NOTE ON THE DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION OF AUSTRALIAN POLICE FORCES AND PRISON SERVICES

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This research note presents the results of a cross-tabulation analysis of 1971 Census data on the composition of Australian police forces and prison services by sex, age, country of birth, educational qualifications and religion. One frequently hears confident assertions being made that a certain Department of Corrective Services is run by "poms"; that certain police forces have been more progressive than others in employing large numbers of university graduates or females; that one force is controlled by the Masons, another by Catholics; and the like. With the publication of the following tables, it is to be hoped that in future such assertions might be made by reference to some data.

Police Forces

Table 1 shows that at the time of the 1971 Census all police forces were at least 97 percent male. South Australia was the State with the highest percentage of female police officers (2.9%).

All police forces have very similar age distributions, with the exceptions that the South Australian and ACT forces have notably higher proportions of young officers (Table 2).

From Table 3 it is clear that the three eastern States (Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria) have the lowest proportions of police officers born outside of Australia. This is because the remaining States and Territories employ substantially higher numbers of British born policemen. If we add the Australian and British categories together we find that all forces are between 94 and 98% Anglo-Saxon. No force is remarkable in employing more non-Anglo-Saxon migrants than others. Data are not available on how many aborigines are employed as policemen, but one does not strike many of them on the street.

There are no great differences among forces in the educational qualifications held by officers (Table 4). New South Wales is the State with most university graduates (0.3% of the force).

Table 5 compares the composition of police forces by religion. Because there are considerable interstate differences in the religious composition of the general population, percentages of policemen in a particular denomination are compared with the percentage of the total population in that denomination for the State concerned. Queensland has clearly the most Catholic police force (36.1%), an interesting situation in a State where 17 of the 18 cabinet ministers are

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Protestant. South Australia has the lowest proportion of Catholic policemen (17.8%), but it must be kept in mind that only 20.6% of the general population of South Australia is Catholic.

South Australia also has a strikingly higher proportion of officers in the "Other Christian" category (16%) — a category dominated by more fundamentalist Protestant groups such as Baptists. Again, however, this is merely a reflection of the fact that there are more "Other Christians" in the general South Australian population (18.5%). There are notable overrepresentations of the Church of England in the ACT (40.7%) and New South Wales (44.3%) forces. These differences are minor compared to the more fundamental reality that Australian police forces are by and large quite representative of the religious composition of the populations from which they are drawn. If Catholic-Mason struggles to control police forces loomed large in the past, those struggles are not evident in the religious composition of Australian police forces today.

Prison Officers

As with the police forces, prisons services are overwhelmingly and consistently male (Table 6). Interstate differences in the age structure of prisons services are also minimal (Table 7). While South Australia tended to have the youngest of the eight police forces, the average age of its correctional staff was older than in any other State or Territory, with only one of the 245 South Australian prison officers being under 25.

Prison officers were very different from police officers in country of birth (Table 8). In every State at least 30% of the prison officers were born outside of Australia. In South Australia only 35.9% of prison officers were Australian born. Table 8 shows very clearly the inordinate numbers of British migrants who are attracted into Australian Corrective Services Departments, from a minimum of 21.9% of the service in New South Wales to a maximum of 57.1% in South Australia. In all States, however, non-British migrants comprise only small proportions of the prisons service personnel.

A comparison of educational qualifications of prison officers produces no remarkable differences between States (Table 9). Only two of the States, New South Wales (0.5%) and Western Australia (0.4%) had any university graduates among its prison officers.

With respect to religious denomination, prison officers were typical of the general populations of their States (Table 10). Minor exceptions were a slight underrepresentation of Catholics in Queensland and South Australia, and an overrepresentation of Catholics in Tasmania.

Conclusion

Women and people with tertiary educational qualifications are grossly underrepresented in Australian police forces and prisons services. In police forces Australian born males are overrepresented, while among prison officers it is British migrants who are in numbers out of proportion to their numbers in the general population.

With respect to religion both police and prison officers have denominational affiliations which are by and large typical of the communities from which they are drawn. There is no evidence to support the existence of either Catholic or

Masonic monolithic empires. The demographic similarities among the eight police forces and the seven prisons services are far more striking than the differences.

Since 1971 this picture is bound to have changed in some ways. Given staff cutbacks at the Australian Bureau of Statistics, it will be a long time, if ever, before comparable data can be accessed from the 1976 census.

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TABLE 3 Country of Birth of Australian Police Officers

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Country	NSN	W	V.	VIC	στὸ	۵	SA	_	WA	4	TAS	SI	ACT	T	LN	T
of Birth	n 7252	86	n 4864	8	3068	89	n 2321	86	n 1532	86	n 722	86	n 472	86	n 282	86
Australia	6661	91.9	4200	86.3	ł	93.3	1958	4.4	1245	81.3	571	79.1	373	79.0	215	78.9
UK and Eire	383	5.3	203	10.5	147	4.8	281	12.1	193	193 12.6	129	17.9	œ	5.5		19.5
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Other	ß	0.7	41	0.8	21	0.7	21	6.0	45	5.9	9	8.0	6	1.9	9	2.1

TABLE 4
Educational Qualifications of Australian Police Officers

	NSM	W.		VIC	OLD	٩	SA	-	WA	A.	T/	TAS	ACT	H	Ż	LN
Educational Qualifications	n 7252	86	n 4864	86	3068	96	n 2321	56	n 1532	5 9	n 232	88	n 472	86	n 282	5 %
No qualification	5788	79.8	١,			85.6		89.1	1 _	77.2	627	86.8	335	71.0	216	76.6
Trade	1178	16.2	671	13.8	363	11.8	182	7.8	287	18.7	8	11.1	85	17.4	45	16.0
Technician	168	23				1.5		1.5		2.3	10	1.4	æ	8.1	16	5.7
Non-degree tertiary	83	0.4				0.5		9.0		0.7	01	0.3	4	8.0	0	. 0
Bach degree Post-grad Dip	20	0.3				0.1	Т	0		0.1	-	0.1	0	0	0	0
Higher degree	7	0	П			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not classified by level	69	1.0			13	0.4	18	8.0		8.0	61	0.3	13	8.7	3	1.8

TABLE 5 Religion of Australian Police Officers and Religion of Total State Populations

1	ı	i	i					
	Total popn	80	21.4	11.7	19.8	15.3	1.9	30.0
L Z	Police	68	22.3	12.4	33.7	10.3	16.3	5.0
	8	n 282	ಜ	8	8	83	46	14
	Total	58	32.2	13.0	28.6	9.7	10.3	6.1
ACT		5 ×	23.7	19.5	40.7	7.0	4.9	4.2
	Police	n 472	112	95	192	8	ន	8
	Total	5-6	19.8	15.2	43.3	6.6	9.9	6.2
TAS		56	18.1	14.8	47.1	8.9	9.0	5.1
	Police	n 722	131	107	340	64	43	37
	Total	86	0.92	13.0	35.2	10.2	9.6	6.0
W A		5 9	22.8	16.4	42.0	7.6	6.5	5.5
	Police	n 1532	320	252	4	117	100	8
	Total	56	9.02	21.7	4.42	18.5	8.8	5.9
SA		5 0	17.8	26.2	27.9	16.0	6.9	2.5
	Police	n 2321	413	808	749	372	161	120
	Total	54	25.6	20.5	8.62	10.7	6.5	6.9
QTD		5 9	36.1	19.9	27.5	7.7	3.3	5.5
	Police	30e8	1108	610	843	236	102	169
	Total	5 9	28.7	17.7	25.5	13.2	8.8	6.1
VIC		5 9	24.4	24.1	31.9	9.6	6.5	3.5
	Police	n 4864 %	1187	1174	1552	468	315	168
	Total	5 %	28.7	14.2	35.6	9.1	9.9	5.8
NSW		89	26.7	16.9	44.3	4.2	4.0	3.9
	Police	n 7252	1935	1223	3212	307	8	83
			Catholic Meth and	Presb Church of	England Other	Christian	Other	Not Stated

TABLE 6 Sex of Australian Prison Officers

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TABLE 7 Age of Australian Prison Officers

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TABLE 9 Educational Qualifications of Australian Prison Officers

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Qualifications	п 86 8	86	n 378	86	n 279	54	n 245	96	n 88	69	n 17	56	n 51	96
No qualification	657	81.3	311	82.3	212	1	182	1	203	75.7	57	80.3	31	80
Trade	112	13.9	27	15.1	20		46		51	19.0	13	18.3	19	37.3
Technician	ଷ	2.5	9	1.6	က		12		1	2.6	7	1.4	-	2.0
Non degree tertiary	9	0.7	0	0	0	0	01		_	0.4	С	0	С	ے
Bach degree Post grad Dip	4	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0.4	0	0	0	ے ۔
Not classified by level	∞	1.0	4	1:1	S	8.1	က		ĸ	1.9	0	0	0	_
Inadequately described	-	0.1	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	ت .

TABLE 10
Religion of Australian Prison Officers and Religion of Total State Populations

	Total popn	86	21.4	1.7	8.6	5.3	1.9	0.0
LN	Prison Officers 1	ı	33.3					
	Pris	a [5				61		
	Total popn	l	19.8					
TAS	Prison Officers	l	8.2 1					
	Of P	a £	: :ន	•	83	4	9	4
	Total		26.0					
WA	ion	84	25.7	11.6	37.7	8.6	9.11	4.9
	Prison Officers	¤ 86	8	31	101	ន	31	13
	Total	86	20.6	21.7	4.4	18.5	80.00	5.9
SÀ	Prison Officers	86	13.5	21.6	38.4	9.0	10.6	6.9
	SE SE	n 245	ಜ	ß	\$	প্ল	83	17
	Total	86	25.6	20.5	8.63	10.7	6.5	6.9
QIÒ	Prison Officers	86	21.9	16.5	38.7	9.0	7.9	6.1
	E GE	n 279	9	46	108	প্ত	53	17
	Total	8	28.7	17.7	25.5	13.2	8.8	6.1
VIC	Prison Officers	86	28.6	15.9	32.8	7.4	8.5	6.9
	P. Of	n 378	108	8	124	83	32	88
	Total	86	28.7	14.2	35.6	9.1	9.9	5.8
NSW	Prison Officers	86	29.7	12.4	41.0	6.1	7.3	3.6
	P. Off.	¤ 808	240	100	331	49	29	83
			Catholic	Meth and Presb	Church of England	Other Christian	Other	Not stated