

Time-Sharing Experiments for the Social Sciences: An Underutilized Resource for Justice Researchers

by Penny Visser, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Chicago

Justice researchers have begun taking advantage of an innovative infrastructure project funded by the National Science Foundation. The project, Time-Sharing Experiments for the Social Sciences (TESS), offers social scientists the opportunity to conduct original experiments on large, nationally representative samples at no cost to the researchers. Any faculty member, postdoctoral fellow, or graduate student of any social science or social science-related department anywhere in the world is eligible to submit a proposal for funding.

Overseen by Penny Visser (a psychologist at the University of Chicago) and Jeremy Freese (a sociologist at Northwestern University), TESS solicits proposals on a continual basis to test methodological and substantive hypotheses from across the social sciences. These proposals are submitted to a rigorous peer-review process and the most innovative and promising experiments are implemented at no cost to the investigators by Knowledge Networks, a leading Internet-based survey firm.

"Scholars have long acknowledged the experimental method as the gold standard for causal inference," says Dr. Visser, "but the confines of the laboratory make it difficult or impossible for scholars to address some of the most pressing issues confronting society." She notes that surveys provide an alternative, but the obstacles to drawing strong causal inferences from conventional survey data are well-established. "The central aim of TESS," Dr. Visser explains, "is to provide both the impetus and the opportunity for scholars from across the social sciences to capitalize on the unique strengths of the experimental method while simultaneously taking advantage of the inferential power of large, nationally

representative samples."

The key to TESS is multiple studies from different disciplines sharing a common observational platform, all exploiting the control and inferential power of experimental designs. The TESS data collection platform supports complex experimental designs, including those involving elaborate randomization strategies, the collection of response latencies, the presentation of audio or video stimuli, and over-time panel designs, among many other design features. And by distributing the fixed costs of sampling, data collection, and data management over a large number of studies, TESS dramatically reduces the average cost of each study and makes experimentation

on general population samples available to researchers for whom the obstacles to such work would be otherwise prohibitive. Indeed, the high fixed costs associated with fielding this kind of data collection drives many promising scholars away from large scale experimentation.

Unlike most Internet survey firms, whose samples are limited to current Internet users, Knowledge Networks uses random-digit dialing procedures to select a sample of households across the country. The members of these households are provided free personal computers and Internet access and other incentives in exchange for agreeing to participate in occasional online studies. Thus, TESS enables scholars to conduct research with samples that are

(See *Time-Sharing*, p. 12)

Using State Criminal History Records to Study Felony Case Processing

by Janice Iwama, Research Analyst, and Stan Orchowsky, Research Director, Justice Research and Statistics Association

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) is responsible for administering the National Criminal History Improvement Program (NCHIP) with the goal of "improving safety and security by enhancing the quality, completeness, and accessibility of criminal history record information and by insuring the nationwide implementation of criminal justice and non-criminal justice background check systems." Under this program, BJS has funded two JRSA criminal history projects, the findings of which were reported in the June 2009 ("Using State Criminal History Records to Study Sex Offender Recidivism") and September 2009 ("Using State Criminal History Records to Study

Drug Offenders") issues of *The JRSA Forum*.

In 2008, BJS awarded JRSA a third grant to coordinate state Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) projects using criminal history records to study felony case processing. Five states participated in the project, which required the states to: (1) obtain criminal history records of offenders arrested for felony offenses; (2) provide these criminal history records in a specified format to BJS and JRSA; and (3) analyze the criminal history records to summarize the processing of felony cases in their states in a final report. BJS and JRSA requested that the final report include

(See *Criminal History Records*, p. 6)

National Research Council Completes Assessment of the National Institute of Justice

In 2006, the National Research Council of the National Academies formed the Committee on Assessing the Research Program of the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) after a request by NIJ for an independent assessment of its programs, organization, and processes. One of the major units of the

Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, NIJ awards grants and contracts to public agencies, private organizations, institutions of higher education, and individuals for the support of research, demonstrations, behavioral studies, program evaluation, technology research and development, and the dissemination of research findings.

The Committee was charged with examining “the full range of NIJ programs in order to assess and make recommendations for NIJ’s short- and long-term strategic planning and budgeting processes and its organizational structure.” The Committee was also instructed to consider NIJ’s research and dissemination priorities based on the needs of stakeholders and limitations imposed by budgetary constraints.

Findings were recently released in a prepublication proof, which is available on NIJ’s website. The Committee concluded that a federal research institute such as NIJ is vital to the country’s crime and justice efforts, but that NIJ has been “severely hampered” by a lack of independence, authority, and discretionary resources. It made five recommendations to address some of its concerns.

Recommendation 1. Congress should provide

for NIJ’s independence and authority, while keeping NIJ within the Office of Justice Programs’ organizational structure. Consideration should be given to instituting a statutory advisory board, a set term and minimum qualifications for the NIJ director, and clear authority for NIJ in budgetary areas.

Recommendation 2. NIJ should work toward building a body of knowledge to improve the criminal justice field; sponsor research that will upgrade the scientific methods currently used to study crime; and support projects of long duration, complexity, and substantial expense in new areas that have been neglected due to constraints on the agency in choosing and funding research. Responsibility for forensic capacity-building programs should be transferred to other, more appropriate agencies.

Recommendation 3. NIJ should support researchers and the research process, including increasing resources in support of graduate education for those pursuing careers in criminology and criminal justice as well as other related disciplines, and enhancing the Data Archives Program.

Recommendation 4. NIJ should improve its research operations to increase transparency, consistency, timeliness, and involvement of researchers and practitioners.

Recommendation 5. NIJ should better assess its programs in terms of their effects on research and practice and evaluate the operations and management areas that support these efforts.

The full prepublication version of *Strengthening the National Institute of Justice* is available on NIJ’s website at <http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?recordid=12929>. Printed copies of the final report can be pre-ordered at the same location. ☛

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Counting Deaths: Developments in the BJS Arrest-Related Deaths Program

by Joel Garner, Chief, Law Enforcement Statistics, Bureau of Justice Statistics

Every year nearly 700 deaths that occur during the process of arrest or in the presence of law enforcement officers are reported to the Bureau of Justice Statistics' (BJS) Arrest-Related Deaths (ARD) program. Roughly half of these arrest-related deaths are deaths caused by the police; the rest are attributed to intoxication, suicide, accidental injury, and illness or natural causes. Regardless of the circumstances, deaths that occur in the presence of law enforcement officers are highly visible, occasionally controversial, and can both positively and negatively impact the legitimacy with which law enforcement officers and agencies are viewed by the public.

Widespread public concern regarding the completeness and accuracy of available information about deaths in jails and prisons, as well as deaths that occurred in the process of arrest, contributed to a congressional mandate

that BJS collect data on all such deaths. BJS began collecting data regarding deaths in jails in 2000, in prisons in 2001, and arrest-related deaths in 2003. One BJS report was issued in 2007 on arrest-related deaths, and annual data on arrest-related deaths are included on the recently revised BJS website (<http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=1226>).

In 2010, BJS assigned additional staff and resources to make the ARD data collection and reporting more comprehensive, timely, and, hopefully, useful to state and local policy makers. Updated web tables are planned for December 2010, and, in 2011, we anticipate that the program will be fully operational in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

With the assistance of the Justice Research and Statistics Association, BJS recently convened a meeting of 20 individuals from around the United

States with special knowledge about the current ARD program, law enforcement operations, and how the manner and cause of death are determined by medical authorities.

While the May 2010 meeting focused on refinements to the 2010 ARD data collection instrument, BJS is currently exploring ways to enhance the program, use alternative data collection approaches, collaborate with other federal statistical agencies, and go beyond reporting simple counts of deaths to produce policy-relevant and statistically sound analyses about arrest-related deaths. At the present time, the ARD program is a state-based data collection effort and BJS looks to Statistical Analysis Centers, whether they currently participate in the ARD data collection or not, as a valuable source for additional ideas about how to improve the current ARD program.

BJS welcomes suggestions from individuals and agencies for improving the ARD program. Please feel free to contact Andrea Burch, ARD program manager, at 202-307-1138 or Andrea.Burch@usdoj.gov. ☞

BJS Releases Findings from the National Inmate Survey on Sexual Victimization

To meet requirements of the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003, the Bureau of Justice Statistics surveyed more than 81,500 inmates held in 167 state and federal prisons, 286 jails, and 10 special confinement facilities between October 2008 and December 2009 regarding their sexual victimization by another inmate or facility staff. Findings from the survey were released on August 26.

Nationwide, 2.1% of all prison inmates and 1.5% of all jail inmates reported at least one incident involving another inmate; 2.8% of prison inmates and 2.0% of jail inmates reported having had sex or sexual contact with facility staff. This translates to an estimated 88,500 inmates—64,500 in prison and

24,000 in jails.

Among the 463 facilities in the survey, eight male prisons, two female prisons, and six jails were identified as "high rate" facilities based on the prevalence of inmate-on-inmate sexual victimization. Four male prisons, two female prisons, and five jails were identified as "high rate" based on the prevalence rate of staff sexual misconduct.

Female prisoners (4.7%) were more than twice as likely as male prisoners (1.9%) to report experiencing sexual victimization by another prisoner. Jail inmates reported a similar pattern of inmate-on-inmate sexual victimization (3.1% for females compared to 1.3% for males).

Sexual activity with staff was somewhat more prevalent among incarcerated males. An estimated 2.9% of male prisoners and 2.1% of male jail inmates reported at least one incident with staff, compared to 2.1% of female prisoners and 1.5% of female jail inmates.

The report, *Sexual Victimization in Prisons and Jails Reported by Inmates, 2008-09* (NCJ 231169), was written by BJS statisticians Allen J. Beck and Paige M. Harrison and RTI International staff Marcus Berzofsky, Rachel Caspar, and Christopher Krebs. The report can be found at <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=2202>.

JRSA Reviews Juvenile Minority Overrepresentation Efforts in Two States

by Mary Poulin, JRSA Senior Research Associate

JRSA recently completed a project for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention on disproportionate minority contact (DMC) efforts in Iowa and Virginia. These states were used as case studies of how states and localities are utilizing empirical information to: (1) identify the extent and nature of the DMC problem; and (2) assess the effectiveness of their efforts to reduce DMC.

In each state, JRSA examined both state-level efforts to address DMC as well as ongoing efforts in two targeted localities. As a part of our study, we: 1) examined all available documents relating to DMC in both states, with a particular focus on those produced in the last five years; 2) conducted interviews with state and local stakeholders in both states and attended meetings of local planning groups addressing DMC issues; and 3) sought data from both states and were able to obtain data from Iowa, which were used to illustrate how local DMC initiatives could be assessed.

With this project, JRSA wanted to provide some insight into how state and local DMC efforts might be improved. The activities in the two states were looked at within the larger context of guidance provided by OJJDP, as well as work being done in states and localities by national organizations, specifically the Burns Institute and the Casey Foundation's Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI). JRSA did not conduct an evaluation of efforts in Iowa and Virginia per se, but rather used information and data available in each state to: 1) document the history and status

of DMC efforts that have been implemented over the past several years, 2) identify the issues faced in carrying out DMC efforts, 3) identify if and how the states measured the results of these efforts, and 4) when possible, analyze available data to illustrate how localities can examine the impacts of specific DMC interventions.

The final report for the project, available on JRSA's website, addresses the aforementioned issues, and provides a discussion of the lessons learned in implementing these efforts. The report provides conclusions and recommendations to help OJJDP and the states enhance their ability to address DMC issues, collect data, and evaluate the results of their efforts. Broadly, these include:

- Efforts by national organizations to encourage systematic data collection and analysis in addressing DMC and their work with localities seem to result in increased use of data by local jurisdictions as they consider their DMC problems. Similar emphasis must be placed on assessing the outcomes of local DMC interventions.
- States and localities must be encouraged, particularly by OJJDP, to document their DMC efforts so that results can be shared with others and assessed by a wider audience. We found no information on the effectiveness of interventions carried out in the two states and their localities, and, in fact, just finding information on the interventions themselves was a challenge. Relatedly, OJJDP should more clearly define its expectations

for states and localities regarding evaluation of DMC initiatives.

- Our assessment of the accumulated evidence on DMC interventions suggests that some DMC interventions, almost exclusively at the detention stage, are promising. Systemic interventions by the JDAI and the Burns Institute have been implemented in a number of localities across the country, including some in Iowa and Virginia. These interventions seem to have the benefit of energizing, at least temporarily, local efforts to address the DMC issue, and both show some indication of reductions in DMC. However, no evidence that meets any reasonable standard of scientific validity and objectivity shows either JDAI or the Burns Institute approach to be successful in reducing DMC.

The project's report, *A Review of the Status of Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) Efforts in Iowa and Virginia*, is available on the JRSA website: <http://www.jrsa.org/pubs/reports/dmc-final-report.pdf>. 📄

SAC NEWS

Arizona SAC Works with LECC Initiative to Address Reentry Challenges

On behalf of participating government and community-based organizations, Arizona Statistical Analysis Center Director Phillip Stevenson accepted an award from the United States Attorney's Office – District of Arizona Law Enforcement Coordinating Committee (LECC) for "Outstanding Contributions to Community Partnerships for Public Safety" for the work done by the LECC Reentry Initiative. The Reentry Initiative is a community-based, stakeholder-led initiative to promote the successful reintegration of ex-offenders and increase public safety where they live.

Members of the Reentry Initiative met more than two dozen times in Phoenix and Tucson. Using data obtained from local, state, and federal sources to better understand the challenge of ex-prisoner reentry, Reentry Initiative members discussed the critical needs facing returning ex-prisoners. Additionally, working groups were established to explore in more detail how treatment and health services, housing and transportation, mentoring and faith-based/community partnerships, employment and education, and community education and linkages impact former prisoners.

The goal of the initiative was to assess the challenges and opportunities for ex-prisoner reentry and develop key recommendations for executive decision makers and public policy makers in Arizona. Keeping in mind the current fiscal realities of Arizona's criminal justice system, members focused on developing meaningful policy recommendations that would strengthen Arizona's reentry network without a large influx of financial resources. The ten overarching recommendations are:

1. Streamline the continuity of medical and behavioral health and treatment services from prison to the community.
2. Increase community capacity to address medical and behavioral treatment and care close to home.
3. Enhance diversion opportunities for nonviolent offenders with medical/behavioral issues that contributed to their involvement in the criminal justice system.
4. Ensure access to quality housing opportunities and provide information about possible housing alternatives to prisoners prior to release.
5. Establish a regulatory framework for transitional housing to ensure minimum standards for safety and quality.
6. Create specialized housing plans for soon-to-be-released mentally ill prisoners.
7. Prepare landlords and residents to welcome former inmates into their communities by providing objective information about the men and women leaving correctional facilities.
8. Collaborate across agencies to eliminate barriers to employment and education through programs that identify needs upon reentry and address transitional services prior to release including: obtaining necessary identification records and gaining access to information about current employment and educational opportunities.
9. Raise public awareness, public involvement, and commitment to reentry success by utilizing the media, community organizations, faith communities, and academic scholarships to increase understanding, dispel myths, and engage the community and public policy makers in successful reentry efforts.
10. Cultivate collaboration with faith-based (e.g., Open Table) and secu-

lar mentoring programs, and streamline continuity of mentoring from pre-release (3–6 months) to post-release (one year).

These recommendations were highlighted during a briefing session for agency executives that included the United States Attorney's Office – District of Arizona, United States Bureau of Prisons, United States Bureau of Probation, Federal Public Defender, Office of the Governor, Arizona Department of Corrections, Arizona Department of Health Services, Administrative Office of the Courts, Maricopa County, Phoenix Police Department, Central Arizona Shelter Services, and Goodwill of Central Arizona. The briefing resulted in the creation of an Executive Working Group that will continue to meet on a regular basis to explore opportunities for implementing the recommendations of the Reentry Initiative.

Illinois SAC Works on Multiple Projects and Publications

The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA), which serves as the state's SAC, has recently initiated several projects and publications and completed several others. Their activities are summarized below.

Description of Illinois Justice Systems Procedures. ICJIA staff completed a narrative explanation of the laws, processes, and procedures in the Illinois juvenile justice system. This report covers each stage of the juvenile justice system, from arrest through expungement, and includes information about diversion, transfers, and juvenile rights. The report is slated for release in fall 2010. Additionally, ICJIA staff are now working on a similar detailed explanation of the adult criminal justice system in Illinois. This

(See SAC News p. 9)

(Criminal History Records, from p. 1)

detailed information about the data collection process, any obstacles encountered during data collection and data file preparation, data quality issues found during analysis, recommendations for future criminal history projects, and a profile of offenders' backgrounds and criminal histories. Unlike the previous efforts, SACs were asked to provide BJS and JRSA with standardized datasets containing criminal history information in addition to the final report.

Methodology

Initially, BJS and JRSA requested that SACs collect and analyze records for individuals indicted for a felony in 2006. Since only New York was actually able to provide information on indictments, the selection criterion was changed to arrests for the remaining states. The Iowa SAC decided to target felony charge filings in 2006 after finding what they considered to be a large amount of missing and unreliable arrest data. Each SAC extracted data for these offenders and constructed a dataset based on a codebook of variables BJS and JRSA provided. Based on the availability of data or lack thereof, some SACs were able to provide more data than others; some SACs even provided variables not listed in the codebook to gain a better understanding of felony case processing in their state.

Table 1 shows the total number of felony offenders arrested (or indicted, in the case of New York) in each state, and the proportion arrested/indicted multiple times during the year. While most offenders arrested in 2006 were only arrested once, relatively large proportions of offenders were arrested more than once in several states.

Issues in Analyzing State Criminal History Records

The SACs reported a number of

Table 1. Arrest/Indictment Data for Felony Offenders in 2006

	Arizona	Connecticut	Delaware	Iowa	New York
One Arrest	80.3%	83.3%	86.0%	97.8%	90.9%
Two Arrests	14.7%	13.1%	11.1%	2.0%	7.9%
Three or More Arrests	5.0%	3.6%	2.9%	0.2%	1.2%
Total Number Felony Offenders	65,808	28,596	9,072	8,253	49,475

difficulties related to data collection and data file preparation, as well as issues with the quality of the data. These data quality issues are similar to those discussed in the June 2009 and September 2009 *Forum* articles; they include: arrest records with no disposition, disposition records with no corresponding arrest, and missing information. Issues specific to the current project include those related to criminal history record policies and practices.

Policies and Practices

All of the SACs identified some policies and practices that limited their ability to provide accurate information on felony case processing in the state. For example, policies and/or laws related to criminal history record retention in some states require the removal of records from the criminal history record repository based on certain criteria. In Arizona, offender records are removed from the repository upon notification that the offender has passed away. The Iowa SAC reported that data were removed from its state's repository if a defendant was not convicted of the charge(s) against him/her. Arrest information more than four years old without a court disposition also is removed from Iowa's repository. Another limitation noted by SACs is related to fingerprinting: Data are unavailable and not included in the study for any offender that had not been fingerprinted. The New York SAC discovered that it was initially including cases – such as parole violation cases and cases from domestic violence courts – in its data set where the

defendant had not been indicted. In cooperation with the state Office of Court Administration, the New York SAC surveyed all superior courts in the state to learn more about their policies and practices. Based on the results of this survey, the SAC was able to identify and exclude these cases.

Missing Variables

As part of the development of the final codebook for the datasets to be submitted, BJS and JRSA asked the SACs to identify requested data elements that they would be unable to provide from the criminal history records and other databases they may have used for the project. Examples of the kinds of variables identified by SACs as being unavailable or considered unreliable included: citizenship status, resident status, employment status, income level, and variables regarding the appeals process. Arizona was also unable to provide any filing information, since it is not captured in the disposition forms submitted for data entry into the repository. Iowa, as noted previously, found their arrest data to be unfit for analysis and depended exclusively on their filing information. Both Arizona and Iowa were also unable to identify whether the most serious arrest charges were attempts.

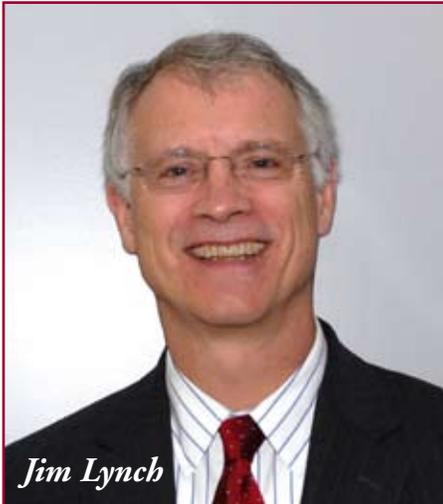
Organizing Data for Analyses

All of the SACs spent a great deal of time and effort organizing their criminal history records data in a format

(See Criminal History Records, p. 8)

Jim Lynch and John Laub Confirmed by Senate to Head BJS and NIJ

On June 22, the Senate confirmed by voice vote James P. Lynch, Ph.D., as Director of the Bureau of Justice Statistics and John H. Laub, Ph.D., as Director of the National Institute of Justice.



Jim Lynch

Dr. Lynch was Distinguished Professor at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York before being nominated by President Obama to be Director of the Bureau of Justice Statistics. Throughout his career he has focused on measurement issues in criminal justice data and statistics. He has led research projects on a wide variety of crime and criminal justice-related topics, from comparing incarceration practices in different countries to examining the impact of incarceration on families. He worked as a program evaluator for the Connecticut Planning Committee on Criminal Justice Administration beginning in 1972, and he interned with the Department of Justice's (DOJ) Office for Improvements in the Administration of Justice from 1978 to 1979.

From 1980 to 1985, Dr. Lynch served as project manager for the National Crime Survey Redesign, a multi-million dollar revamping of one of the nation's major indicators of crime. He

served as an adviser in the redesign of the other major indicator, the Uniform Crime Report, during the same period. In 1986, he became a faculty member in the Department of Justice, Law, and Society at American University, where he remained for two decades, serving as associate professor, full professor, and chair of the department before leaving for John Jay in 2005. He continued his work with crime statistics through the 1990s. From 2007 to 2009, he served on a National Academy of Science panel to review the DOJ's Bureau of Justice Statistics programs.

Dr. Lynch has published three books, two reviewing crime statistics and one examining immigration policies, and co-edited another on terrorism and homeland security. He has also published many articles, book chapters, and other publications. He has served on the executive board of the American Society of Criminology (ASC), on the editorial boards of *Criminology* and the *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, and as deputy editor of *Justice Quarterly*. He also chaired the American Statistical Association's Committee on Law and Justice Statistics.

Dr. Lynch graduated from Wesleyan University with a bachelor's degree in sociology, and received a master's degree and then a doctorate in sociology from the University of Chicago.

Dr. Laub was the Distinguished University Professor in the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Maryland, College Park, an Affiliate Faculty Member in the Department of Sociology at Maryland, and a Visiting Scholar in the Institute for Quantitative Social Science at Harvard. He was named a Distinguished Scholar-Teacher at the University for the 2006-2007 academic year. He has served as the editor of the *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* for

five years, and from 2002 to 2008, he was a member of the Committee on Law and Justice of the National Academies of Science.



John Laub

Dr. Laub has coauthored two books: *Crime in the Making: Pathways and Turning Points Through Life* and *Shared Beginnings, Divergent Lives: Delinquent Boys to Age 70*. Both books won awards, including the Albert J. Reiss, Jr., Distinguished Book Award from the American Sociological Association; the Outstanding Book Award from the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences; and the Michael J. Hindelang Book Award from ASC. In addition, Dr. Laub has authored many research articles in the areas of crime and deviance over the life course, juvenile delinquency and juvenile justice, and the history of criminology.

Dr. Laub was named a fellow of ASC in 1996 and served as ASC's President from 2002 to 2003. In 2005, ASC presented him with its Edwin H. Sutherland Award for outstanding contributions to theory or research in criminology. Dr. Laub received his B.A. from the University of Illinois, Chicago, and his M.A. and Ph.D. in criminal justice from the State University of New York at Albany. ❧

(Criminal History Records, from p. 6)

that would permit them to conduct analyses on felony case processing. The SACs faced a variety of obstacles in matching and merging the data collected from various agencies to achieve a complete and accurate record of each offender. Additional time and resources were required to produce the data in the standardized format required by BJS and JRSA. For example, the Arizona SAC noted its difficulties in formatting the most serious arrest and conviction charges for analysis due to the large number of unique offense codes. The Iowa SAC discovered that several variables requested for this study were recorded in free-form text fields, necessitating the manual review of information from the repository and court records. The New York SAC also gathered and merged additional information from prosecutorial offices to make up for missing data from its repository.

Selected Findings

Due to the issues mentioned above, the selected findings should be reviewed with caution and this information should be considered within the context of these issues. Comparisons among states may be particularly misleading due to the differences in state statutes, the availability of individual data elements, and differences in the completeness and accuracy of the data reported.

Table 2 provides information on select demographic characteristics of the felony offenders in each state. As the table shows, the average age at time of arrest (except in Iowa, where the filing date was used to calculate the age) was around 30 years in all five states. Most of the targeted population was made up of white males except in Delaware and New York, where about half of those arrested/indicted were black.

Table 3 shows the percentages of felony offenders who had a felony or

Table 2. Selected Demographic Characteristics of Felony Offenders in 2006

	Arizona	Connecticut	Delaware	Iowa	New York
Average Age at Arrest	31	30	31	32.5	30
Male	80.5%	82.2%	79.6%	81.9%	88.0%
Female	19.5%	17.7%	20.4%	18.1%	12.0%
White	85.0%	64.9%	48.7%	79.3%	49%
Black	9.6%	34.1%	51.1%	18.4%	49%
Other	5.3%	1.0%	0.2%	2.2%	2%

Table 3. Criminal History of Felony Offenders Arrested in 2006

	Arizona	Connecticut	Delaware	Iowa	New York
No Prior Felony Arrests	49.8%	36.8%	33.9%	n/r	36.6%
No Prior Misdemeanor Arrests	45.1%	20.9%	n/r	n/r	30.8%
No Prior Felony Convictions	71.4%	55.3%	n/r	81.8%	65.1%
No Prior Misdemeanor Convictions	54.0%	43.7%	n/r	47.4%	51.8%

n/r = not reported. Iowa prior convictions are from 1/1/98 to present.

Table 4. Most Serious Arrest Charge Category

	Arizona	Connecticut	Delaware	Iowa	New York
Violent Offense	18.7%	14.5%	25.2%	21.5%	26.5%
Property Offense	23.4%	21.4%	30.3%	33.1%	22.2%
Drug Offense	35.1%	28.7%	27.4%	27.4%	30.7%
Public Disorder Offense	22.9%	34.0%	17.2%	16.9%	14.4%
Unknown Offense	0.0%	1.5%	0.0%	1.1%	6.2%

misdemeanor arrest or conviction in their own state prior to their arrest in 2006. About one third to one half of the felony offenders had no record of a felony arrest before 2006, and the majority of offenders in all states had no prior felony convictions. In the states that reported these data, arrestees were more likely to have prior arrests and convictions for misdemeanors than felonies.

Table 4 shows the percentages for the most serious arrest charge category. Drug charges accounted for the largest percentage of arrests/indictments in 2006 in Arizona and New York. The

largest percentage of arrestees in Connecticut were charged with a public offense, while the most common type of felony arrest in Delaware and Iowa was a property offense. Violent offenses accounted for about one fourth or fewer of the arrests in all five states.

Table 5 shows that the majority of felony offenders were found to be guilty either by plea, trial, or other form across all five states (again, note that New York is reporting indictments, not arrests). Dismissed cases were more common in Connecticut and Iowa, but this may be due to dif-

fering definitions and classifications. The large percentage of unknown dispositions in Arizona is due to cases in which final dispositions were still pending or to the final dispositions not being forwarded to the repository.

Finally, Table 6 provides the statistics on the most serious sentence received by convicted felony offenders in the study. A large percentage of the convicted felony offenders from the Arizona, Connecticut, and Delaware study populations were sentenced to probation. While all states had a fairly large percentage sentenced to either prison or jail, it is important to keep in mind that certain issues regarding using criminal history records for analysis, such as those mentioned earlier, will affect sentencing data. Variations in definitions, in procedures for identifying the actual sentence, and in classifying sentences into one of the categories shown above make it difficult to make cross-state comparisons.

Summary

This project provides further evidence of the viability of using state criminal history records to study critical policy-relevant topics such as felony case processing. As with previous projects, there are certain limitations to these data as a source for research, but

Table 5. Type of Disposition

	Arizona	Connecticut	Delaware	Iowa	New York
Dismissal	8.6%	33.3%	7.1%	28.1%	4.0%
Acquittal	0.2%	0.1%	0.4%	0.0%	1.3%
Diverted (Deferral and/or Dismissal)	1.0%	0.0%	7.5%	4.3%	0.9%
Guilty (plea, trial, or other)	50.9%	63.6%	67.3%	53.5%	84.7%
Other	14.2%	1.8%	15.8%	11.2%	3.2%
Case Pending/Missing/Unknown	25.1%	1.3%	1.8%	2.9%	6.0%

Table 6. Sentencing Data for Convicted Felony Offenders Arrested in 2006

	Arizona	Connecticut*	Delaware	Iowa	New York
Prison	30.4%	43.9%	11.1%	25.4%	40.2%
Jail	29.8%	-	33.8%	13.4%	31.2%
Probation	37.2%	36.5%	48.4%	55.3%	21.6%
Fine	2.3%	7.5%	3.7%	4.6%	1.2%
Other	0.3%	0.2%	3.0%	0.7%	5.7%
Not Applicable	-	-	0.1%	-	-
Unknown/Missing	0.0%	11.9%	0.1%	0.5%	0.2%

*Connecticut does not distinguish between prison and jail. All incarceration sentences were coded as prison sentences.

as SACs continue to work with the data and provide feedback to their state repositories, the quality of the data should continue to improve. JRSA and the SACs hope to work with

BJS in the future to improve the quality of state criminal history records through analyses such as the ones described here.

(SAC News, from p. 5)

report will mirror the juvenile report and cover each stage of the system from arrest through expungement, including information about specialty courts; diversion; risk, assets, and needs assessments; and rights. The report is slated for completion in 2011.

Get the Facts Publication Series.

The *Get the Facts* series was created to answer common questions about the juvenile and criminal justice systems. The juvenile series is complete and the adult series is forthcoming. Completed topics include juvenile arrests, the

juvenile pretrial process, juvenile courts, juvenile sentencing, and juvenile incarceration and aftercare. A *Get the Facts* on juvenile records will also be produced. Forthcoming topics for adults mirror those for juveniles; they will include arrests, pretrial process, courts, sentencing, corrections, and criminal records.

Anne's House Program

Evaluation. ICJIA will complete a process evaluation of Anne's House during year one of program operations. The home, operated by the Salvation

Army, is a long-term residential facility serving sexually exploited/trafficked girls and young women. The study will measure implementation milestones in relation to the program's logic model, provide a review of literature, create a full program description of Anne's House, describe program participants, and conduct interviews with staff at the end of year one. The interviews will document successes, barriers to success, and suggested changes to improve the program. The anticipated start date of the evaluation is September 2010.

PTSD and Victimization among Female Prisoners. In 2009, ICJIA interviewed 163 female inmates housed in the Illinois Department of Corrections. Study participants were asked questions on prior victimization in their lives and were administered the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Symptoms Checklist (PCL) to gauge PTSD symptoms. This study will share the level and correlates of PTSD symptomology of female inmates and will help inform prisons and parole agents so they can better assist women housed in prisons and those released from prison deal with this problematic mental illness. PTSD can impact basic functioning, including the ability to hold a job, have healthy relationships, and avoid the abuse of drugs and alcohol. The report is slated for completion in late 2010.

Illinois Metropolitan Enforcement Groups and Task Forces Profiles. In 2009, the Authority funded 19 Metropolitan Enforcement Groups (MEG) and Task Forces which pooled resources, knowledge, and personnel to more efficiently and effectively fight the proliferation of illicit drugs. All MEGs and task forces are staffed by officers representing federal, state, county, and local police agencies. Periodically, the Authority creates profiles of each MEG and task force in order to provide a general overview of the drug and violent crime problem in their jurisdiction and share their response to these problems. Updated profiles will be published in late 2010.

Mental Health Screening and Assessment Practices in the Juvenile Justice System. ICJIA staff conducted research on the mental health screening and assessment practices of juveniles by police, probation, and court services departments, and detention and correctional facilities in Illinois. The study found that very few agencies used standardized mental health screening or assessment instruments and few had standard policies and procedures in place to identify mental

health needs of system-involved youth. The report provided overviews of the different instruments and tools used in Illinois, as well as others available, to screen and assess for mental health issues in adolescents, and included information about their reliability and validity.

Student Perceptions of Campus Safety Initiatives. ICJIA funded researchers at Southern Illinois University to conduct a study on campus safety and a final report was completed in June 2010. During the 2009–2010 academic year, survey data were collected from more than 5,000 students across six Illinois college campuses. The surveys asked students to report their on-campus fear of crime, perceptions of risk, victimization experiences, and protective behaviors, as well as their attitudes toward common campus safety initiatives.

New Sourcebook Published by Kentucky SAC

In July 2010, the Kentucky Statistical Analysis Center released the 2008 edition of the *Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics in the Commonwealth*. By providing comprehensive information from all components of the criminal justice system, the *Sourcebook* encourages data-driven decision making and effective criminal justice policy development. The *Sourcebook* is intended for use by policymakers, Kentucky Justice and Public Safety Cabinet personnel, researchers, academic institutions, students, media, and the general public.

In addition to valuable information on crime, arrest, prosecution, correction, and juvenile justice system trends, this seventh edition of the *Sourcebook* highlights selected topics that are currently of interest. These include drug-related offenses, with a particular focus on methamphetamines and prescription drugs, DUI offenses, sex offenses, and school safety. Kentucky does not have a unified

criminal justice information system; therefore, the data presented here have inherent limitations. Despite these limitations, however, this annual publication is the only single source of criminal justice data representing so many areas of Kentucky's criminal justice system. The commitment and participation of the agencies who work together on this important data collection effort is essential. The *Sourcebook's* Data Advisory Team convenes annually, bringing together representatives from each of the key contributing agencies to discuss the upcoming edition. Feedback from the team is used to shape the *Sourcebook's* direction and to make improvements to how the data are collected, analyzed, and presented.

New Mexico SAC Director Elected to Board of ASC

New Mexico SAC Director Lisa Broidy was elected to serve as an Executive Counselor on the Executive Board of the American Society of Criminology. Dr. Broidy's term runs from 2010 to 2013. She also currently serves as a delegate on JRSA's Executive Committee. The NM SAC is housed at the University of New Mexico, where Dr. Broidy also directs the Institute for Social Research and is an Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology. Her research interests run from theoretical to applied. Her theoretical research focuses particularly on gender differences in the causes and consequences of criminal behavior. Her applied research interests focus on systemic responses to domestic violence and on offender reentry.

Oklahoma Has New SAC Director

Angie Baker was appointed Director of the Oklahoma SAC, where she has worked as a Statistical Research Specialist since November 2008. She has worked on several projects, including an evaluation of intelligence-led policing, an evaluation of mentoring

programs designed to prevent gang violence, and a review of state administrative records related to the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003. Ms. Baker is currently working with SAC staff to develop the first statewide victimization survey. She earned her bachelor's degree in sociology from the University of Oklahoma. Prior to her position with the SAC, Ms. Baker spent many years working with juvenile offenders.

West Virginia DCJS Undergoes Major Reorganization

On the heels of various efforts in the state of West Virginia to reduce its prison population, the newly renamed Division of Justice and Community Services (previously the Division of Criminal Justice Services) is expanding its role in the areas of research and strategic planning in accordance with evidence-based practices.

In July 2009, Gov. Joe Manchin officially reviewed the *Governor's Commission Report on Prison Overcrowding* and accepted its findings. The report contained 14 recommendations—three of which relate directly to the work of the Criminal Justice Statistical Analysis Center (CJSAC). In particular, the Commission report contained explicit recommendations for the use of a standardized risk and need assessment tool rooted in Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) principles, improved data collection and sharing across justice agencies, and more research on the effectiveness of community corrections programs (report recommendations #1, #7, and #8). The Commission's report can be found at [http://www.wvgov.org/Prison overcrowding report 2009.pdf](http://www.wvgov.org/Prison%20overcrowding%20report%202009.pdf).

To coordinate the work of the Statistical Analysis Center and other efforts to solve the prison overcrowding crisis, the Division of Justice and Community Services (DJCS) is undergoing a major organizational change.

This reorganization calls for the establishment of an Office of Research and Strategic Planning (ORSP) and the Justice Center for Evidence-Based Practice (JCEBP)—both to be housed in DJCS. This change is necessary to combine the unique talents and expertise of the CJSAC with the need for evidence-based decision making to address critical crime and justice issues in the state, including the current prison overcrowding situation. The ORSP, with the creation of the JCEBP, will be designed to promote the use of evidence-based practices (EBP) in the administration of justice in the state of West Virginia.

The ORSP and JCEBP will facilitate the mission of the DJCS to protect the public through research, effective planning and coordination of services, and making proper funding decisions. This will include, but not be limited to, working with multiple state agencies to implement the use of the Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (LS/CMI) and assist in the creation of quality assurance mechanisms for the use of the LS/CMI and the delivery of appropriate offender treatment in both institutions and community corrections programs. Based on systematic reviews of scientific evidence on justice-related issues, the JCEBP will also synthesize current research and help translate this information for policy makers, system administrators, and staff to inform policy decisions that promote best practices. The ORSP will provide technical research briefs on EBP issues, conduct systematic reviews of current scientific evidence, and offer workshops, trainings, and presentations to key stakeholder groups. Director of the CJSAC, Dr. Stephen M. Haas, is expected to head the newly created Office of Research and Strategic Planning and oversee the operations of both the JCEBP and CJSAC.

WYSAC Conducts Survey on Judicial Performance and Upgrades Case Management System

The Wyoming SAC (WYSAC) is conducting the 2010 iteration of its biennial Judicial Advisory Poll on behalf of the Wyoming State Bar. Following guidelines of the American Bar Association, the poll has been conducted in Wyoming in the fall of every election year since 1976. All practicing attorneys in the state are surveyed by mail (and since 2008, on the Internet) and asked to assess the judicial performance of judges on the ballot for retention or reelection in that year. In addition to the summary information that is made available to the general public and the press, each individual judge receives detailed written comments provided by the attorneys about his or her work on the bench. This year's summary report will be posted to the website of the Wyoming State Bar by mid-October, in time for use by citizens in deciding how to vote on these important positions in November.

WYSAC has completed a major enhancement of WyCST, a web-based case management system used by Wyoming's Court Supervised Treatment program (formerly known as drug courts). The original system was developed by WYSAC in 2002 for the Wyoming Department of Health (WDH), and substantially improved in 2005 with a grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The version upgrade just completed under contract to WDH converts the system to incident-based reporting, provides a modernized and improved user interface and data dashboard, expands the reporting capabilities, and builds in stronger safeguards for data quality and security. ¶

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(Time-Sharing, from p. 1)

representative across the “digital divide.” TESS also permits oversampling respondents from typically underrepresented groups, a feature that some investigators have utilized in order to better understand processes within these groups.

TESS is also remarkably efficient. Proposals are limited to five pages and reviewers are given a short window within which to return their comments. Investigators typically receive a decision about their submissions within six to eight weeks, and successful submissions are fielded shortly thereafter. Dr. Visser and Dr. Freese view the timeliness of data collection as one of TESS’s greatest strengths. They note that the pace at which social science research typically unfolds is not well-suited to providing the kind of feedback that policymakers often need. “By the time relevant findings come out, attention may have shifted elsewhere or important decisions have already been made,” says Dr. Freese. “TESS’ fast turnaround time provides exciting new opportunities for scholars to work quickly and benefit the public and policymakers more immediately.”

Historically, most TESS proposals have come from political science, sociology, and psychology. One of Dr. Visser and Dr. Freese’s primary goals is to increase the diversity of the projects that TESS supports. “We are working hard to get the word out to a broader range of scholars,” says Dr. Visser. “We view TESS as a valuable and underutilized resource to investigators working in a number of areas, including justice, the law, and public policy.”

Increasingly, justice researchers are beginning to capitalize on this unique resource. For example, Robert Kurzban and Paul Robinson (both at the University of Pennsylvania) used TESS to assess the degree to which ordinary citizens agree about the severity and blameworthiness of various crimes. Linda Skitka (University of Illinois at Chicago) investigated whether established conflict resolution techniques, such as providing opportunities for voice, lead to greater tolerance for non-preferred outcomes when people perceive a moral mandate on the issue. John Scott and James Zink (both at the University of California, Davis) explored the impact of judicial behavior, especially the Court’s invocation of

precedent and the size of an opinion’s majority coalition, on public approval or acceptance of judicial policy outcomes. James Yocom (University of Wisconsin) and Sara Wakefield (University of Minnesota) tested the hypothesis that personal experience with the criminal justice system may mediate the frequently observed relation between income and punitive attitudes. Lawrence Solan (Brooklyn Law School) and John Darley (Princeton) probed people’s judgments about an intriguing question: When an individual acts badly and puts another person at risk, should compensation be awarded even if the aggrieved party never actually suffers a physical injury? Aneeta Rattan, Jennifer Eberhardt, and Carol Dweck (all at Stanford) examined whether the race of a juvenile defendant influences support for a sentence of life in prison without the possibility of parole.

The diversity of these projects illustrates the broad potential of this innovative infrastructure program. More information about TESS, including instructions on the proposal submission process, is available on its website: <http://tess.experimentcentral.org>. ☛