

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



**CENSUS OF
PRISON
INMATES
1999**

Michael Rich

Strategic Analysis Section

Policy Development

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Michael Rich

Policy Development Group

Introduction

A census of prison inmates has been carried out biennially in November since 1987. Earlier censuses of prison inmates were conducted every two years by the Department of Justice from 1987 to 1993, and the Ministry of Justice in 1995 and 1997. The Department of took over this responsibility in 1999.

The results reported represent the findings of the first census to be completed and analysed by the Department of Corrections. To preserve the integrity of the historical record and maximise the value of the information collected, every effort has been made to retain definitions used previously.

A snapshot picture of the offender population as at 18 November 1999 is provided. A time series analysis of the data compares the current results with those of the previous prison censuses back to 1991. Not all of the information collected in this census has been collected in every previous census; however, where possible comparisons are made.

Generally the census provides a useful snapshot and historical record of prison inmates, which will assist the Department in the analysis of how best to respond to offenders' needs. In all such data collation instances, caution needs to be taken when interpreting the results given the variability that may exist. However, as long as this is recognised, it represents a good resource.

The information was collected from three main sources. Where possible, the report information was extracted directly from the IOMS computer system. Otherwise the data was obtained manually, either through prison staff reviewing offenders' files, or by interviews with prison inmates and offenders on home detention.

All remand and sentenced offenders are included, and for the first time, so are those on home detention. The census collected statistics on an offender's age, offence, sentence, ethnic group, family responsibilities and income before going to prison, education, gang association, participation in rehabilitative programmes, and many other topics. The results are published as statistics so that no individual offender can be identified. This is a valuable source of information that is not otherwise available. The policy decision-making process within the Department will benefit from this 1999 census data.

The figures that come from it are used by many agencies including Corrections, Justice, Te Puni Kokiri, Pacific Island Affairs, Health, Prime Minister and Cabinet, Police, Statistics, Women's Affairs and Courts. The results are also of interest to prisoners' aid groups, and researchers.

The Census is a valuable research tool. We are looking for ways to enhance the final product, and welcome suggestions on how further improvements can be made. Your comments should be emailed to michael.rich@corrections.govt.nz.

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1 Executive Summary

1.1 Analysis of Snapshot Data

Offender Numbers

On the day of the census (18 November 1999) there were 5647 inmates, 233 of whom were female and 5414 male. There were 4965 sentenced inmates, 657 remand inmates and 25 offenders held in home detention.

Demographics

More than half of the sentenced inmates were less than 30 years old at the time of the census. Male prisoners had an older age profile than females. Māori and Pacific peoples sentenced inmates were generally younger than European male sentenced inmates. Europeans were more strongly represented in the 40 years and above age group. For male inmates under 20 years, the Māori and Pacific peoples (11%) almost doubled the representation for Europeans (6%).

Information on Māori ancestry was available for 106 females and 2106 male sentenced inmates. The most frequent iwi affiliations identified by Māori inmates were for iwi located in Northland/Auckland (33%) then Waikato/King Country (24%) and Bay of Plenty/Hauraki (23%).

Current Sentence

Compared to females, males tended to have longer sentence lengths and a correspondingly longer mean time left to serve. Violent offending was the most common cause of imprisonment (39%) for both genders.

Offenders in prison for robbery was close to 40 percent, irrespective of gender. The proportion of females in prison for homicide was greater than for males. There was a markedly greater proportion of males in prison for serious assaults and grievous assaults than of females.

The proportion of prisoners occupying accommodation of least security (minimum, low medium) was similar for both genders (males 79%; females 84%).

Offending History

Female inmates had fewer previous convictions, on average, than their male counterparts. More than twice the proportion of males than females had a first conviction at aged 16 years or less (males 13%, females 5%). A greater proportion of females than males had first convictions aged 30 or more (females 18%, males 14%).

For inmates with an offending history, the most common major previous offences were for property and violence (including sexual violence) and traffic offences. Twice the proportion of females compared to males had no previous convictions (females 41%, males 20%).

Over twice the proportion of males compared to females had received a custodial sentence as their most serious previous sentence type (males 32%, females 15%). A much larger proportion of female inmates had no previous terms in custody compared to males (females 58%, males 39%). Most inmates, particularly females, had previously served a total of less than 12 months in prison (females 90%, males 67%). Around half of those inmates had never been in prison before. A small minority of inmates had served a substantial proportion of their lives in prison.

Irrespective of gender, more than one-quarter of the inmates included in the 1999 census were first imprisoned as teenagers.

Gangs

Prison staff identified 382 or 8 percent of the male sentenced inmates as patch members of gangs. Gangs with the most patch members were the Mongrel Mob and Black Power. A further 8 percent of male sentenced inmates were identified as associated with, or ex-members, of gangs.

Violent offences were most prevalent amongst inmates with gang connections, whilst crimes of sexual violence were proportionately lower amongst inmates with gang affiliations.

Supervision & Medication

Prison staff identified 345 sentenced inmates as being under psychological supervision, and 53 percent of these inmates were in custody for a sexual offence. Of the 236 sentenced inmates receiving psychiatric supervision, 72 percent were in custody for a violent or sexual violence offence. Compared with males, twice the proportion of females were receiving some type of medication and three times the proportion of females were on psychiatric medication.

Education

Approximately three quarters of inmates had left school with no educational qualifications. After leaving school, about one-half of inmates failed to obtain a qualification. A greater proportion of males had a trade, technicians or polytechnic certificate (males 25%, females 21%). A greater proportion of females had undertaken a job skills course (females 27%, males 21%).

Programmes

Around one half of the prison population was enrolled in one or more programmes. Notable proportions of male and female inmates attended personal development (23%) or substance abuse (females 17%, males 22%) programmes.

The programmes for male inmates with the five highest enrolments were: Personal Development, Substance Abuse, Anger Management, Literacy courses and Cultural programmes. For female inmates, the top five programmes were: Leisure or Recreational Skills, Personal Development, Substance Abuse, Language and Vocational.

Incomes

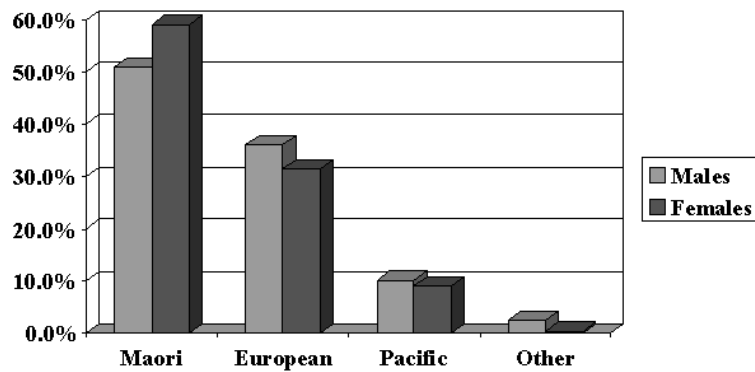
For sentenced inmates prior to entering prison, a greater proportion of females than males were receiving a benefit (males 49%, females 73%) while a greater proportion of males than females were in paid employment (males 41%, females 15%).

For males the main benefit received was the jobseeker or training benefit, while for females it was the domestic purposes benefit.

1.2 Graphical Snapshots

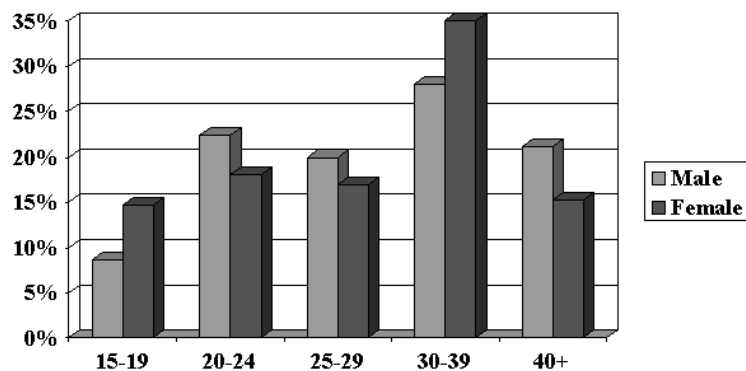
Some of the interesting statistics are graphically highlighted below.

Prison Population by Ethnicity



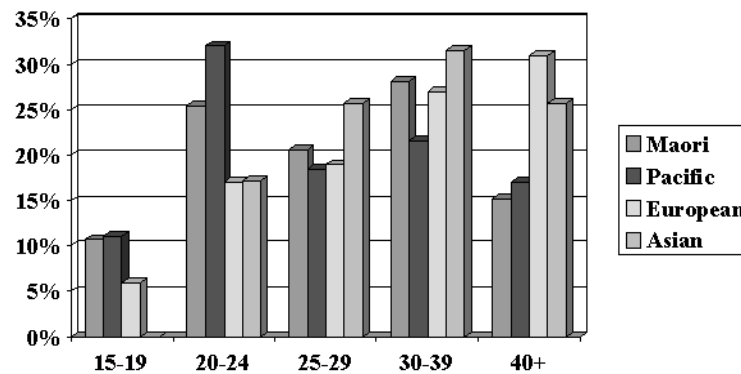
* Prison Census, Nov 1999, Table 3.2, Sentenced Inmates

Prison Population by Age



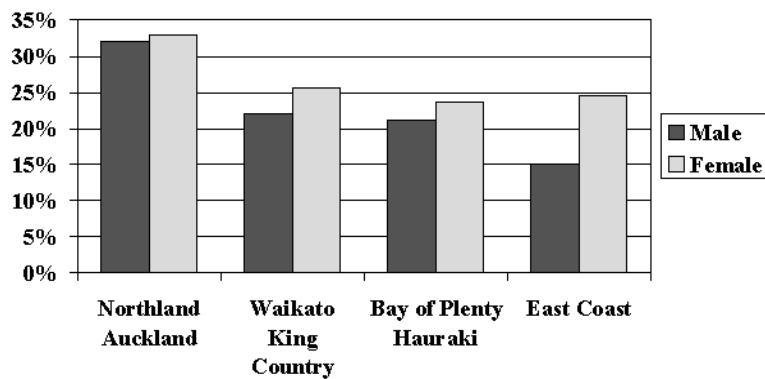
Prison Census, Nov 1999, Table 3.1, Sentenced Inmates

Male Prison Population by Age & Ethnicity



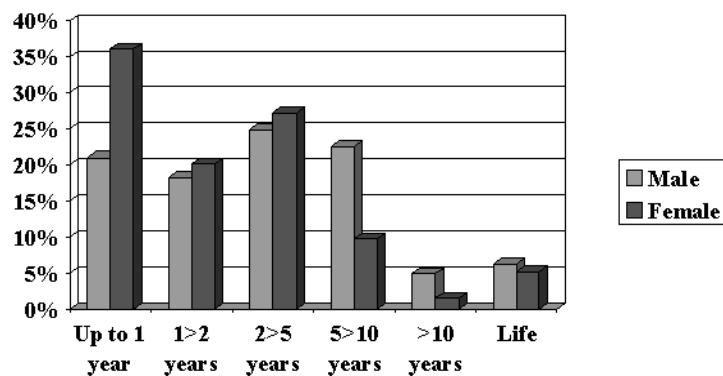
Prison Census, Nov 1999, Table 3.3, Sentenced Inmates

Most Common Iwi Named by Area for Inmates



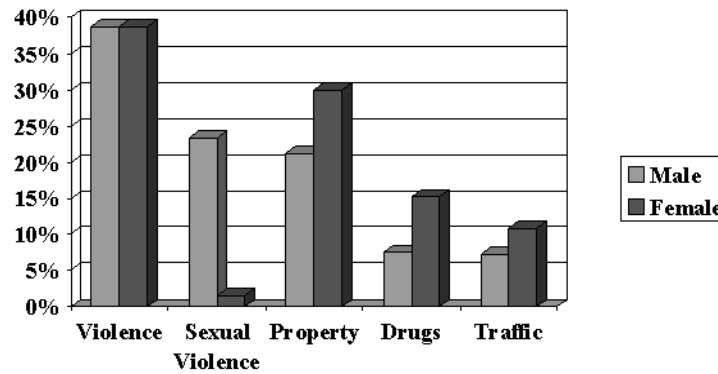
Prison Census, Nov 1999, Table 3.5, Sentenced Inmates

Sentence Length for Inmates



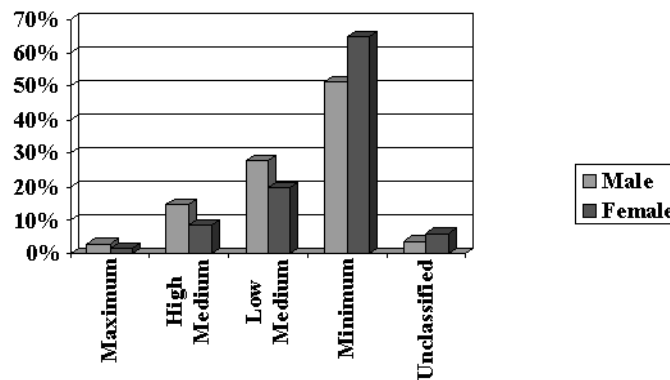
Prison Census, Nov 1999, Table 4.1, Sentenced Inmates

Major Offence of Inmates



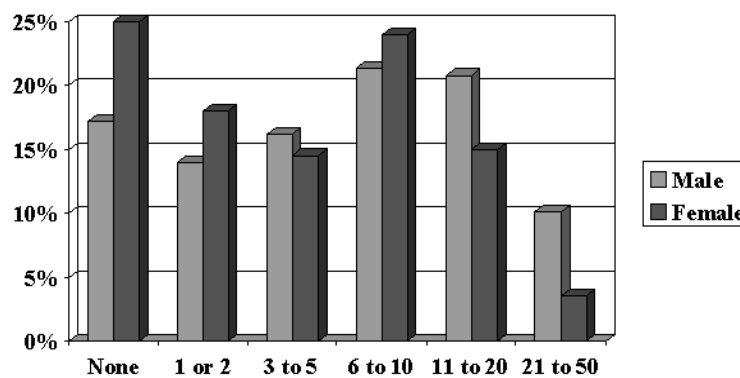
Prison Census, Nov 1999, Table 4.3, Sentenced Inmates

Security Status of Inmates



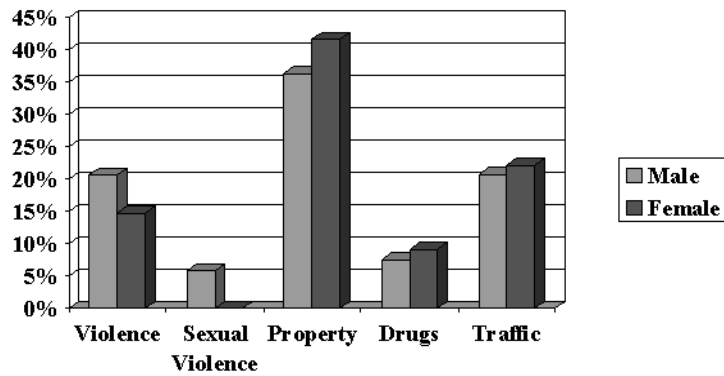
Prison Census, Nov 1999, Table 4.5, Sentenced Inmates

Previous Convictions for Inmates



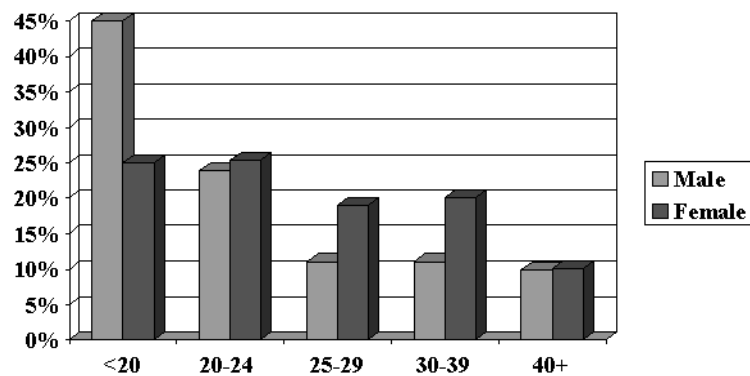
Prison Census, Nov 1999, Table 5.1, Sentenced Inmates

Major Previous Offence of Previously Sentenced Inmates



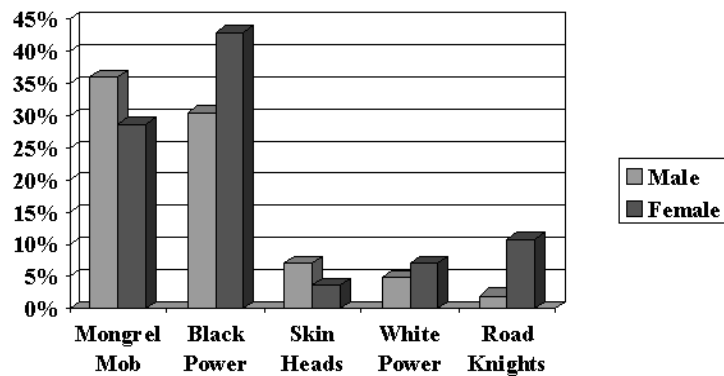
Prison Census, Nov 1999, Table 5.3, Sentenced Inmates

Age at First Custodial Sentence for Inmates



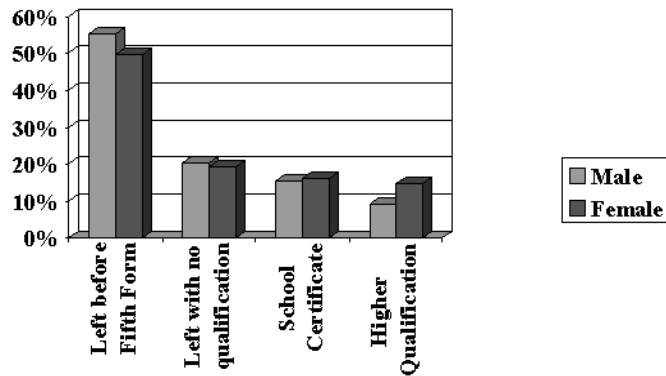
Prison Census, Nov 1999, Table 5.8, Sentenced Inmates

Gang Affiliation of Inmates



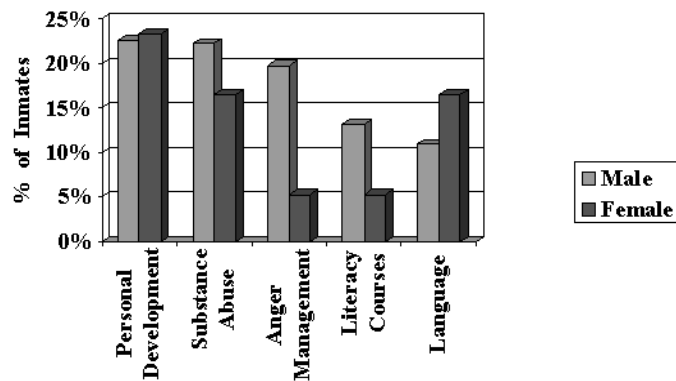
Prison Census, Nov 1999, Table 6.2, Sentenced Inmates

Highest School Qualification for Sentenced Inmates



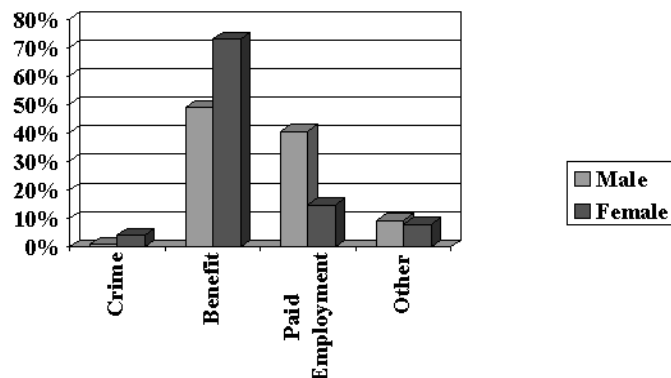
Prison Census, Nov 1999, Table 8.1, Sentenced Inmates

Programme Enrolments for Sentenced Inmates



Prison Census, Nov 1999, Table 9.2, Sentenced Inmates

Income Source Prior to Entering Prison for Sentenced Inmates



Prison Census, Nov 1999, Table 10.1, Sentenced Inmates

1.3 Analysis of Time Series Data

Inmate Numbers

Over the decade, total inmate numbers at the time of each census increased from 4232 in 1991 to 5647 in 1999. This 33 percent growth in eight years represents an average per annum growth of 4.2 percent.

For both males and females, the number of sentenced inmates and remand inmates increased notably from 1991 to 1999. While the predominant trend has been upward, there have been some temporary decreases for both sentenced inmates (1993) and remand inmates (1995).

Despite increasing prison numbers, the inmate numbers transferred from prison to a psychiatric hospital has declined since 1995. This is not to be interpreted as a decline in the number of inmates with psychiatric conditions.

Demographics

The trend towards an older prison population continued. In 1991, 14 percent of the sentenced inmates were 40 years or older, but in 1999 the percentage was 21 percent.

In each year the ethnic group with the highest proportion of sentenced inmates was Māori. The proportion of sentenced inmates who identified themselves as having mixed European and Māori ancestry has been increasing.

Current Sentence

There has been a trend towards inmates serving longer sentences. The percentage of sentenced inmates serving determinate sentences of more than five years increased from 1991 to 1999 for males from 15 percent to 28 percent, and for females from 2 percent to 11 percent.

From 1997 to 1999 the number of male inmates serving sentences of life imprisonment and periodic detention changed little, relative to earlier increases.

There was a trend toward more inmates being in prison for offences involving violence. From 1991 to 1999 the proportion of violent offending sentenced inmates increased for males from 54 percent to 62 percent, and for females from 31 percent to 40 percent.

Offending History

The proportion of sentenced inmates who had not previously been convicted rose from 1995 to 1999, for both male and female offenders. In general, it appears an increased proportion of the population is being imprisoned with less than six previous convictions.

The average age at which all sentenced inmates received their first conviction has been increasing. For those 40 years or older (over the period 1991 to 1999), the proportion almost doubled for males, and almost quadrupled for females.

The proportion of female sentenced inmates who had spent no more than one previous period in custody in 1999 was 78 percent, almost exactly the same as the average over the 1990s. For males the corresponding proportion was 53 percent, the lowest percentage in the decade.

Gangs

The percentage of male sentenced inmates who were patch members or associates of gangs decreased between 1991 and 1993 from 20 percent to 16 percent, and has stayed at this lower

level since then. The Mongrel Mob and Black Power continue to have the largest number of patch members in prison.

Programmes

Since 1991, the percentage of female sentenced inmates enrolled in programmes has been higher than the percentage for males. For male and female inmates respectively, the proportion of inmates enrolled in programmes appears to have declined approximately 15 and 31 percent over the last decade.

Children

For each census since 1991, the percentage of female sentenced inmates with dependent children was higher than for males.

