



The work of a statistician at BJS

Daniela Golinelli, Ph.D.
Chief, Corrections Statistics Program

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Outline

- Introduction about myself
- Description of BJS mission and organization
- Statisticians at BJS and their job qualifications
- Type of work that is done at BJS

Me

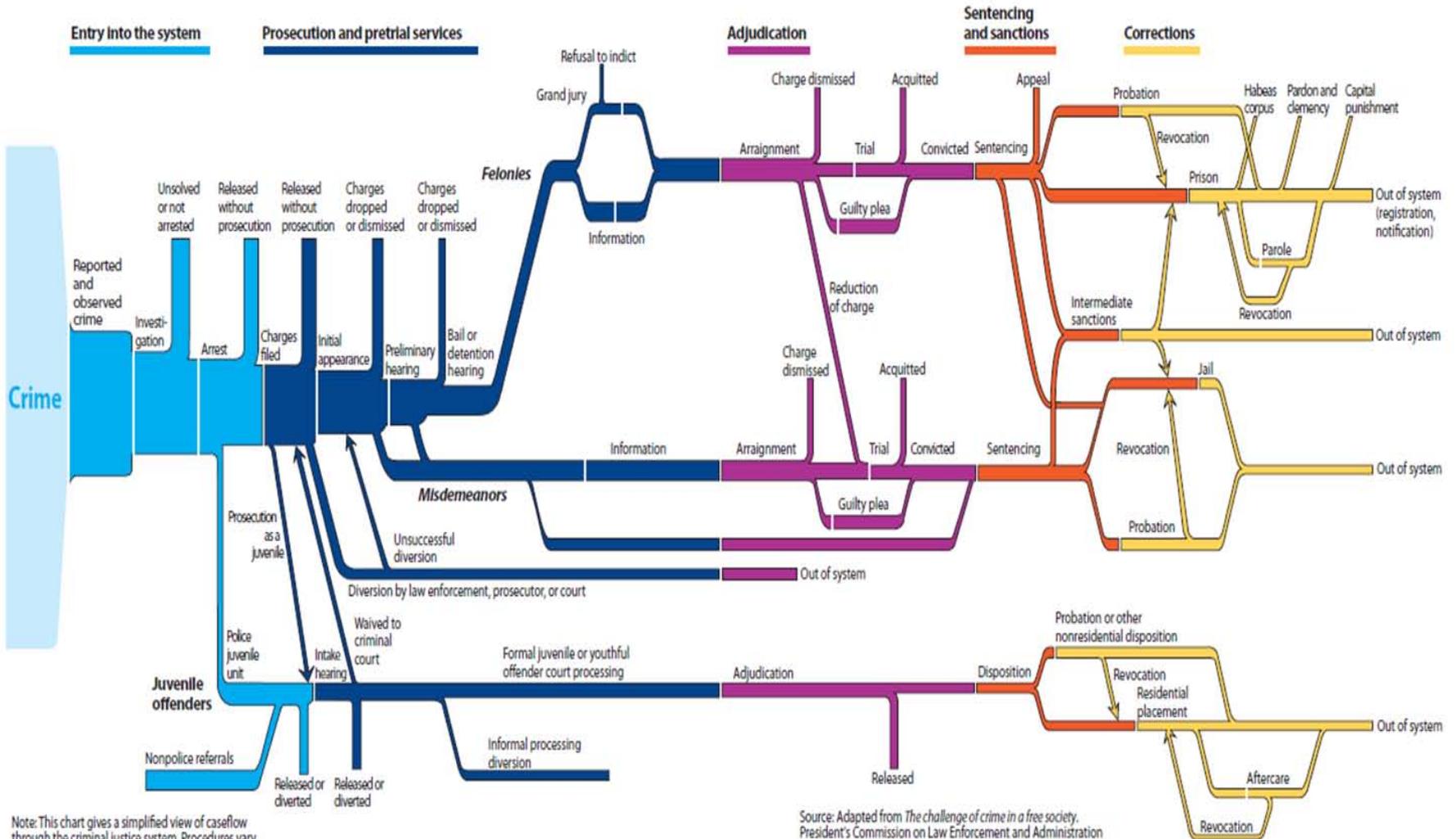
- I joined BJS at the end of February after more than 10 years at RAND
- I have a PhD in Statistics
- I am the Corrections Unit Chief
- I supervise 8 statisticians
- I oversee all the data collections that fall in the Corrections Unit

Bureau of Justice Statistics

- BJS is one of the Principal Federal Statistics agency with 55 total staff and **30 statisticians**
- BJS is located in Chinatown within OJP
- **Mission:**

To collect, analyze, publish, and disseminate information on crime, criminal offenders, victims of crime, and the operation of justice systems at all levels of government. These data are critical to federal, state, and local policymakers in combating crime and ensuring that justice is both efficient and evenhanded

What is the sequence of events in the criminal justice system?



Note: This chart gives a simplified view of caseload through the criminal justice system. Procedures vary among jurisdictions. The weights of the lines are not intended to show actual size of caseloads.

Source: Adapted from *The challenge of crime in a free society*. President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, 1967. This revision, a result of the Symposium on the 30th Anniversary of the President's Commission, was prepared by the Bureau of Justice Statistics in 1997.

BJS organization

- BJS is composed of units that have a substantive focus and aim to cover the entire sequence of events
- Corrections Unit focuses on the last part of the sequence of events in the criminal justice system
- Victimization, Law Enforcements, Courts, Recidivism and Special Projects, Mandates: PREA

Focusing on the statisticians

- We have several vacancies but currently there is a hiring freeze
- An opening for a statistician will be posted soon
- Position description requires knowledge of: survey techniques and methodology; statistical methodology and analysis; and **criminal justice systems and procedures**

Statisticians

- BJS is one of the smaller statistical agencies
- BJS does not have a survey shop
- Statisticians have several responsibilities: they oversee a data collection/project from its ideation to the publication of the report
- They have very different backgrounds: psychologists, anthropologists, criminologists, sociologists, but only one PhD statistician

However there are plenty of methodological challenges to address

To a degree criminology still needs to be discovered by statisticians.

Examples of challenges:

- Estimating the average length of stay (time served) in prison
- Develop sampling strategies for jail inmates
- Produce state level estimates
- Develop techniques for obtaining counts of individual probationers instead of cases
- Missing data imputation techniques for non-reporting entities

Corrections: Portfolio of data collections

Substantive Areas	Data Collection	Periodicity	Unit of analysis/collection		Type of data collected	
			Individual	Establishment	Administrative data	Self-reported
Probation	ASP	Annual		x	x	
	CAPSA	Every 5-7 years		x		
Parole	ASP	Annual		x	x	
Jail	ASJ	Annual		x	x	
	SJIC	Annual		x	x	
	DCRP	Annual	x	x	x	
	Census of Jails	Every 5-7 years		x		
	SILJ	Every 5-7 years	x			x
Prison	NPS1	Annual		x	x	
	NPS8	Annual	x	x	x	
	NCRP	Annual	x		x	
	DCRP	Annual	x	x	x	
	CASFCF	Every 5-7 years		x	x	
	SPI	Every 5-7 years	x			x

Contact Information

Bureau of Justice Statistics

810 7th Street, N.W.

Washington, DC 20531

(202-616-5164)

Daniela.Golinelli@usdoj.gov