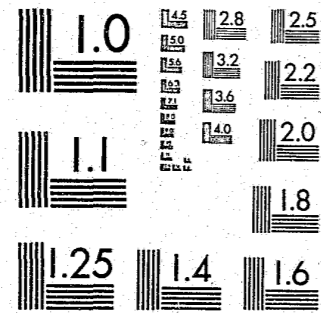


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OFFICE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE



CRIMINAL JUSTICE IN MICHIGAN

- I. Criminal Justice on Trial
- II. The Anatomy of Felony  
Case Processing

State of Michigan  
Office of Criminal Justice  
Data and Information Center

September 1979

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IN MICHIGAN

"There are many objects of great value to man which cannot be attained by unconnected individuals, but must be attained if at all, by association."

Daniel Webster

Acknowledgments

We wish to thank colleagues in the Prosecutor's Office and The Circuit Court of County I and the Circuit Court and County Clerk of County II for their generous help.

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PREFACE

Within the past year there has been a coalescing of interest around a central research and evaluation issue: the need for a methodology to describe criminal justice agencies both as independent entities and as components of an interacting criminal justice process. This report, Criminal Justice in Michigan, fits into the national trend.

In this report criminal justice agencies are evaluated from several perspectives. Part I, aimed at decision makers in state government and county government, attempts to relate three characteristics of operating agencies, their manpower resources, expenditures and workloads. Analyses in Part I also offer an opportunity to determine the adequacy and quality of information currently collected on a routine basis. An important objective of Part I was to suggest the kinds of questions that can be answered by existing data and to identify specific needs for improvement.

Part II speaks more directly to the interests of operating agency personnel such as prosecutors, law enforcement officers, court employees and correctional officials. Case tracking statistics are analysed to illustrate the interacting influences of many case characteristics on agency workloads. For example, the mix of crime categories flowing into the court, types of disposition, and sentencing decisions all influence to varying degrees the workloads borne by prosecutors, court personnel and correctional units.

Criminal Justice in Michigan responds to a national concern about performance standards and measures of performance of criminal justice agencies. Placement of this issue as a priority for future research emphasis by the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice and a recent publication by INSLAW analysing PROMIS data from five jurisdictions illustrate the emergence of this research focus. The Michigan Office of Criminal Justice is pleased to help lead the way in this effort.

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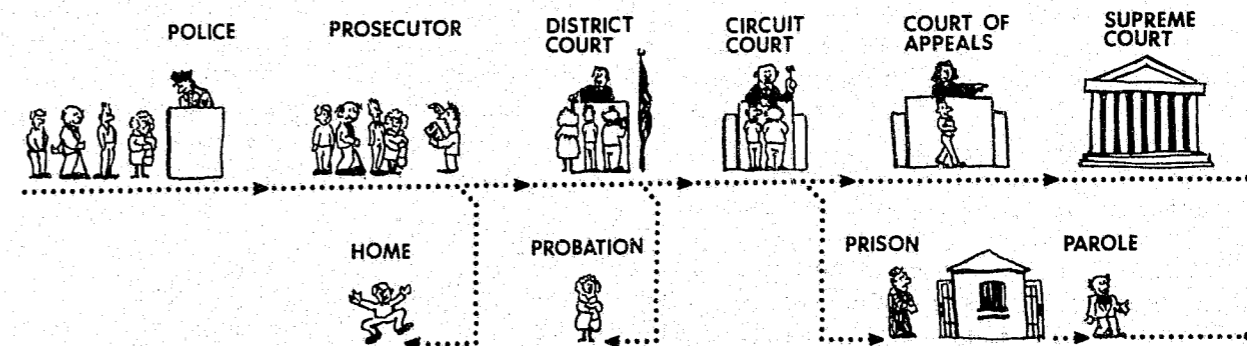
## PART I: CRIMINAL JUSTICE ON TRIAL

### Adult Criminal Justice - A System?

A truism voiced in criminal justice literature is that criminal justice agencies do not form a system because the necessary conditions of interaction and cohesion among police, prosecutors, courts, and corrections are missing. This issue will be examined more precisely in this report as the specific strengths and weaknesses of criminal justice components are documented.

#### First, The Good News

There are at least two threads that tie criminal justice agencies together. One is the movement of the offender/defendant from arrest through the courts and possibly to detention. Along the way the defendant comes in contact with some or all of the components of the system. Traditional steps in the adult criminal justice system are pictured below. (The juvenile justice system, with its own complex structure, is beyond the scope of this report).



Because decisions made at one step affect agencies further along in the sequence, these decisions impose connections between agencies that might not otherwise exist. To some degree agency caseloads and needs for resources are influenced by a common element, the flow of defendants.

A second, more fragile, thread is the acceptance of a common purpose. When asked to rank overall goals for the criminal justice system, criminal justice professionals in Michigan ranked timely and uniform justice, prevention of crime, and protection of life and property as their three top choices, in that order.



Drawing by Chas. Addams; ©1979  
The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.

Within agencies there are programs that work toward these goals. Crime prevention units, speedy trial standards, victim-witness programs and career criminal prosecution all evidence a willingness to improve the system.

Programs that engage the efforts of several agencies are more rare and they seem to focus on operational efficiency. City, county and state police departments often join together for centralized dispatch of officers in response to calls for service, for example.

Now, The Bad News...

One important barrier to system action is the isolation of one agency from another when decisions are made. Even when it is obvious that decisions will affect other agencies, the complex organizational structures and press of business preclude such considerations. For example, a program to speed up felony case processing in a circuit court may result in a burden that overtaxes correctional facilities or in a sudden increase in cases filed in the Court of Appeals. Whereas independent decisions force reactions upon agencies, coordinated decisions would support more efficient and anticipatory adjustment to change.

Why are decisions so often made in isolation? Part of the answer lies in the structure of the system as it has evolved through the years. Figure I describes the overall administrative and budgetary sources for principal agencies of the criminal justice system.

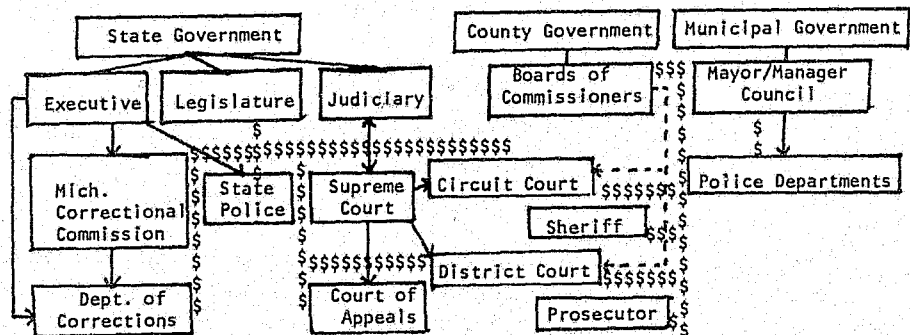


Figure 1. Lines of administrative and budgetary control between government and criminal justice agencies.

Information in Figure I has been decoded and listed in Table I to make the relationships more clear.

The first three columns of the table list major agencies and the governmental units responsible for their funding and supervision. Potential sources of controversy between branches and levels of government are suggested in the last column.

AGENCIES	SUPERVISION/ ADMINISTRATION	FUNDING	SOURCES OF PROBLEMS
State Police Department of Corrections	State Executive	State Legislature	Two Branches of State Government
Supreme Court Court of Appeals	Supreme Court	State Legislature	Two Branches of State Government
Circuit Court District Court	Supreme Court Local Judges	State Legislature County Boards	Two Branches of State Government State vs. County Government Two sets of elected local officials
Sheriff's Department Prosecutor's Office	Sheriff Prosecution	County Boards	Two sets of elected officials
Police Departments	Mayor/Manager and Council	Mayor/Manager and Council	Mayor vs. Council Employees vs. City Government

Table 1. Governmental units responsible for administrative and financial control of criminal justice agencies.

What are the consequences of a structure so cluttered with intermingled lines of control? Examples of conflicts and competition are reported daily by the press. Some recent headlines in Figure 2 illustrate the variety of problems that can arise.

**ATTACHMENT A**  
**Compromise could release sheriff funds**  
Dkt. No. 1/9/78

LANSING — (AP) — The Milliken administration and legislative Democrats are near a compromise on giving millions of dollars in state funds to county sheriff departments, both sides said yesterday. the compromise would:

- Increase the county boards' involvement in how the money could be spent and require their approval before sheriffs could patrol county or state roads at the request of a village or city.
- Spell out how funds could be used: For hiring deputies, buying equipment, conducting vehicle inspection programs, patrolling parks and providing traffic safety information and education programs.
- Protect State Police money, and alter the formula used to allocate the funds among the counties.

- If we look at one of the incidents in more detail, the complexities are even more apparent. The story to the left makes the following points:
- (1) The Governor and the state Legislature disagreed on funding procedures for expansion of county law enforcement.
  - (2) The relative authority of county boards and sheriffs was at issue in the compromise legislation. County boards received supervising control over use of funds by sheriffs.
  - (3) State funding and administrative rules were introduced into a county level agency, adding complexity to the structure at this point.
  - (4) Michigan State Police expressed concern that funding of sheriffs would be with funds shifted from the State Police budget.

# State should fund all courts

Another part of Justice Coleman's report which deserves priority consideration was a plea for even-tempered state takeovers of all court financing in Michigan.

First phase of that plan is a proposal by Gov. Milliken to overhaul the troubled Wayne County judicial system by eliminating the Recorder's and Common Pleas courts and assigning their responsibilities to a new district court and a larger circuit court. The state would pick up a major share of the cost for the change.

Most of the supreme court justices have been advocating complete state financing of all courts for years, a goal we support. The present system of shared financing of lower courts has caused increasing budget conflicts between local judges and local government units, including some confrontations

where the supreme court upheld the right of local judges to overrule local court budget decisions. Justice Coleman emphasized that ever-increasing judicial dockets place an enormous financial burden on local governments, and especially county governments. Michigan has a simple court system under the supreme court and it should be so-financed.

Budget problems will be easier, but the sooner we begin the process the better.

# Counties don't agree on circuit court staff

The Clinton and Gratiot County commissioners have agreed to pay the supplemental staff for the two courts.

# Police, fire pensions cramp cities

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Police plans for many cities and towns will spell bankruptcy for some unless the pattern ends, Police Magazine reports.

The magazine's May issue said the causes of the problem vary and a number of solutions are available.

# Assembly to Debate Jail Standards

Federal, State, Local Guidelines in Conflict

# Officials see need for 8 new prisons

By PEGGY ANN BLISS  
Associated Press Writer

As many as eight new prisons will be needed in the next few years because of present overcrowding and a new constitutional ban on "good time" early parole, corrections officials say.

# Judges v. clerk tiff could become costly

A bureaucratic tiff over the control of a handful of Ingham County employees threatens to cost taxpayers a bundle.

Ingham County's county clerk are at odds with judges and its 18 clerk's employee.

# 'Chew, chat' session helps police

by DAN PODERMAN  
Staff Writer

It is a gossipy delight, these men siting around the table, munching doughnuts, sipping coffee and chattering about who is doing what to whom.

But it's a much more serious business than the informal chatter would indicate.

THE MEN are all cops — for the most part, deputies — and each week they get together at what has come to be known as the "chew and chat" session.

Established by Wayne County law enforcement officials when they were weekly meeting every other week, the session is now a regular feature of the State Police's law enforcement working group.

It's a "chew and chat" session, and it's probably the most active and productive of any.

# Troopers, deputies exchange barbs

State Journal 2-8-79

# Our Opinion: Jails: a regional test

What may be a classic example of why cooperative regional government programs are needed and why they seldom get started was suggested in Oceana County.

# Bargaining faces fight

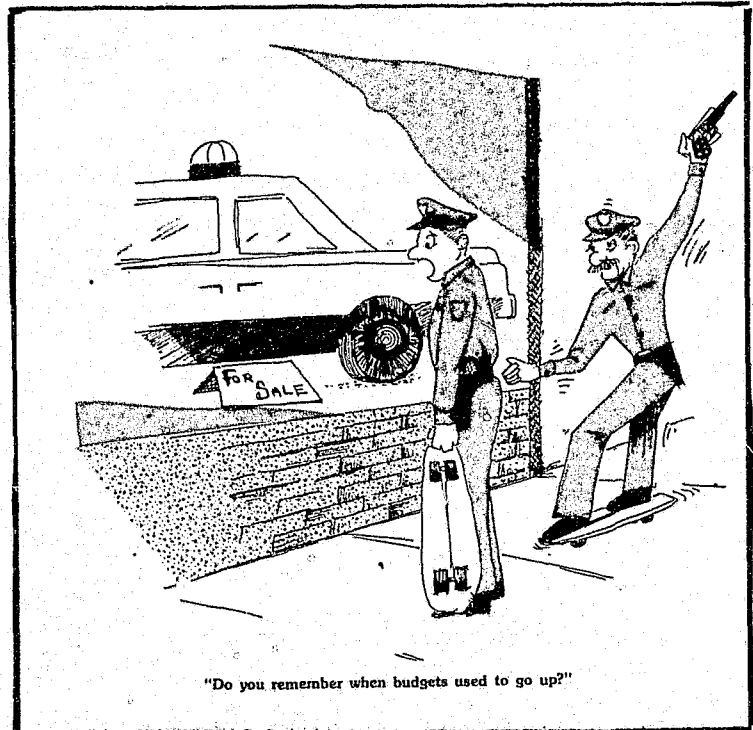
By the Associated Press

A tussle between Gov. William Milliken and the Democratic Legislature looms as the Senate begins debate on a bill to implement collective bargaining rights for state police troopers.

# Appeals judges delay prosecutor layoffs

A three-judge panel of the Michigan Court of Appeals temporarily delayed the layoffs of 18 attorneys in the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office Thursday.

Although the sheriffs' funding story involves several branches and levels of government and several sets of elected officials, even within a governmental unit there is opportunity for conflict when public employees press for benefits from limited local resources which officials must stretch over all departments.



If the principal actors in the criminal justice process are jostling each other for spheres of influence and competing for limited resources, then we shouldn't be surprised if loyalties are narrowly given to the agency itself with scant attention allotted to the larger system.

### Overall Objective

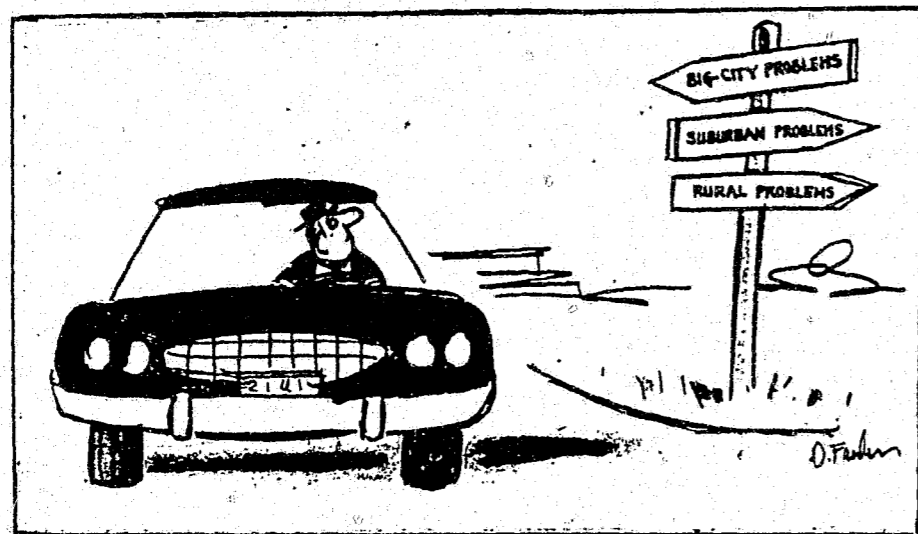
The Office of Criminal Justice perceives itself, and is charged in Public Act 541, to be a force working toward coordination and cooperation among criminal justice agencies. To move effectively toward this goal, it is necessary first to understand how the system works at the present time. The network of interdependence among criminal justice agencies must be recognized so that potential lines of cooperation can be strengthened, and areas of conflict can be dealt with.

Figure 2. News stories illustrating cooperation and conflict among agencies.

The task of system documentation is further complicated because each criminal justice agency expends money and resources on multiple activities. Criminal justice is but part of a larger justice system. For example, the police not only play a role in criminal investigation, they also are occupied with general patrol and traffic control. Courts may spend only 10% to 25% of their time on criminal cases with the remainder allotted to traffic, civil or domestic matters.

Even within the domain of criminal cases there is a division of effort in treating misdemeanors and the more serious felonies. Misdemeanors are relatively more demanding of district courts and county correctional facilities; felonies require more from the circuit courts and state correctional facilities.

Idiosyncracies of the criminal justice process peculiar to individual localities also complicate the task of analysis. On the positive side, these unique differences show the local agencies as dynamic, changing, and variable components of a system capable of adapting to particular personalities, political influences and local conditions. Although we need to understand the large number of subsystems that make up the total justice system to say we "understand" the criminal justice system in Michigan, a close look at several subsystems will start us on the way.



Drawing by D. Fradon; ©1979  
The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.

The specific objective of this analysis is to document the processing of criminal cases in Michigan. This report will focus on felony cases for two reasons: there is relatively good record keeping by criminal justice agencies and felony case processing has more implications for county and state level planning. This does not mean that we will ignore the interests of local operational units, only that more emphasis will fall on county and statewide relationships.

What does it mean to document the adult felony processing system? Our approach has been to construct a descriptive framework for felony case processing that will allow judgments to be made about intra- and inter-agency resources, workloads and responsibilities.

The descriptive framework concentrates on characteristics of felony processing for which data were available: (1) manpower and financial resources, and (2) activity levels for criminal justice agencies as represented by crime and arrest rates, numbers of cases filed and disposed, and number of persons sentenced. To assure that enough time had elapsed for activity data to reflect cases through the disposition and sentencing phases, the analysis used case records and resource information for 1976.

The scope of the analysis is geographically restricted, also. Early in the project efforts to locate case data from automated sources led to disappointing results. Although several state and local systems are now under development, none were able to provide the level of detail we required when this project began. Time restrictions for manual data collection led us to base the felony analysis on case data for two Michigan counties.

Within these constraints, our immediate objective is to demonstrate the interdependence of criminal justice agencies and the need for a management process that recognizes these relationships. The present analysis of adult felony processing serves as a demonstration, suggesting how agencies can be examined as a system.

#### Analysis of Criminal Justice Resources

Basic data describing criminal justice resources came from comprehensive plans for criminal justice submitted by regional and local planning units in Michigan supplemented by expenditure and employment data from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) for the year 1976. The resource analysis is limited to locally supported manpower and expenditures. Local refers to municipal or county sources of support; state funding and manpower are not included.

The first question asked about resources was, 'How are criminal justice resources distributed across the principal agencies? What portion of local manpower is allocated to police, to prosecution and so forth?' Both manpower and expenditures were analyzed in this fashion. Table 2 summarizes the results for the state as a whole, and for the two counties that were sampled for this study.



Type Agency	Statewide		County I		County II	
	% Total CJ Expenditure	% Total CJ Manpower	% Total CJ Expenditure	% Total CJ Manpower	% Total CJ Expenditure	% Total CJ Manpower
Police	65	63	67	64	59	57
Prosecution	6	5	7	6	4	5
District Court Circuit Court	16	19	7	8	12	14
			9	10	7	7
Corrections	13	13	10	12	18	16
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total in Dollars or Persons	\$559,191,000	29,338	\$13,601,910	890	\$7,928,181	543

Table 2. The distribution of local resources to criminal justice agencies for the state and two counties in 1976.

In the bottom row of the table actual dollar amounts and numbers of employees are given; the body of the table shows how these totals were subdivided among police, prosecution, courts and corrections. Notice that for both the state and the counties there was very close agreement between adjacent manpower and expenditure percentages.

Both counties reflected distributions of resources that were in reasonable agreement with the state breakdown, although County II was slightly underweighted in the police category and overweighted toward corrections. County I conformed more closely to the state average.

When agencies are compared against each other, we see that police expended well over half of total resources. Corrections is the next largest agency, followed closely by district courts and circuit courts. Prosecution had the smallest percentage values.

Another relationship that can be derived from the table is the average dollar amount of support for each person employed. If we divide total expenditures by total manpower, the data show a per person support level of \$19,000 for the state, \$15,300 for County I and \$14,600 for County II. Lacking data for all Michigan counties, it is difficult to interpret these dollar averages in any detail, beyond the fact that both counties fell below the statewide figure. Knowledge of state demographics, however, suggests one hypothesis, namely that the large urban counties in the southeastern corner of the state have high expenditure levels relative to manpower. Since these counties also account for a substantial percentage of statewide resources, their high support levels would raise the average considerably; with the result that most other counties would show up as below average.

A second question raised about the data was, 'What percentage of statewide resources were contributed by County I and County II for each type of agency?' The same basic manpower and expenditure data displayed previously in Table 2 were reorganized to answer this question. These new data entries shown in Table 3 were obtained by dividing each county's manpower or expenditure amount by the corresponding statewide value. For example: County I Police Expenditure/Statewide Police Expenditure = .025 or 2.5% for the percentage of statewide expenditures present in County I.

Type Agency	COUNTY I		COUNTY II	
	% of Statewide Expenditure	% of Statewide Manpower	% of Statewide Expenditure	% of Statewide Manpower
Police	2.5	3.1	1.3	1.7
Prosecution	3.0	3.9	1.1	1.9
District and Circuit Court	2.3	2.9	1.6	2.2
Corrections	1.9	2.8	2.4	2.2
TOTAL	2.4	3.0	1.4	1.9

Table 3. Allocations of manpower and expenditures within counties as a percentage of statewide local resources for each agency.

Several general features of the data deserve mention. In almost every instance the expenditures were lower than corresponding manpower percentages. This disparity contrasts with the relation between the same variables within a county, where they showed a high degree of consistency (see Table 2). However, the low expenditure values are consistent with, and a result of, the average financial support levels backing up criminal justice personnel in the two counties. These levels were found to be lower than the statewide average.

We stated earlier that criminal justice agencies have multiple roles that may include civil, domestic, traffic and other matters. All of these activities are reflected in the resource data presented in the previous section. What would the resource allocations look like if only those devoted to felony processing were considered?

Primary indicators of felony workload for police are the number of felony offenses reported and number of arrests for such offenses. For prosecution, relevant activities are screenings of felony complaints, approving warrants and prosecuting felony cases (including diversion programs and career criminal prosecution in some counties). District courts conduct felony arraignments and hold preliminary examinations, unless waived, prior to bind over to circuit court; circuit courts have the responsibility for adjudicating adult felony cases, including pretrial and trial activity. County corrections is involved when pretrial detention is authorized and in pre- and post-sentencing duties. Based on reported numbers of these activities, manpower and expenditure data were reallocated for each agency with the results shown in Table 4.

Criminal Justice Agency	COUNTY I		COUNTY II	
	% of Total Felony Expenditure	% of Total Felony Manpower	% of Total Felony Expenditure	% of Total Felony Manpower
Police	38	35	37	37
Prosecutor	22	19	12	14
District Court	1	1	2	2
Circuit Court	13	15	13	15
Corrections	26	30	36	32
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 4. Estimates of criminal justice resources allocated to processing felony cases.

When caseloads were restricted to felonies, the biggest shift in relative allocation of resources came in the police segment which was reduced some 20% to a level more in line with other agencies. Police however, still expended the largest single amount.

In each county police and corrections combined accounted for over 60% of total expenditures and manpower. Also in each county, the circuit court had a much more substantial role than district court, as would be expected in felony cases.

Summing up the resource picture, manpower and expenditures were viewed from two perspectives. First, there was the allocation of local resources to criminal justice agencies. Listed in decreasing order of amount received, the agencies lined up as follows: police, corrections, district court, circuit court (reversed order of courts in County I), and prosecution. From the second perspective each county's support for an agency was taken as a percentage of total statewide support. The two sample counties each accounted for a higher percentage of statewide manpower than statewide expenditures.

When resources were reconfigured to reflect only the activity associated with felony case processing, the counties were similar in their patterns of allocations to agencies. Compared to the total criminal justice distribution, when only felonies were considered, police and district court percentages were reduced and prosecution, circuit courts, and corrections had increased roles.

#### Criminal Justice Demographics and Activities

The second category of information available for describing the system consists of activity data based on caseloads for individual agencies. The overall purpose of the activity comparisons is to contrast the two counties, pointing out unique features of each, and to demonstrate the influence of one agency on another by following shifts in caseloads as cases progress from one stage of the felony process to the next.

Data in this section came from two sources. First, annual reports provided caseload information on many pertinent indicators of felony workloads by agency. Second, some of the caseload data were collected directly from case records as part of a research effort that studied felony cases in detail for two counties.

Information from annual reports of criminal justice agencies is shown in Table 5. The first two columns identify source documents and data elements selected for comparison. In the next two columns each county is characterized according to its percentage of the state total for each data element. To illustrate, looking down the third column, County I has 3% of the state's population; it reported 3.1% of all criminal offenses, and 3.7% of all new cases were filed there.

Source	Variable	County I % State Total	County II % State Total
Census Estimation 1976 Michigan DMB	Population	3.0	1.9
Uniform Crime Report	Total Offenses	3.1	2.6
	Total Arrests	2.6	3.0
	Adult Arrests	2.9	3.0
Supreme Court Administrators Office Annual Report 1976-1977 Circuit Court Section	Total New Cases Filed	3.5	2.2
	New Criminal Cases	3.7	2.3
	Criminal Trials	2.8	3.4
	By Jury	3.0	4.2
	By Judge	2.1	0.4
Circuit Court Section	Total Cases Disposed	3.4	2.3
	Criminal Disposed	3.7	2.4
Corrections Annual Report 1976	Number Sentenced		
	Prison	2.3	1.5
	Jail	8.2	0.5
	Probation	3.2	1.9

Table 5. Activity statistics for criminal justice agencies taken from published annual reports.

Scanning down the columns of percentages for each county, one can easily pick out unusually deviant values. For example, County II had relatively high rates of total arrests and criminal trials by jury; County I ranked high in number of jail sentences.

Percentage values for County I ranged between 2.1% and 3.7% with an average of approximately 3.0%; for County II most values lie between 1.5% and 3.4% with an average somewhat over 2.0%. These averages are in close agreement with the manpower allocations listed in Table 3. As a rule the activity data reflect manpower levels more closely than expenditure levels.

Another value of the data in Table 4 is its ability to reveal how interdependent the agencies are. To demonstrate the interdependence we turn to some of the activities that interface the police with prosecution, prosecution with the courts and courts with corrections.

The raw data that generated percentages for Table 5 were reorganized to form ratios of arrests to crimes, new cases filed to arrests, sentences to dispositions and so forth. Whenever possible the same ratios were computed from research data as well.

Before looking at the data in this stepwise fashion we will briefly describe the way in which the research data were obtained. In County I data came from individual case records filed in the prosecutor's office. From all cases that were filed in 1976, a random sample of 20% was selected for coding. More than 30 events and dates related to each case were recorded. The result was a sample of 214 cases in County I. In County II the same selection and coding procedure yielded 108 cases. Data were obtained through the circuit court administrator's office with the aid of the county clerk.

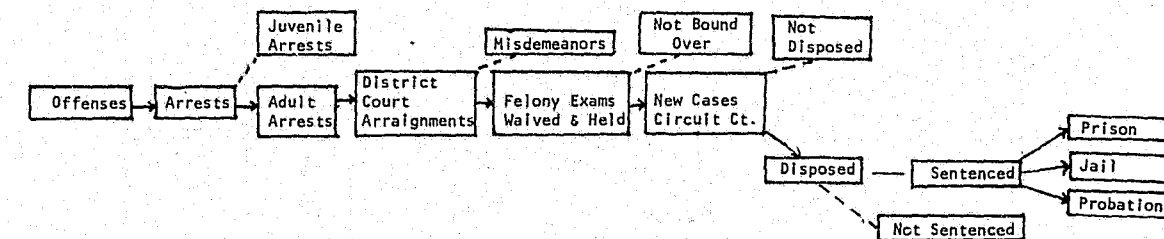


Figure 3. Flow chart of major steps in the adult felony process.

Turning first to data from annual reports of the Michigan State Police (Uniform Crime Statistics), the Supreme Court Administrative Office and the Department of Corrections, the ratios of various events were calculated. In choosing measures to include in the analysis we followed a flow chart of steps in the felony process outlined in Figure 3, giving special attention to measures that illuminate changes in caseload that occur when control shifts from one agency to another. Thus, we have special interest in the number of district court arraignments compared to arrests, number of new circuit court cases relative to number of felony preliminary exams (waived and held) in district court, and

number of defendants sentenced as a ratio to the total cases disposed. The ratios, expressed as percentages, are displayed in Table 6. Inter-agency measures are set off in double boxed sections.

Agency Data	Measure	State	County I	County II
Police	Offenses/Population	123	130	171
	Arrests/Offenses	33%	28%	38%
	Adult Arrests/Arrests	83%	93%	84%
Police and Dist. Court	New District Ct. Cases / Adult Arrests	77%	74%	97%
Dist. Ct.	Exam Waived and Held / New Dist. Ct. Cases	9%	13%	8%
Dist. Ct. & Cir. Ct.	New Cir. Ct. Cases / Exam Held and Waived	113%	113%	82%
Cir. Ct.	Cases Disposed / New Cir. Ct. Cases	100%	100%	104%
	Trials/Dispositions	9%	7%	13%
	Jury Trials/Trials	78%	84%	98%
Cir. Ct. and Corrections	# Sentenced/Disposed	72%	60%	50%
Corrections	Prison/#Sentenced	39%	28%	34%
	Jail/#Sentenced	6%	17%	2%
	Probation/#Sentenced	55%	55%	64%

Table 6. Ratios of events in the processing of criminal cases.

When we look at the data in Table 6 some interesting contrasts emerge. In the topmost box, for police reported activity, we see that County II had a high crime rate and a high arrest rate compared to County I. However, of all arrests made, County I reported a high proportion of adult arrests. At this point one might conclude that County II imposed a relatively heavier burden on its police for handling criminal complaints, but the higher proportion of adult arrests in County I would make one predict that the burden on later stages of the adult criminal justice system might not be too different for the two counties.

The next comparison cuts across data reported by two different agencies, police and district court. According to the data, 74% of arrests were followed by district court arraignment in County I and 97% in County II. The difference between the two is large and raises the question of what happened to the 26% of arrests in County I that did not appear in district court. One possibility is error in reporting, either too many arrests or too few arraignments; another is differences in definition of "new criminal cases" when applied to district court records, or perhaps different practices by police in number of persons released or number arrested from a jurisdiction outside the county.

The next step in the process shows the percentage of all new district court criminal cases for which a preliminary exam was held or waived, a measure of the number of felony arraignments. County I had a much higher rate than County II, forecasting a heavy caseload for the circuit court, if most cases were bound over.

Moving down to the next box in the table, the number of new circuit court criminal cases is given as a ratio to felony arraignments in district court. If all district court cases were bound over, the percentage would be 100%; the actual figures of 113% for the state and County I are a clear signal that something has gone awry in the reporting system. The figure for County II is reasonable, but we have no criterion to determine its accuracy.

Disposition data reported by the circuit court show that, statewide and in County I, the number of felony cases disposed equaled the number of new cases being filed. County II reported more cases disposed than commenced, and thus was able to decrease its backlog. County II also reported a high rate of trials, almost all of which were held before a jury.

The number of persons sentenced relative to the number of cases disposed, or the conviction rate, again represents data from two different agencies. Compared to the statewide average, both of the sample counties were shown to be low on this measure.

The final box contains corrections data describing the type of sentences imposed. County I was characterized by a high percentage of jail sentences; County II had a large proportion of probation sentences.

Assuming for the moment that all of the data in Table 5 are accurate, we can see that each county is unique in some ways compared to each other and to the state average. This means that in order to predict caseloads and needs for resources within counties one must examine each county as a unit. High arrest rates mean more work for the prosecutor and district court; more frequent felony arrests lead to heavier caseloads for the circuit court; the conviction rate and the court's tendency to impose different types of sentences determine the impact on prison, jail and probation services.

How accurate are the data published annually by criminal justice agencies? Because of the large numbers of individuals who participate in data collection, coding and analysis there are many opportunities for error. Lackadaisical reactions of many agencies to requests for information, while understandable in this age of questionnaires and information processing, contribute to doubts about the priority assigned to record-keeping activities. During our research study of felony case processing we were able to collect information directly from case records that will, in part, speak to the accuracy of data shown in the previous table.

Data from annual reports and research data are listed next to each other in Table 7 for the five measures where comparisons are available. All of the measures that depended upon data from

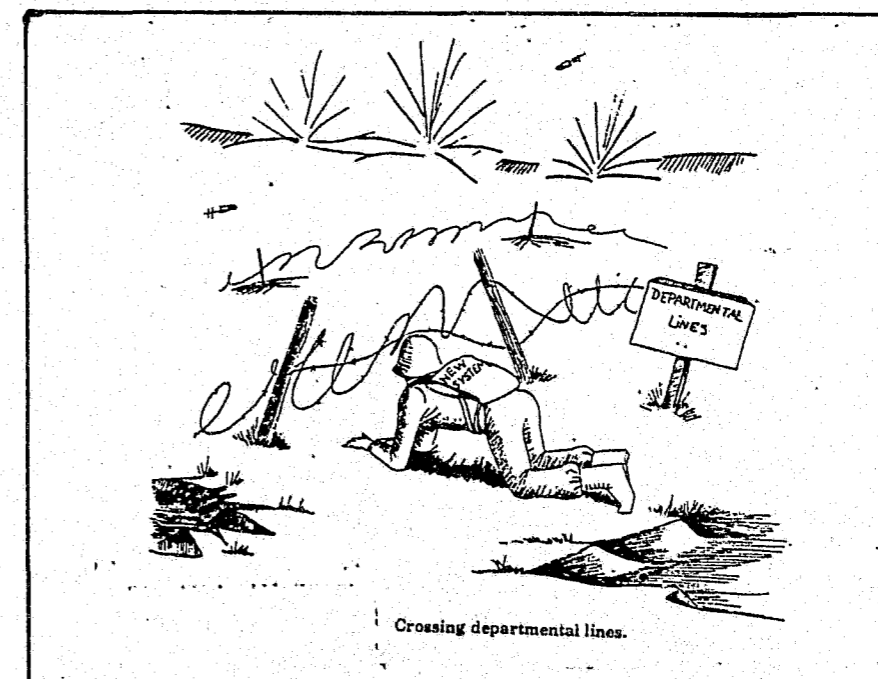
Measure	COUNTY I		COUNTY II	
	Research Data	Ann. Report Data	Research Data	Ann. Report Data
Trials/Dispositions	8%	7%	13%	13%
# Sent./Dispositions	91%	60%	64%	50%
# Prison/Sentenced	29%	28%	29%	34%
# Jail/Sentenced	14%	17%	3%	2%
# Probation/Sentenced	56%	56%	63%	64%

Table 7. Comparison of annual report activity data and manually collected data from case records.

within the same agency are in remarkably good agreement with the research findings. It is the one category where data came from two different agencies, courts and corrections, that the breakdown occurs, and it happens in both counties. The number sentenced relative to all dispositions is very wide of the mark if one relies on data reported in annual summaries of activity.

Another problem confronting the data analyst, planner or policy maker is the incompleteness of published data. Crimes are not categorized according to felony and misdemeanor in keeping with circuit and district court adjudication, but rather according to the FBI division between Part I and Part II crimes. Arrest data have the same difficulty. Then at the prosecution-warrant stage there are no aggregate data published at all.

There are a number of explanations that could account for the difficulty in following cases across agency boundaries. One possibility is that definitions of events are not consistent or uniformly applied across the system. One agency might count a reopened case as "new" and another might not, or two different law enforcement agencies might report the same arrest. Lags in reporting may mean that only part of an annual caseload is included by one agency while the next agency in line reports all cases in timely fashion.



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In the ideal case we would like to have confirmatory data reporting by two or more agencies whenever possible. This could apply when police report warrants requested and warrants issued, prosecutors also report warrants requested along with warrants approved, and district courts supply the number of warrants issued by them. Similar reasoning applies to number of persons sentenced which could be reported by both courts and corrections. Coordination and cooperation among agencies is required if improvements are to be realized.

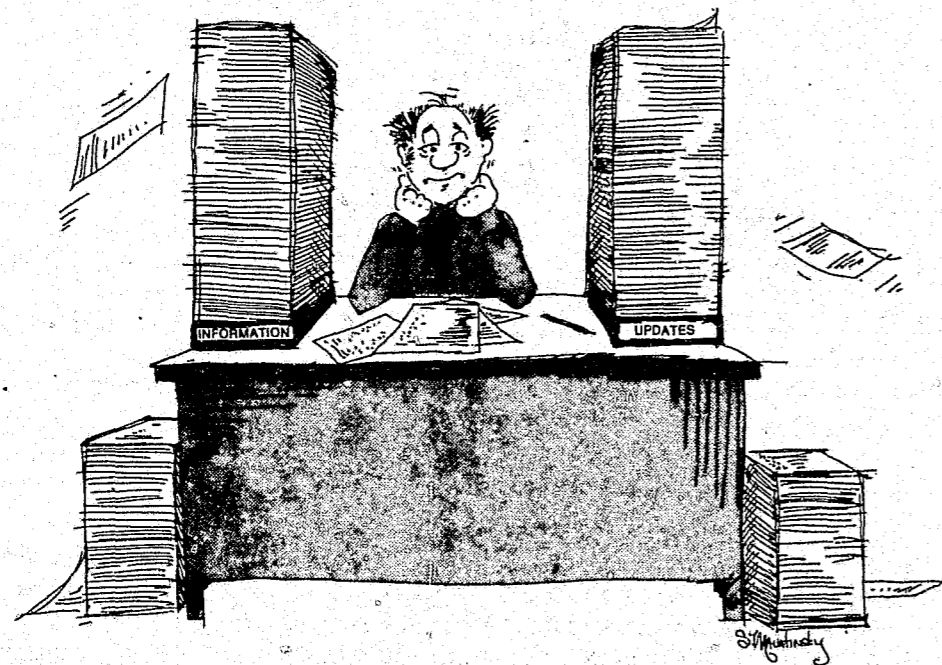
#### Summary of Criminal Justice Demographics and Activities

An analysis of adult felony case processing in two Michigan counties served as a vehicle for looking at criminal justice agencies as an interdependent system. Each county was discovered to have unique characteristics that affected the division of effort of agencies within the county. For example, arrest rates, proportion of district court cases that were bound over to

circuit court, and number of defendants sentenced to jail were all variables that distinguished between the two counties under study.

Activity data from annual reports published by criminal justice agencies generally showed good internal consistency. Problems arose when a relationship required data to be drawn from two different agencies. Large discrepancies were found, for instance, when the numbers of offenders sentenced were computed as a percentage of all cases disposed. Manually collected research data yielded much higher sentencing rates for each of the counties than the data from court and correctional records indicated.

Given only data from regularly published reports in Michigan, it was impossible to track the flow of defendants from the point of arrest through disposition in any detail. Missing links prevented the division of offenses and arrests into misdemeanors and felonies, the comparison of arrests to warrants requested and warrants issued, and similar inter-agency shifts in caseload.



**END**