

Modus Vivendi: The cell, emotions, social relations and television

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ABSTRACT- This paper documents some of the findings from a doctoral study examining the role of in-cell television in a closed adult male prison. Interviews with serving prisoners and staff indicate the complex nature of relationships (social relations) within prison settings. In particular, prisoners' relationships with other prisoners, especially those they share a cell with, was a significant feature of this research. Television's role within these dynamic relationships has personal, social and policy value for prisons and the people within them. This paper draws upon two separate case examples of prisoners who, at the time of interview, shared a cell. The ways in which they relate to television and each other provides some initial understandings of what happens to prisoners when they share a cell together. This paper discusses the role of television in light of safer custody agendas with a particular focus on the emotive dimensions of the prison cell. Here the paper draws close attention to contemporary discussions about the salience of emotions and space. In particular the work of Crewe et al (2013) in relation to the emotional geography of the prison space and Moores' (2011) concept of 'reach' with respect to media use. The paper highlights the complexities of the ways in which space is negotiated within the cell and how everyday life with television is organised to nourish the pains of prison within a cell sharing context. This paper ends by making a number of statements about how future research needs to explore both the emotive and social geographies of the prison cell.

Overview-

This paper documents some of the findings from a doctoral study examining the role of in-cell television in a closed adult male prison. Interviews with serving prisoners and staff indicate the complex nature of relationships (social relations) within prison settings. In particular, prisoners' relationships with other prisoners, especially those they share a cell with, was a significant feature of this research. Television's role within these dynamic relationships has personal, social and policy value for prisons and the people within them. This paper draws upon two separate case examples of prisoners who, at the time of interview, shared a cell. The ways in which they relate to television and each other provides some initial understandings of what happens to prisoners when they share a cell together. The paper goes on to discuss the role of television in light of safer custody agendas. The paper draws close attention to contemporary discussions about the salience of emotions and space. In particular the work of Crewe et al (2013) in relation to the emotional geography of the prison space and Moores' (2011) concept of 'reach' with respect to media use. The paper highlights the complexities of the ways in which space is negotiated within the cell and how everyday life with television is organised to nourish the pains of prison within a cell sharing context. This paper ends by making a number of statements about how future research needs to explore both the emotive and social geographies of the prison cell.

Emotional Geography in Prison

Crewe et al , in my view, are right- accounts of prison life and adaptation only 'provide a partial account of the prison's emotional world'¹. As a result, the complexity of the

¹ Crewe, B., Warr, J., Bennett, P., & Smith, A. (2013). The emotional geography of prison life. *Theoretical Criminology*, 1362480613497778

emotional landscape of the prison has been obscured by a range of typologies, largely registered as 'pain'. To a point this has been extremely helpful and has provided researchers and commentators a framework for interrogation. However, as Crewe et al suggest this has resulted in a failure to capture the 'distinctive kind of emotional geography, with zones in which certain kinds of emotional feelings and displays are more or less acceptable'². This framework is helpful for understanding how spatial regions within the prison context are 'felt' and how space in prison settings are 'differentiated'. It is these differentiated spaces that will be the focus of this paper- in particular the peculiar private or 'backstage' space of the prison cell.

Many prisoners in the UK have to share a cell, usually with people they do not know. The architectural diversity of prison buildings in the UK means that the physical make up of the cell can vary from Victorian gothic cells to 'modern' pre-fabricated cells. Little is known or documented about the cell as a site of experience yet the cell characterizes all that is incarceration. Hence the cell deserves focused inquiry which explores how relationships (social relations) and emotions nestle within the prison space. Crewe et al helpfully consolidate key sociological analyses of prison spaces taking into account the nature and prevalence of violence in prisons, the roles prisoners adopt to cope with prison life and the spatial features of prison institutions and how they interplay with the emotional rules of the institution. These insights, for the first time, liberate questions of emotion and space in the prison context- and permit an emotive reading of prison space. What this means is that the 'internal geographies of behavior and emotional expression'³ can be traced more closely and it then it is possible to trace the 'emotional map'⁴ of prison spaces. However as MacKian, warns 'mapping' emotions across space fixes them as rigid entities and 'breaks the iterative process of constant experience'⁵. Instead, with MacKian's advice this paper seeks to present a 'visualization' of the

² *ibid* p.1

³ *ibid* p.4

⁴ Crawley, E. (2004) Emotion and performance: Prison officers and the presentation of the self in prisons. *Punishment and Society* 6:4 411-427 p.5

⁵ MacKian, S. (2004). Mapping reflexive communities: visualizing the geographies of emotion. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 5(4), 615-631

emotive dimensions of the prison cell. Using two case studies of two prisoners sharing a cell, this analysis provides a focused understanding of prisoner and prisoner relationships and how they go about shaping their domestic space to 'cope with problems of privacy and safety'⁶.

Centred within this space the television set is fully accommodated- with many cells having purpose built shelves to house them and in some prisons a full overhaul of in-cell electricity was necessary⁷. With it now firmly entrenched into contemporary prison life, television has, as it did in the home⁸, changed the experience of the cell. Unwittingly, the cell has become a palatable place to be and many prisoners, as I found in my research, a space which can be modified emotionally. Moores describes, television helps with this modification by allowing prisoners to 'reach'⁹ spaces that stretch beyond the prison place. Here then the 'leakages, sublimations and positive forms of emotion'¹⁰ are of course visible. As Davidson and Milligan highlight emotions are 'connective tissue that links experiential geographies of the human psyche and physique with(in) broader social geographies of place'¹¹. Prison research is often in danger of reporting the prison place in pathological terms and the paraphrasing of emotions as negative and positive do not sufficiently capture the complexity of the surfacing of a range of emotions¹². The emotional geography of the prison cell is dynamic and distinctive- the following case studies highlight this.

Modus Vivendi: Finding ways to stay in control: Barry and Will

⁶ Crewe, B., Warr, J., Bennett, P., & Smith, A. (2013). The emotional geography of prison life. *Theoretical Criminology*, 1362480613497778.

⁷ Knight, V. (2012). A Study of In-cell Television in a Closed Adult Male Prison: Governing Souls with In-cell Television. Leicester, De Montfort University PhD

⁸ Spigel, L. (2013). *Make room for TV: Television and the family ideal in postwar America*. University of Chicago Press.

⁹ Moores, S. (2006). Media uses and everyday environmental experiences: A positive critique of phenomenological geography. *Particip@tions*, 3(2).

¹⁰ Crewe, B., Warr, J., Bennett, P., & Smith, A. (2013). The emotional geography of prison life. *Theoretical Criminology*, 1362480613497778.

¹¹ Davidson, J., & Milligan, C. (2004). Embodying emotion sensing space: introducing emotional geographies. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 5(4), 523-532.

¹² Layder, D. (2004). *Emotion in social life: The lost heart of society*. Sage.

Television activity diaries completed in this study highlighted that most television in prison is viewed with another prisoner and so scope for carving out their 'own' viewing schedules is limited. Most respondents spoke about compromise or the need to accommodate others' viewing preferences, which often meant that not all of their viewing needs were met. Here, a *modus vivendi* is established to avoid conflict. Some talked about conflict over viewing schedules and the ways in which these differences are resolved¹³. Barry and Will separately disclosed their frustration over the other's viewing preferences and their domestic habits. Barry was not as keen as Will on sporting events. Will did not like Barry's choice of action movies and the lead actors in them. Hobson¹⁴ describes how television audiences are separated by different tastes in television or 'two worlds' and this applies to Barry and Will:

Barry — *I've been having rows with pad mate cos the athletics is on, he's not bad but don't tell him. It was on all day yesterday. Last week I watched what I wanted with a view to him*

watching the athletics and Match of the Day. I don't want to watch it, especially after 5 hours, I'm climbing the walls. He ain't bothered though. He hates Steven Segal and Jean Claude van Damm, he hates it I know it winds him up. I leave the toilet seat up too. We get on alright. I know him from in here.

Within this confined space two separate cultures evolve and do not always nestle well together. The few things they share are the experience of being in prison. Learning to compromise and be tolerant of each other requires personal control and a willingness to ratify a treaty or surrender. Layder's¹⁵ application of Goffman's 'interaction order' can account for how individuals find ways to look after their 'social self' and dealing with

¹³ Gersch, B. (2003) Dis/connected: Media Use Among Inmates Unpublished PhD Oregon, University of Oregon USA.

¹⁴ Hobson, D. (1980) Housewives and Mass Media *Culture, Media and Language* p109.

¹⁵ Layder, D. (2004) *Emotion in Social Life: The Lost Heart of Society* London, Sage.

problems in social life results in 'mutual moral obligations'¹⁶. Will corroborates what Barry states about their planned viewing and sometimes viewing together is achieved. Will's interest in sport is enabled by a sustained sacrifice of his viewing preferences in order to 'bank' television time with his cell mate,

***Will** — Like in the last 2 weeks I told him to watch what he wanted cos I knew sport was on. He enjoys football I think, he does get into it. We have a cup of tea and sit on the bed and watch it.*

Barry describes how planning together helps to establish a shared television routine in which a rhythm of mutual viewing can evolve,

***Barry** — I plan TV and mark it down, we also plan it together. He is the DVD orderly, I tell him what I fancy and he brings it. We have as many as we like really. Tonight we've got Shooting Gallery. We'll watch a DVD at bang up between 12-2pm and on Saturdays and Sundays we can do 3 DVDs back to back.*

By having a shared ritual they develop their own social rules, and these become ratified as time spent with each other in these circumstances goes on¹⁷. However this is not always a seamless or innocent negotiation. Will admits that he will deliberately select programmes which challenge Barry's taste:

***Will** — Sometimes I do the opposite to him. I can't stand Jean Claude Van Dam and Steven Segal or crime and The Bill. I like Panorama, Dispatches, News on ITV, but not regional. The Bill is most frustrating, it is police orientated, a warped perspective of what police do.*

¹⁶ Ibid p.18

¹⁷ Ibid p.18

The game-playing¹⁸ can in part help to temper their own frustrations and manage a situation which most find intolerable. Moreover in a climate in which boredom is commonplace, conflict can emerge as a response to these conditions¹⁹. Furthermore, finding and sustaining power within the cell requires focus, and the playful nature they describe underlies their attempts to sustain personal control²⁰. On the surface Barry and Will wanted to present an egalitarian version of their domestic circumstances, yet Barry's description describes how his own power could not be fully realized with Will, due to a prisoner code²¹:

Barry — We have a remote each now, we normally pass it to each other. My pad mate was in his cell before me so it is his pad, when he moves out it then becomes mine. Mind you I moved into a cell and there was a young lad and I told him to shift. I didn't bully him, I just told him. I don't like to associate with people in here some are nasty, but I know who is good. My pad mate is not bad but he is never wrong. He has a way of saying stuff. We like Star Trek, when we were kids, our era. We just like it. You see things in Star Trek and Star Wars.

Finding common ground and the ability to relax in these awkward circumstances is important to make the situation bearable and meaningful. Sharing programmes they both enjoy provides respite from potential tension and conflict. In maintaining the 'self as a finely tuned security system',²² they can function with less effort as they become

¹⁸ McDermott, K. & King, R. (1988) Mind games: where the action is in prisons *British Journal of Criminology* Vol.28:3 pp357-78 Gersch, B. (2003) Dis/connected: Media Use Among Inmates Unpublished PhD Oregon, University of Oregon USA

¹⁹ Barbalet, J. M. (1999) Boredom and Social Meaning *British Journal of Sociology* Vol.50:4 pp631-649.

²⁰ Layder, D. (2004) *Emotion in Social Life: The Lost Heart of Society* London, Sage p17.

²¹ Sykes, G. (1999) *The Society of Captives: A Study of A Maximum Security Prison* New Jersey, Princeton University Press
Crewe, B. (2005) Codes and conventions: the terms and conditions of contemporary inmate values in Liebling, A, & Maruna, S. (eds) (2005) *The Effects of Imprisonment* Collumpton, Willan. 6.
²² Layder, D. (2004) *Emotion in Social Life: The Lost Heart of Society* London, Sage.

united²³

Will — *My pad mate's choice Big, Bigger and Biggest, I enjoy that. He sometimes says 'that's amazing' but we don't normally talk, that is a*

sign of a good pad mate. If you can sit in silence. I remember this chap, one of the bully boys, like making demands, I think it was a lack of education to deal with problems, there are arguments sometimes. Like my pad mate we have arguments sometimes, his hygiene levels, he smokes and the toilet. You have got to respect each other and he snores. TV is great for your mental health, but you need ear plugs for your sanity, but it is more to do with his snoring. In daytime I might watch Countdown or sports. My pad mate watches Murder She Wrote and Heartbeat! I'd murder that Angela Lansbury. Curtain twitchers watch that stuff.

Will explains that television provides an escape from his environment and the people within it. Will may worry about the potential risk his pad mate could pose, as he knows about the way the prison had managed Barry as a high risk prisoner. This means Will needs to tread carefully. Barry described the violent crime he was involved in and this will have been assessed as a factor of significant risk. Inadvertently, these kinds of actuarial assessments can highlight and inflame the pathological label. Will therefore may be worried about the contaminating effects Barry could have on him, and experiencing large quantities of time in a confined space with a 'dangerous' prisoner can induce fear. Television, if handled and negotiated properly, can provide respite from these tensions. Striving for ontological security²⁴ using television can offer protective factors against unsettling and distressing emotions like frustration or fear.

Will — *In the evenings TV is separation from my pad mate I get head space from him. I think he was single cell and high risk, so I need head space from him. I'm a private*

²³ Kubey, R. (1990) Television and The Quality of Family Life *Communication Quarterly* Vol.38:4 pp312-324.

²⁴ Layder, D. (2004) *Emotion in Social Life: The Lost Heart of Society* London, Sage.

person. I enjoy my own company. My pad mate is a big kid — it is frustrating. In here sometimes you are forced into violent situations. It is divide and conquer with other prisoners, it is much easier to control and we become products of our environment.

Their relationship requires ‘a rational plan’ in order for them to co-exist in the same cell without conflict²⁵. Planning television viewing and bargaining are techniques which help to maintain an amicable relationship, sharing the remote control for example and Will providing Barry with DVDs are ways in which help to temper conflict. Will has clear distaste for Barry’s television choices and Barry finds Will’s love of sport tedious; both manifesting as frustration. Despite these differences some common ground was achievable and Barry’s testimony in relation to sci-fi was an opportunity for these individuals to identify a bond or intimacy via television; bringing them together and achieving reasonable harmony.

Friendship, survival and time together: Shaun and Lee

At the time of interview Shaun and Lee were subject to basic conditions and their television had been removed for bad behaviour. This meant that time out of cell, visits and access to goods and services were limited, resulting in extended periods of bang-up. In the absence of television, Shaun found he read and wrote more, something he got great pleasure from. Lee enjoyed dance music, which Shaun also liked. Unlike Barry and Will, Shaun and Lee’s relationship appeared more settled; they shared similar taste in music, shared a past before prison and also liked crime novels and similar television and radio programmes. Shaun’s taste was more diverse than Lee’s; he also liked wildlife programmes, rock and pop music. Both were very familiar with popular soap storylines and characters. They were concerned about boredom and the impact that certain kinds of broadcasts would have on their well-being,

Lee—*My typical day is in a morning if I had TV I’d turn on ‘Jeremy Kyle’ then get lunch and sit there all day until dinner. I get bored of watching it, it is the same everyday. It*

²⁵ Ibid.

makes time drag with telly. You know how long they are on for and then it is dinner time. It is one big time game here. Time flies with me and him [Shaun]. We get up and clean pad and we jump up and do something. But cos TV might be on you're just lying on your bed. I go to sleep at lunch and we have a messy pad. I clean in evenings all the time.

Shaun — *There is crap on TV. TV in your cell is ok like if you weren't working and nothing to do. But in the day it is rubbish like 'Build a*

House in the Country', 'Trisha', 'Wright Stuff' — crappy, shitty, rubbish. But then TV is something to look at, something to stare at. Day time fries your head, scrambled brain, it makes people anti-social, no one talks when the telly is on. You talk, but it is not a conversation, like saying 'Oh she's fit', 'yeah' it is not a proper conversation. There is no danger with TV in prison, it entertains people, keeps people quiet, good for reducing suicides, but it gives people a lot of power, even the prisoners. Like some folks can't read, folks haven't got a stereo, so TV helps. But without it for me it is easy, I can read and write.

Given their attitude towards the dominance that television can have in their lives in prison, their current experience on the basic regime without television highlights how getting by and doing their time can essentially be experienced more positively. Shaun especially felt more motivated and compelled to read and write,

Television, for Shaun, is a distraction, something that gets in the way of what he considers to be more purposeful.

Shaun — *I've been 3 weeks without TV cos I am on basic. It is much better, I feel more motivated to do things such as cell work-outs, read books, write more like poetry, a book. If I had TV I'd only just I don't miss them. I suppose if*

be starting... But I had a TV that magically came on and then switched off that would be good — but it is too tempting to leave on and then you become a bed spud — it becomes the be all and end all of your life in here. If my pad mate watches 'Emmerdale', I'll write

a letter.

They also show 'sensitivity to spatiality' which is accentuated by their segregation from the standard regime²⁶. Television, for Shaun, is a distraction, something that gets in the way of what he considers to be more purposeful. Shaun realises that reading and writing was something that was out of his focus, until he encountered prison without television. Shaun does recognise the pleasures of television, but like many respondents in this study finds it hard to switch off and regulate viewing quantities. Lee is less confident about the absence of television. For Lee music (which is permitted on basic regime) can provide sufficient stimulation, but he struggles more than Shaun with bang-up time,

Lee — *Music makes you think about other things so you can go behind your door and get away and stay behind your door. I'm alright to talk but it does wind you up also behind your door... it deads my head in this shit. I just cope with it really, but it does wind me up. It is a joke with the staff. My cell mate helps.*

Tolerance of isolation and exposure to unstructured time can differ, and coping and adaptation to the conditions of incarceration is variable. Their friendship helps Lee handle these conditions. Under the basic regime, contact with others would be minimal and therefore interaction between themselves in their cells becomes increasingly significant. The solidarity they have can be evidenced in how they plan to manage television once it is re-introduced,

Lee — *We've planned a routine with telly it was his [Shaun] idea, I ain't bothered. I'm getting lazy just lying in bed watching TV all night. I don't like been lazy. I like to get up*

²⁶ Lull, J. (1990) *Inside Family Viewing: Ethnographic Research on Television Audiences* London, Routledge.

and be out there and be busy. But here I don't want to do anything, it is a waste of time doing nothing.

Shaun fears idleness and the intrusion of the outside world once television enters his life again,

Shaun — *Prison is depressing, nothing happens and to have the outside shoved in your face is hard. I don't want to think about it whilst I am here. I'm in my cell all day. I need a certain level of exercise, it lets off steam and you are then not thinking and things playing on your mind. I manage to block it out all day and then it all just hits you all before you go to sleep. I struggle with sleep in here and suppose TV can help with that. Like when I couldn't get to sleep and find myself watching Big Brother.*

Despite the benefits Shaun describes, contact with the outside world is too painful.

Withdrawal from public life is not an uncommon response amongst prisoners, especially long-termers²⁷²⁸ Shaun was a remand prisoner and explained he was probably going to get a life sentence for his crime. Being able to comprehend, witness and be intimate with a world in which he cannot participate may explain his need to disconnect. This is the same world that has confined him to prison and put him

in social care as a child. The visual qualities of television for Shaun are an intrusion into his life²⁹ and therefore do not suit Shaun's needs at this time. He is grateful to spend time without television and escape the punctuated nature of broadcasts³⁰,

Shaun — *I thank them for putting me on basic, I love it. I don't want my TV back, but I do*

²⁷ Martel, J. (2006) To Be, One Has To Be Somewhere: Spatio-temporality in Prison Segregation *British Journal of Criminology* Vol. 46:4 pp587-612.

²⁸ Cohen, S. & Taylor, L. (1972) *Psychological Survival: The Experience of Long-Term Imprisonment* Middlesex, Pelican.

²⁹ Spigel, L. (1992) *Make Room for TV* Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

³⁰ Scannell, P. (1996) *Radio, Television and Modern Life* Oxford, Blackwell.

want visits and associations. They don't like that, that I don't want a TV. I'm not in cell crying. I have a choice you see. Time goes quicker this way, I suppose you analyse yourself. I like TV on at certain times and not having a clock. Like the adverts, they come on roughly every 15 minutes and so on, so you get the time all the time. Without a stereo it is hard. You have a 45 minute tape I suppose, but there isn't a constant tab on time. I don't want to know what time it is.

Lee on the other hand imagines a routine in which television would feature in his 'own' schedule rather than he being dominated by television all of the time³¹. Lee also described how he had struggled to overcome drug addiction, and finding techniques to control his drug use could also be extended to his use of television,

Lee — *...the punishment doesn't bother me. I just take it. I could leave the TV on the doorstep when they move me to level 2. They are winding me up saying I could have a telly. If they offered me a telly I'd turn on in the morning for the news then keep it off. I'd have it on in the lunch hour and in the afternoon it would be off. It would be on in the evening for the soaps. Then I would do a pad work out to music, switch it back on to fall asleep.*

Television helps Lee to punctuate his daily life in prison and he actively aligns television to certain activities. The combination of imprisonment and television accentuates the fears of becoming idle, akin to addiction³². Becoming dependent on television is something the respondents were conscious of and where media dependency³³ reaches a level that they considered to be unhealthy, television could become dissatisfactory. This draining effect of television steals important energy and stifles attempts to remain

³¹ Silverstone, R. (1999) *Television and Everyday Life* London: Routledge.

³² Jewkes, Y (2002) *Captive Audience: Media, masculinity and power in prison* Collumpton, Willan.

³³ Vandebosch, H. (2000) Research Note: A Captive Audience? The Media Use of Prisoners *European Journal of Communication* Vol.15:4 pp529-544.

ontologically secure. As Rubin³⁴ found, those individuals with internal locus of control were less likely to be susceptible to these kinds of effects, whereas individuals with an external locus of control and are more likely to take up more television are more likely to be dissatisfied with the activity. Taking responsibility for their viewing is a mechanism for resolving pervasive attitudes, which can be destructive. Avoiding the 'docile'³⁵ aspect of incarceration serves to ensure that their personal control remains functioning. Losing control by becoming docile can weaken their ability to govern themselves and thus they may become susceptible to subordination of the situated or mediated encounters. The techniques outlined by Shaun and Lee enabled them to secure meaning and control in their disorientating circumstances. The re-introduction of television presents a threat to the equilibrium they have managed to achieve in its absence.

Television and Safer Custody

The two case studies presented in this article outline how television can contribute to the 'work' of the prison. The dominant outcome of this research is that television is co-opted by prisoners in attempts to self-regulate and control their emotive responses to prison life. Inadvertently, television is therefore contributing to the efforts to maintain control and assist in the delivery of care — television is put to work and thus contributes to what Crewe³⁶ defines as a mechanism for 'soft-power', enabling services to govern at a distance. Television has normalised the experience of the cell, in part replicating the comforting aspects of domestic life which result in legitimating the power structures which operate at a distance.

Television provides the prison with a resource which unwittingly distracts and occupies the prisoner in a number of ways. So much so, that other opportunities have either

³⁴ Rubin, A.M. (1993) The Effect of Locus Control on Communication Motivation, Anxiety, and Satisfaction *Communication Quarterly* Vol.41:2 pp161-171.

³⁵ Foucault, M. (1991) *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* London, Penguin.

³⁶ Crewe, B. (2011) Soft power in prison: Implications for staff-prisoner relationships, liberty and legitimacy Vol. 8:6 pp455-468.

been removed or declined in popularity. The removal of 'stage' newspapers (free daily newspapers for prisoners) from prisons in 2005 has been attributed by some commentators to the introduction of in-cell television³⁷. Before its introduction, policy makers and politicians made reasonable judgements of the value of in-cell television by anticipating its impact on calming or 'settling' of prisoners, assisting with loneliness and boredom and above all achieving control of the setting and its people. The findings of this study, as well as that of others³⁸ support what policy makers anticipated were reasonably close to findings from research. The placing of television in the cell, however, means that these 'benefits' have wider and diverse ramifications on prisoners and the prison and thus actually extend beyond the original aims of introducing in-cell television.

A major outcome in prisons has been the regulation of the 'emotional economy'³⁹ and the regulation of emotion has enabled and accompanied increased control of prisoner behaviour⁴⁰. Television is one of the few outlets for prisoners to manage their emotionality. Television's place across social relations contributes to 'neo-paternalistic' agendas, where television is used to foster control with less direct intervention from staff and thus satisfying safer custody priorities.

If television did not deliver 'care-giving' qualities, prisoner audiences would be reluctant to use it⁴¹. This raises important questions about the framing of television as 'care-

³⁷ James, E (2005) Never a Luxury *The Guardian* 14/6/05

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2005/jun/14/prisonsandprobation.erwinjames> accessed 12.9.11

³⁸ Jewkes, Y (2002) Captive Audience: Media, masculinity and power in prison Collumpton, Willan Gersch, B. (2003) Dis/connected: Media Use Among Inmates Unpublished PhD Oregon, University of Oregon USA Vandebosch, H. (2000) Research Note: A Captive Audience? The Media Use of Prisoners *European Journal of Communication* Vol.15:4 pp529-544.

³⁹ Rose, N. (1999) *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self* London, Routledge p225.

⁴⁰ Pratt, J. (1999) Norbert Elias and the civilized prison *British Journal of Sociology* Vol. 50:2 pp271-296.

Garland, D. (1991) *Punishment and Modern Society: A Study in Social Theory* Oxford, Clarendon.

⁴¹ Silverstone, R. (1999) *Television and Everyday Life* London: Routledge.

giver'. There is a problem of 'care' in prison settings, which results in care being mostly self-directed and television is one functional mechanism to assist in this. It is observable that there is a dichotomous relationship between care and control. The experience of television is secured by attachments to it in the promise of achieving basic or ontological security. Instead, personal and inter-personal control resembles care of the self. Tait⁴² has recently attempted to capture the nature and typologies of care among prison officers. The ambiguity of care is accentuated by the prevalence of control and this may result in care being difficult. Instead it is suggested that television is not necessarily 'care giving', it is 'care enabling'. Television's contribution is to normalise the experience of prison and especially attempt to make the cell more palatable and attractive. Television is therefore placed in the cell with unanticipated outcomes for therapeutic control, and inadvertently television is exploited to achieve control. This extends the remit originally intended by policy makers at the introduction of in-cell television to prison.

Research Directions?

To end I would like to consider the direction of future research and offer some methodological solutions for extending research into emotion and also the prison cell. Is it possible to frame the prison cell in the same way ethnographers have studied the home?

...we have come to see each household as both economic and a cultural unit in which the respective material position of each sets profound limits on the opportunities available for consumption and self-expression...households are able to define for themselves a private/public moral, emotional, cognitive, evaluative and aesthetic

⁴² Tait, S. (2011) A typology of prison officer approaches to care *European Journal of Criminology* Vol. 8:6 pp440-454.

*environment- a pattern of life- on which they depend for survival...*⁴³

Is it possible therefore, to conceptualise the prison cell, as Silverstone et al do here akin to the domestic household? If so, we need to conduct more research and embrace different epistemological foundations. Both sociological and geographical perspectives can foster methodological synergy. In synthesizing an inter-disciplinary approach Layder's⁴⁴ theory of social domains is a productive model for investigating complex emotive responses to everyday life as it helps researchers to reach personal and embodied experiences whilst drawing in and on influences from social settings and cultural rules and practices. This framework amplifies social reality and avoids the flattening out of social interaction, which results in the silencing of felt experiences. My work on in-cell television has provided a 'way into' the domestic lives of prisoners behind their cell doors. However, more needs to be done. Drawing on a range of methodologies the emotional geography of the prison cell requires focused inquiry.

Much can be learnt from audience researchers, like Silverstone et al⁴⁵ and also Moores⁴⁶ which engage with their respondents in a number of helpful ways. Methods which access the felt experiences lend themselves to ethnographic approaches, as Silverstone et al⁴⁷ did in their study a range of methods which together permit the bridging of different data sets linked together by a number of conversational interviews. The aim of these such methods is to observe the ways in which prisoners attach (or detach) themselves to the prison cell. We know the prison is no longer a 'bounded'⁴⁸ space it

⁴³ Silverstone, R., Hirsch, E., & Morley, D. (1991). Listening to a long conversation: an ethnographic approach to the study of information and communication technologies in the home. *Cultural Studies*, 5(2), 204-227.

⁴⁴ Layder, D. (1997). *Modern social theory: Key debates and new directions*. Psychology Press.

⁴⁵ Silverstone, R., Hirsch, E., & Morley, D. (1991). Listening to a long conversation: an ethnographic approach to the study of information and communication technologies in the home. *Cultural Studies*, 5(2), 204-227.

⁴⁶ Moores, S. (2006). Media uses and everyday environmental experiences: A positive critique of phenomenological geography. *Particip@ tions*, 3(2).

⁴⁷ Silverstone, R., Hirsch, E., & Morley, D. (1991). Listening to a long conversation: an ethnographic approach to the study of information and communication technologies in the home. *Cultural Studies*, 5(2), 204-227

⁴⁸ Moores, S. (1993). Television, Geography and Mobile Privatization'. *European Journal of Communication*, 8(3), 365-379.

now welcomes and endorses mediated activity (exchanges between audiences and media texts), such as watching television, listening to the radio and under close supervision using ICTs. Thus a prisoner's ability to 'migrate'⁴⁹ across different spaces is now possible. Thus to better understand the prison cell, capturing the 'pattern of life' is necessary.

I have taken inspiration from Silverstone et al's methodology and with some minor refinement this could be adjusted to explore the spatial, emotional and temporal economy of the prison cell. Suggestions include a multi-method ethnographic research strategy, which also allows participants to define their own agendas and draw on a number of resources and artefacts to tell their stories. Time-use diaries are a useful method for articulating a 'time-space geography'⁵⁰ of the prison cell and can offer researchers an account of the movements a prisoner makes. It can tell us a lot about encounters (situated and mediated) and reports on the interface between private and public life. As Silverstone et al suggest this requires the diarist to talk about their diary entries and open up the narratives behind them. For prisoners that share a cell these diaries could be triangulated to present a view of time spent together and apart. In a similar way 'household maps' require the participant to draw their space and talk, at the same time, about the movements and feelings they have about the space. In essence the capturing of a 'mental map'⁵¹ of the cell can be achieved. In extending these personal accounts prisoners and cell-sharers could develop and design a network diagram which traces the people and networks they are linked into both inside the cell and outside the cell. More precisely a record of how they 'feel' about these relationships could develop in-depth accounts about social relations.

⁴⁹ Moores, S. (2006). Media uses and everyday environmental experiences: A positive critique of phenomenological geography. *Particip@tions*, 3(2).

⁵⁰ Silverstone, R., Hirsch, E., & Morley, D. (1991). Listening to a long conversation: an ethnographic approach to the study of information and communication technologies in the home. *Cultural Studies*, 5(2), 204-227.

⁵¹ Silverstone, R., Hirsch, E., & Morley, D. (1991). Listening to a long conversation: an ethnographic approach to the study of information and communication technologies in the home. *Cultural Studies*, 5(2), 204-227 p215

In a material sense, the prison cell is also a space in which personal and diverse artefacts are contained- things that have meanings for the past, present and possibly the future. Participants could be invited to talk about meaningful items and how they relate to their time in the cell. A prisoners economic and privilege position is also of relevance to the ways in which space and their emotions are managed.

As Crewe et al⁵² propose a cartography or map could be one such outcome of this kind of research but this needs to cautiously develop and celebrate the complexity and diversity of emotive life. As the two case studies of Will and Barry and Lee and Shaun demonstrate, living together in the context of the prison has distinguishing features- developing a research portfolio which captures these relationships and experiences would enhance the broader prison sociology and geography and offer credible insights that could benefit the care of our prisoners.

⁵² Crewe, B., Warr, J., Bennett, P., & Smith, A. (2013). The emotional geography of prison life. *Theoretical Criminology*, 1362480613497778.