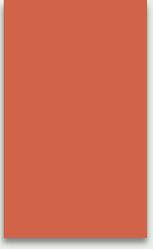


Beyond 'heavy-light': rethinking penal power

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‘We do not dissent from the plain truth that incarceration implies force, at least in ‘the last instance’. Prisons are dominative institutions. [But] we would also argue that an account that places its whole emphasis on the imposition of order by relentless force glosses over many important complexities of prison life and effaces some significant variations in the social organization of different prisons. One aspect of such difference [...] concerns the extent to which the staff of different prisons succeed or fail in legitimating their deployment of power and authority and the techniques and strategies which they deploy in seeking to secure such legitimacy’

(Prisons and the Problem of Order, Sparks, Bottoms and Hay 1996: 35)

Heavy-light

Light

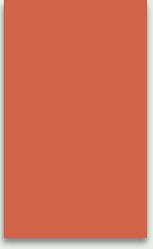
Relaxed
Co-operative
Approachable



Heavy

Oppressive
Confrontational
Intimidating

Use of authority



How strictly do they enforce the rules here?

Not at all. [...] It is mayhem sometimes. [...] They have not got a lot of control. Certain wings, the officers are not running the wings. The lads are running the wings. [...] It's not good is it? There is no authority really. Just mayhem, everywhere. [...] They need more staff to keep on top of things. (Prisoner, private sector)

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You'll have a bit more respect for the officers in an HMP than in here, because they earn it. They do the work that they're meant to do and then obviously you know where you stand with them (Prisoner, private prison)

What keeps things calm and ordered here?

Because of the way that the prison officers control the situation quickly. If they can demonstrate to the prisoner that they are in control of any given situation, no matter how big or small, [...] then it calms down large numbers of prisoners. (Prisoner, public sector)

Order, control and self-control

- ▶ ‘It’s too easy to get in trouble in here. I’ve kicked [drugs] before when inside and I thought, ‘yeah, I’m going to do that again’. It barely lasted 12 hours’
- ▶ ‘There’s no structure. There’s no rules. It’s a free-for-all and staff barely exist ... I’m involved in more criminal activity in here than I was on the out. That’s not good, is it? I don’t think that’s what prison should be for’
- ▶ ‘I think for everything to run properly there has to be rules, and those rules to a certain degree have to be kept, right? If somebody asks you to do something here and you say ‘no I’m not doing it’, [...] then they should be able to have the power and weight behind them to actually to enforce it’.

Absent-present

Absent

Invisible/ unavailable/ un-engaged
Laissez-faire
Insecure/weak



Present

Visible/ available/ engaged
Interventionist
Confident/authoritative

HEAVY/LIGHT
ABSENT/PRESENT

Heavy

Oppressive

PUBLIC SECTOR PRISONS

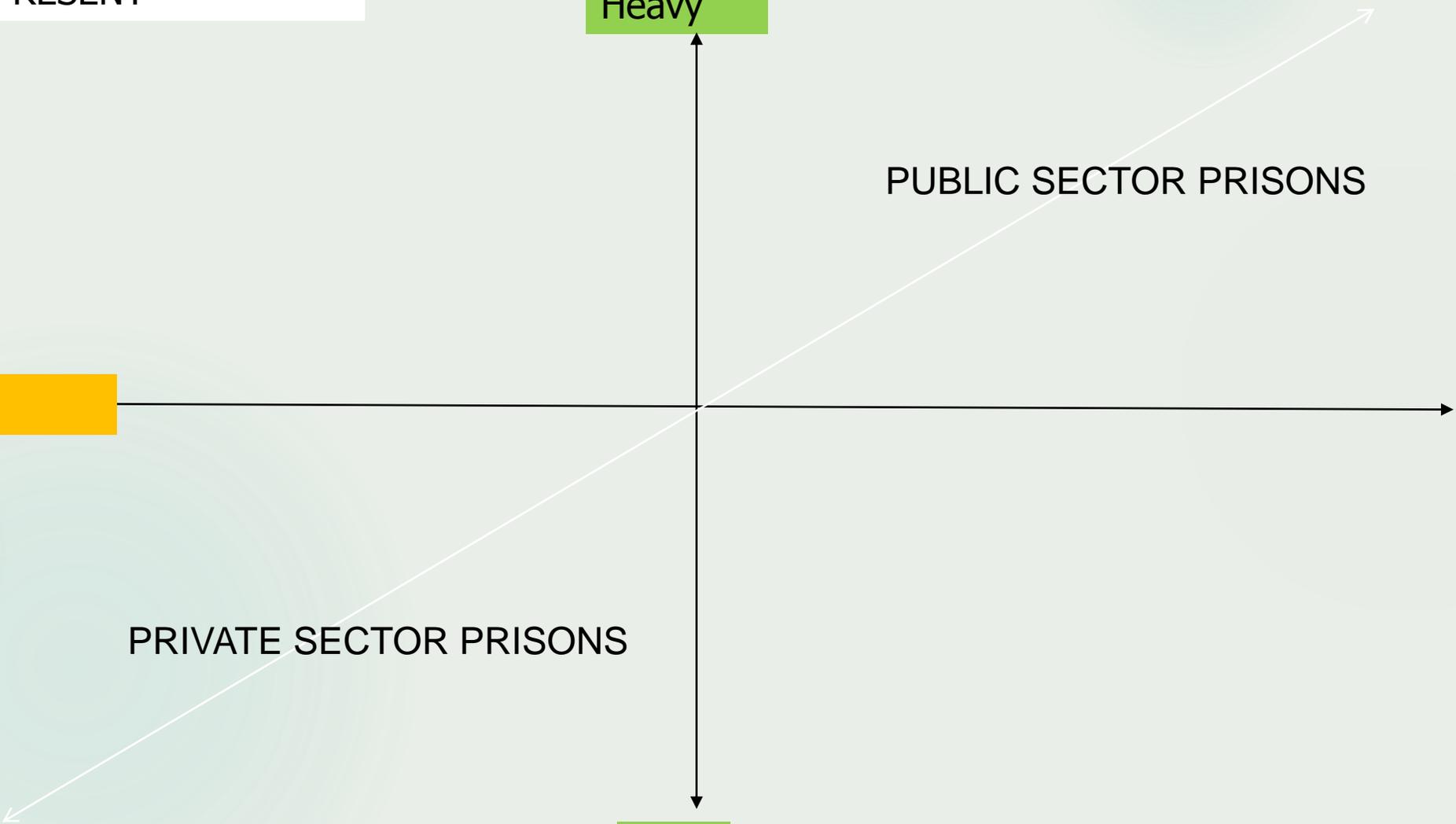
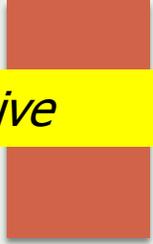
Absent

Present

PRIVATE SECTOR PRISONS

Light

Insecure



HEAVY/LIGHT
ABSENT/PRESENT

TRADITIONAL / CYNICAL

Oppressive

Heavy

PUBLIC SECTOR PRISONS

Absent

TRADITIONAL-
PROFESSIONAL

Present

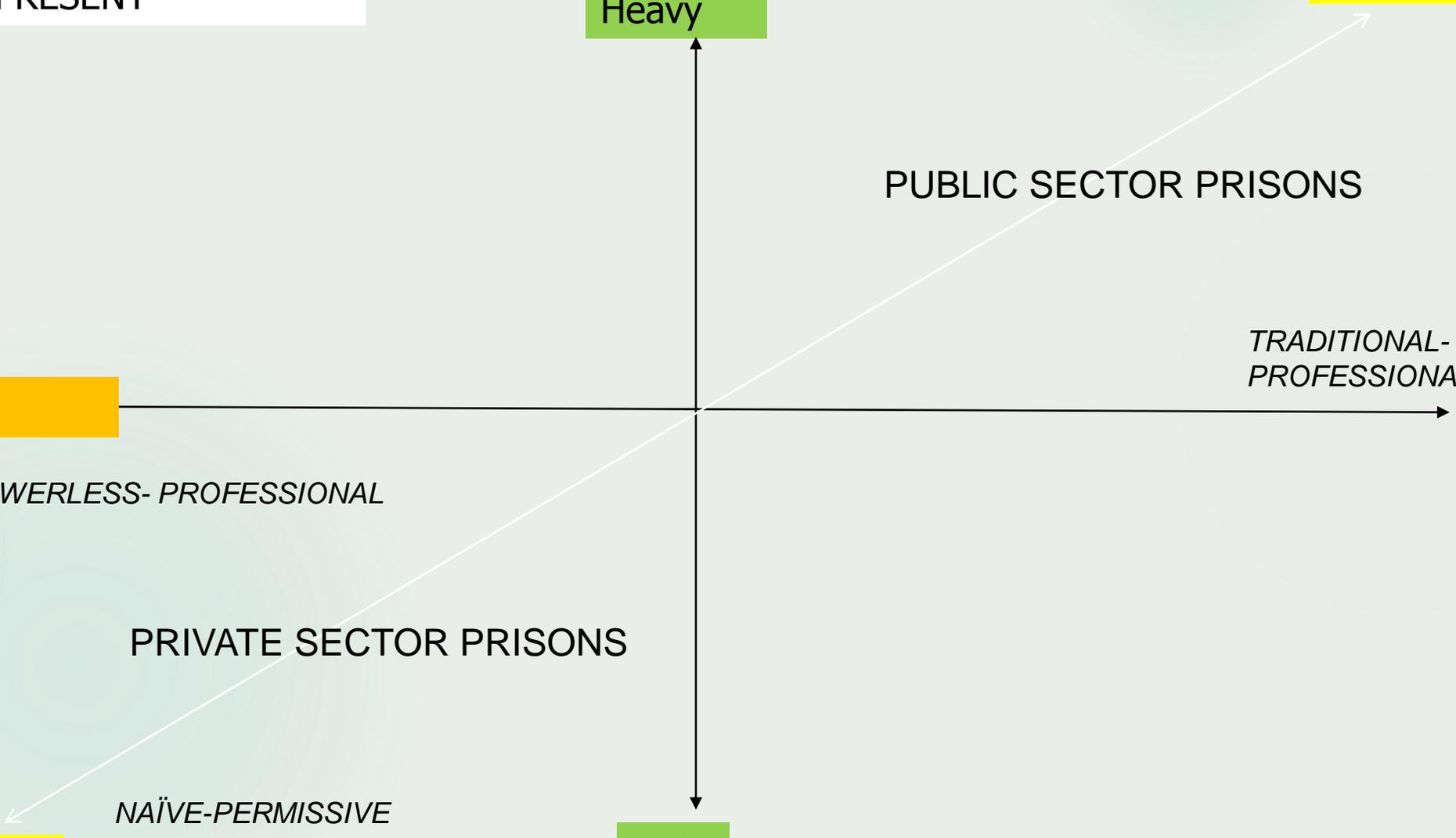
POWERLESS- PROFESSIONAL

PRIVATE SECTOR PRISONS

NAÏVE-PERMISSIVE

Light

Insecure



HEAVY/LIGHT
ABSENT/PRESENT

TRADITIONAL / CYNICAL

Oppressive

Heavy

PUBLIC SECTOR PRISONS

PRISON A

TRADITIONAL-
PROFESSIONAL

Absent

Present

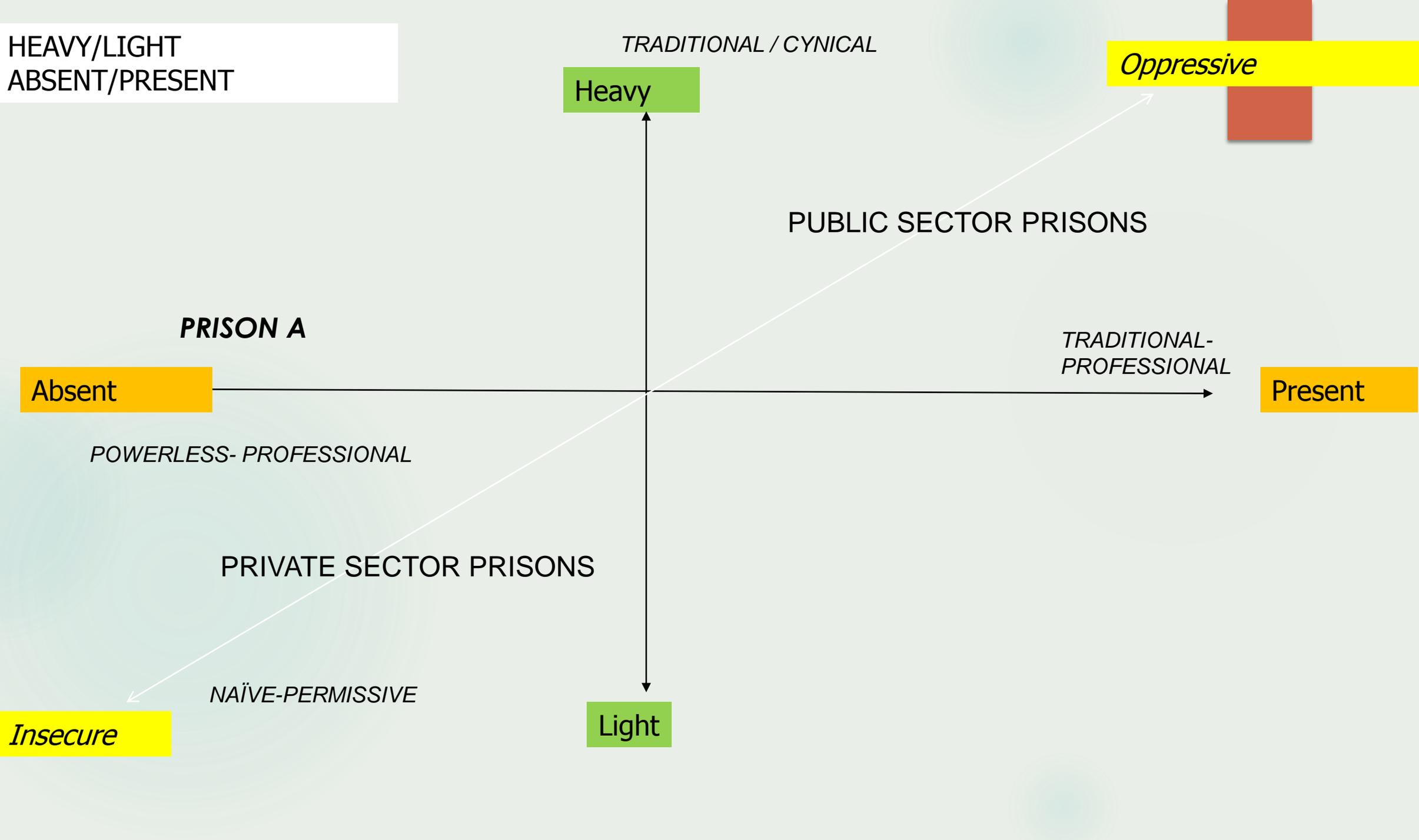
POWERLESS- PROFESSIONAL

PRIVATE SECTOR PRISONS

NAÏVE-PERMISSIVE

Insecure

Light



HEAVY/LIGHT
ABSENT/PRESENT

TRADITIONAL / CYNICAL

Oppressive

Heavy

PUBLIC SECTOR PRISONS

PRISON A

Absent

TRADITIONAL-
PROFESSIONAL

Present

POWERLESS- PROFESSIONAL

PRIVATE SECTOR PRISONS

PRISON B

NAÏVE-PERMISSIVE

Light

Insecure



HEAVY/LIGHT
ABSENT/PRESENT

TRADITIONAL / CYNICAL

Oppressive

Heavy

PUBLIC SECTOR PRISONS

PRISON A

PRISON C

TRADITIONAL-
PROFESSIONAL

Absent

Present

POWERLESS- PROFESSIONAL

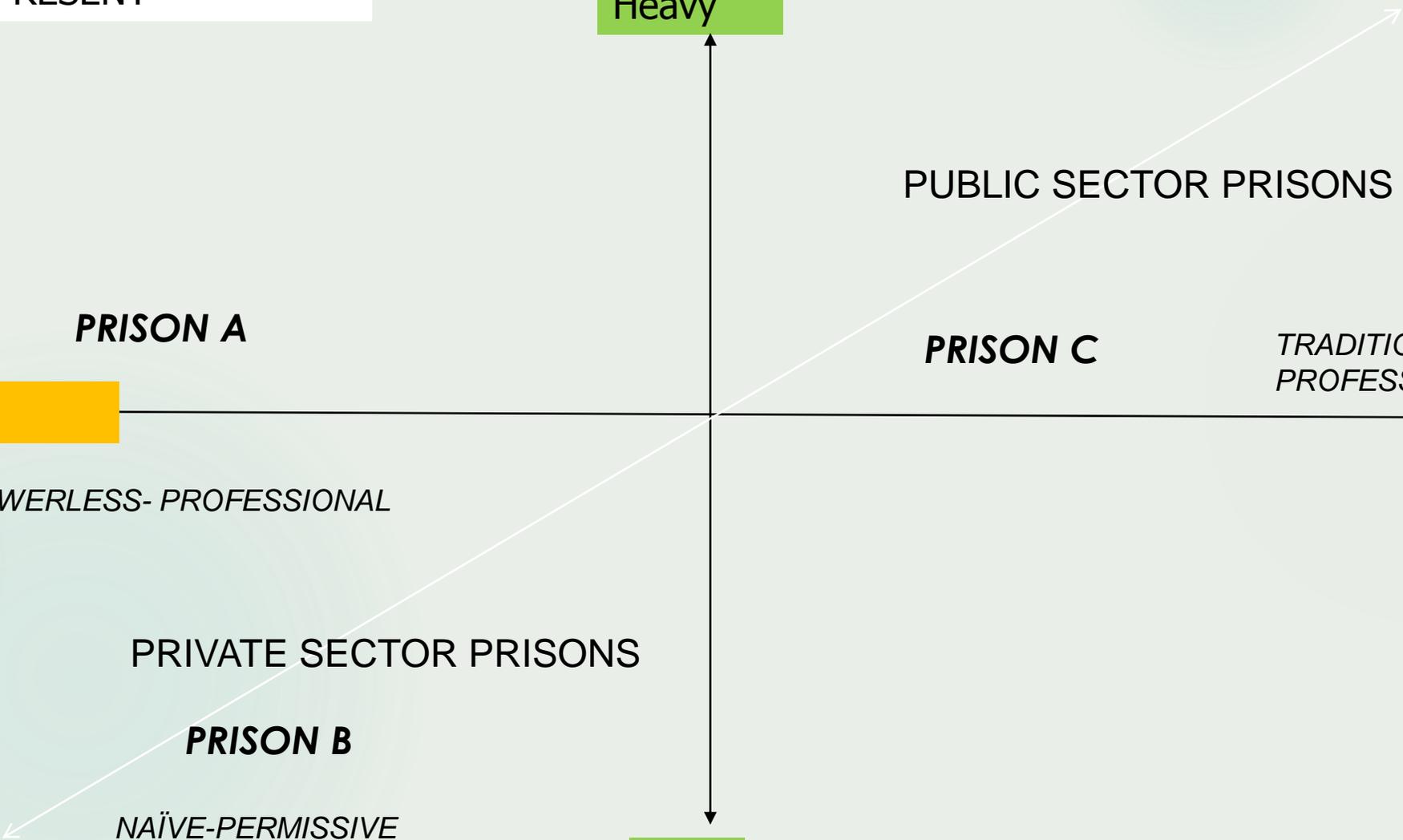
PRIVATE SECTOR PRISONS

PRISON B

NAÏVE-PERMISSIVE

Light

Insecure

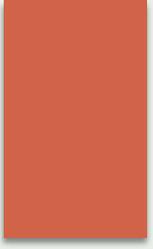


	Prison A Heavy-absent	Prison B Light-absent	Prison C Heavy-present	Prison D Light-present
<i>Harmony Dimensions</i>				
Entry into Custody	2.72	2.69	2.85	3.74
Respect/courtesy	2.99	3.21	3.23	3.99
Staff-prisoner relationships	2.80	3.07	3.20	3.93
Humanity	2.74	2.93	3.01	3.86
Decency	2.60	2.80	2.83	3.90
<i>Professionalism Dimensions</i>				
Staff professionalism	2.81	2.99	3.37	3.79
Bureaucratic legitimacy	2.30	2.53	2.77	3.26
Fairness	2.46	2.65	2.86	3.53
Organisation and consistency	2.14	2.31	2.89	3.60
<i>Security Dimensions</i>				
Policing and security	2.51	2.57	3.26	3.45
Prisoner safety	2.91	3.06	3.45	3.69
Prisoner adaptation	2.88	3.17	3.41	4.07
Drugs and exploitation	2.05	2.14	2.70	3.33
<i>Wellbeing and Development Dimensions</i>				
Personal development	2.60	2.76	2.97	4.11
Personal autonomy	2.75	2.76	2.97	3.78
Wellbeing	2.34	2.54	2.83	3.17
Distress	3.19	3.16	3.45	3.60

'Supervision of prisoners is poor in this prison'

	Mean Score	% Strongly agree	% Strongly disagree
Prison A - Heavy-absent	2.30	57.7	13.1
Prison B - Light-absent	2.45	54.4	16.8
Prison C - Heavy-present	3.03	28.8	35.6
Prison D – Light-present	3.50	18.6	65.4

Environment and behaviour



‘I don’t try to do anything anymore – it’s pointless’

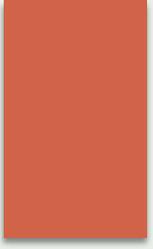
There’s no consistency, so people just give up’

‘The only way to get attention from the screws is to kick off or slice up’

‘You have to make a protest to even get a TV’.

‘It seems like the lads who are disruptive get more than the lads who are complying’.

Environment and behaviour



‘Yeah, the rules are clear on paper, but not in practice. It can drive you crazy. You do what you’re told, you follow the rules, and you don’t get anywhere. You see others swear, kick off, and then get Enhanced or moved on ... You don’t know what to do. I actually want to progress and follow the rules, but this is a game. Rules don’t matter. It makes me not want to comply. It makes me angry’.

‘I was Enhanced before I came here. I was the second server worker on my wing. But there’s no reason to apply yourself here, no motivation, no payoff’

Three models of 'power-sharing'



Prison C (heavy-present): power delegated and overseen carefully
others prisoners assisted

Prison A (heavy-absent): power granted informally and unaccountably
other prisoners exploited / neglected

Prison B (light-absent): power taken by prisoners
other prisoners overlooked

Three models of 'power-sharing'

Prison C (heavy-present): power delegated and overseen carefully
others prisoners assisted
'A screws' nick'

Prison A (heavy-absent): power granted informally and unaccountably
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Three models of 'power-sharing'

Prison C (heavy-present): power delegated and overseen carefully
others prisoners assisted
'A screws' nick'

Prison A (heavy-absent): power granted informally and unaccountably
other prisoners exploited / neglected
'A screws' prison, but prisoners run it'

Prison B (light-absent): power taken by prisoners
other prisoners overlooked
'A cons' nick'

'This prison is run by prisoners rather than staff'

	Mean Score	% Strongly agree	% Strongly disagree
Prison A - Heavy-absent	2.61	50.7	23.2
Prison B - Light-absent	2.67	46.0	26.7
Prison C - Heavy-present	3.85	11.7	67.6
Prison D – Light-present	3.23	29.9	46.7

In this prison, there is a real 'pecking order' between prisoners.	Mean Score	% Strongly agree	% Strongly disagree
Prison A - Heavy-absent	2.16	65.9	4.3
Prison B - Light-absent	2.36	55.7	8.1
Prison C - Heavy-present	2.70	35.2	16.2
Prison D – Light-present	3.31	26.9	52.9

In this prison things only happen for you if your face fits.	Mean Score	% Strongly agree	% Strongly disagree
Prison A - Heavy-absent	2.23	61.3	10.2
Prison B - Light-absent	2.28	63.8	13.4
Prison C - Heavy-present	2.74	41.7	23.6
Prison D – Light-present	3.36	24.8	56.2

Mode of authority	Heavy-absent	Light-absent	Heavy-present	Light-present
Mode of order	Excess order	Disorder	Firm order	Good order
Feel	Oppressive	Normless	Heavy	Relaxed, purposeful
Model of safety	<i>Situational</i> Hyper-vigilant, Risk-oriented No trust	<i>Disregard for safety</i> Avoidance, indifference	<i>Reassurance/defensive</i> Vigilant Low-trust	<i>Relational safety</i> Dynamic Interactive/ informal Intelligent trust
Professional confidence	Excessive	Low	Excessive	High
Moral position of officers	Cynical Enforcers, avoiders	Some tragic 'reciprocators', 'avoiders'	Cynical (enforcers and professionals)	Tragic (professionals)
Use of authority	Under- & over-enforcement 'stand back / jump forwards'	Under- & over-enforcement 'stand back / jump forwards'	Over-enforcement 'By the book', exacting	Selective, balanced, judicious
Degree of legitimacy	Very low --	Low -	moderate - (+)	High ++