

California Women and State Incarceration: An Overview

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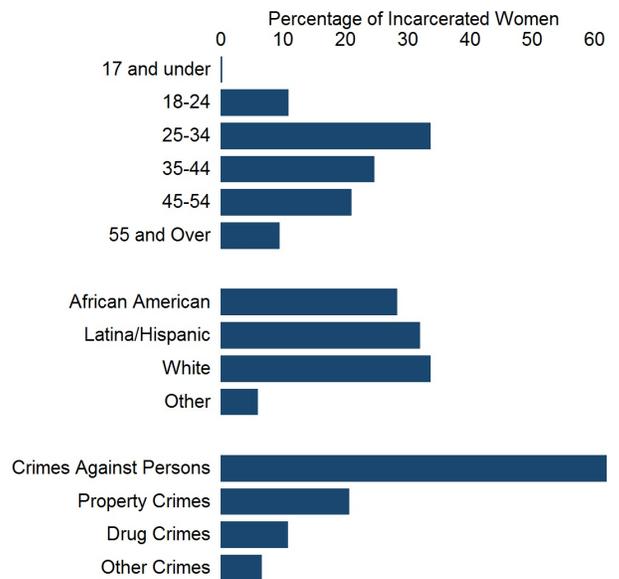
The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) reports that, as of December 2012, 6,000 women were incarcerated in a California state adult or juvenile facility – 5,974 in the Division of Adult Institutions (DAI)¹ and 26 in the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ).² California has the largest number of women incarcerated in prisons of any state and is home to one of the largest women's prisons in the world. This Short Subject compares the number of incarcerated women in California over time; disaggregates 2012 data according to age group, race/ethnic category, and type of crime; presents current numbers by county; and offers a brief discussion about California women and realignment as an explanation for shifts in state prison and county jail populations.

CALIFORNIA WOMEN AND INCARCERATION

The number of women incarcerated in DAI and DJJ facilities has decreased over time. From a peak in 2006 (11,977),³ the number of women incarcerated in DAI facilities as of December 2012 has decreased by approximately 50 percent. Younger women in DJJ constitute a much smaller part of the total number of incarcerated women in California and have decreased in number approximately 80 percent from 132 in 2006.^{2,4}

Figure 1 combines and summarizes information maintained by CDCR about women in DAI and those in DJJ as of December 31, 2012.^{1,2} Roughly 34 percent of California's women who were incarcerated at the state level were ages 25-34. White women made up 34 percent of the women in state facilities. Latinas and African Americans followed closely with 32 and 28 percent, respectively. Most of these women were incarcerated for crimes against persons (60 percent). Incarceration due to property (21 percent), drug (11 percent), and other (7 percent) crimes are less common.

Figure 1. Characteristics of Incarcerated Women in California^{2,3}



CALIFORNIA COUNTIES AND INCARCERATED WOMEN

Figure 2 (back page) presents the number of incarcerated women by county of commitment based on 2012 CDCR combined data about DAI and DJJ. The top five counties with respect to the number of women committed to state-level incarceration are all in Southern California. In fact, with 2,122 women, more than one-third of all incarcerated women are committed by Los Angeles County. Figure 2 also plots the locations of California's prisons for women. DAI has one women's facility in Southern California and another in Central California. DJJ's only facility for women is in Southern California.

The locations of these facilities are important because they indicate how far incarcerated women likely are from their homes, parents, partners, friends, and children. Recognizing that maintaining positive support relationships during incarceration may be associated with successful reentry and beneficial for the children of incarcerated parents,^{5,6} the California Penal Code (PC) requires an individual be incarcerated

"nearest the prisoner's home, unless other classification factors make such a placement unreasonable" (§5068). While most incarcerated women are committed in Southern California counties, the locations of the state's facilities for women place those from Northern California at a relative disadvantage because they risk fewer visits from their children and support network.

BRIEF DISCUSSION – REALIGNMENT

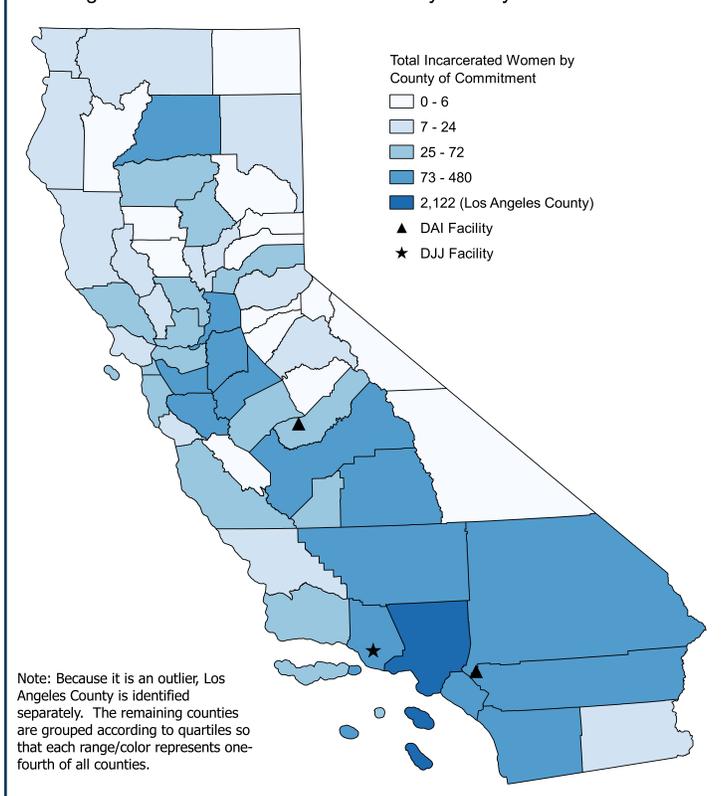
The recent decline of women incarcerated at the state level is likely related to California's 2007 realignment of DJJ cases and 2011 realignment of DAI cases as well as to a general decrease in violent crime. Senate Bill (SB) 81 (2007) and Assembly Bill (AB) 109 (2011) have shifted less "serious" and/or less "violent" offenders who are not registered sex offenders from state to county-level incarceration, programs, and/or probation.⁷ Thus, it is unsurprising to find state-level incarceration on the decline.

We might expect that decreasing numbers of women incarcerated at the state level would lead to increasing county jail populations. The average daily population of adult women in California jails in 2010, a period just prior to the implementation of AB 109, was 3,233.⁸ By 2012, this number rose to 4,457 – an approximately 38 percent increase.⁹ However, a complete picture of the effects of realignment remains unclear because California counties do not uniformly collect and share comparable data about incarcerated people. Until such data are systematically recorded, gathered, and made publicly available, analyses of how realignment impacts the people incarcerated in jails, the staff who provide them supervision, the communities they reenter, administration of programs, and budgets, among other things, will remain inconclusive.

ENDNOTES

1. California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Prison Census Data, December 2012.
2. California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Characteristics of the Division of Juvenile Justice Population, December 2012.
3. CQ Press State Stats, Female State Prisoner Imprisonment Rate. Washington D.C: CQ Press. Accessed June 13, 2013.
4. California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Characteristics of the Division of Juvenile Justice Population, December 2006.
5. Sullivan, Eileen, Milton Mino, & Katherine Nelson. (2002). "Families as a Resource for Recovery from Drug Abuse: An Evaluation of La Bodega de la Familia." VERA Institute of Justice.

Figure 2: 2012 Incarcerated Women by County of Commitment^{2,3}



6. Hairston, Creasie Finney. (2007). "Focus on Children with Incarcerated Parents: An Overview of the Research Literature." The Annie E. Casey Foundation.
7. SB 81 (2007) mandates that youth adjudicated of acts *other* than those identified in Welfare and Institutions Code §707(b) (e.g., murder) and/or Penal Code (PC) §290 (e.g., sex offense) will *not* be placed in DJJ facilities. AB 109 (2011) mandates that adults adjudicated of crimes *other* than those specified in PC §1192.7 and §1192.8 as "serious" and PC §667.5 as "violent" and/or specified in PC 290 (e.g., sex offense) will be realigned to community-based corrections programs.
8. Jail Profile Survey. (Fourth Quarter 2010). Bureau of State and Community Corrections.
9. Jail Profile Survey. (Fourth Quarter 2012). Bureau of State and Community Corrections.

This short subject was requested by the California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls.
<http://www.women.ca.gov>

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