

**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

## INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

# International perspectives on the privatization of corrections

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**Research Summary:** In this article, we provide a global snapshot of the recent (2000–2018) expansion of the private sector’s involvement in both institutional and community corrections systems. Variation in the use of private-sector organizations to manage both institutional and community correction populations is examined within and across global regions, with a focus specifically on the utilization of privatization in the 50 countries with the highest prison populations. The key private-sector organizations in each global region are also identified, and the “new technology” acquisitions by these companies—documenting the expansion of prison-based organizations into community corrections—are considered. In addition, the available evaluation research on the comparative effectiveness of private- versus public-sector management of both prisons and community corrections is reviewed. Based on this review, we offer our assessment of the available data on global developments in the privatization of corrections, as well as the available research on the comparative performance of public-sector and private-sector corrections.

**Policy Implications:** Policy makers considering the advantages and disadvantages of privatization in either their institutional- or their community-based corrections system need to consider not only whether performance improves when the private sector gets involved but also

whether private-sector involvement directly or indirectly undermines or enhances the legitimacy of either system. By examining how and why private-sector involvement varies both within and across global regions, policy makers will likely glean critical insights into the need for public–private corrections partnerships. Through our review of the available research in which the performance of public versus privately operated corrections programs is directly compared, we underscore the need for independent, high-quality evaluations in countries currently using privatization to help manage prison, jail, and/or community corrections populations.

**KEYWORDS**

community corrections, prisons, privatization

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

In the following article, we provide a global snapshot of recent private-sector expansion in both institutional and community corrections systems. We have attempted to document the extent of privatization of prison systems globally, while describing the increased involvement of the private sector in the community control and treatment of justice-involved individuals within and across global regions.<sup>1</sup> Although recent attempts have been made to document the level of private-sector involvement in the construction and operation of prisons and jails globally (see, for example, Allen & English, 2013; Mason, 2013), we know much less about the private sector's involvement in the community corrections system. Aside from the private sector's role in the global expansion of electronic monitoring (Allen, 2015), several other areas of private-sector involvement in community corrections systems globally have not been fully documented. These areas include the use of proprietary risk and needs assessment instruments, the design and management of residential and nonresidential community treatment programs by private for-profit and private nonprofit organizations, fine collection by private agencies, day reporting centers operated by private agencies, work programs and community service programs operated by private companies, the development of new persuasive technology designed in conjunction with electronic monitoring systems (Pattavina, Corbett, Nader, & Ge, 2018; Pattavina, Miofsky-Tusinski, & Byrne, 2010), and most recently, reentry programs designed to offer a continuum of care and control for offenders leaving private-sector prisons. We attempt to address this knowledge gap in the following global review, but our primary focus will be on the expansion of private-sector companies that manage prisons (using full-service and/or hybrid models) into the community corrections arena.<sup>2</sup>

To some observers, the global expansion of public–private partnerships in the provision of corrections services is yet another example—a negative one, in our view—of American exceptionalism. They argue that large U.S.-based multinational corporations are constantly looking to expand their business by applying their “successful business model” to new markets in other countries (Biron, 2013). Although evidence exists to support this view, it can also be argued that the consideration of private-sector alternatives to public-sector construction and management of all or part of adult (and

juvenile) corrections systems is driven by the need to maximize performance through contestability. The contestability argument is based on the notion that public–private competition for contracts to manage both institutional and community corrections will lead to better overall system performance (Burke & Collett, 2016; Ministry of Justice, 2013). We examine this issue by reviewing the available evaluation research on the performance of public versus private corrections, considering effectiveness and efficiency.

## 2 | DATA AND METHOD

We begin our review by highlighting privatization initiatives in each global region based on available databases, published reports, newspaper articles, and other publically available documents in which the public sector’s role in corrections is described. We caution the reader that our review is preliminary and that our ability to document the expansion of the private sector into community-based corrections systems varied both within and across global regions.<sup>3</sup> Next, we examine the utilization of private-sector companies by corrections systems in the countries with the 50 largest prison populations. More than 90% of the world’s prison population is located in these 50 countries.

A third area of inquiry involved the identification of the key players in the global private corrections market, with a focus specifically on whether the global expansion of private prisons and community corrections programs has its roots in the two largest U.S. private prison providers—GEO Group and CoreCivic.<sup>4</sup> By examining the recent technology and community corrections facility acquisitions by GEO Group included in the company’s most recent filing before the Security and Exchange Commission, the movement of these prison-focused companies into the community corrections arena can be documented. We conclude our review by summarizing the results of the available evaluation research conducted over the past two decades (1999–2019) on the comparative effectiveness of public versus privately operated corrections systems (and/or programs).

## 3 | HOW (AND WHY) DOES RELIANCE ON PRIVATIZED CORRECTIONS VARY ACROSS GLOBAL REGIONS?

Despite the ongoing debate about the need to reduce our reliance on prison-based sanctions, the global prison population continues to rise. Between 2000 and 2018, it increased 24%, which is about the same as our general population growth during this same period (Walmsley, 2018). An estimated 10.74 million people are in prison around the world, but distinct regional variations in the distribution of these inmates become blurred when researchers focus on incarceration rates rather than on numbers. Table 1 includes the 2018 prison populations of the 50 largest prison systems globally. Close to 90% of the world’s prison population resides in prisons or jails in these countries. We have focused our review on the use of private-sector organizations to manage institutional and community corrections in these top 50 countries. The results of that review are also presented in Table 1. Seventeen of these top 50 countries are currently using private companies to manage all or part of their prison systems (using the total system and hybrid models mentioned earlier). We also document the use of the private sector to manage offenders under community corrections control in 13 countries, but here we primarily focus on those countries where the private-sector company providing prison management expanded to include reentry services (typically including electronic monitoring), or when electronic monitoring has been specifically described as a stand-alone, private-sector–managed program.

**TABLE 1** Privatization in the top 50 countries with highest prison populations (2018)

Rank	Country	Prison Population 2018	Private-Sector Involvement?	Prison/Jail	Community Corrections
1	United States	2,121,600	Yes	Yes	Yes
2	China	1,649,804	No <sup>a</sup>		
3	Brazil	690,722	Yes	Yes	
4	Russia Federation	582,889	Yes		Yes (EM) <sup>b</sup> Corrective labor
5	India	419,623	No <sup>c</sup>		
6	Thailand	364,288	No		
7	Indonesia	248,765	No		
8	Turkey	232,886	Yes		Yes (EM)
9	Iran	230,000	No		
10	Mexico	204,422	Yes	Yes	Yes
11	Philippines	188,278	No		
12	South Africa	158,111	Yes	Yes	
13	Vietnam	130,002	No		
14	Colombia	118,708	Yes		Yes (EM)
15	Ethiopia	113,727	Yes (PPP work program <sup>d</sup> )	Yes	Yes
16	Egypt	106,000	No		
17	Bangladesh	88,424	No		
18	Peru	87,995	Yes	Yes	
19	Pakistan	83,718	No		
20	United Kingdom	83,014	Yes	Yes	Yes
21	Morocco	82,512	No		
22	Argentina	81,975	Yes		Yes (EM)
23	Myanmar (Burma)	79,668	No		
24	Nigeria	73,631	Yes	Yes	
25	Poland	73,524	No		
26	France	65,084	Yes	Yes	Yes (EM)
27	Taiwan	62,634	No		
28	Germany	62,194	Yes	Yes	
29	Saudi Arabia	61,000	No		
30	Rwanda	61,000	No		
31	Algeria	60,000	No		
32	Italy	59,135	No		
33	Spain	59,087	Yes	Yes	Yes (EM)
34	Cuba	57,337	No		
35	Venezuela	57,096	No		
36	Ukraine	56,246	No		

(Continues)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Rank	Country	Prison Population 2018	Private-Sector Involvement?	Prison/Jail	Community Corrections
37	Malaysia	55,413	No		
38	South Korea Republic	55,198	Yes	Yes	
39	Uganda	54,059	No		
40	Kenya	54,000	Yes (planning stages)	Yes (planning stages)	
41	Japan	51,805	Yes	Yes	Yes (reentry)
42	Iraq	45,000	No		
43	Uzbekistan	43,900	No		
44	Australia	42,942	Yes	Yes	Yes (planning stages)
45	Chile	42,683	Yes	Yes	Yes
46	Canada	41,145	Yes	Yes	
47	El Salvador	38,714	Yes		Yes (EM)
48	Ecuador	37,497	No		
49	Belarus	34,600	No		
50	Kazakhstan	33,989	No		

<sup>a</sup>China: There is evidence that private industry uses prison labor to produce goods.

<sup>b</sup>EM = Electronic monitoring; corrective labor community sanction involves private companies.

<sup>c</sup>India: Private-sector involvement in use of prison labor in at least one prison documented.

<sup>d</sup>PPP = Public-private partnership.

Based on our review, the privatization of institutional and community corrections seems to vary both across and within regions. The Americas (North, Central, South, and Caribbean) is the region with the most privatization, with 9 of the 12 countries included in our review involved. At the other extreme, 16 of the 50 largest prison systems in 2018 are located in Asia, but only 2 of these 16 countries (Republic of South Korea and Japan) have involved the private sector in prison management, and only Japan uses a private company to manage reentry. Recent downward trends (2000–2015) in both prison populations and incarceration rates were reported for both countries. By comparison, 12 of the 14 countries in Asia that did not use privatization reported increases in the size of their prison populations, whereas 10 of these countries also reported higher rates of incarceration.

We examined the possible link between prison privatization and prison downsizing in the remaining global regions, but we did not find the same patterns in these other regions (see Table 2a–2d). In Europe, for example, three of the four countries that used prison privatization had increases in both their incarceration rates and their prison populations during the review period (2000–2015); the one exception was Germany, which had decreases in both its incarceration rate and its prison population. In contrast, five of the six European countries that did not use privatization had decreases in both the rate of incarceration and the total prison populations; the exception was Poland, where both the rate of incarceration and the number of prisons increased slightly from 2000 to 2015. These region-specific variations indicate that privatization may be used for different purposes—and therefore have different impacts—across global regions. To get a sense of why privatization has been embraced in some regions more than others, we examine each region separately (see also Harding, Rynne, & Thomsen, 2019, this issue).

## 4 | CORRECTIONAL PRIVATIZATION ACROSS NORTH AMERICA

Correctional privatization is on the rise in the United States, whereas its neighbor, Canada, tried private-sector prison operation about a decade ago (in one maximum-security prison), but the contract was canceled as a result of poor performance. Table 2a displays privatization in prisons and community corrections in North America. In the United States, “Private prisons ... incarcerated 128,063 people in 2016, representing 8.5% of the total state and federal prison population. Since 2000, the number of people housed in private prisons has increased 47%” (The Sentencing Project, 2018, para. 1). There is, however, substantive state-level variation in the use of private prisons that is worth noting, with 23 states that did not operate any private prisons in 2018 (Gotsch & Basti, 2018). At the other end of the privatization–utilization continuum, six states rely heavily on private prisons: Arizona (19.6% private), Hawaii (25.1%), Tennessee (26.4%), Oklahoma (26.6%), Montana (38.8%), and New Mexico (43.1%). In the federal prison system, 18.1% of the 34,159 federal prisoners in 2016 were housed in private prisons (Gotsch & Basti, 2018). Although the Obama administration took steps to phase out its contracts with private prison corporations used in the federal system in 2016, the Trump administration changed course in 2017, and the federal corrections system has reinstated these contracts (The Sentencing Project, 2018).

The two largest U.S.-based corrections corporations—the GEO Group and CoreCivic—have received considerable attention, and the reviews of their performance have generated a heated debate on the need for prison privatization in recent years.<sup>5</sup> Despite this controversy, policy makers at the federal, state, and local levels, as well as the managers of public corrections facilities, rely on the private sector in ways that are important to consider. For example, in a 2018 report, the Urban Justice Center’s Corrections Accountability Project highlighted the fact that the prison industry in the United

**TABLE 2a** Regional variation in incarceration and privatization in the Americas

Rank	Country	2018 Prison Population	Evidence of Privatization		Prison Population & Rate Trends		2000–2015 Prison Population Change	2000–2015 Incarceration Rate Change
			Prison	CBC	+	-		
1	United States	2,121,600	Yes	Yes	+	-	1,937,482–2,166,600	683–672
3	Brazil	690,722	Yes	No	+	+	232,755–699,618	132–335
10	Mexico	204,422	Yes	Yes	+	+	154,765–247,788	156–205
14	Colombia	118,708	No	Yes	+	+	51,518–120,444	128–249
18	Peru	87,995	Yes	No	+	+	27,734–75,003	107–239
22	Argentina	81,975	No	Yes	+	+	38,604–75,769	105–174
34	Cuba	57,337	No	No	+	+	55,000–60,000	487–531
35	Venezuela	57,096	No	No	+	+	14,196–49,664	58–159
45	Chile	42,683	Yes	Yes	+	+	33,050–42,954	215–240
46	Canada	41,145	Yes	No	+	+	35,533–39,916	115–117
47	El Salvador	38,714	No	Yes	+	+	7,754–32,645	132–516
48	Ecuador	37,497	No	No	+	+	8,029–25,902	64–162
	Total	3,579,894						

Source. Walmsly’s (2018) comparisons are 2000–2015 for most countries, but data availability varies. For details, see the country-specific database. See Byrne, Pattavina, and Taxman (2015).

**TABLE 2b** Regional variation in incarceration and privatization in Europe

Rank	Country	2018 Prison Population	Evidence of Privatization		Prison Population & Rate Trends		2000–2015 Prison Population Change	2000–2015 Incarceration Rate Change
			Prison CBC		+ / –			
4	Russia Federation	582,889	No	Yes	--		1,060,404–671,649	729–466
8	Turkey	232,886	No	Yes	++		49,512–178,089	73–266
20	United Kingdom	83,014	Yes	Yes	++		64,602–85,626	124–148
25	Poland	73,524	No	No	++		70,544–70,838	184–186
26	France	65,084	Yes	Yes	++		48,049–61,714	82–96
28	Germany	62,194	Yes	No	--		70,252–61,737	85–76
32	Italy	59,135	No	No	--		53,165–52,164	93–86
33	Spain	59,087	Yes	Yes	++		45,309–65,472	113–141
36	Ukraine	56,246	No	No	--		218,800–73,431	443–201
49	Belarus	34,600	No	No	--		56,590–29,776	566–314
	Total	1,308,659						

Source. 2018 prison population available from Walmsly (2018). Comparisons are 2000–2015 for most countries, but data availability varies. For details, see the country-specific database. See Byrne et al. (2015).

**TABLE 2c** Regional variation in incarceration and privatization in Africa

Rank	Country	2018 Prison Population	Evidence of Privatization		Prison Population & Rate Trends		2000–2015 Prison Population Change	2000–2015 Incarceration Rate Change
			Prison CBC		+ / –			
12	South Africa	158,111	Yes	No	--		171,462–159,241	394–292
15	Ethiopia	113,727	Yes	Yes	++		62,597–104,467	94–124
16	Egypt	106,000	No	No	+–		56,587–66,000	84–83
21	Morocco	82,512	No	No	++		54,288–74,039	187–214
24	Nigeria	73,631	Yes	No	+–		44,450–57,313	36–32
30	Rwanda	61,000	No	No	--		115,000–54,729	1,369–434
31	Algeria	60,000	No	No	++		33,992–62,150	108–155
39	Uganda	54,059	No	No	++		21,700–45,092	92–115
40	Kenya	54,000	Yes	No	+–		40,010–54,631	129–119
	Total	763,040						

Source. Walmsly (2018). Comparisons are 2000–2015 for most countries, but data availability varies. For details, see the country-specific database. See Byrne et al. (2015).

States is best described as a public–private partnership. The Urban Justice Center identified more than 3,100 vendors that provide a range of services, such as case management, food service, health care, transportation, video visitation, and other operations. The authors of this report estimated that payment to vendors account for more than half of the \$80 billion spent on incarceration annually in the United States (Urban Justice Center, 2018).

**TABLE 2d** Regional variation in incarceration and privatization in the Middle East, Asia, and Oceania

Rank	Country	2018 Prison Population	Evidence of Privatization		Prison Population & Rate Trends + / -	2000–2015 Prison Population Change	2000–2015 Incarceration Rate Change
			Prison CBC				
Asia							
2	China	1,649,804	No*	No	++	1,427,407–1,656,773	111–121
5	India	419,623	No**	No	++	272,079–368,998	26–30
6	Thailand	364,288	No	No	++	223,406–310,399	354–452
7	Indonesia	248,765	No	No	++	53,399–176,754	26–68
9	Iran	230,000	No	No	++	158,000–225,624	237–287
11	Philippines	188,278	No	No	++	79,299–135,752	102–135
13	Vietnam	130,002	No	No	++	88,414–136,245	104–146
17	Bangladesh	88,424	No	No	+–	62,669–69,719	47–43
19	Pakistan	83,718	No	No	+–	78,930–80,169	56–43
23	Myanmar (Burma)	79,668	No	No	++	31,648–60,000	64–113
27	Taiwan	62,634	No	No	++	56,676–62,889	254–268
37	Malaysia	55,413	No	No	++	27,358–51,184	116–169
38	South Korea Republic	55,198	Yes	No	--	62,959–53,892	136–107
41	Japan	51,805	Yes	Yes	--	61,242–58,497	48–46
43	Uzbekistan	43,900	No	No	--	63,900–42,000	257–153
50	Kazakhstan	33,989	No	No	--	78,029–47,939	520–274
	Total	3,785,509					
Middle East							
29	Saudi Arabia	61,000	No	No	++	23,710–47,000	116–161
42	Iraq	45,000	No	No	++	7,000–39,100	26–125
	Total	106,000					
Oceania							
44	Australia	42,942	Yes	Yes	++	21,714–36,134	114–152

Source. Walmsly (2018). Comparisons are 2000–2015 for most countries, but data availability varies. For details, see the country-specific database. See Byrne et al. (2015).

In terms of community corrections, both the United States and Canada maintain public-sector community corrections systems. In the United States, several states have statutes<sup>6</sup> allowing probation to be managed in the private sector (Lindsey et al., 2016). It is difficult to provide an accurate estimate of the number of probationers currently supervised by private probation, but in one recent review, the author claimed that “hundreds of thousands of people every year are sentenced to probation overseen by a private company, often for minimal offenses such as unpaid parking ticket” (McCullough, 2016, p. 19). One aspect of private-sector involvement in probation that has received considerable attention over the past few years is the use of private companies to collect probation fees (Human Rights Watch, 2014). Questions can certainly be raised about whether the profit motive of private probation agencies will result in practices that harm probationers and, in the process, undermine the purpose of the community sanction. Notably, we could not identify a single research study that evaluated public versus

private probation in states where the private sector has been contracted to provide this service (e.g., Florida's experience with the Salvation Army's management of low-risk probationers).<sup>7</sup>

Although the use of total system or even hybrid system models has not yet hit the North American community corrections market, there has been an increasing reliance on the private sector to manage specific community corrections functions in both countries, such as the previously mentioned fine collection, use of proprietary risk assessment instruments, private-sector treatment providers, and private-sector–managed electronic monitoring programs. It is worth noting that one of the two largest private corrections organizations in the United States, GEO Group, has purchased a large electronic monitoring company (BI) and operates offender reentry programs in several states, along with day reporting centers (GEO Group, 2017). The other major private corrections corporation, CoreCivic, has also expanded into the community correction arena with the acquisition of Correctional Alternatives, Inc. (CAI) in 2013 and Avalon Corrections in 2015. CoreCivic currently owns and manages 19 community correctional facilities in the United States, generating \$41.5 million in revenue in 2016 alone (CoreCivic, 2018). CoreCivic offers a full range of community corrections services, including work furlough, home confinement, residential reentry, and drug and alcohol treatment programs. Clearly, the two largest private-sector corrections corporations view the U.S. (and Canadian) community corrections systems as areas for expansion.

## 5 | CORRECTIONAL PRIVATIZATION ACROSS CENTRAL AMERICA, SOUTH AMERICA, AND THE CARIBBEAN

Ten of the 50 largest prison systems in the world are located in Central America, South America, and the Caribbean. The private sector is involved in the operation of prisons and/or community corrections in all but two of these countries: Ecuador and Cuba (see Table 2a). During the last decade, Latin American countries have had an increased interest in public–private partnerships (PPPs) in corrections mainly as a result of concerns regarding the costs of corrections, although some have suggested that the privatization movement in this region is also related to corporate social responsibility and the emergence of social philanthropy (World Bank, 2011). Prisons, jails, and community corrections in this region have effectively served as laboratories to explore the efficacy of different models of PPPs. Today, privatization initiatives are underway in several countries in South and Central America, including Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Perú, Venezuela, and Uruguay. Knowledge, however, is scant in relation to the outcomes and impact of these PPPs. Because private prisons and the establishment of PPPs flourished in more developed countries (e.g., Chile and Mexico) in the past decade, governments from less developed countries<sup>8</sup> have begun to look into prison privatization to address several challenges in their prison systems, such as severe overcrowding, lack of adequate health care, and violence (Allen & English, 2013). It is worth noting, however, that the introduction of a private prison can have negative consequences for the system as a whole, especially in poorer, less developed countries. As Allen and English (2013, p. 15) pointed out, “Questions of equity and discrimination arise when the budget allocation per prisoner day is higher in private than in public prisons. More pragmatically, contractual arrangements may make it difficult or expensive to overpopulate the PPP prisons, despite severe overcrowding in the system as a whole. If prison numbers rise, the impact is felt more sharply in the public prisons.”

Chile and México were the prison privatization pioneers in Latin America, followed by others such as Peru, and several states in Brazil. In 2003, Chile became the first South American country to contract fully with private prison companies. The Chilean government, concerned with the lack of prison infrastructure and continuous failure of the traditional system to rehabilitate inmates, decided to promote a

program of private investment in the construction of 10 new prison facilities, each intended to host between 1,300 and 2,000 inmates (Morales, 2013). The concession model implemented in Chile is a hybrid model including both private and government participation. The private company is in charge of the design, construction, equipment, operation, and prison services (laundry, health, and reintegration programs, among others) of the 10 prisons for a maximum of 20 years. After this period, the company would transfer the assets to the government (Morales, 2013).

In Mexico, the decision to privatize seems to have been based on the need to address two problems: prison crowding and prison conditions (Allen & English, 2013). PPPs in the federal prison system began in 2012, when the government granted contracts to national construction companies to build 12 new penitentiaries.<sup>9</sup> The financial scheme followed the Building-Leasing-Transfer model, and the initial investment was approximately US\$2 million (Espinoza & Sandoval, 2015). The Mexican government retained control over security of the facilities and left the construction and the provision of services such as food, laundry, and medical care to private companies. At the time, international private prison companies were hesitant to participate in the bidding process, as a result of the high levels of violence in the country and its prisons (O'Neill, 2012). More recently, BlackRock, an American company, took over a contract originally granted to the Mexican construction firm Grupo Tradeco almost 8 years ago. It will receive approximately US\$65.5 million a year for 20 years to cover construction, food, and other maintenance contracts (Murray, 2018).

The use of electronic monitoring at the pretrial stage has been on the rise throughout Central and South America (Allen, 2015). This development is in response to the recognition that this region has high pretrial detention rates (Byrne, et al., 2015). Our review has identified private-sector management of electronic monitoring programs in the following countries: Colombia, Chile, Argentina, and El Salvador. Colombia began using electronic monitoring in 2008 as an alternative to incarceration for both sentenced and pretrial detainees. Articles 1 and 2 of the Decree No. 177 of 2008 established the legal criteria for the selection of users of electronic bracelets. The Ministry of Justice through the National Penitentiary and Prison Institute (INPEC) serves as the authority to make decisions about the imposition of electronic monitoring (UNODC, 2013). In terms of implementation, the company *Energia Integral Andina* had been responsible for providing this service in Colombia. In 2017, however, INPEC changed the operator of the electronic bracelets to The Temporary Union Electronic Security System through a contract of approximately US\$10.5 million. Three companies are part of this temporary union: *Buddi* (a British multinational), *Unión Eléctrica*, and *Meltec*. *Buddi* designs the bracelets used by approximately 5,700 people under supervision in Colombia (Justicia, 2018).

Electronic monitoring programs managed by private-sector companies are also found in Chile. *Carabineros de Chile*, the Republic of Chile's uniformed prison service, signed an agreement with U.S.-based *Track Group, Inc.* (formerly *Secure Alert, Inc.*) to provide electronic monitoring products and services commencing on October 18, 2017. This contract totaled approximately US\$10.6 million in year one. Services provided by *Track Group* as part of the contract include the provision of monitoring software, supply, installation, replacement and withdrawal of surveillance devices, training for *Carabineros de Chile*'s personnel, and maintenance of the Surveillance Center and the Regional Surveillance Support Center. Under the agreement, *Track Group* will deliver and put into service up to 9,400 electronic monitoring devices over a 3-year period. In addition, the company will also initiate real-time monitoring and data centers to be staffed by Chilean government employees, and it will provide ongoing training and support to maintain the program's full effectiveness.

A third South American country with a private-sector-managed electronic monitoring program is Argentina. The electronic monitoring system in Argentina began in the province of Buenos Aires in December 1997. The initial target populations for electronic monitoring were aging and terminally ill prisoners. In 1998, however, the new penal code allowed it as an alternative to imprisonment

(Di Tella & Schargrodsky, 2010). Currently, approximately 21,000 offenders are under house arrest, with monitoring via ankle bracelet. The company Surely Security S.A. provides equipment, training, and monitoring to the Ministry of Government (Entregan modern sistema, 2015).

Finally, El Salvador is the latest South American country to use electronic monitoring in community corrections, beginning in 2017. This program is part of the Ministry of Justice and Public Security efforts to reduce prison overcrowding and violence. The British multinational company G4S provides electronic monitoring devices and technology assistance. The program is one of the largest in the Central American region and has the potential to monitor nearly 10,000 offenders over the 4-year contract period (G4S, 2017).

## 6 | CORRECTIONAL PRIVATIZATION ACROSS EUROPE

Ten of the 50 largest prison systems globally are located in Europe. Only four of these European countries—the United Kingdom (England and Wales), France, Germany, and Spain—have used prison privatization (see Table 2b). Approximately 14% of all prisoners in the United Kingdom are held in private prisons (Mason, 2013). Several privately managed prisons are currently operating in England and Wales (including GEO, G4S, and Serco), and the performance of public and private prisons is reviewed annually by the Prison Service. In France, a hybrid model has been in place for several decades. According to one recent review (Knaebel, 2016), 68 of France's 188 prisons are operated, in part, by the private sector. An estimated 50% of France's prisoners are housed in privately operated prisons. The French private-sector company Sodexo is mainly responsible for managing 34 of France's hybrid model prisons, and it also operates prisons in several countries. According to Knaebel (2016, para. 11), "Sodexo won management contracts for 42 prisons in the Netherlands, five in the United Kingdom, five in Chile, two in Spain and one in Belgium."

The third European country that has privatized at least some of its prisons is Spain, but critics have argued that its current prison capacity is higher than necessary, resulting in higher corrections system costs (Tallantyre, 2014). The number of prisoners in Spain's prisons reached a peak of 76,701 in 2010, but it dropped to 59,087 in the fall of 2018, for a variety of reasons, including of the use of electronic monitoring as an alternative to incarceration (Walmsley, 2018). It is unclear what impact this drop in prison population—and reports of empty "ghost prisons" (Tallantyre, 2014)—will have on Spain's private prison industry, but as we noted earlier, Sodexo currently operates two prisons in Spain. The fourth European country that has used the private sector to manage at least one of its prisons is Germany,<sup>10</sup> which first contracted with the multinational corporation, Serco, in 2004. According to Mason (2013), in this first German PPP, the public sector retained responsibility for detention, whereas Serco was responsible for all other functions and services (e.g., food, health care, maintenance, and video surveillance). In our review, however, we did not identify any information on the current use of privatization in Germany's prison system, which has been lauded by some as a prototype for a more humane, rehabilitation-focused prison system (Subramanian & Shames, 2013).

Although the Russian Federation operates the largest prison and jail system in Europe, it has not yet privatized any of its prisons. Recently, however, a proposal was made to fund private prisons in this country, ostensibly to address the problems related to the location of the Russian Federation's prisons and detention facilities in remote areas of the country (Amnesty International, 2017). The Russian Federation has significantly reduced its prison population since 2000, cutting it almost in half during this period. To accomplish this, it was necessary to restructure and expand the country's community-based sanction system. The private sector plays an important role in the Russian Federation's community corrections system.

One mechanism used recently in Russia as an alternative sanction for convicted offenders is corrective labor<sup>11</sup> (Russian Federal Penitentiary Service, 2017). The Russian Federation seemingly has plans to expand the use of this community sanction.<sup>12</sup> With 423,092 offenders on probation in the Russian Federation in 2016, this represents a large potential labor pool for both public-sector and private-sector agencies in this country. In 2012, approximately 50,000 offenders received this sentence (Utkin, 2013); by 2016, that number rose to 93,310 (Aebi & Chopin, 2017). When combined with the number of offenders receiving community service in 2016 (39,344), we found that 31% of all persons under the supervision of probation received labor-based sanctions (Aebi & Chopin, 2017, p. 20). Both forced (or corrective) labor and community service involve work—both paid and unpaid—for employers in the private sector, but we cannot yet document the extent of private-sector involvement. Problems, however, have been identified related to the ability of correctional inspectorates to monitor private employers' utilization of individuals working at these companies (Utkin, 2013).

In addition, electronic monitoring has been used in the Russian Federation since 2010 as a component of judicial restraint, which is comparable with house arrest. According to a review by Penal Reform International, "In 2013, the electronic monitoring system was operating in 80 of 83 constituent entities of the Russian Federation, covering over 9 thousand convicts sentenced to judicial restraint" (Utkin, 2013, p. 35). There were ~9,000 individuals on judicial restraint with restrictions of freedom monitored via electronic monitoring devices in 2012; by 2016, the number of individuals with restrictions of freedom as a sanction rose to 48,212, which is an indicator of the increasing use of electronic monitoring in the Russian Federation. Questions have been raised about the initial selection of the electronic monitoring vendor, the reliability of the electronic bracelets, and the cost of technology acquisition. According to Utkin (2013), it is currently cheaper to send persons to prison in the Russian Federation than it is to place them under judicial restraint with the current electronic monitoring vendor.

The most ambitious community corrections privatization initiative in Europe is found in the United Kingdom, which has placed the supervision of approximately 70% of its probation population under private-sector management. In the United Kingdom, the public sector is responsible for the supervision of individuals classified as high risk, whereas contracts were given to approximately 100 private-sector organizations for the supervision of low- and moderate-risk offenders (Burke & Collett, 2016). The primary motivation driving the United Kingdom's community corrections reform efforts (and, most recently, the "reform" of these reform efforts) is a belief that governments can increase performance through public- versus private-sector competition (i.e., contestability). Although this privatization strategy has been the subject of several critical reviews (see, e.g., Walker, Annison, & Beckett, 2019, for an overview), the United Kingdom plans to continue in this direction.

In addition to the privatization of probation in the United Kingdom, five of the ten European countries included in our review have used the private sector to manage electronic monitoring programs. According to the Council of Europe's (2018) annual penal statistics, France had the largest number of offenders under electronic monitoring (9,801), followed by Turkey (2,084), Spain (1,738), and the United Kingdom (670). In addition, the Russian Federation indicated that it uses this technology at both the pretrial and sentencing stages, but it did not supply data on the extent of use for this survey (Aebi & Chopin, 2017). Although the number of offenders on electronic monitoring in these countries is only a fraction of each country's community corrections population, as community corrections agencies in this region embrace new technology, it seems they also are embracing the inevitable privatization of additional probation functions. It is in this context that new criminal justice technology has been described as the private sector's "Trojan horse," providing entrance into new markets (Byrne & Marx, 2011). Once these private firms have a foothold, they will likely propose additional functions and services that they can provide.

## 7 | CORRECTIONAL PRIVATIZATION ACROSS AFRICA

Nine of the 50 countries with the highest prison populations in 2018 are located in the African region. A review of Table 2c reveals that prison populations have been increasing in seven of the nine African countries included in our review. Walmsley (2018) observed that if we exclude Rwanda (which has experienced a substantial decline in its prison population), the total prison population across the rest of Africa has increased by 40% since 2000, which is still less than the rate of growth of the general population in this region. In fact, incarceration rates decreased in five of these nine countries during this period. The reason for the significant decline in Rwanda's prison population since 2000 (from 115,000 in 2000 to 54,279 in 2018) is that the year 2000 numbers were inflated as a result of the thousands detained in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide (Walmsley, 2018). Despite the decline in incarceration rates, the increased size of the prison population overall has been identified as a key driver of prison privatization in several African countries, where four of nine countries are either currently using private prisons (South Africa and Ethiopia) or planning to sign partnership agreements in the near future (Nigeria and Kenya).

In South Africa, currently two privately operated prisons have a total capacity of 3,000 inmates. The Kutama Sinthumule Correctional Centre is run by the American GEO Group, and the Mangaung Correctional Centre is run by the British security company G4S.<sup>13</sup> Only a small percentage of South Africa's prisoners (less than 2% or 3,000/158,100) are currently held in private prisons in South Africa. Ethiopia has also experimented with private prisons, and one public private prison partnership—the Mekelle Prison Project—has received considerable press because of its focus on job training and skills development.<sup>14</sup> In recent reviews of global prison conditions, scholars have highlighted the overcrowding problems faced by prison managers across Africa (e.g., U.S. Department of State, 2013), but several challenges await less developed countries in this region considering privatization. For example, Allen and English (2013) observed that there are potential problems related to political corruption and the influence of large multinational prison corporations in poor, underdeveloped countries.

We found evidence of private-sector involvement in the community corrections systems of only one of the nine countries included in our review from this region: Ethiopia. In Ethiopia, the PPP—the Mekelle Prison Project—has a reentry component designed to transition inmates from prison to the community. The lack of private-sector involvement in community corrections systems in the African region is likely a result of a simple fact: Community sanctions are not well developed in this region. The findings from our review of the available data revealed that probation is not used for adults in two countries (Nigeria and Morocco) and that baseline data on the community corrections populations of seven of nine countries included in our review were unavailable. Only South Africa has publically available data on the current size of its community corrections population (70,356 in 2017); data could also be identified for Kenya, but it was more than two decades old. (Note: Available data on the total corrections population of the countries with the 50 largest prison populations can be found at [www.globcci.org](http://www.globcci.org).)

## 8 | CORRECTIONAL PRIVATIZATION ACROSS THE MIDDLE EAST

Two Middle East region countries are among the top 50 countries with high prison populations: Saudi Arabia and Iraq. Although both countries have experienced significant increases in both the prison population and in the incarceration rate between 2000 and 2018, we found no evidence that either country was considering privatization as a strategy to address this increase in their prison populations.

We also did not find evidence of private-sector involvement in the community corrections system in either country.

## 9 | CORRECTIONAL PRIVATIZATION ACROSS ASIA

Close to 40% of the world's prison population is located in countries in Asia, which has experienced rapid growth in its prison populations (a 37% increase from 2000 to 2018) outpacing population growth (21.8%) in this region during the same period (Walmsley, 2018). Despite this rapid growth, private-sector involvement in both the prison and community corrections systems across Asia has been minimal (see Table 2d). South Korea and Japan are two exceptions to this pattern. In both countries, only a small percentage of the prison population is housed in private prisons. In Japan, the Mine Rehabilitation Program Center was the first PPP prison established in 2007 using a hybrid model.<sup>15</sup> Although the security staff is not hired by the private company, some security-related functions are outsourced (Allen & English, 2013). The prison also provides reentry services for offenders leaving prison. South Korea's private prison initiative, Somang (Hope) Prison, was opened in 2010 by a religious organization—the Agape Foundation—and focused initially on developing a positive prison culture.

Only 1 of the 16 countries in this region—Japan—seems to have private-sector involvement in the operation of community corrections. In Japan, the Mine Rehabilitation Program Center has a reentry component. Unlike with the African region, it is possible to review data on the community corrections populations in the majority (10/16) of the Asian countries included in our review. Descriptions of the community corrections systems in this region, however, are limited in scope, and there is little evaluation research available to review.

The largest country in this region is China, and its community corrections system has only been in operation for a little more a decade (Li, 2014). According to Yang (2017), there were 707,058 offenders under community supervision in 2013, but the system was only in place in ~65% of all local jurisdictions (Li, 2014). As the system in China develops, it seems likely that electronic monitoring technology will be incorporated into community supervision. Jiang and colleagues (2014) reported that the Chinese government began experimenting with the use of GPS-based electronic monitoring in 2012, but that the results of the initial field study revealed problems related to the reliability of the electronic monitoring system and the lack of funding to replace faulty devices. In addition, the private sector would seem to have a role in the provision of both treatment services and the provision of assistance during reentry. At present, China is typically relying on nongovernmental organizations made up primarily by volunteers to provide such assistance (Yang, 2017). The Shanghai Model of community supervision, however, does allow for the contracting of services to a professional organization (Jiang et al., 2014; Li, 2014).

One additional comment about privatization in the Asian region is worth considering at this point. The governments of two of the largest prison systems globally—India and China—have used prison labor in ways that benefit both publically and privately owned businesses in these countries, as well as private companies from other countries, including the United States (Bowe, 2017). Although this might not look like the kind of PPP we set out to document, it needs to be discussed. In India, for example, there have been recent reports of a partnership agreement in the Tihar jail, reportedly the largest prison complex in Asia, with more than 12,000 prisoners in 2012. The facility includes an auto parts manufacturing company, as well as several other “small factories” that produce a variety of goods, such as furniture (Ullah, 2014). Similarly, the continued use of prison labor has been documented in China (Yang, 2017) even though the export of goods made in prisons is illegal (for an overview, see Bowe, 2017). Bringing private- and public-sector companies into prisons to teach skills and train

inmates for jobs upon reentry to the community are laudable goals. There is a potential, however, for exploitation inherent in the use of inmate labor by private companies that will need to be monitored closely.

## 10 | CORRECTIONAL PRIVATIZATION ACROSS OCEANA

The last global region included in our review is Oceana, which includes both Australia and New Zealand (see Table 2d). The number of prisoners in this global region has increased 86.5% between 2000 and 2018, whereas the general population increased by only 32.1% during this period. Although Australia's prison population is modest when compared with the other countries in our review (42,492 in 2018), it has the largest proportion of prisoners in private prison in the world, close to 20% (Mason, 2013). Several international companies have footprints across Australia. For example, GEO Group is currently operating several facilities, including a medium/high-security state remand prison in Queensland, the Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre, which it has been operating since 2008. It also operates facilities in Victoria, New South Wales, and Sydney.

Australia seems to be following the lead of the United Kingdom, both in terms of prison privatization and in terms of potential community correction system privatization. The first step in this process has involved the collection of comprehensive system-wide performance data to assess the current performance of both publically operated prisons and community corrections programs. In those cases in which a prison or community corrections program was identified as a poor performer based on a review of these data, the operation of that program would be open for bid (i.e., contestability). Unfortunately, such a system-wide performance review has not been completed; plans were under review in one state (Queensland) in 2014 before a change in government and correctional priorities.<sup>16</sup>

## 11 | WHO ARE THE MAJOR PLAYERS GLOBALLY?

The private for-profit companies identified in our global review are included in Table 3. Three of these companies are currently operating prisons and/or community corrections programs (electronic monitoring, reentry) in three or more countries included in this review: the GEO Group (United States, Canada, United Kingdom, and South Africa), G4S (United Kingdom, El Salvador, and South Africa), and Sodexo (France, Spain, and Chile). Examination of their annual reports reveals a concerted effort to expand their companies into the emerging community corrections market. Both GEO and G4S provide electronic monitoring to community corrections agencies, whereas all three companies offer reentry programming that includes a wide range of services. In this respect, the major players seem to be changing with the times by positioning their companies not only as experts in the technology of offender control—in both institutions and the community—but also as experts and industry leaders in the new technology of offender change in both settings.

One company in particular deserves a closer inspection, in part because of access to publically available data on its operations, business plan, and assessment of future markets: GEO Group. This company's revenue rose from \$877 million in 2007 to \$2.2 billion in 2016: 19% of that revenue (\$410 million) was from international work. GEO Group's 2017 annual report stated that they operate 104 correctional facilities and 12,000 community education center beds. Their activity in the community corrections area includes the supervision of 174,000 offenders and pretrial defendants, as well as the electronic monitoring and alcohol monitoring of 95,000 individuals. Their EM system is operating in every U.S. state. It is our view that GEO Group has positioned itself to move seamlessly into the

**TABLE 3** Global snapshot of the key players in the private prison and private community corrections industry

Region/Country	Prisons	Community Corrections
North America		
United States	GEO Group <sup>a</sup>	GEO Group
	Core Civic <sup>b</sup>	Core Civic
Canada	GEO Group	GEO Group
South America		
Colombia		Temporary Union Electrical Security System <sup>a</sup>
	Chile	Sodexo Chile USA <sup>c</sup> Compas Catering and Services Chile LTD Vici Construction Grand Projects Sociedad Concessionada (BAS)
Argentina		Surely Security SA
Mexico	Blackrock Inc (BLKN)	
	Grupo Tradeco	
El Salvador		G4S <sup>b</sup> (electronic monitoring)
Europe		
United Kingdom	Serco <sup>d</sup>	Serco
	G4S <sup>e</sup>	G4S
	GEO	Sodexo (Community Rehabilitation Centers)
France	Sodexo	
Spain	Sodexo	
Germany	Serco	
Africa		
South Africa	GEO	
	G4S	
Ethiopia	Mekette Prison Project	Mekette Prison Project (reentry)
Oceania Australia		
	GEO	
	G4S	
Asia		
South Korea	Agape Foundations	Agape Foundations
Japan	Mine Rehabilitation Program Center	Mine Rehabilitation Program Center (reentry)

<sup>a</sup>GEO Group details: <https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/923796/000119312517056831/d320699d10k.htm><sup>b</sup>CoreCivic details: <http://ir.corecivic.com/static-files/f242d017-6ce3-4bb5-ae33-f6888059dc9b><sup>c</sup>Sodexo details: <https://www.sodexo.com/home/services/on-site-services/justice-services.html><sup>d</sup>Serco details: <https://www.serco.com/uk/sector-expertise/justice/full-prison-management><sup>e</sup>G4S details: <http://www.g4s.com/>

community corrections market by acquiring smaller companies that can support both the technology of offender control (surveillance via electronic monitoring) and the technology of offender change (case management systems, residential treatment facilities, day reporting centers) in community settings. GEO Group currently operates not only prisons but also a wide range of reentry programs, residential

and nonresidential treatment programs, and day reporting centers with electronic monitoring support. They have entered into both the adult and juvenile community corrections arenas. Consider the following assessment of the community corrections market from GEO in 2016:

*With respect to our reentry services, electronic monitoring services, and youth services business conducted through our GEO Care business segment, we are currently pursuing a number of business development opportunities. Relative to opportunities for community-based reentry services, we are working with our existing federal, state, and local correctional clients to leverage new opportunities for both residential reentry facilities as well as non-residential day reporting centers. We continue to expend resources on informing federal, state and local governments about the benefits of public-private partnerships, and we anticipate that there will be new opportunities in the future as those efforts continue to yield results. We believe we are well positioned to capitalize on any suitable opportunities that become available in this area. (GEO Group, 2017, Section "Revenue," para. 4)*

GEO certainly seems to be planning for the likely privatization of an increasing number of community corrections systems. It is possible to envision a future community corrections system in which the majority of funding is provided to private-sector agencies to provide assessment, treatment, supervision, and control. Just as new police technology is taking a larger and larger chunk of police budgets (via predictive analytics, body-worn cameras, CCTVs, drones, robots, etc.), new corrections technology (both in prisons and the community) will likely have a similar impact on corrections budgets (Byrne & Marx, 2011).

## **12 | WHAT DO WE CURRENTLY KNOW ABOUT THE COMPARATIVE PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE CORRECTIONS?**

There is a dearth of evaluation research in which the performance of public and private corrections systems is compared (see Gaes, 2019, this issue, for a further review). Table 4 provides a summary of the results of our review of the available research on the comparative performance of public-sector versus private-sector institutional- and community-based privatization initiatives, with a focus on published research studies conducted over the past two decades (1999–2019). We identified 11 evaluations of public versus private prisons but only two evaluations of public versus private community corrections programs. Given the number of high prison population countries (23) that are currently using privatization strategies in either their prison or their community corrections system, it is remarkable how few evaluation studies are available for review for countries outside the United States and the United Kingdom.

In terms of the prison evaluations, only 3 of the 17 countries that we identified as contracting for private prisons had conducted evaluations of the effectiveness of this strategy: United States (eight studies), United Kingdom (two studies), and Chile (one study). The U.S. evaluations comprised a variety of outcome measures to compare the performance of public versus private corrections facilities. Pratt and Maahs (1999) conducted a meta-analysis of 33 cost evaluations of private versus public prisons using inmate cost per day as the primary outcome measure. They found no difference in cost effectiveness across public versus private prisons, controlling for a variety of factors. One caveat is in order here: These studies are older, and they may not be applicable to the current discussion. Seven of the eight U.S. studies used postprison behavior (rearrest, reconviction, reincarceration, and/or revocation) as the primary outcome measure, whereas one study involved disciplinary infractions. The results are mixed

TABLE 4 Prison and community corrections privatization evaluation studies

Prison Studies				
Authors (Year)	Study Site	Sample	Variables/Outcomes/ Performance Measures	Findings
Alonso and Andrews (2016)	United Kingdom	Compare private and public prisons (99 public vs. 15 private prisons)	<i>Easy-to-measure:</i> conditions (overcrowding), security (escapes) <i>Hard-to-measure:</i> activity (hours doing activities), order (drug tests) and safety (assaults)	Private prisons showed better results in “easy-to-measure” dimensions of public service quality, and public prisons showed better results on “hard-to-measure” dimensions.
Bales et al. (2005)	Florida, USA	81,737 inmates in public and private prisons (adult males, adult females, and youthful offender males)	Outcomes: Re-offense and reincarceration Controls: age, race, crime seriousness, risk level, prior recidivism	No significant differences in recidivism rate between private and public prison inmates for adult males, adult females, or youthful offender males.
Crewe, Liebling, and Hulley (2015)	United Kingdom	1,145 prisoners and 957 staff; Interviews conducted with 114 prisoners and 133 staff	Measuring the Quality of Prison Life (MQPL) Survey: a 140-item including prison-staff relationships; prisoner variables; staff variables; organizational variables	Public prisons had significantly higher scores on MQPL surveys and security measures for both staff and inmates than private prisons
Duwe and Clark (2013)	Minnesota, USA	3,532 offenders released 2007–2009 (1,766 matched inmates incarcerated in private facilities)	Outcomes: Recidivism as measured by rearrest, reconviction, reincarceration, and revocation	Private prison inmates were more likely to recidivate on all measures (rearrest, reconviction, reincarceration, and revocation); the authors attribute the results to fewer visitation and programming opportunities in private prisons.
Farabee and Knight (2002)	Florida, USA	8,848 inmates (matched) released 1997–2000 followed for 3 years	Outcomes: reconviction and reincarceration	No difference in recidivism for male prisoners or youthful offenders released from public or private prisons. Female prisoners from private facilities were less likely to recidivate.

(Continues)

TABLE 4 (Continued)

Prison Studies				
Authors (Year)	Study Site	Sample	Variables/Outcomes/ Performance Measures	Findings
Lanza-Kaduce, Parker, and Thomas (1999)	Florida, USA	396 prisoners (198 matched pairs) followed for 12 months	Outcomes: rearrest, reconviction, reincarceration; Time to failure	Private prisoners were less likely to recidivate compared to public prisoners; There was no difference in time to recidivism between public and private prisoners.
Lanza-Kaduce, Parker, and Thomas (2000)*	Florida, USA	298 offenders (149 pairs) followed for 4 years	Outcomes: reincarceration and revocation	Private prisoners were less likely to be reincarcerated for either a new offense or a technical violation compared to public prisoners over 4 years
Morales (2013)	Chile	Inmates leaving private and public prisons (3 private vs. 6 public); Interviews conducted with prisoners and staff	Outcomes: recidivism (1 year follow up); life conditions, quality of services offered, quality of rehabilitation and reinsertion programs	There are no significant differences in terms of the decrease in recidivism for adult male inmates, when in a private or public prison.
Mukherjee (2015)	Mississippi, USA	15,754 inmates	Outcomes: Infractions (conduct violation)	Prisoners in private prisons served longer sentences than prisoners in public prisons by 4% to 7% (equaling 60–90 days), which “directly erodes the cost savings offered by privatization.” Private prisoners were 15% more likely to receive an infraction (conduct violation) than public prisoners
Pratt and Maahs (1999)	USA	Meta-analysis of 33 cost evaluations of private versus public prisons	Outcomes: Inmate cost per day Controls: age of facility, ownership, security level, year of data collection	Private prisons no more cost effective than public prisons.
Spivak and Sharp (2008)	Oklahoma, USA	23,000 inmates released from 1997–2001	Outcome: Recidivism; time to recidivism	Inmates released from private prisons had higher rates of recidivism compared to inmates released from public prisons.

(Continues)

TABLE 4 (Continued)

Community Corrections Studies				
Alladin and Hummer (2018)	Pennsylvania, USA	Compare private and public residential community corrections facilities ( $n = 7,204$ individuals)	Outcome: Reincarceration in 4 years Security, safety, care, activity, justice conditions, management and court-ordered sanctions	Individuals supervised in private facilities were four times more likely to recidivate. Authors assert that "private entity cost efficiency and effectiveness claims are not supported."
Burke & Collett (2016)	United Kingdom	Replaced 35 probation trusts with the national probation service and 21 community rehabilitation companies	Impact assessment from 2014 to 2016 Outcomes: Reoffending; costs	Privatization showed increased reoffending and costs.

on postprison behavior. The two studies we included by Lanza-Kaduce et al. (1999, 2000) reported that private prisoners were less likely to recidivate than prisoners in public prisons in Florida. Both Bales et al. (2005) and Farabee and Knight (2002), however, found no difference between public and private prisoners in two much larger Florida studies. Farabee and Knight (2002) conducted a subgroup analysis and reported positive outcomes for female prisoners in private prisons. In the remaining two studies, researchers reported that prisoners in public-sector prisons had better outcomes than did prisoners in private prisons in terms of post-prison behavior (Duwe & Clark, 2013; Spivak & Sharp, 2008). In the study that comprised in-prison infractions as the primary outcome, the author also found that private prisoners fared worse than public prisoners, resulting in longer time served (Mukherjee, 2015).

Researchers from the two U.K. comparative studies reported better results across a range of outcome measures for public versus privately operated prisons. Crewe et al. (2015) focused on the quality of prison life in public versus private prisons. They found that both prisoners and staff in public prisons scored higher on the quality of prison life survey items than did their counterparts in private prisons. Alonso and Andrews (2016) compared 99 public prisons with 15 private prisons in the United Kingdom on what they referred to as "easy-to-measure" versus "hard-to-measure" dimensions of prisons. The private prisons did better on the "easy-to-measure" items (such as overcrowding and escapes), whereas the public prisons did better on the "hard-to-measure" items (such as drug tests, assaults, and hours out of cell doing activities). These findings have implications for prison managers in the United Kingdom engaged in contract negotiations with private prison companies because these "hard-to-measure" performance benchmarks may be more difficult to define. A good example is assault victimizations. In Australia, for an assault victimization to be counted, there needs to be an offender and a victim, but in many instances, it is unclear which is which. In these cases, no victimization is recorded. One solution would be to count assault incidents rather than assault victimizations, but that may not be the optimal solution for private prison contractors, especially if incentives are built into the contract if they reduce victimizations.<sup>17</sup>

The final prison privatization study we reviewed was conducted in Chile. Researchers conducted interviews with prisoners and staff in three private and six public prisons. Various outcome measures were examined, including inmate and staff assessments of living conditions, service quality, and

treatment quality in three private and six public prisons, along with data on postrelease recidivism (1-year follow-up). No differences were reported (Morales, 2013).

We know much less about the effectiveness of public versus private community corrections initiatives. The findings from the one study we included in which public versus private probation in the United Kingdom was compared (Burke & Collett, 2016) revealed that probation privatization was associated with increased reoffending and increased costs between 2014 and 2016. In another study, public versus privately operated residential community corrections centers in Pennsylvania were compared. Alladin and Hummer (2018) found that individuals in private residential facilities were four times more likely to recidivate than were individuals supervised in publically operated residential community corrections facilities. It seems clear that much more research needs to be conducted in this area based on a more complete assessment of what constitutes both institutional- and community-based correctional performance (Lindsey et al., 2016).<sup>18</sup>

### 13 | CONCLUSION

What are the implications of our review for private and public corrections policy and practice? Although we do believe there is much to be learned from investigating how corrections-related problems and issues—such as the potential need to privatize an underperforming public corrections system—are defined, addressed, and evaluated within and across global regions, we need to emphasize that our review is preliminary. More work needs to be done before a comprehensive global review of privatization can be conducted. After completing our preliminary review, we realize that there is much that we simply do not know about how and why privatization is expanding in each global region. Three themes emerge from our global review: (1) We need accurate descriptive data on private-sector involvement in both prisons and community corrections, (2) we need to encourage countries using privatization to conduct impact evaluations, and (3) we need to document how (and why) correctional performance is defined and measured within and across global regions and then examine how performance-based incentives have been used in both the public and the private sector.

In terms of gaps in our knowledge base, the first suggestion we can offer is the researcher's typical lament: We need better data from each global region on the nature and extent of corrections privatization. The existence of a global prison database is an incredible resource (Walmsley, 2018) for researchers to examine regional variations in the use of imprisonment (see, e.g., Coyle, Heard, & Fair, 2016; Jacobson, Heard, & Fair, 2017), but it does not currently include information on the number and key characteristics of private prisons in each country. The knowledge gap is even larger in community corrections because we do not yet have a global community corrections database to examine as a starting point. Although we can provide a nearly accurate estimate of the number of prisoners being held worldwide, we do not know how many offenders are placed in community corrections systems globally. The findings from our review of community corrections systems in the 50 countries with the highest prison populations revealed that data on the size of the community corrections population was unavailable for half of these countries, with distinct regional variations in data availability.<sup>19</sup> For example, we accessed detailed country-specific data on community corrections for most European countries (Abei & Chopin, 2018), along with profiles of several countries' probation systems (available on the Confederation of European Probation webpage). We need a similar dedicated data collection effort to target community corrections in each global region. Data on the use of privatization in community corrections need to be included in this effort. We were able to identify private-sector involvement in the community corrections systems of 14 countries in this preliminary review, but there is much we do not know about the nature and extent of community corrections privatization.

Second, there is simply not a sufficient body of evaluation research available for review from countries currently involved with corrections privatization initiatives to offer definitive statements about the comparative performance of public- versus private-sector corrections. Indeed, only 3 of 17 countries currently contracting for private prisons—United States, Chile, and the United Kingdom—had published impact evaluations available for review. Similarly, only 2 of the 14 countries identified as contracting for private-sector community corrections services—United States and United Kingdom—had published impact evaluations available for review. Although the results of the public- versus private-sector comparative studies we reviewed do not demonstrate support for the continued use of privatization in these three countries, we need to know about the comparative impact of privatization initiatives in the remaining countries before drawing any global assessment.

Third, the results of our review revealed regional variations in the use of privatization in both institutional and community corrections that are likely a result of differences in how policy makers view the need for—and appropriateness of—privatization. In some countries (e.g., Australia and United Kingdom), policy makers and corrections managers decided that the corrections system was underperforming and they viewed privatization as a means to an end: improved correctional performance through public-sector versus private-sector competition for contracts (i.e., contestability). In other countries (e.g., Mexico), the introduction of the private sector was not based on a belief that competition would improve performance; it was based on the need to fill a service gap or a resource need that the public sector could not address, as a result of a lack of skilled personnel, and/or new technology. A third possibility is that public–private partnerships were viewed as the most appropriate strategy for the management of either prisons (e.g., France) or community corrections (e.g., Colombia). We recognize that there will be variation within and across global regions regarding how to measure performance and how to address the problem of an underperforming prison or community corrections system. We need to collect data on how correctional performance is defined and measured in each global region to understand better these decisions. We also need to document how corrections managers have attempted—some successfully, some not so much—to build performance-based incentives into contracts with public-sector agencies and with private-sector corporations. There are important lessons to be learned from this type of global information exchange.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Several different types of private contracting (public–private partnership) models are currently being used around the world. According to Allen and English (2013, pp. 4–5), three distinct models can be employed: In Model 1 (a full-service model), “private companies have been contracted to build and run prisons in their entirety” (United States, United Kingdom, Australia, South Africa); in Model 2 (a hybrid model), “private companies finance the building of a new prison and operate certain functions within it, such as maintenance, health care, catering or the provision of rehabilitation activities” (France, Hungary, parts of Latin America, Japan); and Model 3 (limited service model) involves the contracting out of certain limited functions within an existing prison to a private company, for example, catering, maintenance, the provision of regime activities, or transportation (the Netherlands, other European countries). We focus our review on Models 1 and 2, but we recognize that it is likely that every prison system contracts out at least one of its functions to the private sector.

<sup>2</sup> We can provide details on the use of privatization in community corrections systems in the United States, South America, and Europe, but there is no global community corrections database similar to the database available for prisons. This resource shortfall is being addressed in the new Global Community Corrections Initiative. For more information, go to [www.globcci.org](http://www.globcci.org). For the United States, we draw on a variety of sources (see, e.g., Lindsey, Mears, & Cochran, 2016). Our review of private-sector involvement in community corrections in several South American countries was based on the translation of public documents and newspaper accounts of new public–private partnerships by L. Marmolejo, the third author. The source for our review of European countries was the Council of Europe, Annual Penal Statistics, Space 2 report (2016 survey) by Aebi and Chopin (2017), and here we focused on electronic monitoring programs at both the pretrial and the sentencing stage.

- <sup>3</sup> We have not attempted to document the use of proprietary risk-needs classification systems globally in this review, but see the review by Latessa and Brusman Lovins (2019, this issue) for estimates of the global use of the LSI-R and other proprietary instruments.
- <sup>4</sup> CoreCivic, formerly Corrections Corporation of America, is the largest private prison corporation in the United States. According to its 2018 Annual Report, CoreCivic reported revenues of \$1.77 billion in 2017. While both CoreCivic and GEO Group were actively expanding into the U.S. community corrections market in recent years, the GEO Group has a larger global imprint with contracts in at least four countries.
- <sup>5</sup> For a detailed performance review comparing publically operated with privately operated prisons in the federal prison system, see the report by the Office of Inspector General (2016), "Review of the Federal Bureau of Prisons 'Monitoring of Contract' prisons." The Obama administration based its decision to terminate contracts with private prison providers based on this report. In February 2017, however, Attorney General Sessions rescinded that decision.
- <sup>6</sup> According to a recent review by Human Rights Watch (2014, note 3) "Probation companies provide offender-funded misdemeanor probation services in Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, Colorado, Utah, Washington, Missouri, Michigan, Montana and Idaho."
- <sup>7</sup> Human Rights Watch (2014) did note that an audit of Georgia's private probation companies revealed several instances of lack of government oversight of these private agencies; estimates of revenue from probation fees in Georgia alone are \$40 million.
- <sup>8</sup> In Costa Rica, for example, CGL companies won a bidding process to perform planning, design, and program management services for the urban jail and courts called "comprehensive care correctional units" (CGL Staff, 2017). These units were conceived as rehabilitation-oriented modern facilities intended to provide human spaces and be respectful of human rights. In addition, these centers would offer social services to inmates and their families with a focus on education, job training, and reintegration initiatives (Abizanda, 2017).
- <sup>9</sup> In Mexico, private-sector involvement has also occurred at the pretrial stage. Carlos Slim's Telmex foundation and the program Reintegra have been bailing first-time, nonviolent offenders out of jail since the early 1990s. The main goal is to keep them out of prison and create opportunities for rehabilitation and reintegration within the community.
- <sup>10</sup> We have relied here on the 2013 review of global privatization by Mason (2013), but we could not identify any data on the extent of privatization in Germany. In addition, Serco does not seem to have a current contract with Germany, according to its website: retrieved January 26, 2019, from <https://www.serco.com/uk/sector-expertise/justice/full-prison-management>
- <sup>11</sup> According to a review by Utkin (2013, p. 30), "The convicts having a principal job serve their sentences to corrective labor at their principal jobs. Those who have not a principal job serve this punishment at the jobs determined by local self-government bodies by agreement with the correctional inspectorates." This sentence can be imposed for between 2 months and 2 years. Offenders receive remuneration for their work, but they must pay a portion of their earnings (5% to 20%) to authorities.
- <sup>12</sup> According to the Russian Penitentiary Service (2017, para. 9), "One of the main results of the joint work of the Federal Penitentiary Service of Russia and the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation was the development and maintenance of regulatory legal acts aimed at introducing in 2017 a new type of punishment in the form of forced labor and the creation of correctional centers. Four such correctional centers are currently operating in our country, as well as seven sites functioning as correctional centers at correctional facilities. Until the end of 2017, it is planned to open 8 more centers."
- <sup>13</sup> Thulanie and Gear (2018). More information on South Africa's prison system, including recent controversies, can be found at <https://www.prison-insider.com/countryprofile/prisonsinsouthafrica>
- <sup>14</sup> See [http://www.ilo.org/pardev/development-cooperation/WCMS\\_228592/lang-en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/pardev/development-cooperation/WCMS_228592/lang-en/index.htm)
- <sup>15</sup> A profile of the Mine Rehabilitation Center describes it as a BOT (build-operate-transfer) established by a special-purpose company for a duration of 20 years (until March 2025). Retrieved December 17, 2018, from <http://www.mine-center.go.jp/en/>
- <sup>16</sup> The first author (Byrne) was the director of the Global Centre for Evidence-based Corrections and Sentencing at Griffith University in 2013–2014. In this role, he was tasked with developing a performance review system for both prisons and community corrections in Queensland.

- <sup>17</sup> The first author (Byrne) served as the inspector of prisons in Queensland in 2014; in this role, he conducted a review of the prison assault problem in their prison system. For an overview, see Zhouand and Byrne (2017).
- <sup>18</sup> In Australia, one possible system-wide performance measurement system has been developed, and it defines performance in terms of three dimensions: efficiency, equity, and effectiveness. For a discussion of the need for global performance measures, see Byrne and Ritchie (2014).
- <sup>19</sup> For a summary table presenting the results of this review, go to [www.globcci.org](http://www.globcci.org)

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