

Diversity in the Offender Population: Emerging Research Results

CSC has seen an increase in some ethnocultural offender groups; however, overall the rate of growth has slowed.

Why we are doing this study

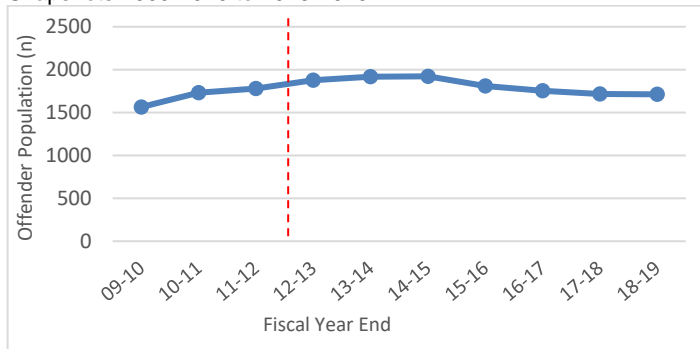
The Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) has a diverse offender population. A 2012 study found that several visible minority groups within CSC's population increased between 2000 and 2009.¹ The current research provides a timely update on diversity trends in the Canadian federal offender population between fiscal year end 2009-2010 and 2018-2019. These results are from Part I of a planned four-part study on ethnocultural offenders.

What we are doing

Part I examined 10-year diversity trends in CSC's offender population, based on fiscal year-end snapshots from 2009/2010 to 2018/2019, using data from the Corporate Reporting System-Modernized. It also compared the proportional representation of total offender populations from the end of fiscal year 2015/2016 to Statistics Canada 2016 Census data for the Canadian public.

What we have found so far

Figure 1. Number of Black Men Offenders at CSC, End of Fiscal Year Snapshots 2009-2010 to 2018-2019.

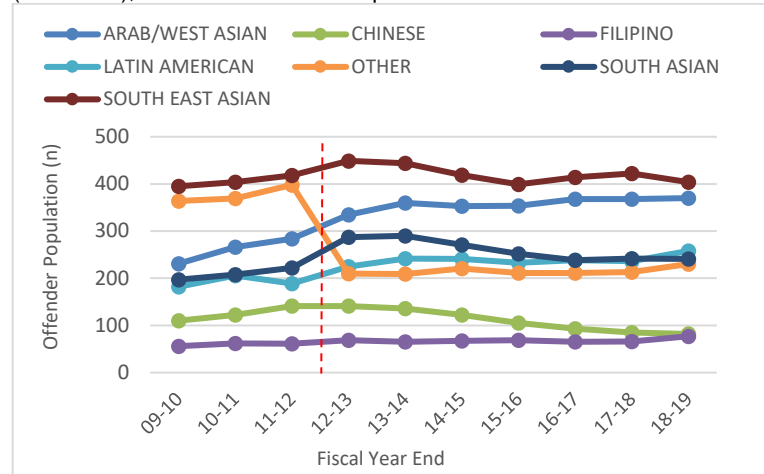


Note. Vertical line indicates change in OMS category options.

Over the study period (2010 to 2019), the number of Black offenders peaked in 2015 for men and in 2013 for women although this may have been affected by changes in the category options available in the Offender Management System (OMS). As of 2013, 15 additional categories were introduced as options in the variable within which offenders self-identify their ethnicity or geographic area of origin. While men of Arab/West Asian descent are not over-represented in the CSC population relative to their presence in the Canadian population, they are the fastest growing offender population, increasing by 60% over the past decade. The number of men offenders from most ethnocultural groups increased, except those self-identifying as Chinese and those included in the 'other' ethnocultural category. However, overall the rate of growth of the ethnocultural population in CSC has slowed considerably compared

with that seen in the previous decade (2000 to 2009). It should be noted that although not included in these figures, Indigenous men and women are over-represented in the CSC population relative to their presence in the Canadian general population.

Figure 2. Number of Men Offenders at CSC by Ethnocultural Group (non-Black), End of Fiscal Year Snapshots 2009-2010 to 2018-2019.



Note. Vertical line indicates change in OMS category options.

In addition to Indigenous men and women, Black men, Black women and men of South East Asian descent were overrepresented in CSC's 2016 in-custody and community populations compared with their number in the Canadian general population. Black offenders were the most disproportionately overrepresented non-Indigenous visible minority. Black women under community supervision were overrepresented, but they were not significantly overrepresented in the institutions, reflecting their success in obtaining early release.

What it means

The overrepresentation of Black men, Black women, and South East Asian men in the CSC offender population is consistent with findings from a previous assessment of diversity trends in CSC.² The overrepresentation for these groups, along with the observed growth in some other ethnocultural groups reinforces the need for attention to diversity issues by reviewing programs and services for relevance to a diverse population.

For more information

Please e-mail the [Research Branch](#) or contact us by phone at (613) 995-3975.

You can also visit the [Research Publications](#) section for a full list of reports and one-page summaries.

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^{1,2} Gottschall, S. (2012). *Ethnic diversity in Canadian federal offender admissions* (R-263). Ottawa, ON: Correctional Service of Canada.