

Jurisdictional Review of Custody Trends by Offender Characteristics in Canada, the UK, Australia, and New Zealand

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Background

- A Juristat profile on the status of sentenced and remand custodial populations in Canada between 1986 and 2001 indicated that, while admissions to remand were steadily increasing and represented a larger proportion of those in custody during this time period (Johnson, 2003)
- Reitano (2017) indicated that the remand population exceeded the sentenced population for the decade following Johnson's (2003) report. A 35% increase in the remand population across Canada was noted between 2005/2006 and 2015/2016 with the largest increases reported in New Brunswick (+112%), Newfoundland and Labrador (+106%), and Nunavut (104%).
- This increase in the remand population has been cited as an issue for provincial and territorial custody centres as remand populations tend to require higher levels of security and more intensive intervention to manage creating a strain on institutional resources (Johnson, 2003).

Study Objectives

- Research Questions:**
 - Between 2000-2019, what custody trends have emerged in Canada (by province), Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, specifically in relation to total remand and sentenced custody populations?
 - Between 2000-2019, what custody trends related to offender age, gender, and ethnicity emerged in those same jurisdictions?

Methodology

- Data Sources:**
 - Given the broad scope of the project, an initial focus was placed on compiling publicly available aggregated data from each of the selected jurisdictions in order to begin to describe remand and sentencing trends in age, gender, and ethnicity
 - It became apparent that the information available varied significantly depending on the jurisdiction
 - Canadian remand and sentenced data is reported by Statistics Canada in terms of admissions to custody, provincial counts are done by average daily count
 - Admissions to correctional services data is also reported by the UK and is included in this poster
 - Aggregate data concerning average daily counts of persons in custody was obtained from organizations in Australia and New Zealand, each providing average daily count information as of the fiscal year end (June 30th of each year.)
 - Data was broken down by sentenced and remand populations was obtained, but for each of the jurisdictions (save for New Zealand)
 - A full 20 years of data was not available for some jurisdictions, and therefore analysis was conducted based on what was made available for this report

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Results

Table 1. All Provinces Remand/Sentenced Admissions

Remand/Sentenced	2000/2001	2018/2019	% Change
Age			
18 to 19 years	10,576/4,355	5,500/1,308	-48%/-70%
20 to 24 years	22,119/12,126	21,084/9,938	-5%/-18%
25 to 29 years	17,020/10,294	26,391/14,097	+55%/+37%
30 to 34 years	17,975/11,047	25,116/13,634	+40%/+23%
35 to 39 years	17,582/10,818	20,222/11,198	+15%/+4%
40 to 44 years	11,758/7,827	12,903/7,650	+10%/-2%
45 to 49 years	6,334/4,242	9,152/5,672	+44%/+34%
50 years and over	6,092/4,289	12,827/8,807	+111%/+105%
Gender			
Male	99,380/60,216	113,082/62,973	+14%/+5%
Female	10,802/5,624	20,150/9,330	+87%/+66%
Ethnicity			
Indigenous	19,490/9,603	40,442/21,263	+108%/+121%
Non-Indigenous	89,278/55,161	92,391/50,630	+3%/-8%

Table 2. United Kingdom Remand/Sentenced Admissions

Remand/Sentenced	2001	2020	% Change
Age			
15 to 17 years	6,201/5,905	689/416	-89%/-93%
18 to 20 years	18,475/15,202	4,082/2,563	-78%/-83%
Adults	75,642/70,855	42,514/37,305	-44%/-47%
Gender			
Male	91,847/84,661	43,945/36,974	-52%/-56%
Female	8,471/7,301	3,340/3,310	-61%/-54%
Ethnicity			
	2009	2017	
Asian	2,303/3,946	2,054/3,758	-11%/-5%
Black	4,710/6,800	3,586/6,001	-24%/-12%
Mixed	1,001/1,869	937/1,1704	-6%/-9%
White	21,106/50,933	18,780/45,505	-11%/-11%
Other incl. Chinese	911/1,506	465/776	-49%/-48%

Table 3. Australia Prison Admissions

	2000 / 2001	2020/2021	% Change
Age¹			
Under 18 years	52	-	
18-19 years	957	674	-30%
20-24 years	4,650	4,772	+3%
25-29 years	4,775	7,248	+52%
30-34 years	3,729	7,507	+101%
35-39 years	2,695	6,559	+143%
40-44 years	1,879	4,991	+166%
45-49 years	1,167	3,612	+210%
50-54 years	848	2,236	+164%
55-59 years	459	1,378	+200%
60-64 years	281	849	+202%
65+ years	218	1,227	+463%
Gender			
Male	20,329	37,908	+86%
Female	1,385	3,144	+127%
Ethnicity			
	2010-2011	2019-2020	
Indigenous	7,507	12,456	+66%
Non-Indigenous	20,747	30,200	+46%

Table 4. New Zealand Remand/Sentenced Admissions

Remand/Sentenced	2000 / 2001	2020/2021	% Change
Age			
< 20 years	73/376	64/70	-12%/-81%
20-24 years	175/1,057	452/559	+158%/-47%
25-29 years	151/956	719/957	+376%/+0.1%
30-39 years	262/1,545	1,263/1,835	+382%/+19%
40-49 years	111/701	642/1,281	+478%/+83%
50+ years	29/401	268/1,275	+824%/+218%
Gender			
Male	774/4,809	3,156/5,614	+308%/+17%
Female	41/247	251/363	+512%/+47%
Ethnicity			
Māori	445/2,567	1,917/2,990	+331%/+16%
Non-Indigenous	378/2,502	1,492/2,986	+295%/+19%

Discussion

- Overall, there was an increase in admissions to adult remand custody across most of the age groups for both remand and sentenced admissions
- Over the past 20 years, trends have remained relatively stable with males vastly outnumbering females in remand custody
- The number of Indigenous individuals admitted to remand and sentenced custody has increased over the period from 2000/2001 to 2018/19
- United Kingdom**
 - The prison population grew rapidly between 1993 and 2008, at an average of 4% a year, and then began to decrease with the exception of an increase in 2011
 - The decreases in the prison population since 2008 were explained by a number of policy, legal, and population changes
 - The immediate but temporary increase in the number of prison population in 2011 was attributed to the public disorder seen in UK cities from August 6 to 9, 2011
- Australia**
 - Over the 20-year period from 2000 to 2020, there has been a substantial increase in almost all age, gender, and ethnicity groups
 - When the trend is more closely analyzed, it is observed that the number of adult prisoners in Australian prisons has steadily increased since 2011 with the number of prisoners falling for the first time in 2020
- New Zealand**
 - Over the past 20 years, the prisoner population in New Zealand seems to have increased dramatically for all groups with the exception of those under 20 years of age
 - Both genders seem to have experienced a major increase over the past 20 years
 - There were also dramatic increases in remand prisoner populations for both ethnicity groups

References

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