Where Is Our Criminal Justice System Going?*

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**Summary:** Ireland’s criminal justice system is showing some signs of drifting in the direction of an ‘assembly line’ model of justice in which the State–individual balance is increasingly tipped in favour of the former. David Garland’s ‘culture of control’ thesis is very useful in describing the thrust and direction of this trend, particularly given the tendency to review events through starkly juxtaposing the inclusionary elements of *penal welfarism* and the exclusionary elements of *control*. Such a juxtaposition facilitates analogies, contrasts and generalisations serving the very useful purpose of highlighting ruptures, discontinuities, and dissimilarities within orthodox practices and ways of thinking. The paper make the point that though many of the indices of control are present in Ireland, many significant phenomena and occurrences in the criminal process do not sit neatly within the four corners of the thesis.

**Keywords:** David Garland, criminology, penology, punishment, welfare, rehabilitation, Ireland, culture of control, constitutional liberalism, legal justice, penal welfarism.