

Secondary Effects of Imprisonment: The New Direction of Prison Research

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Summary: This paper outlines the features of mass imprisonment and introduces an emerging field of research focusing on the ‘unintended’ or ‘collateral’ effects of the over-use of imprisonment. While recognising the differences in the scale of imprisonment between the US and the Republic of Ireland,¹ the paper argues that the questions raised in relation to the secondary effects of mass imprisonment are appropriate for any society in which imprisonment is not evenly distributed among the general population. A brief overview of theoretical approaches and empirical research on the secondary effects of imprisonment is presented, underscoring the dearth of knowledge on the subject area in the Irish case.

Keywords: Mass imprisonment, secondary effects of imprisonment, unintended consequences, prison, families, recidivism.