Gendering Justice Reinvestment: Assessing the Prospects for Reducing Women’s Imprisonment

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Justice Reinvestment

a data-driven approach to reducing high levels of incarceration through diverting expenditures from prisons to local communities to fund services intended to provide support and supervision for offenders within the community and to prevent crime

(Clement et al., 2011:8).
Correctional expenditure

Correctional spending in the US had increased by 303% between 1987 and 2008 as compared to 125% education while recidivism rates had remained the same or in some places had worsened.

(Clement at al 2011: 2-3).

Australia - $3.1 billion p.a. (4.8% increase last year)
Growth in women’s incarceration rates

From 2000-10, in Australia

- 56.8% increase for Indigenous women
- 35.2% for Indigenous men
- 22.4% for non-Indigenous women
- 3.6% for non-Indigenous men

‘changing sensibilities about both race and gender have clearly impacted on the propensity to incarcerate Indigenous women’ (Baldry et al 2102:28)
Indigenous women’s incarceration

In 2010, in Australia

- Indigenous women 21.5 times more likely to be imprisoned than non-Indigenous women
- Indigenous men 17.7 times more likely to be imprisoned than non-Indigenous men
Incarceration rates for Indigenous women

Australia

- Indigenous women - 381.6 per 100,000
  range from 112.8 (Tas) to 821.7 in WA

- non-Indigenous women 24.4 per 100,000
  range from 14.5 (Vic) to 27.0 (NSW)

US rates for minority women (BJS)

- Black non-Hispanic women – 133 per 100,000
- White non-Hispanic women – 47
- All women - 67
Trends in NSW

Figure 2: NSW women's crude full-time custody rates: 1991 - 2010, (per 100,000 adults)

Source: Corrective Services NSW, data provided to the author.
JR for women??

• Economic focus on $ savings – are women too few to count?
• ‘Evidence based’ approach - what counts as evidence?
• What do we know about women’s pathways to offending, desistance?
• Risk assessment tools
Challenges

Keeping a focus on women
Social justice
Challenging factors that exacerbate gendered insecurity and contribute to high incarceration