

Centre for Crime and Justice Studies ***Reform Sector Strategies* event**

27th October 2011

About *Reform Sector Strategies*

- Help inform approaches to challenging the record nos. imprisoned in England and Wales
- **Part 1: Approach to prison no. in E and W since late 1990s**
 - Com sentences in particular
 - Penal reform strategies more broadly
- **Part 2: Developing fresh thinking**
 - Alternative approaches in none UK jurisdictions.

Demands and positioning

Crime fighting

- **The crime problem can be better addressed by another criminal justice intervention than prison.**
- Tough' community sentences are a way for people to pay back for their crime and are not a 'soft' option.

Humanitarianism

- **Highlight human costs of the high prison population and its effect on CCJS's ability to be rehabilitative.**
- High prison numbers and overcrowding result in prisons being less effective at rehabilitating people and poorer prison conditions.

Managerialism

- **Dispassionate arguments about the financial cost of prison, money spent on prison could be better spent elsewhere**
- Prison is not a good investment. There are cheaper options that are more effective from a cost / benefit analysis.

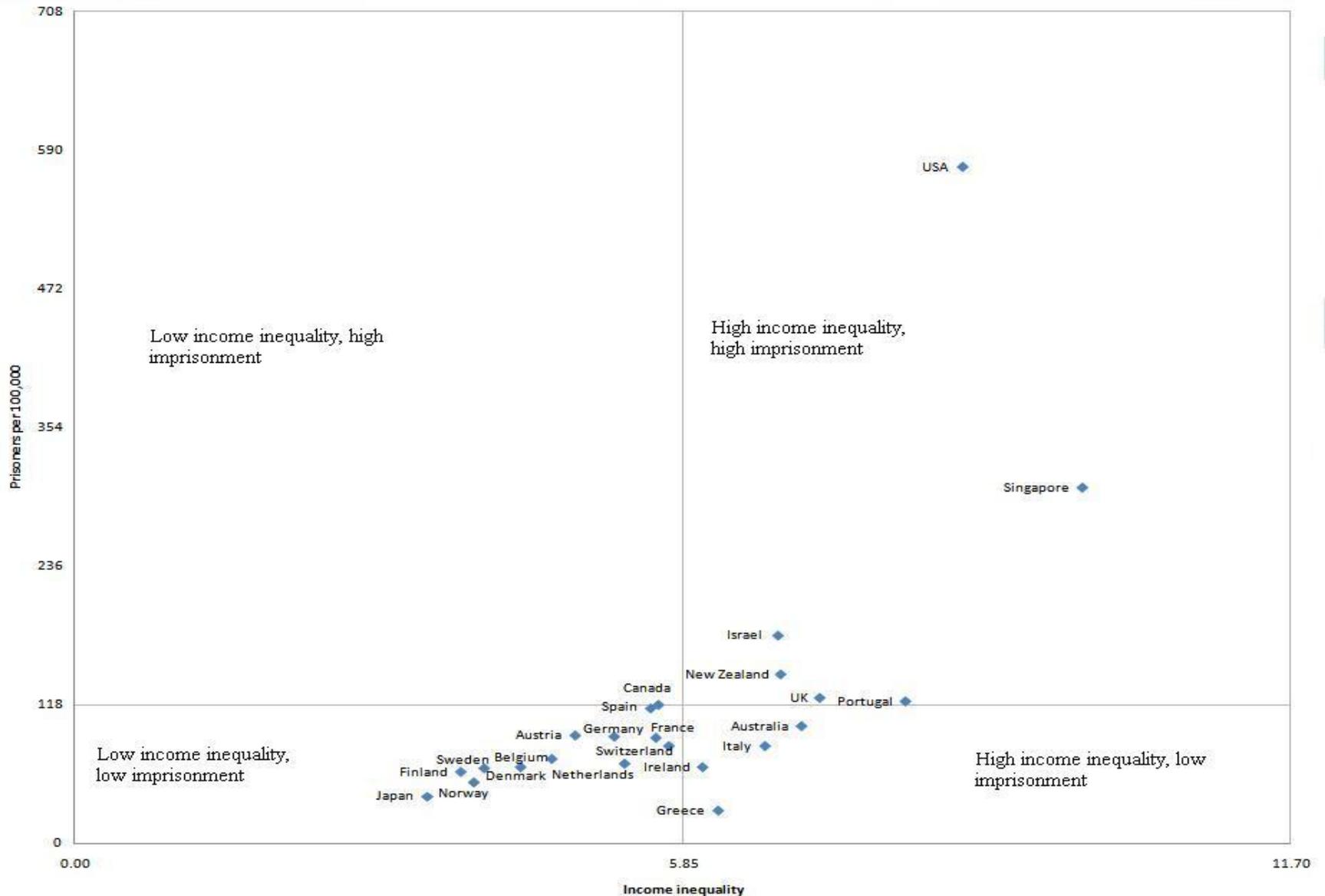
Key questions

- What can be learnt from recent evidence considering socio-economic factors' relationship to the numbers imprisoned?
- What might be approach to tackling prison numbers which acknowledges socio-economic and political drivers involve?
- What are the implications of this perspective for taking forward a debate about how to address prison numbers?

Accounting for prison numbers differently

- Three recent studies comparing nations' imprisonment rates with various social circumstances.
- Set out to establish whether there is a connection between the numbers imprisoned and wider social context.

Inequality



Welfare spending

Downes and Hanson (2006) of the 18 countries studied:

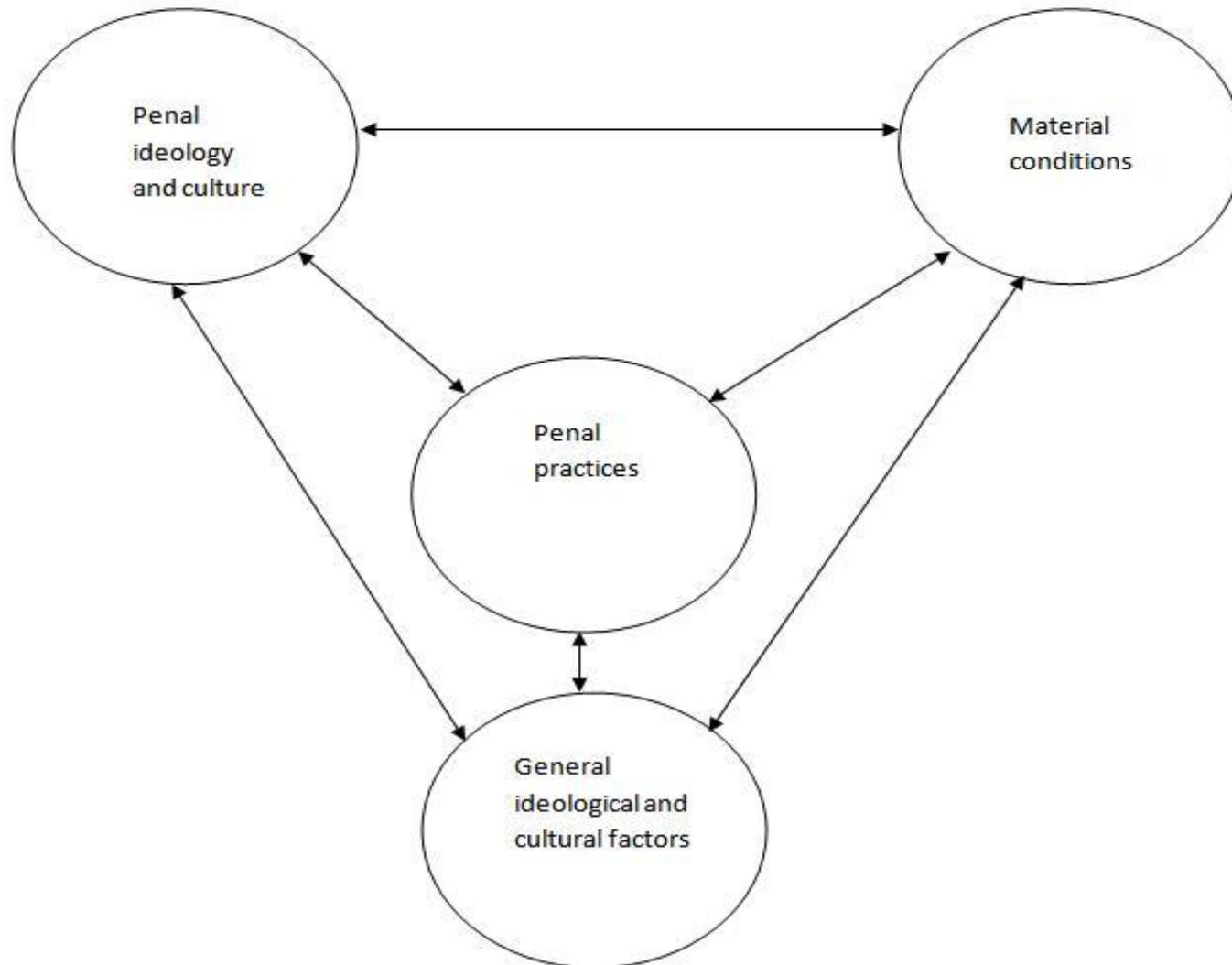
- Strong, inverse correlation between welfare spending and imprisonment.
 - The countries with the highest imprisonment rates all spent a below average proportion of their GDP on welfare.
 - Between 1989 – 1998 all bar one of the countries studied experienced increased imprisonment. However those that increased the share of their GDP on welfare experienced slower increases to their imprisonment rate than other, lower, welfare spending countries.
- Not fixed relationship over time.

Political economy

- Cavadino and Dignan (2006)
- Reliance on imprisonment is a feature of broader similarities between countries with similar social and economic organisation.
- 12 countries categorised into 4 groups.

Neo-liberal	Conservative corporatism	Social democratic	Oriental corporatist
Free market, considerable income inequality and minimal welfare state.	Status related economy and society, moderately generous welfare state and pronounced income differentials.	Generous welfare state, universal benefits and relatively limited income inequality.	Private sector based social and economic policy, paternalistic social system, and with very limited income differential.
US, England and Wales, and Australia	Germany and France	Sweden and Finland	Japan
All over 115 per 100,000 population	100 – 93 per 100,000 population	73- 70 per 100,000 population	53 per 100,000 population

No determining factor, 'complex interplay'



What do these accounts tell us about explanations for prison numbers?

- Disprove a hypothesis that there is no relationship between imprisonment and a wider set of social relations outside CJS.
- Different ways of expressing the same phenomenon.
- There is a complexity about the relationship between imprisonment and the factors they identify which this type of study can't explain.

Opening up nature of inquiry about prison numbers

- There is a value to organising responses to imprisonment across a broader spectrum than CJS.
- Concern about imprisonment is not a separate concern from the nature of society we live in but also involves engaging with some profound questions about structural inequality, attitudes and responses to marginalised, organisation of social policy.

What might an alternative approach to reducing prison numbers look like?

- Four responses asked to describe activities, perspective and dilemmas faced in work to reduce prison numbers.
- Four groups.
- 10 – 15 mins to read and discuss.
- Feedback

Thinking through and working towards reducing imprisonment

1. Dialogue

- Disrupting
- Exposing
- Choice
- Vocabulary

2. Where criminal justice fits in?

3. Rethinking the relationships between campaigns to reduce the use of custody and the public

Discussion

- ... CJ separation
- ... Changed dialogue about CJ
- ... Involving the public
- ... Other sources / suggestions you find helpful re. informing approach to tackling prison nos.
- ... Attempts and obstacles
- ...Mission itself... to significant change prison numbers?