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The Editorial Board wishes to make clear that the views expressed by contributors are their own and do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the Prison Service.

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Editorial Comment

This edition of *Prison Service Journal* offers a wide array of topics rather than focussing on a single theme. It examines different types of prisons, different groups of prisoners, the experiences of staff, and also features international contributions.

Dr. Ian D. Marder, Magali Lapouge, Dr. Joe Garrihy and Dr. Avril M. Brandon are currently undertaking empirical research on open prisons in Ireland. These prisons are low security prisons, usually holding people nearing the end of their prison sentence and offer opportunities for reintegration with the community, including through temporary release. This particular article is a considered review of the existing, albeit limited, literature on open prisons. The article focusses on key themes including the benefits and challenges associated with the greater autonomy provided in open prisons; the potential impact on prisoners, and; the cultures and relationships in open prisons. The article sets out approaches to further research, and makes the important point that as well as considering any potential benefits relative to closed conditions, it is also relevant to compare open prisons with community-based sanctions. This article offers an excellent overview of the current research into open prisons and sets out a valuable programme of work, that has the potential to inform future policy and practice.

Dominique Moran, Yvonne Jewkes, Eleanor March and Matt Houlbrook outline their research looking at the continued operation of prisons built during the Victorian era. The authors explain how these prisons are a material reality, with some 22,000 prisoners in England and Wales housed in prisons built between 1837 and 1901, but also the design and function of these prisons has a hold on the public imagination and shapes how prisons are understood.

The emergence and effects of psychoactive substances has previously been addressed in *PSJ*, but Dr. Maggie Leese and Dr. Victoria Bell examine this from the perspective of members of staff. Their research in a category C prison exposes not only the physical effects

of exposure to 'spice' but also the psychological and emotional impacts. Their work is a considered assessment that recognises the harms experienced by prison officers and the need to ensure that support is available.

Transitional points can be critical in life, including for those who are in prison. The movement between prisons can be disruptive and difficult, and as the earlier article in this edition highlighted, the movement from closed to open prisons can also be a mixed experience. Dr. Jayne Price focusses on the transition between juvenile young offenders' institutions and young adult/adult estate. Price highlights the different resources and cultures between these functions, and argues that if this important transition is to be successfully navigated, it needs the investment of time, imagination and resources.

This edition also includes an evaluation of a prison peer review programme conducted by Julia Telfer and colleagues. The power of peer support and community building is a topic that has been regularly featured in *PSJ* and warrants continued attention. A novel contribution comes from Charles Prempeh, who explores the social media activity of the Church of Pentecost in Ghana. This is a fascinating study that explores the connections between religion, social justice and imprisonment in contemporary online communications. The edition closes with an interview with Michael Capra, the Superintendent of Sing Sing prison in New York State, USA. This includes a discussion of the extraordinarily courageous decision that Capra made to testify in criminal proceedings against one of his officers, charged for violence towards a prisoner. Capra describes that this was a simple decision to make morally, but the effects were significant.

This edition of *PSJ* ranges across topics and themes, but at its centre is an attempt to stimulate questioning and reflection on the policy, practice and realities of prison.

Empirical research on the impact and experience of open prisons: state of the field and future directions

Dr. Ian D. Marder is a Lecturer in Criminology at Maynooth University, Magali Lapouge is a Research Assistant at Maynooth University, Dr. Joe Garrihy is a Lecturer in Criminology at Maynooth University, and Dr. Avril M. Brandon is a Lecturer in Criminology at Maynooth University

Introduction

The term ‘open prison’ can be used to mean different things depending on the jurisdiction or institution, but generally refers to a prison into which residents are not fully or always locked.¹ Relative to their ‘closed’ counterparts, open prisons generally afford detainees a greater connection to the outside world, often through access to family and day release for employment, volunteering and education. As such, progressive prison reformers and scholars often tout the potential benefits of open conditions for the wellbeing and reintegration of people in custody² — relative, at least, to the generally deleterious effect of entirely closed regimes.³ Yet, compared with research on closed prisons, there remains only a modest quantity of empirical work on open prisons, even considering the low proportion of incarcerated people in open prisons in most countries.⁴ Similarly, few studies attend to the experience of staffing open prisons, despite a burgeoning literature on prison officers.⁵ There must be further research on the impact and experiences of living or working in open prisons to enhance our understanding of different prison regimes and inform penal policy.

In preparation for such a project in Ireland, we identified and reviewed published empirical studies that present primary data and speak to the dynamics,

experience or impact of open prisons. Recent research suggests that the quality of prison life affects desistance and other outcomes.⁶ Our forthcoming study is concerned with whether and why the open prison experience differs from that in a closed institution. As such, this review focuses on empirical, academic research that explores resident and staff experiences of open prisons, especially those using primary data to build theory.⁷ Despite its limited scope and quantity, this literature indicates many themes that are ripe for further exploration through empirical research in open prisons. This is important, given the simultaneous public health, moral, social and economic imperatives to rethink the usage, functions, governance and conditions of imprisonment and other penal sanctions.

The first three sections of this article focus on themes emerging from the literature. Firstly, it discusses the benefits and challenges for residents associated with the greater autonomy provided in open prisons. Secondly, it outlines quantitative and qualitative efforts to examine the impact of open conditions on residents, noting that methodologically rigorous approaches are needed to draw generalisable conclusions. Thirdly, it considers findings on the cultures and relationships in open prisons. The final section proposes several themes and methodologies for future study, concluding that there is a pressing need for a range of stakeholders to collaborate on exploring the impact and experience of living and working in open prison conditions.

1. Mastrobuoni, G. and Terlizzese, D. (2014). EIEF Working Paper 13/14, Rehabilitating Rehabilitation: Prison Conditions and Recidivism. Retrieved from http://www.eief.it/files/2014/11/wp-13-rehabilitating-rehabilitation_prison-conditions-and-recidivism.pdf
2. See, for example, Irish Penal Reform Trust (2017). Open Prisons. Retrieved from <https://www.iprt.ie/reintegration-of-offenders/open-prisons/>
3. Cullen, F., Jonson, C., and Nagin, D. (2011). Prisons do not reduce recidivism: the high cost of ignoring science, *The Prison Journal*, 91(3), 48-65.
4. Pakes, F. (2020). Old-fashioned Nordic penal exceptionalism: the case of Iceland’s open prisons, *Nordic Journal of Criminology*, 21(2), 113-128.
5. Garrihy, J. (2020). ‘There are fourteen grey areas’: ‘Jailing’, professionalism and legitimacy in prison officers’ occupational cultures, *Irish Probation Journal*, 17, 128-150.
6. Auty, K. and Liebling, A. (2020). Exploring the Relationship between Prison Social Climate and Reoffending in *Justice Quarterly*, 37(2), 358-381.
7. Bodies of literature beyond the scope of this review include commentaries on the history and policies of open prisons, studies of the prisons or penal institutions beyond the prison estate that support independent living but are generally not defined as ‘open’, and that which focuses on absconding, day release or the pursuit of ‘normality’ in prison regimes more widely.

Notwithstanding any potential benefits relative to closed conditions, however, we must also compare open prisons with community-based sanctions to develop a fully informed penal policy.

Open prisons: the international empirical literature

Research on closed prison environments has advanced rapidly in recent years; a burgeoning literature written by people currently or formerly in custody,⁸ and the use of data produced through the Measuring the Quality of Prison Life survey,⁹ are two examples. At the same time, empirical research on the experiences of living and working in an open prison is conspicuously limited. That which has been published is generally small scale and far from comprehensively answers the range of questions one might ask relating to the impact or dynamics of open prisons.

In preparation for a study of open prisons in Ireland, we identified and reviewed eighteen directly relevant, accessible and published studies, pertaining to residents' experiences of residing under open prison conditions. This included peer-reviewed journal articles, one book (published in 1973) and several non-peer-reviewed publications, such as master's and doctoral dissertations and government reports based on primary research conducted using academic methodologies. The research included both quantitative and qualitative methods, and took place in several jurisdictions, including in England and Wales (5), Norway (3), Iceland, Finland, Brazil, Sweden, Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg, Spain, Scotland and Australia (from which there were one publication each). These were identified through electronic searches for literature with key words, and is not exhaustive of the field. Over 80 percent of this literature was published in the last decade, and only two studies each involved female institutions, or collected data from staff. Here, we divide their findings

into three themes: the benefits and challenges relating to the freedom afforded open prisons' residents; the outcomes for people who spend time in open prisons; and the cultures and relationships in open prisons.

A taste of freedom?

*'Open prison can be seen as a secure social world in which offenders have the opportunity to develop constructive interpersonal relationships with one another, with staff, and with people from the free world. This creates a sense of acceptance in the convict's perception of the outside world and positively reshapes his self-definition.'*¹⁰

Open prison can be seen as a secure social world in which offenders have the opportunity to develop constructive interpersonal relationships with one another.

Relative to the closed environments that most residents seemingly previously experienced, the material conditions reported in this literature — including the food, accessibility of technology and services, and the quality of the sanitation and other infrastructure — were mostly better in open prisons.¹¹ At the same time, many authors focused principally on the unique dynamics emerging from the relative autonomy afforded residents of open prisons. In

many, people in custody were permitted regularly to leave for work, education or to spend time with their family; in others, the freedom described was primarily within the confines of prison gates. Researchers and participants spoke positively of both regime types, especially in terms of the opportunities for self-sufficiency enabled therein. For the open prison residents in Iceland who played a significant, proactive role in running and maintaining their institution, for example, Parkes believed that 'some of the prison-ness of their experience is negated or reduced'.¹² This raises the possibility that semi-autonomous living may reduce the intensity and negativity of the prison experience.

8. Earle, R. (2017). *Convict Criminology: Inside and Out*, Policy Press: Cambridge; Ross, J. & Vianello, F. (Eds.) (2020). *Convict Criminology for the Future*, Routledge: Abingdon.

9. Auty and Liebling (2020) op. cit.

10. Ekunwe, I. (2007). *Gentle justice: an analysis of open prison systems in Finland. A way to the future?* Retrieved from <https://trepo.tuni.fi/handle/10024/67756>, p.143.

11. In one study (Parkes, 2020, op. cit.), for example, access to personal telephones and computers (albeit, not smart phones or social media) was 'the principle material condition that prisoners talk about in most approving terms', (p.117) allowing for access to games, extended communication with family and entrepreneurship opportunities.

12. Parkes (2020) op. cit. p.122.

At the same time, the research also found that different types of ‘pains’¹³ emerged in more autonomous regimes. In Norway, Shammas described the ‘pains of freedom’: prisoners experience confusion, anxiety, ambiguity and relative deprivation as they have more individual responsibility than in closed prisons, and experience a ‘taste of freedom’ or a life ‘proximate to freedom’, but in a ‘liminal space’.¹⁴ Other studies similarly implied that residents felt within ‘touching distance’ of the outside world, but ever-conscious that they were never truly free, remaining controlled through the regulations, restrictions and other measures inherent in prison regimes: rigid routines,¹⁵ counts and checks¹⁶ and, for some, ineligibility for day release.

Open prisons can create confusion by encouraging an autonomous mindset while imposing curfews, requiring urine tests and restricting possessions. Researchers found the residents and staff alike expressing ambivalence and uncertainty, especially when given conflicting instructions that left them unclear about the extent to which their institution represented freedom or containment.¹⁷ A consistent theme was that, with unlocked gates and limited staff intervention, the responsibility to remain lies with the person in custody.¹⁸ These invisible and internalised barriers, alongside the constant (implicit or explicit) threat of return to closed conditions, the difficulties in transitioning from closed to open environments, and the rehabilitative obligations and pressures to self-improve, represent subtler forms of control than exist in closed conditions, but can be experienced as even more onerous and stressful.¹⁹ In other words, the pains of open imprisonment may diverge in their character and intensity from those in closed prisons, requiring further study to establish the degree of their generalisability,

Open prisons can create confusion by encouraging an autonomous mindset while imposing curfews, requiring urine tests and restricting possessions.

their causes and impact, and how, if at all, they can be alleviated.

Questions remain as to the extent to which open prisons are experienced as empowering or disempowering, and as pro- or anti-therapeutic. The highly selective process of transfer to an open prison might result in the exclusion of those with the most complex needs from such institutions. For those that do move to open conditions, their experience likely depends on whether their prison has the resources to respond to their particular needs. For example, people with untreated, complex mental illnesses, foreign nationals, those who lack capacities around self-sufficiency, or even those who find it difficult to live communally and with limited privacy, will only thrive if the institution has and allocates the resources to

support them as individuals.²⁰ Indeed, mental health difficulties and illnesses are still commonplace in open prisons that often suffer the same strains on services as closed institutions.²¹ By implication, any potential benefits of open prisons over closed prisons are constrained by prevailing conditions in the wider penal system, insofar as these determine both the demographics and needs of residents, and the resources and services available.

Outcomes for residents

Given that the research distinguishes between open and closed prisons, we should examine whether outcomes for open prisons’ residents differ from those for whom their only experience of prison is in a closed prison, and whether any differences relate to the conditions of imprisonment. The research on this topic is limited, and questions remain about its reliability, given its generally small scale and the lack of control groups or randomisation. Still, its findings indicate the

13. Sykes, G. (1958). *The Society of Captives: A Study of a Maximum Security Prison*, Princeton University Press: Princeton.
 14. Shammas, V. (2014). The pains of freedom: assessing the ambiguity of Scandinavia penal exceptionalism on Norway’s prison island. *Punishment & Society*, 16(1), 104-123, p.114.
 15. Osment, L. (2018). The complexity of rehabilitation in open and closed prison settings. Retrieved from: <https://lup.lub.lu.se/student-papers/search/publication/8948730>
 16. Jones, H. and Cornes, P. (1977). *Open Prisons*, Routledge: London.
 17. Jones and Cornes (1977), Osment (2018) – op. cit.
 18. Shammas (2014) op. cit.
 19. Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Pantheon Books: New York City; Barrachina, M. (2019). Prisiones abiertas: la supervisión de la pena de prisión en semilibertad. *Revista Electrónica de Ciencia Penal y Criminología*, 21-07, 1-26; Crewe, B. (2011). Depth, weight, tightness: revisiting the pains of imprisonment. *Punishment & Society*, 13(5), 509-529; Parkes (2020) op. cit.
 20. Parkes (2020) op. cit.
 21. Baumann, M., Meyers, R., Le Bihan, E. and Houssemand, C. (2008). Mental health (GHQ12; CES-D) and attitudes towards the value of work among inmates of a semi-open prison and the long-term unemployed in Luxembourg. *BMC Public Health*, 18(8), 214-224.

potential benefits of open versus closed prisons and suggest avenues for further study.

Studies on open prisons' impact focused on a range of indicators. One Scottish, qualitative report concluded that the additional contact with the outside world and more normalised contact with family enabled by open regimes, helped ease the transition from custody to release.²² Other studies focused on prisoner wellbeing. One, taking place in England and Wales and using mixed methods, found that older prisoners were more satisfied with the quality of life in an open unit than in a closed unit;²³ one quantitative study in three Belgian prisons (including one open institution) found significantly lower levels of distress among those in the open system.²⁴ In a study of English open prisons in the 1970s, the researchers expressed surprise that the institutions closely resembled closed prisons, but concluded that factors within each prison may explain different rates of prisoner wellbeing. For example, whether residents were mostly short- or long-term, levels of staff training and sympathy, space available within each prison, coherence of rules, communication channels, atmosphere, and the presence or absence of education and other programmes, could all help explain positive and negative elements of the incarceration experience.²⁵ This implies that being 'open' is not enough to ensure a substantially better experience, in the absence of other services and features of a regime. As such, researchers should explore which elements of open prisons relate to positive experiences and how these could be replicated across open (and closed)

Equally, that open prisons are not entirely positive places to be should remind us to consider their impact relative to sentences served fully in the community, as well as relative to closed prisons.

institutions. Equally, that open prisons are not entirely positive places to be should remind us to consider their impact relative to sentences served fully in the community, as well as relative to closed prisons.

Quantitative research also provided some positive results around violence, reoffending and costs. For example, one study from an Italian open prison found favourable rates of recidivism and violence, compared with closed institutions.²⁶ At a female open prison in Australia, Botello reports low rates of recidivism that compare favourably with Nordic rates, despite the limited availability of rehabilitative programmes in the open centre.²⁷ Other studies have pointed to the lower financial costs of open prisons due to lower staffing and security levels, and the benefits to local and national communities and economies of having those in custody engaged in education or employment.²⁸

Open prisons are of particular interest to scholars who hypothesise a relationship between the autonomy and normality they permit and outcomes for residents.²⁹ Yet, the methods that could reliably detect any such differences require researchers to control for several variables. One recent paper suggested that an open prison gave residents 'opportunities to change their life situation, so that they had something to look forward to after release' by providing new learning opportunities.³⁰ Yet, the author obtained these data through focus groups with 27 residents, so they cannot confirm the hypothesis that the learning opportunities provided in that prison improved reintegration. Open prisons often have strict criteria for transfer, meaning that their populations'

22. Armstrong, S. Malloch, M. Norris, P. and Nellis, M. (2011). Evaluation of the use of Home Detention Curfew and the open prison estate in Scotland, Retrieved from webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/20170706155303/http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2011/07/08105629/1; Borg, L. (2017). Frihet under ansvar pa Gruvbergets oppna anstalt. Retrieved from diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1117935/FULLTEXT01.pdf; Osment (2018) op. cit.
23. De Motte, C. (2015). Understanding older male prisoners' satisfaction with quality of life and wellbeing. Retrieved from irep.ntu.ac.uk/id/eprint/31213/1/Claire%20de%20Motte%202015%20excl3rdpartycopyright.pdf
24. Vanhooren, S., Leijssen, M. and Dezutter, J. (2017). Loss of meaning as a predictor of distress in prison. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 61(3), 1441-1432.
25. Jones and Cornes (1977) op. cit.
26. Mastrobuoni and Terlizze (2014) op. cit.
27. Botello, C. (2017). Women's imprisonment and recidivism: an illustrative analysis of Boronia Women's Pre-release Centre (Western Australia) and progressive/open prison systems in Norway and Sweden. Retrieved from: <https://researchonline.nd.edu.au/theses/172/>
28. Armstrong, et al. (2011), Ekunwe (2007), Mastrobuoni and Terlizze, (2014) and Shammass (2014) – op. cit.
29. Shammass (2014) op. cit.
30. Andvig, E., Koffeld-Hamidane, S, Ausland, L. and Bengt, K. (2020). Inmates' perceptions and experiences of how they were prepared for release from a Norwegian open prison. *Nordic Journal of Criminology*, Online First.

characteristics do not reflect those across the prison estate. Thus, even if statistics showed that people released from open prisons more ably reintegrated or were less likely to reoffend than those released from closed prisons (or that open prisons have lower rates of violence than in closed prisons, and so on), this could relate to population demographics, rather than the type of regime. Quantitative studies need to match and track comparable individuals when searching for relationships between open or closed regimes (or elements of the 'openness' of a regime) and outcomes for residents.

Cultures and relationships

A related difficulty in drawing conclusions from the open prisons research lies in the need to disentangle the factors that cause any observed benefits. It may be that open prisons, compared to closed prisons, are uniquely conducive to a strong performance on certain metrics. Yet, research suggests that wellbeing and outcomes vary markedly between closed prisons, depending on their social climate, legitimacy and cultures.³¹ Moreover, contact with one's family, the availability of educational programmes, and other measures of 'prison quality', help explain a high proportion of variance in the distress that people in custody experience, and may be available in open prisons or not, depending on institutional policies and practices.³² As such, it may be that any benefit of open prisons is as contingent on institutional cultures and climate, as it is on security levels.

Indeed, the literature on open prisons often points to the importance of institutional cultures and staff-prisoner relationships in explaining positive findings. For example, in one study of Dutch open prisons, Borg found that staff's humane treatment of prisoners

strengthened the rehabilitative process.³³ Similarly, a study in Norway hypothesised a link between the humaneness of treatment and the reduction in feelings of stigma.³⁴ Ekunwe studied open prisons in Finland and observed an 'atmosphere [...] of humility and dignity where inmates and guards address each other by their first name and the prison superintendents use non-military titles like governor, while prisoners may be referred to as 'clients'.³⁵ A study of a Belgian open prison found a 'more personal and therapeutic approach to its prisoners' and 'a staff that fosters personal relationships with prisoners', compared with similar, closed prisons; this, the researcher asserted, related to lower levels of stress among people in

custody.³⁶ In Leira, Norway, open conditions were underpinned by a strong and self-sustaining management philosophy — consequence pedagogy — for which staff built positive, trusting relationships with those in their care, encouraging them to self-regulate and problem solve, and consciously directing their practice towards reinforcing the philosophy. Interpersonal conflicts were understood as opportunities to learn and communicate.³⁷ In Iceland, almost all staff 'explained their approach to the job as non-hierarchical and focused on communication' rather than discipline, and 'talked about affording trust, and about seeing eye-to-eye with offenders, and

about helping'.³⁸ The author, who interviewed the staff and residents during a week in which he lived in the prison, described the atmosphere as convivial and communal, noting that officers and people in custody ate together, while staff prioritised relational work (albeit, under criticism from people in custody, whose self-sufficiency sometimes meant that they were confused about the staff role).

Questions remain as to the relationship between the cultures described above and the open prison. On one hand, the permeability of, and autonomy

...inmates and guards address each other by their first name and the prison superintendents use non-military titles like governor, while prisoners may be referred to as 'clients'

31. Auty and Liebling (2020) op. cit.
 32. Liebling, A. (2011). Moral performance, inhuman and degrading treatment and prison pain. *Punishment & Society*, 13(5), 530-550; Day, A., Casey, S., Vess, J., and Huisy, G. (2011). Assessing the social climate of Australian prisons. *Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice*, 427, 1-6.
 33. Borg, (2017) op. cit.
 34. Andvig, et al. (2020) op. cit.
 35. Ekunwe (2011) op. cit., p.143
 36. Vanhooren, et al. (2017) op. cit.
 37. Steiro, T. J., Anderson, B. Olsvik, L. S. and Johansen, P. (2013). Balancing structure and learning in an open prison. *International Journal of Management, Knowledge and Learning*, 2(1), 101-121.
 38. Parkes (2020) op. cit., p. 121

permitted within, open prisons could mean that their atmosphere is necessarily calmer or less adversarial. On the other hand, factors including their size (the Icelandic prison held around 20 people), location (Nordic open prisons reflected the cultural egalitarianism associated with those nations) or demographics (those in open custody were often carefully selected if deemed to be a low risk of non-compliance) may be confounding factors. It may also be that several factors, when present simultaneously, promote a positive culture.

Research on prison cultures, social climates and moral performances indicates that a range of dynamics are more or less responsible for shaping the experience and impact of imprisonment. One's experience of open prison may be contingent on one's ability to find meaning in the distress of incarceration, linked to the extent to which a regime is personalised and therapeutic, and whether one envisages a career, has contact with their family, and can see a defined purpose to their life.³⁹ Rather than only measuring the outcomes from open prisons, therefore, we might seek to identify any unique features of these institutions — or, the dimensions of 'openness' — and their relationship with the features of positive prison social climates that can manifest in any institution. Researchers and other prison stakeholders can collaborate to explore the extent to which open prison conditions are conducive to creating, facilitating or reinforcing a positive social climate, and to determine the implications for prison governance, prison services and penal policy.

The future of open prisons research

Open prisons may support wellbeing and create opportunities for reintegration, compared with closed prisons. However, further research is required to establish the extent and causes of any benefits and the nature of the challenges, and to understand any relationship between the dynamics of 'openness' and prisons cultures, social climates, desistance, family life, wellbeing, reintegration and other subjects. Likewise,

the (potentially unique) 'pains' identified require further exploration into their intensity, distribution and prevention.

The literature indicates a range of empirical questions that researchers might seek to answer and the methods best suited to doing so. Rigorous quantitative methods are of value, for example, in measuring any differences between the experiences, wellbeing and outcomes of those in closed and open prisons. Aside from their low security, the greater encouragement of outside contact and constructive staff-prisoner relationships, alongside other reintegrative services and practices, may plausibly lead to a less repressive experience for residents and to better wellbeing and outcomes during incarceration and on release. At the same time, at least some of these outcomes could relate to the population itself, and any benefits of open prisons compared to closed prisons does not mean that they are a more effective or humane penal sanction than the full community-based measures and opportunities for early release to which they must also be compared. Moreover, any benefits of open prisons, relative to closed prisons, are likely tempered by criminogenic structural conditions, such as inequitable employment and housing markets, and social conditions, such as the stigma

associated with homelessness, drug use, mental illness and, indeed, criminalisation and imprisonment in any form. Questions remain as to how open prisons can do more than closed prisons to reduce the stigma or affect the conditions and the lack of services that many people face upon release from incarceration.⁴⁰

The experience of transitioning from closed to open prisons, of residing in an open prison, or of transitioning from open institutions to release, can all be studied qualitatively. Equally, staff wellbeing, experiences and transitions can be studied using mixed methods and compared to that of staff who work in closed establishments. Ethnographic methodologies — including immersive approaches⁴¹ — are suited to a detailed analysis of prison cultures and staff-prisoner relationships, especially if triangulated through (a

Research on prison cultures, social climates and moral performances indicates that a range of dynamics are more or less responsible for shaping the experience and impact of imprisonment.

39. Vanhooren, et al. (2017) op. cit.

40. Ekunwe (2007) op. cit.

41. Such as those used by Parkes (2020) op. cit.

potentially bespoke version of) the Measuring the Quality of Prison Life survey. Questions also remain about the differences between open institutions, and if 'halfway houses' and other residential environments can be operationalised as open prisons for the purpose of their study, or otherwise studied and compared to open prisons.⁴² As mentioned above, we must compare open prisons with the entire range of sentencing options — including community interventions — rather than only with closed prisons, to understand their relative merits.

Our own research — awaiting approval from the Irish Prison Service — seeks to explore how people experience open prison conditions in Ireland. Ireland has two (male) open prisons that are relatively small in operational capacity,⁴³ holding roughly 4.3 per cent of the total prison population, as of February 2021.⁴⁴ We aim to conduct focus groups and interviews with the current, former and prospective residents of an open prison, and with its prison staff and managers, to achieve this. We will then consider whether the themes identified from these broad datasets might inform a further quantitative element, such as a bespoke 'entry and exit' survey for residents to capture any changes in their wellbeing or capacities over time. This research would help build a much-needed evidence base on the

experiences of open prison residents and staff, and potentially result in a transferrable and improvable tool that helps measure their impact.

Over several visits and conversations, we designed the methods and aims of the prospective research in collaboration with persons from the selected institution and the wider service. Further cooperation in exploring the potential for research, including visits to other sites, were postponed because of COVID-19. We remain convinced, however, that existing measures do not capture the dynamics and impact of open prisons. Reconviction rates alone do not reflect the breadth of factors that support desistance and determine wellbeing, and do not provide enough feedback to improve services. Resilience, wellbeing, agency, self-efficacy, impulsivity, the motivation to change, hope and interpersonal trust, and other dimensions are also important.⁴⁵ More than this, as policymakers increasingly recognise the futility of using punitive interventions in response to the complex social problems that contextualise crime, harm and conflict, studying open prisons can help all those with a stake in penal policies and practices to re-examine the assumptions they hold about who should be imprisoned when, under what conditions and for what purpose.

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42. Maier, K. (2020). Canada's 'open prisons': hybridisation and the role of halfway houses in penal scholarship and practice. *The Howard Journal of Crime and Justice*, 59(4), 381-399; Miller, R. (2021). *Halfway Home: Race, Punishment and the Afterlife of Mass Incarceration*, Little, Brown: New York City.
43. According to the Irish Prison Service website (www.irishprisons.ie), Shelton Abbey has an operational capacity of 115, while Loughan House has an operational capacity of 140; figures last checked on 10/02/2021.
44. Or, 162 persons between the two open centres out of a total prison population of 3,729 in Ireland; for full data, see https://www.irishprisons.ie/wp-content/uploads/documents_pdf/01-February-2021.pdf. For around 40 years, Ireland also maintained a semi-open prison – the Training Unit on the Mountjoy Campus – that closed in 2017.
45. Wong, K. (2019). *If reoffending is not the only outcome, what are the alternatives?* Academic Insights 2019/07, HM Inspectorate of Probation: Manchester; Maguire, M., Disley, E., Liddle, M., Meek, R. and Burrowes, N. (2019) *Developing a toolkit to measure intermediate outcomes to reduce reoffending from arts and mentoring interventions*. Ministry of Justice Analytical Series, HM Prison and Probation Service: London.

The Long Shadow of the Victorian Prison

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This article introduces a new research project that explores the continued operation of Victorian prisons in 20th and 21st century Britain. Over the three years of the project, there will be opportunities for current and former prison staff, currently and formerly incarcerated people, prison managers and contractors, and the general public to share their views and experiences of these historical buildings.

The persistence of the Victorian prison

Over one-quarter of the prison population of England and Wales (22,000) are currently held in 32 prisons with Victorian-era (1837-1901) accommodation.¹ Media reports describe the continuing use of such historic buildings as a 'scandal'.² Yet despite politicians' promises to close these outdated 'relics', Victorian infrastructure remains an integral part of the prison estate.³ Our research project *The Persistence of the Victorian Prison: Alteration, Inhabitation, Obsolescence and Affirmative Design* aims to explore the implications of this 'persistence' of the Victorian prison and trace the long shadows it has cast over prison experiences and penal policy in 20th and 21st century Britain.

The continued operation of these historic prisons attracts attention from policymakers and the media alike, with significant public resources being spent on maintaining and refurbishing such buildings. While prison reform advocates criticise the 'squalid' and 'Dickensian' conditions of many Victorian-era establishments, popular media outlets propose that such deprivations are a fitting punishment for those who break the law, and such views echo across social media.⁴ These contradictions point to a live policy debate about whether Victorian prisons should remain

in operation, for what length of time, and how we will know when they have reached the end of their operational lives. Our project, funded by the ESRC, seeks to understand how prisons continue to function as time passes, and to consider how those buildings have changed over their lifecourses.⁵ This article explores some of the issues we address in the project. We first give an overview of the construction of Victorian prisons, then outline how Victorian prisons have been altered over time, before reflecting on the implications of the persistence of these supposedly obsolete buildings.

Building the Victorian prison

The term 'Victorian prison' covers a diversity of building styles and designs. In the early 1830s, the English prison system was an assortment of facilities, comprising centuries-old gaols, unventilated dungeons, small cellblocks attached to town halls or workhouses, and reformed prisons, built after The Gaol Act of 1823. During this period, two models of prison reform were gathering force in the United States: the Separate or Pennsylvania System, which advocated keeping prisoners in separate cells day and night; and the Silent or Auburn System, which saw prisoners congregate for silent work in the daytime, returning to separate cells at night. By the mid-1830s, the Separate System had garnered significant support in England, and in 1835 a government Select Committee ruled that new prisons would be constructed to deliver the Separate System, while existing prisons would be remodelled to meet the system's demands.

The Separate System necessitated considerable architectural and design planning. Cell spaces needed to be sufficiently 'large, light and airy' for prisoners to

1. Ministry of Justice (2019) *Prison Population Bulletin: monthly Feb 2019*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/prison-population-figures-2019>.
2. The FT View (2018) *The enduring scandal of England's Victorian jails*. Available at: <https://www.ft.com/content/28daea7a-fd15-11e7-9b32-d7d59aace167>.
3. ITV News (2015) *New prisons planned to replace Victorian jail 'relics'*. Available at: <https://www.itv.com/news/2015-11-09/new-prisons-planned-to-replace-victorian-jail-relics/>.
4. Independent Monitoring Board (2017) *Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Manchester for reporting year 1 March 2016 to 28 February 2017*. Available at: <https://www.imb.org.uk/manchester-2016-17-annual-report-published-today/>.
5. Economic and Social Research Council, Standard Grant no: S/T005483/1.

sleep, eat and work alone in their cells.⁶ Cells were built 12ft by 8ft by 10ft high, or 13ft by 7ft by 10ft high, lit by a window 42in by 11in, located high up in the wall, to prevent any view of the outside world. Ventilation was provided by two vents in each cell, through which either fresh or heated air could enter, and stale air would be extracted. Soundproofing was considered essential, to prevent communication between prisoners, and cells were built with '18in walls, double doors, arched ceilings and concrete floors, to prevent the penetration of any comprehensible noise'.⁷ Other design features, such as in-cell sanitation and openings in doors through which meals could be passed, removed the need for prisoners to leave their cells except to attend chapel or school, or to partake in outside exercise or monthly baths. During such activities, separation was maintained through the wearing of masks, to prevent recognition, and the construction of walls between outdoor exercise areas.

Of the 90 prisons built or added to during a concerted building programme from 1842 to 1877, the majority conformed to a radial hub-spoke layout, built in brick and/or stone. All featured small cells intended for single occupancy, arranged along landings three or more storeys high. Galleried spaces and internal atria provided clear sight lines, allowing officers to see and be seen by colleagues on other levels. The radial design was later superseded by the 'telegraph pole' plan, with prison buildings laid out in parallel blocks, as at Wormwood Scrubs, yet internal prison layouts remained largely unchanged from early Victorian designs.

Inhabiting the Victorian prison

Since the end of Queen Victoria's reign, many Victorian-era prisons have been demolished, while others no longer function as prisons, and the 32 establishments that remain have undergone significant alteration. Recent research by geographers of architecture has drawn attention to the 'inhabitation' of

buildings, raising an awareness of the everyday practices through which buildings are used and altered.⁸ As sites in which users and things come into contact in numerous, complex, planned, spontaneous and unexpected ways, buildings shape and are shaped by such encounters, which are often resonant of the power structures that exist both inside and outside them, and which influence their inhabitation.

Given the long operational lives of the 32 Victorian-era prisons, these processes of alteration and inhabitation have been significant and varied. There have been major alterations, in the demolition and replacement of buildings, additions of new sections of buildings, extensions to linear wings, and addition of

new floors and replacement of roofs, affecting both the exterior aspects of the buildings, and their interior configuration. More incremental changes have come with the internal retrofitting of networks of pipes and cables, bringing sanitation, gas lighting and electricity, as well as telephones, switches, alarms and signage. Candle alcoves have been bricked-in and painted over. Steel cell doors replace the wooden originals. Suicide netting stretches across galleried spaces. These prisons have seen more than a century of routine repair and replacement of fixtures and fittings, as well as repetitive cleaning and redecoration, and

unauthorised adjustments by residents, such as graffiti. Weathering, natural decay, and the presence of moss, mould and vermin further alter the appearance of these structures.

Even before the Victorian era was over, its prisons had already been subject to numerous changes. HMP Pentonville was substantially altered during the Victorian period, with the addition of 220 cells in 1867, and removal of the vaulted roof to enable a further storey to be added between 1871 and 1890.⁹ By 1890, in-cell toilets and washbasins had been removed from all but three prisons, as demands on space increased, and prisons were fitted with anti-suicide measures such as raised wing railings and wire netting across corridors.¹⁰ Subsequent decades brought further

During such activities, separation was maintained through the wearing of masks, to prevent recognition, and the construction of walls between outdoor exercise areas.

6. Tomlinson, H. (1980) 'Design and reform: the 'separate system' in the nineteenth-century English prison', in King, A.D. (ed) *Buildings and Society: Essays on the Social Development of the Built Environment*. Routledge: London, 51-65, p.54.

7. Ibid.

8. Kraftl, P. and Adey, P. (2008) 'Architecture/affect/inhabitation: geographies of being-in buildings', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 98(1), 213-231.

9. Historic England (2021) *Pentonville Prison, A, B, C and D Wings, and Chapel Wing*. Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1195491>.

10. Brodie, A., Croom, J. and Davies, J.O. (2002) *English Prisons: An Architectural History*. English Heritage, Swindon, p.159.

changes to historic buildings across the prison estate, although records of changes at individual prisons are not widely available.

The recent closure of several Victorian prisons, however, has enabled detailed inspections by Historic England, providing valuable insights into the inhabitation of these buildings. For example, at HMP Reading, built between 1842 and 1844, and closed in 2014, there had been significant changes to cells and landings. Much of the original red-brick prison was demolished in the 1970s, so that only the cruciform main building remained. The original cells with their jack-arched brick vaults largely survived, but had mostly been doubled-up by removing the wall between each pair.¹¹ Several original features remained, including the metal gallery structures that supported the landings outside of the cells, with their curved supporting brackets and cross-braced balustrades, and the pointed brick vault ceiling over the galleries and central octagon, which had 'moulded stone ribs and corbels, and lozenge-shaped ceiling lights cut through the webs of the vault'.¹² However, the original 'glazed Gothic pavilion structure from which prison staff could keep watch on movements in A, B and C wings and (via the tall side windows) in the prison yard outside' had been replaced by a 'modern prefabricated cabin'.¹³ Further alterations had seen the original two-light cell windows replaced with double-glazed window units, so that only one unaltered original cell window survived, in the basement of D wing.¹⁴

Victorian-era buildings at HMP Shrewsbury, which closed in 2013, underwent similar changes, as Historic England detailed:

New staircases and balustrade panels have been fitted to the gallery landings c2007. These are heavier than the original iron panels and have required the fitting of new brackets

Much of the original red-brick prison was demolished in the 1970s, so that only the cruciform main building remained.

to supplement the originals, which still support the landing floors. [...] Scars in the brickwork show where lamp windows allowed illumination of the cells at night by warders. [...] Doors are a mixture of wooden doors with bolt-heads, some of which may be original, and steel doors from the later C20 [...] The ablutions annexe at the centre of the south-eastern side was converted to showers when lavatories and basins were fitted to each cell. Some cells have had the dividing walls removed to make them double and one triple cell is used as a servery.¹⁵

Today, Victorian prisons are still undergoing refurbishment in this ongoing process of inhabitation. HM Inspectorate of Prisons provides insights into living conditions in Victorian-era prisons today, suggesting that: 'we often find conditions in 19th-century local prisons to be worse than other, newer establishments. They often have sanitary facilities which are not fit for purpose and inadequate fixtures and fittings'.¹⁶ In some of these prisons, inspectors find that, just as had been observed when these establishments were first built or adapted for the Separate System: 'windows could not be opened properly and cells were poorly ventilated'.¹⁷ In warm weather, some prisoners reported that they took matters into their own hands, breaking windows in order to provide ventilation.

In light of similar criticisms arising from a 2017 inspection, HMP Liverpool underwent a £6 million renovation, which included the delivery of 'lighting, sanitaryware, electrical and flooring upgrades, as well as replacing 215 windows and doors across the 90 cells, wing offices, servery and staff refreshment areas'.¹⁸ Scaffolding was erected in exercise yards to allow the small Victorian window apertures to be adapted to receive new uPVC casings, manufactured at another

11. A jack-arch is a structural arch made of masonry elements cut or formed into a wedge shape, that efficiently uses the compressive strength of the masonry itself for support.

12. Historic England (2021) *Reading Gaol (main building) former Her Majesty's Prison*. Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1321948>.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

15. Historic England (2021) *Former Her Majesty's Prison Shrewsbury*. Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1254593>.

16. HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2017) *Report on an announced inspection of HMP Wormwood Scrubs by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons 31 July–11 August 2017*. Available at: <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/inspections/hmp-wormwood-scrubs-3/>. p. 14.

17. Ibid.

18. ISG Ltd (2021) *Case Study - HMP Liverpool B Wing Refurbishment, Liverpool, UK*. Available at: <https://www.isg ltd.com/en/our-experience/government-public-sector-and-education/defence-and-justice/case-study/uk-hmp-liverpool-b-wing-refurbishment>.

The future of the Victorian prison

prison, and all cells had walls stripped for repainting, and new doors and new electrical socket points fitted. Porcelain sanitaryware was replaced with resin, new vinyl flooring was fitted, and refurbished beds installed. Older light fittings were refurbished on site and reused elsewhere in the prison.

Indeed, refurbishments often appear to follow critical inspection reports, as at HMP Wormwood Scrubs, where a 2017 inspection noted that 'efforts had been made to paint the wings and cells since the previous inspection [in 2016] but there was still too much grime in communal areas and a lot of graffiti in cells'.¹⁹ By the time of a further inspection two years later:

*most cells had been painted and there was much less graffiti; we saw few broken windows [...] The remaining cells were being repainted by prisoners as part of a prison-funded programme [...] Around 20 prisoners were employed in a successful project to refurbish wing accommodation. Cells were stripped, cleaned and decorated to a good standard by enthusiastic teams who took pride in their work and in maintaining their craft skills.*²⁰

It is clear, then, that the activity of human inhabitants constantly shapes and reshapes prison environments. Victorian-era prisons have been subject to periods of major alteration, as well as refitting and refurbishments of wings, landings or cells, and micro-scale adjustments by individuals, such as adding graffiti or breaking windows. Those who occupy these spaces, be they staff or prisoners, are constantly at work on the fabric of the buildings, within a repetitive cycle of inhabitation.

It is clear, then, that the activity of human inhabitants constantly shapes and reshapes prison environments.

The persistence of the Victorian prison means that these historic buildings continue to exert significant influence. The separation of prisoners served as the underlying principle of incarceration for many decades, enabled by robustly engineered buildings constructed for this purpose, leading Tomlinson to note that 'the system became self-perpetuating'.²¹ Likewise, the enduring existence and cultural prominence of the archetypal Victorian gaol continue to shape the development of modern penal policy and influence how politicians, policy-makers, and members of the public understand what a prison is and should be. Often associated with mostly (though by no means exclusively) Conservative governments, who champion

a version of imprisonment in which notions of order, control and punitiveness are represented as an antidote to the excesses of past permissiveness and stubbornly high crime rates, the Victorian prison has demonstrated a remarkable obduracy, despite periodic efforts to consign it to history.

Most recently, Michael Gove announced in 2015 that the 'ageing and ineffective' Victorian prison estate would be sold off to fund larger replacement prisons.²²

A year later, in the Queen's speech, Prime Minister David Cameron repeated his government's pledge to close Victorian-era prisons, describing them as 'ageing, ineffective... creaking, leaking and coming apart at the seams'.²³ The proposal was only partially carried out, with many prisons that were earmarked for closure still in operation today. Yet as far back as 1960, the bleak Victorian prison had become viewed as an obstacle to progressive penal thinking, and the form and fabric of prison buildings was regarded as an impediment to the therapeutic mission pursued within.²⁴ Policymakers feared to implement new prison designs, paralysed by

19. HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2017) *Life in prison: Living conditions*. Available at: <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/inspections/life-in-prison-living-conditions/>. p.29.
20. HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2020) *Report on an announced inspection of HMP Wormwood Scrubs by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons 16 September – 4 October 2019*. Available at: <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/inspections/hmp-wormwood-scrubs-4/>. p.14, p.32, p.47.
21. Tomlinson, H. (1980) 'Design and reform: the 'separate system' in the nineteenth-century English prison', in King, A.D. (ed) *Buildings and Society: Essays on the Social Development of the Built Environment*. Routledge: London, 51-65, p.61.
22. Gove, M. (2015) *Speech given at the Prisoner Learning Alliance 17 July 2015*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-treasure-in-the-heart-of-man-making-prisons-work>.
23. Politics.co.uk (2016) *Cameron prison reform speech in full*. Available at: <https://www.politics.co.uk/comment-analysis/2016/02/08/cameron-prison-reform-speech-in-full>.
24. Pratt, J. (2002) *Punishment and civilization: Penal tolerance and intolerance in modern society*. London: Sage.; Jewkes, Y. and Moran, D. (2017) 'Prison architecture and design: perspectives from criminology and carceral geography', in Liebling, A., Maruna, S. and McCara, L. (eds) *The Oxford Handbook of Criminology* [6th edition], 541-564.

the prospect that any novel approach could prove 'as great a handicap to our successors as early Victorian prisons are to us now'.²⁵ As a result, newer prisons often replicated Victorian-era designs, leading a 1961 special issue of the *British Journal of Criminology* to lament that contemporary prison design simply perpetuated 'an embarrassing legacy of extremely permanent buildings expressing an outdated and outworn penal philosophy'.²⁶ More recently, architect Roland Karthaus has noted that even in our very newest facilities, we have built Victorian hub-spoke, galleried prisons, just like those built for the Separate System, but now in concrete, and with integrated plumbing and wiring.²⁷ This repetition is perhaps an example of 'affirmative design', which reinforces how things are now, conforming to cultural, social, technical and economic expectations, and thereby maintaining existing norms.²⁸

As long as Victorian facilities still operate, then, they pose challenges for the implementation of living standards such as those advised in the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.²⁹ Victorian prisons have been described as obsolete, yet the precise characteristics of obsolescence are surprisingly hard to pin down. Adjectives such as 'ageing', 'ineffective and dilapidated', 'unsafe', 'infested', 'overcrowded' and 'grim' are commonly deployed, but these are just as apt for many more modern prisons. What is it specifically about Victorian prisons that defines them? Why do they serve as an archetype of punishment, to be celebrated and even fetishized in the popular imagination? How and why

does this matter for those who live and work in these buildings today? We believe that understanding these issues is essential to inform future prison design.

Conclusion

The Victorian prison casts a long shadow, literally and metaphorically. In seeking to better understand its permanence, our research is taking a wide-ranging, multi-faceted, interdisciplinary approach. We are using methods including archival research, analysis of literary and media sources, interviews, oral histories, creative methods, and a programme of events, to uncover the many ways in which the Victorian prison has influenced, and continues to influence, our political landscape, society and culture. Over the three years of the project, there will be opportunities for current and former prison staff, currently and formerly incarcerated people, prison managers and contractors, and the general public to share their views and experiences of these historical buildings. By working together to explore the persistence of the Victorian prison, we hope to better understand the challenges facing the contemporary prison system.

Find out more

To find out more about this project, please visit our website: www.victorian-prisons.com or follow us on Twitter: twitter.com/VictorianPrison

25. Howard (1960), cited in Fairweather, L. (1961) 'Prison Architecture in England', *The British Journal of Criminology*, 1(4), 339-361, pp.358-359.

26. Fairweather, L. (1961) 'Prison Architecture in England', *The British Journal of Criminology*, 1(4), 339-361, p.339.

27. See discussion at: <https://www.wired.co.uk/article/birmingham-prison-riot-design>.

28. Dunne, A. and Raby, F. (2001) *Design noir: The secret life of electronic objects*. Springer Science & Business Media, p.58.

29. United Nations (2015) *The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners*. Available at: https://www.un.org/en/events/mandeladay/mandela_rules.shtml.

'I seriously didn't want to walk through them gates, it was that bad': New psychoactive substance use and prison officer well-being

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Introduction

This paper reports on a sub section of the data from a study carried out in a Category C¹ prison in the north of England. The availability and use of drugs within the prison environment was discussed in the HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) Prison Drug Strategy 2019² where it was revealed that between 2012/13 and 2017/18 the rate of positive random drug tests increased by 50 per cent, suggesting that drug use within prisons is widespread. The increased use of drugs in the prison also coincided with a shift in the drug prison economy that was previously predicated on what has been termed 'hard drugs' such as heroin to an 'era of new psychoactive drugs'³. This paper reports on how the increased presence of New Psychoactive Substance (NPS) impacted on the well-being of prison officers.

Within this evolving environment there is a need to consider how these new drug economies impact on everyone within the prison estate⁴. The influx of NPS into the prison system during 2017 had a dramatic impact on prison regimes and staff are still recovering

from the aftermath of the effects on their physical and mental health⁵. The significant harm from NPS represented the greatest threat to security and safety within prisons⁶ and drugs such as 'spice' increased in popularity, largely due to its low cost⁷, the difficulties of detecting use and the ability to avoid its detection⁸. The incursion of NPS into the prison system had a dramatic effect on people who live and work there and increased concern about their safety and well-being. To date, most research has highlighted the harms of NPS on prisoners; in order to improve the prison environment and ascertain the impacts of this drug, it is necessary to engage with both staff and prisoners⁹. This paper proposes that in order to promote recovery for the people in their care, it is essential to also address the impact of drugs such as NPS on officers.

The prison officer role is predicated on a complex balance between 'custody' and 'care'¹⁰, within an environment where signs of 'weakness' such as fear or anxiety are not revealed, with officers utilising 'impression management' and 'face work'¹¹ in order to remain outwardly indifferent. This can lead to a culture of being reticent of reaching out for support when

1. Category C prisons in England and Wales are classified as training and resettlement prisons. Retrieved from: <https://prisonjobs.blog.gov.uk/your-a-d-guide-on-prison-categories>
2. HM Prison & Prosecution Services (2019) Prison Drug Strategy. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-prison-drugs-strategy>
3. Gooch, K. and Treadwell, J. (2020) 'Prisoner society in an era of psychoactive substances, organized crime, new drug markets and austerity', *British Journal of Criminology*, 60(5), pp. 1260-1281. (p.1261).
4. Corazza, O., Coloccini, S., Marrinan, S., Vigar, M., Watkins, C., Zene, C., Negri, A., Aresti, A., Darke, S., Rinaldi, R., Metastasio, A. and Bersani, G. (2020) 'Novel psychoactive substances in custodial settings: A mixed method investigation on the experiences of people in prison and professionals working with them', *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 11, pp. 460.
5. Corazza et al (2020) see n.4.
6. Ralphs, R., Williams, L., Askew, R. and Norton, A. (2017) 'Adding spice to the porridge: The development of a synthetic cannabinoid market in an English prison', *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 40, pp. 57-69.
7. Faure Walker, D. (2015) 'The informal economy in prison: Studying prisoner trading can offer significant insights into prison life', *Criminal Justice Matters*, 99(1), pp. 18-19.
8. Ralphs, et al (2017) see n.6
9. Wheatley, M. (2019) 'Promoting recovery in prison: The Holme House approach', *Prison Service Journal (Special edition: Recovery in prison)*, (242), pp. 11-17.
10. Liebling, A., Price, D. and Shefer, G (2018) *The Prison Officer*. 2nd Edition. Milton, Willan Publishing
11. Crawley, E.M (2004) *Doing Prison Work: the public and private lives of prison officers*. Milton, Willan Publishing

officers may be adversely affected by major incidents such as the threat to safety and security — and personal safety — due to the effects of NPS on prison officer well-being.

Prison Officer Mental Health and Well-being

Prison officers work within what could be described as a difficult and complex workplace and this can have a detrimental impact on their overall well-being^{12 13}. This study took place within the context of prison overcrowding, staff shortages, increased levels of violence and a lack of meaningful activity, with officers frequently being diverted to deal with drug related emergencies¹⁴. A number of factors can impact negatively on the prison officer's experience at work, including levels of noise, general cleanliness and access to natural lighting¹⁵.

There is evidence that people who work within what could be described as 'emergency or security roles', are more likely to experience workplace strain and in time this can lead to poor mental health and well-being¹⁶. This stress could potentially relate to a number of factors including poor working conditions, high levels of violence and increasing levels of self-harm in prisoners. Despite an acknowledgement that high levels of stress are also a concern for the police, paramedics and other security roles, it appears that the levels of stress amongst prison officers could be even higher¹⁷. Research¹⁸ has also highlighted the

A number of factors can impact negatively on the prison officer's experience at work, including levels of noise, general cleanliness and access to natural lighting.

significance of relationships and interactions within the prison environment which can, in turn, be fundamental to levels of tension within the prison.

Prison Officers and Emotional Labour

Prison officers play a pivotal role within the prison as they spend most of their time with prisoners, undertaking a dual role in providing both care and control¹⁹. Officers are increasingly being asked to develop positive relationships with prisoners to support what is described as dynamic security, and while this shift has been welcomed by some, it can lead to ambiguity and mistrust²⁰. As officers have developed relationships with prisoners it has become more important to consider the impact of traumatic events on them and to ensure that the appropriate support is available. Major incidents and the risk of them occurring can have a detrimental effect on the prison environment due to officers becoming overwhelmed, which can lead to a further breaking down of positive interactions²¹. Where support is not available to them, officers can be reluctant to engage emotionally with prisoners and in some cases fail to meet their minimal needs²².

The formation of positive relationships requires officers to deal with prisoners' emotional states at the same time as managing their own²³, this can sometimes lead to emotional burnout²⁴. The need for officers to manage their emotions was

12. Evers, T. J., Ogloff, J. R. P., Trounson, J. S. and Pfeifer, J. E. (2020) 'Well-being interventions for correctional officers in a prison setting: A review and meta-analysis', *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 47(1), pp. 3-21.
13. King, A. and Oliver, C. (2020) 'A qualitative study exploring vicarious trauma in prison officers', *Prison Service Journal*, (251), pp. 38-45.
14. Gooch, and Treadwell (2020) see n.3
15. Evers et al (2020) see n.12
16. Kinman, G., Clements, A. J. and Hart, J. A. (2016) 'Work-related wellbeing in UK prison officers: a benchmarking approach', *International Journal of Workplace Health Management*, 9(3), pp. 290-307.
17. Evers et al (2020) see n.12
18. See, for example: Morrison, K and Maycock, M (2021) Becoming a prison officer. *The Howard Journal* 60(1) 3-24; Liebling et al (2018) see n.10; Crawley (2004) see n.11
19. Kolind, T., Frank, V. A., Lindberg, O. and Tourunen, J. (2015) 'Officers and drug counsellors: New occupational identities in nordic prisons', *British Journal of Criminology*, 55(2), pp. 303-320.
20. Crewe, B. (2011) 'Soft power in prison: Implications for staff-prisoner relationships, liberty and legitimacy', *European Journal of Criminology*, 8(6), pp. 455-468.
21. Liebling et al (2018) see n.10
22. Tait, S. (2011) 'A typology of prison officer approaches to care', *European Journal of Criminology*, 8(6), pp. 440-454.
23. Nylander, P.-A., Lindberg, O. and Bruhn, A. (2011) 'Emotional labour and emotional strain among Swedish prison officers', *European Journal of Criminology*, 8(6), pp. 469-483.
24. Lambert, E. G., Hogan, N. L., Dial, K. C., Jiang, S. and Khondaker, M. I. (2012) 'Is the job burning me out? An exploratory test of the job characteristics model on the emotional burnout of prison staff', *The Prison Journal*, 92(1), pp. 3-23.

discussed by Nylander et al.²⁵ with reference to the work of Hochschild on emotional labour, a process by which a person attempts to induce or suppress their emotions. Drawing on this work, it is necessary to ensure that officers have the opportunity to recover from work-related emotional strain, but this can be difficult in a fast moving work environment, and one where any expression of anxiety or fear could be considered a weakness. The role of prisoner officer and the culture within the prison is one where the officer, during work hours, is required to balance the complexities of care and control and do 'face work' — performing emotions and engaging in 'impression management'²⁶. However, without means of support, or accepting that support is needed, officers can suffer from 'burnout' which can result in an inability to commit to the personal encounters that are the backbone of the prison officer role²⁷, and this is likely to impact negatively on their engagement with prisoners.

The threat of violence from prisoners can be a significant source of stress²⁸ but during the period when the use of NPS was at its highest, prison officers also faced danger from inadvertently inhaling the drug and the consequences of this. Officers who have experienced this type of ordeal are more likely to withdraw from prisoner contact²⁹ and for them personally, it can be detrimental to their own well-being³⁰. Liebling³¹ argued that 'the moral quality of prison life is enacted and embodied by the attitudes and conduct of prison officers' (p.484). With this in mind it is essential to consider the impact of NPS on individual officers and in turn the potential wider effects of this on prison regimes.

...without means of support, or accepting that support is needed, officers can suffer from 'burnout' which can result in an inability to commit to the personal encounters that are the backbone of the prison officer role.

The findings presented here relate to the impact of high levels of NPS on the prison officers in a Category C prison in the north of England. The study utilised qualitative data, including interviews with staff and focus groups with prisoners. Interviews were semi-structured in nature, ensuring that all participants were asked the same range of questions, with prompts and probes used where appropriate. Interviews ranged from fifteen minutes to one hour. The interviews carried out with staff (n=26) included representatives from a range of roles; all those included in this article were uniformed staff.

Focus groups were held with groups of four prisoners over three occasions (n=12) and they were asked the same questions as the staff interviews. Prison officer well-being was not the sole focus of the initial study³², but links with the issues of NPS use within the prison estate, as outlined above, gave officers and some of the prisoners a chance to reflect. Hence only a limited number of prisoners spoke directly about the impact on staff but where they did, their comments have been included in the analysis.

The qualitative data from the individual staff interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed, and anonymised. The group interviews with prisoners were captured in note form by the researchers and then written up in full directly after the data collection had taken place. The transcription of the staff interviews was carried out by an HMPPS approved transcription service. All qualitative data was entered into 'NVivo', a computer software package that supports the analysis of large amounts of qualitative data and thematic analysis was undertaken³³. All data

25. Nylander et al (2011) see n.22

26. Crawley, E.M (2004) *Doing Prison Work: the public and private lives of prison officers*. Milton, Willan Publishing

27. Nylander et al (2011) see n.22

28. Evers, T. J., Ogloff, J. R. P., Trounson, J. S. and Pfeifer, J. E. (2020) 'Well-being interventions for correctional officers in a prison setting: A review and meta-analysis', *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 47(1), pp. 3-21.

29. Tait (2011) see n.22

30. Kinman, G., Clements, A. J. and Hart, J. A. (2017) 'Job demands, resources and mental health in UK prison officers', *Occupational Medicine*, 67(6), pp. 456-460.

31. Liebling, A. (2011) 'Distinctions and distinctiveness in the work of prison officers: Legitimacy and authority revisited', *European Journal of Criminology*, 8(6), pp. 484-499.

32. Bell, V. and Leese, M. (2021) 'Increased security measures in a drug recovery prison: Disrupting the drug supply', *Prison Service Journal*, January 2021 – No.252.

33. Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) 'Using thematic analysis in psychology', *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), pp. 77-101.

have been treated confidentially and stored securely and anonymously. In order to maintain the anonymity of staff participants, specific roles have not been attributed to their quotes and comments.

Findings and Discussion

A Challenging Environment

The findings from this study support the suggestion that NPS had impacted dramatically on the prison³⁴ and led to what many participants described as a very challenging environment to live and work in. The staff described the prison environment prior to the implementation of security measures aimed at reducing illicit drug availability within the prison as very difficult for both the staff and prisoners because the use of NPS was at a high level within the prison.

I've been here two and a half year — what it is now and what it was then [...] there's been a massive difference though; I've seen it with my own eyes (Prisoner).

One participant referred the prison as a 'jungle', an environment where danger was present even when it was not visible, this was similar to the way the staff described their experience at that time.

I was on the house blocks, house block 5. And, to be blatantly honest, it got to the point where I didn't want to come into work (Officer).

Officers described a volatile atmosphere that was difficult to predict and they noted the subsequent impact that this had on all staff, both physical and psychological. Officers described the increased number of emergency situations, or 'code blues' that could happen several times a day, where a prisoner had collapsed and needed emergency care. In addition, they also described the impact on staff who became ill due to secondary exposure to NPS. The large number of emergency situations that they described offers insight into what the prison environment was like when the levels of NPS were at their highest.

[There were] high levels of harm [...] the impact on the staff in terms of secondary exposure and things like that (Officer).

These high levels of harm were echoed by other staff and is a clear indicator of the heightened levels of

strain that the potential negative impact of NPS was having on the safety and well-being of everyone within the prison system³⁵. This highly charged prison environment had clearly impacted negatively on the well-being of both prisoners and officers³⁶.

We've seen reductions in kind of code blues, so people kind of overdose — like, eighteen months, two years ago it was quite bad for overdose and stuff, which impacts the staff well-being (Officer).

The increased security measures that were put in place did subsequently reduce the supply and demand of the NPS drug 'spice' and this had resulted in a reduction in the number of emergency situations, or 'code blues' occurring within the prison. This was welcomed by both the staff and prisoners.

There's a lot less 'spice', that has really improved, there's not as many 'code blues' (Prisoner).

I think it's probably one of the most immediate areas where you see success anywhere. [...] it feels a calmer place (Officer).

The impact of the positive changes in the prison environment were discussed by a number of staff, for them there was tangible evidence that the increased security measures and new procedures within the prisons were working. These measures included the increased use of scanners in all reception areas and the searching of staff entering the prison:

So it helps the staff feel safer as well and I think that was a key thing from a prison and a health side, if people can see different technologies being brought in, they can see an investment in making the environment safer and they are better placed to be able to deliver the care (Officer).

Being 'spiced'

The challenging prison environment posed risks to officers with increased violence and inhalation of the drug when attempting to safeguard prisoners. Most of the officers referred to being 'spiced' when they were attempting to offer support to a prisoner who had collapsed. When responding to a 'code blue', an officer would enter the cell and within seconds become

34. Ralphs et al (2017) see n.6

35. Gooch and Treadwell (2020) see n.3

36. Evers et al (2020) see n.12

overcome by the impact of inhaling the drug in a confined area.

You know, seriously didn't want to walk through them gates. It was that bad. Even walking back out, I'd even get 'spiced'. It was a major problem with 'spice'. You know, it was absolutely flooring people (Officer).

Staff would be affected; they would inhale 'spice' from prisoner's use (Prisoner).

While the majority of instances occurred when officers were responding to an emergency, some officers described cases where prisoners had intentionally caused them to inhale the drug.

I mean, I've known staff have accidents. I've known staff be in really bad ways. There was a colleague in the seg [segregation unit], who was literally crawling round on the floor because they'd blown it through the door. I think they found him hours later just laid cuddling in the toilet, crying — a different person you'd ever met. And they were goading him to try and get him to open the cell doors on nights (Officer).

The possibility that prisoners could use NPS to assault an officer raises concern within the wider context of increased violence within prisons. The threat of violence from prisoners can be a source of workplace stress³⁷, and the possibility that NPS could be used as a weapon increased levels of concern for some officers. While willing to talk about the experience of others, some were reluctant to acknowledge that they had personally suffered the impacts of NPS.

I'm not saying it's affected me but sometimes the 'spice' — I don't know whether you're aware, some — some staff are a bit — they go poorly with it (Officer).

It's been horrendous, absolutely horrendous, but I've been fortunate. Like, I usually just get a strange feeling on the end of my tongue, and my lips feel strange if I've been affected (Officer).

These comments are an example of two officers keen to distance themselves from the suggestion that they had been affected by NPS within the prison. This was perhaps because they had indeed experienced very minor reactions to the drug, or it could be an attempt to resist being labelled as a victim. In the interviews some officers attempted to retain the illusion of being

in control, possibly in an attempt to manage their own emotional states³⁸. Where officers had experienced secondary effects of NPS, they described instances where it had happened without them being aware.

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absolutely
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been fortunate.
Like, I usually just
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if I've been affected

You just didn't know it was there. Just walking around the landing like I done every day and go in and check the mail, come back out and lock the door, go to the next wing, go to the next wing, and it was about ten minutes after I realised I'd been, like, 'spiced', as we call it (Officer).

Been affected by 'spice'. But there was no, you know, there wasn't, there was nothing to say that it had happened and, like, if you bang your finger or somebody punches you you've got an immediate reaction. There was nothing, I had no warning that I'd been [spiced], was just the effects (Officer).

These officers had experienced some unpleasant secondary effects of NPS and there was a sense that at times they felt that this was not acknowledged by the prison management. Officers reported that they had suffered physical symptoms from NPS even when they were not aware that they had inhaled the drug.

And, like I say, it gives you a banging headache. I know staff were going, making them physically sick (Officer).

37. Kinman et al (2017) see n.30
38. Nylander et al (2011) see n.23

There were times where you were working, and you were like — you would be coming off and your head would be [...] pounding headache (Officer).

The officer's anxiety about being 'spiced' was something that they had to deal with on a daily basis, adding to the complex nature of risk within the prison. The impact of NPS on the officer's health was described by some as having a transient effect that would wear off quite quickly, whereas others suggested that the negative physical symptoms could last much longer.

It's like a hangover for days. I mean, it does affect you big time (Officer).

Despite their reassurances that things had improved for many of the officers who were interviewed, it was clear that their experience had had a detrimental impact on their overall well-being³⁹.

Emotional Labour

In addition to the impact of personal exposure to NPS, officers described the impact of responding to multiple 'code blues', where prisoners had collapsed due to an overdose of NPS. The participants described how emotionally difficult these situations are for the members of staff who are the first to respond. Although as discussed earlier, the participants suggested that these code blues are now rare, the memory of what it was like was still vivid for the people involved.

I've seen some terrible states, honestly, really bad [...] all of a sudden, this 'spice' boom kicked right off and I'm not kidding you, we had four or five code blues, when somebody is under the influence or unconscious in the morning and the afternoon. But now, we had one yesterday but apart from that [it's] very, very rare (Officer).

Here the officer outlines the emotional impact of witnessing prisoners and staff who repeatedly became unwell due to NPS inhalation. This needs to be set within the recent prison context when officers are being asked to develop positive relationships with prisoner⁴⁰.

If they are fearful and they are seeing people, you know, becoming unconscious, they have to respond to that and it's not delivering the

kind of like proactive care that we want to (Officer).

Another aspect of emotional labour that the officers described is the need to manage their own emotions simultaneously with prisoner's emotions, and officers suggested that this can be difficult. In a highly charged environment, the officers were having to make split second decisions about risk to self and to others and the presence of NPS made this a difficult task.

Someone comes towards you, you react, and you think — is that seen as assault? Could you be seen as assaulting somebody? Because when it happens to one of the men, they were like: 'Oh, I was under the influence, I didn't mean to throw me arms at you', but where do staff stand at the risk of drunk driving, the risk of themselves? You don't know how you're going to react; you don't know if you're going to be angry, sad (Officer).

This officer was concerned about the risk of violence from a prisoner who may be under the influence of NPS, but they also had concerns about their own response if they had been exposed to NPS, highlighting one of the potential stresses of working in such an environment. This heightened sense of alert is likely to have a detrimental impact on the officer and lead to emotional burnout⁴¹.

Officers recognised that the situation had improved with the new security measures, but some concern was also raised that there could be a level of complacency with a relaxation of some of the screening that had been put in place.

[If] we go back to the old ways and they get a bit relaxed about it: 'It's okay, we haven't got a drug problem now'. We have got a drug problem (Officer).

Here there was recognition that the prison still needed to adapt practices in a response to the changing nature of the drug use and supply chains. It was agreed that the security measures had disrupted the supply of drugs into the prison, however participants noted how different supplies and supply routes had now started to open up. Changes to the prison economy included an increased use of prescribed medication and with the ban on smoking, debts relating to the use of vapes.

39. Evers et al (2020) see n.12

40. Crewe (2011) see n.24

41. Lambert et al (2012) see n.24

It's always going to be the case in prison [that people will take drugs and they will be available]. They stem a couple of avenues, for some that means that they're gone from the prison, but there's a demand, so others soon take over (Prisoner).

We are finding in the searching that we're doing at the minute there are bits and pieces coming in but it's more we're seeing a big change in- we're finding a lot more of prescription medication that's already inside the jail (Officer).

Whilst there was an acknowledgement that things had changed for the better; that the reduction in the supply of NPS was contributing to a calmer and safer prison environment for all, officers were concerned about what the future would hold. This is linked to the earlier discussion by Nylander et al.⁴², that officers who have experienced emotional strain need to be given have the time, space and opportunity to recover.

Officer Health and Well-being

The concept of recovery for staff was discussed in a number of different interviews where the officers noted their concern about the possible longer-term physical and psychological impact of NPS on their health and well-being.

[I] took some time off to recover, because some people, I don't know, a lot of the [prisoners] who use it, they kind of, they do drugs a lot. So, when you don't, like, I don't drink, I don't smoke. When it, when it hits me, I feel rough for days (Officer).

Here the officer identified how they had needed to take time off work due to the impact of the drug on their own health. Officers reported that they had experienced numerous periods of sickness because on their return to work they had been 'spiced' again.

I was off sick last year for five months (Officer).

I was off for a set period, came back, and the very next day I ended up going off again, and since that's happened to me once again where my blood pressure jumped to 210 over 120, and I was in quite a bad way. I was straight to hospital (Officer).

For some of the officers NPS had impacted on their long-term health and there was some frustration that this was not always recognised. This is a concern because it is essential that the appropriate support is given at the right time to enable them to continue to do their job well⁴³. Concern was raised that at times they were not supported to take time off to recover from the inhalation, and that because of this, officers were left feeling that any sickness was viewed as a personal weakness.

They knocked me back on my sick excusal. I opened a door, I went sheet white, and I could barely walk, and I was ready to collapse, and I'm told, oh, no, it's just me. Well, it's not. I'm thinking about 'spice' now, and I'm nearly passing out on the floor (Officer).

Here the officer is describing the physical symptoms that they experienced, but during their interview and they also discussed the longer-term psychological impact related to their own experience. Some officers stated that when they remember how they felt when exposed to NPS, they experience a repeat of physical symptoms. The psychological impact on some officers was related to a lack of knowledge about what drugs such as NPS may do to a person's health in the longer term.

What's it doing to your lungs then? Because no one knows...because every batch is different (Officer).

A number of the officers described the psychological impact of working in the prison at a time where there were staff shortages, with rising levels of violence. There was a perception amongst the officers that if you admitted you were finding things difficult, it could show individual vulnerability.

I had depression and anxiety. I've never had depression and anxiety before ever (Officer).

It was awful. It was really, really an awful time. It was depressing, and I was quite low and, you know, it was just the same thing day in, day out, incident after incident, ambulances coming in one after another, staff getting, being assaulted, staff being affected by 'spice', prisoners being affected by 'spice' having to go to hospital (Officer).

The memories of a time when things were at their hardest had clearly taken its toll on some of the staff.

42. Nylander et al (2011) see n.23

43. Kinman et al (2017) see n.30

The levels of stress and in some cases, trauma, were clearly evident when officers recalled this time in the prison. These conditions were, therefore, likely to have impacted on their ability to fulfil their job role⁴⁴.

Furthermore, officers described how their experiences and concerns about NPS had impacted on other parts of their life outside of the prison, including uneasiness that they might be driving home under the influence of drugs without even being aware.

You don't do a test before you leave the prison, so you could be under the influence driving, not knowing, and you think: 'Well, wow' (Officer).

So, I think that's a big, that was a big concern of everybody involved. I mean, as well when you go under the influence yourself, there's always — I think people have had to worry, like, you could drive home, not think anything different (Officer).

The impact on family life was also highlighted by the officers with some concerned that their behaviour toward their family had changed due to both the physical and psychological effects of being in such a volatile workplace.

I could have lost my family because of that. So, I was mega, mega angry about that. I still get upset about it (Officer).

My kids are only young and sometimes it gets you upset, but you are human, you know, it's horrible (Officer).

The need to protect the family from the reality of their day-to-day job meant that for some officers they needed to portray that they were in control and that they were coping with what was happening. This prevented some from having the opportunity to talk about their feelings and express their concerns over a long period of time and it is likely that as a result they experienced significant stress⁴⁵.

Conclusion

In conclusion the findings suggest that the prevalence of NPS, including 'spice', has had a significant impact on officers' health and well-being. It would appear from the findings that this relates to a number of factors, including inhaling NPS, having to attend emergency situations where prisoners have collapsed, increased levels of violence, and low staffing levels due to sickness. While acknowledging that this was a small study in one prison, it offers insight into the experience of prison officers and makes some recommendations to improve their health and well-being. The supply and demand for NPS in the prison system presented a number of challenges in the way that the prison drug economy was managed⁴⁶. While there have been changes made to deal with these, there is a lack of understanding about the experience of officers on the 'front-line'.

The increase of security measures was a response to the escalating levels of NPS and in many ways this was successful, but the aftermath for the officers needs to be acknowledged. The findings suggest that a significant number of officers had experienced trauma and that for many this was not addressed. These findings support the assertions of King and Oliver⁴⁷ that some prison officers are exhibiting both physical and psychological signs of direct and indirect trauma, therefore more research is needed to understand what support the officers need. Returning to Liebling's⁴⁸ argument that 'the moral quality of prison life is enacted and embodied by the attitudes and conduct of prison officers' (p.484), it is essential that these officers are supported. As Tait⁴⁹ identified, if officers have experienced trauma and this is unresolved, this will impact on their ability to engage positively with the prisoners in their care⁵⁰. Finally, the paper has demonstrated the difficulties that people can experience when working in such a fast-moving environment where there are few opportunities to reflect on the past.

44. Tait (2011) see n.22

45. Evers et al (2020) see n.12

46. Gooch and Treadwell (2020) see n.3

47. King and Oliver (2020) see n.13

48. Liebling (2011) see n.31

49. Tait (2011) see n.22

50. Nylander et al (2011) see n.23

The impacts of the drop in staffing provision in the transition between the youth custody estate and young adult/adult estate

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Introduction

The youngest, and considered most 'at risk', young people within the youth custody estate (YCE) are held within eight local authority run secure children's homes (SCHs) or two privately run secure training centres (STCs) which have a high staff to young person ratio (1:2 in SCHs and 3:8 in STCs). Five young offenders' institutions (YOIs) hold the majority of the YCE population. They have a much lower staff to young person ratio at 1:10² justified on the assumption that these young people are 'more resilient' and 'predominantly externalise their risk'³. Charlie Taylor⁴ has proposed an additional type of institution in two secure schools for which the quality of the staff is 'critical to the[ir] success', however, plans for one institution on the site of the controversial Medway STC⁵ remains contentious⁶. There is a strong body of literature which challenges the suitability of custodial provision for children⁷. Indeed, in 2017 Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons reported that:

'there was not a single establishment that we inspected in England and Wales in which it was safe to hold children and young people.'⁸

In these institutions where issues of violence, victimisation and self-harm are of great concern, the relationships young people have with staff is vital for support with risks, vulnerabilities and general well-being⁹. Those held are likely to have experienced challenging backgrounds including abuse and neglect prior to entering custody. Such negative and disrupted relationships can affect their ability to form relationships and trust others^{10,11}. Smaller SCHs and STCs with higher staffing ratios intend to provide greater opportunities for support. As staffing provision drastically decreases through institutions as age increases the opportunity to build these relationships diminishes¹².

At the point of turning age 18 years in custody, young people transition from the YCE into the young adult/adult estate. They can enter an establishment holding prisoners of all ages¹³ as there are only three designated young adult establishments but they hold only 6 per cent of the age 18-25 years population¹⁴.

1. This PhD research was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ES/J500094/1) as part of a CASE studentship. The studentship also formed part of a non-financial collaboration with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons.
2. Wells, D. (2018) Freedom of information request [email]. Price, J. 28th September 2018.
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12. Price, J. & Turner, J. (2021) (Custodial) spaces to grow? Adolescent development during custodial transitions, *Journal of Youth Studies*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2020.1865525>
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Young adult and adult institutions have varying staff prisoner ratios determined by locally agreed 'safe decent and secure operating levels' with the highest at 1:24 for young adult and core local prisons and up to 1:60 in open and resettlement prisons¹⁵. The difference in level of support between institutions is said to be akin to a 'cliff-edge'¹⁶ with fewer staff and supportive services making it a disruptive angst-ridden exercise. The Safer Custody PSI¹⁷ identifies new arrivals and younger prisoners as 'at risk' yet initial inspections of transitions found that staff members had little appreciation of these difficulties¹⁸.

The difference in staffing provision between the YCE and young adult/adult estate is problematic because it indicates age as a predictor of need. Whilst young adult prisoners are defined as those aged 18-20 years, there is a growing body of evidence demonstrating how neurological development continues until up to age 25 years. The impacts upon cognition, behaviour and emotion means they can be a challenging group to work with¹⁹. Physical conditions, regime and staffing can lead to negative responses to stimuli as their capacities develop^{20,21,22}. It is important for the effective and efficient running of an institution²³

that staff members are aware of and can identify the particular needs of those in their care by working alongside them consistently²⁴. The MoJ have refused to adopt a distinct approach for young adults and rejected the assertion that the operational staffing levels in prisons are inadequate²⁵. Instead, they have developed a screening tool for maturity^{26,27} and resource pack for staff, however the House of Commons Justice Committee²⁸ found few practical outcomes from this and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons²⁹ have reported that this positive development is unsupported with other measures leaving it 'insufficient to address the specific needs of young adults'.

Independent reviews and inspections have challenged the sufficiency of staffing levels available within both the YCE³⁰ and young adult/adult estate³¹. Staffing shortages as a consequence of cuts have left institutions 'woefully under-resourced'³². Staff are overwhelmed by their workload^{33,34} which impacts upon its quality³⁵. Staff training and skills to meet the complex needs of young people is vital yet found to be lacking³⁶. Staff joining the YCE receive eleven weeks bespoke training following a curriculum which includes training delivered by NHS and psychological services. Those

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 22. Tanner, J. and Arnett, J. (2009). The emergence of 'emerging adulthood' the new life stage between adolescence and young adulthood. In A. Furlong (ed.) *Handbook of Youth and Young Adulthood*. Oxon: Routledge, pp. 39-46.
 23. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (2018) *Incentivising and promoting good behaviour: a thematic review*. London: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons.
 24. National Audit Office (2017) *Mental Health in Prisons (HC 247) Session 2016-2017 29 June 2017*. London: Her Majesty's Prison & Probation Service, NHS England and Public Health England.
 25. Ministry of Justice (2015) *Government response to the Harris Review into self-inflicted deaths in National Offender Management Service custody of 18-24 year olds (Cm 9176)*. London: The Stationery Office.
 26. National Offender Management Service (2015) *Better outcomes for young adult men: evidence based commissioning principles*. London: NOMS.
 27. Ministry of Justice (2017) *Government Response to the Justice Committee's Seventh Report of Session 2016-17: The treatment of young adults in the criminal justice system (HC 1530)*. London: Ministry of Justice.
 28. House of Commons Justice Committee (2018) *Young adults in the criminal justice system. Eighth Report of Session 2017-19 (HC 419)*. London: The Stationery Office.
 29. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (2021) *Outcomes for young adults in custody*. London: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons, January, p. 28.
 30. Taylor, C. (2016) *Review of the Youth Justice System in England and Wales* December 2016. London: Ministry of Justice.
 31. House of Commons Justice Committee (2016) *The treatment of young adults in the criminal justice system. Seventh Report of Session 2016-17 (HC 169)*. London: The Stationery Office.
 32. Transition to Adulthood Alliance (2014) *Response by the Transition to Adulthood Alliance (T2A) to the Independent Review into Self-Inflicted Deaths in NOMS Custody of 18-24 year olds*. London: Transition to Adulthood, 5.
 33. Harris, T. (2015) *Changing prisons, saving lives: Report of the independent review into self-inflicted deaths in custody of 18-24 year olds, (Cm 9087) July, 2015*. London: Home Office.
 34. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (2016) *Transitions arrangements: a follow-up inspection January, 2016*. Manchester: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation.
 35. Criminal Justice Joint Inspectorates (2012) *Transitions, an inspection of the transition arrangements from youth to adult services in the criminal justice system*. Manchester: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation.
 36. Harris, T. (2015) *Changing prisons, saving lives: Report of the independent review into self-inflicted deaths in custody of 18-24 year olds, (Cm 9087) July, 2015*. London: Home Office.

joining the young adult/adult estate undergo from just eight weeks training which focuses primarily on practical aspects of the role although there is some work on trauma and safeguarding³⁷.

Prison officers perform numerous roles, they are caregivers as well as authoritarians³⁸ in addition to being 'agents of reform' key to delivering the Government's vision of 'making prisons work'³⁹. It is a complex role to manage as they seek to recognise and address the needs of 'distressed, disadvantaged and sometimes difficult' people held⁴⁰. Inspections have frequently shown young adult prisoners reporting poorer experiences across relationships with staff⁴¹, purposeful activity and rehabilitation and found them to be overrepresented in violence, self-harm and use of force than their older counterparts with insufficient exploration as to why⁴². The shortcomings in support indicate the requirement for staff to receive bespoke training and display skills which enable them to understand the need to employ different strategies when working with this group⁴³.

Methodology

The original PhD research project from which the data is drawn sought to explore the pathways and transitions between juvenile YOIs and young adult/adult estate. This was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council⁴⁴ and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) were a non-financial contributing partner. The research took a mixed-methods approach, the primary method was a series of interviews with 14 young people no more than two months pre-and up to six months post-transition

across two YOIs and five young adult/adult prisons and 22 key stakeholders, who worked within, or who had expert knowledge of, youth and young adult/adult custody. This qualitative data was supplemented with qualitative and quantitative data drawn from HMIP surveys (held between August 2014-July 2017) as access was provided due to the collaborative nature of the research project.

Access to institutions was granted following a successful research application to the NOMS National Research Committee (NRC) in November 2016 (2016-353). Ethical approval was received from the University of Liverpool in February 2017. The data collection period was between April 2017 and March 2018. Once permission to conduct the research was received from each prison governor, young people eligible for the research (aged 17 years and scheduled to transition within the next 3-6 months⁴⁵) and staff members willing to participate were identified by gatekeepers. In the year the research was conducted 349 transitioned to the young adult/adult estate. Concerningly, whilst the YCE population declines, the figure of those transitioning as a percentage of the average monthly custodial population and release type has increased up to 413 in 2018/19, the highest since records began in 2015⁴⁶. In 2019/20 this figure was 402 comprising a fifth of

release types and just over 50 per cent of the YCS population that year⁴⁷. Whilst the sample interviewed for this research may not be representative of the entire population, it offers valuable in-depth qualitative insights.

Prison officers perform numerous roles, they are caregivers as well as authoritarians in addition to being 'agents of reform' key to delivering the Government's vision of 'making prisons work.'

37. MoJ People Group Correspondence (2020) FOI 201104028 [email]. Price, J. 20 November 2020.

38. Crawley, E. (2004) *Doing prison work: the public and private lives of prison officers*. Devon: Willan.

39. Ministry of Justice (2016) *Prison Safety and reform*. London: The Stationery Office, 12.

40. Goldson, B. (2002) *Vulnerable inside: children in secure and penal settings*. London: The Children's Society 66.

41. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (2021) *Outcomes for young adults in custody*. London: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons, January.

42. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons (2020) *Annual report 2019-20* (HC 856). London: Her Majesty's Chief Inspectorate of Prisons.

43. Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (2020) *Annual report 2019/20 CP301*. London: Prisons and Probation Ombudsman.

44. Economic and Social Research Council CASE studentship funding (ES/J500094/1).

45. Due to practical issues accessing STCs and SCHs, girls were automatically excluded from the research as YOIs hold males only.

46. Youth Justice Board (2020b) *Youth justice statistics: 2018-2019 supplementary tables. Chapter 7: children in youth custody*. [Microsoft excel spreadsheet]. London: Youth Justice Board. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/youth-justice-statistics-2018-to-2019>. (Accessed: 24 November 2020).

47. Youth Justice Board (2021) *Youth justice statistics: 2019-2020 supplementary tables. Chapter 7: children in youth custody*. [Microsoft excel spreadsheet]. London: Youth Justice Board. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/youth-justice-statistics-2019-to-2020>. (Accessed: 21 April 2021).

The use of gatekeepers in the institutional context and the fact that at the point of pre-interview aged under 17 years some interviewees were children did present some ethical challenges⁴⁸ particularly around consent. To seek to address this upon meeting with participants the researcher checked understanding and provide the opportunity to respond to any questions before seeking further verbal consent. To acknowledge the varying capacities of young people interviewed for the research, questions were adapted to ensure terminology was clear.

A semi-structured interview format was used for flexibility and to enable participants responses to lead the discussion and meaningful exploration of their views and experiences⁴⁹. All Governors permitted the use of a dictaphone, therefore each interview was audio-recorded with participant agreement. All interviews were transcribed, and the anonymity and confidentiality of all participants maintained by removing any identifiable information: young people were given pseudonyms which are culturally similar to their real names and the key stakeholders referred to by their employment. The process of transcription allowed for the familiarisation and immersion of the data which provided the basis for a thematic analysis^{50,51}. The coded data was triangulated with existing literature and the HMIP data, this process added depth to the social meaning and validated the findings within this context⁵².

Staffing within the YCE

For young people who had experience of being incarcerated within the wider YCE, the experience of the YOI was the first demonstration of the depletion in support across institutions. Noah had previously been held in both a SCH and STC, he felt that those environments allowed for greater consistency of relationships between staff and young people:

Noah: 'In here [YOI] the staff are all over the place, one minute they're going from prisons up the road to prisons down south, so you don't know who you're going to see tomorrow. So, you got no like... you can't just go outside your pad like shake someone's hand, you don't even know him. You know when you see the staff over and over again you can say 'how was your day, how was your

day off' and that, some kind of relationship there and makes you feel better inside, in here no one wants to know you, no one wants you to know them, so that's what I'd definitely do, make them smaller, make relationships between staff and prisoners better.'

Inconsistency of staffing has several implications, not least there is less opportunity to identify vital concerns including any signs of distress which can be hugely detrimental to the well-being of young people held. The lack of supportive relationships was evident and only three of the fourteen young people interviewed were aware of who their caseworkers and personal officers were. The issues with staffing permeated across day-to-day life:

Kendrick: 'Some are helpful and support you, then there's a couple of staff who don't really talk to you or nothing [...] they just don't really interact with you much you see them, and they just walk past, just ignore you.'

Casper: 'All the psychology staff education staff they're here to help us, but the others on the wing, they're not here to help us, they're just doing their job, they're just here to unlock the doors, open our doors [...] when we come out as, they don't speak to us, they just stand there, and just keep an eye on us and that, they don't try and speak to us and see how we're feeling and that.'

R. What do you think about that?

Casper: I don't know, it's rude isn't it. Because they work on the wing, so really they should build like a relationship so they can build trust with us, but I don't ever see them trying to do that, some do, it's not all of them don't, you get a couple that's sympathetic like, if you're feeling down, they'll come and speak to you and that, but most of them don't do that.'

Another young person, Edward felt that staff members did not care 'whether you change or not'.

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48. Price, J. (forthcoming, 2021) Power and control: conducting ethically sensitive research with 'children' and 'adults' in custodial settings. In Spencer, G. (ed.). Ethics and integrity with children and young people. Emerald Publishing.
49. Laws, B. and Crewe, B. (2016) 'Emotion regulation among male prisoners', *Theoretical criminology*, 20 (4), pp. 529-547.
50. Bryman, A. (2016) *Social research methods* (5th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
51. Nowell, L., Norris, J., White, D. and Moules, N. (2017) 'Thematic analysis: striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria', *International journal of qualitative methods*, 16 (1), pp. 1-13.
52. Hammersley, M. and Atkinson, P. (2007) *Ethnography: principles in practice* (3rd ed.). Great Britain: The Cromwell Press.
53. Crewe, B. (2009) *The Prisoner Society: Power, Adaptation and Social Life in an English Prison*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 161.

Disrespectful elements of officer culture build the perception that young people are 'lesser social objects'⁵³. The lack of relationships meant that young people did not perceive staff members as sources of help and trust, indeed staff were viewed as focusing on badly behaved young people:

Casper: 'You get certain kids on the wing, they don't care, they're fighting and assaulting people all the time. Then you get other kids that are good, that never cause trouble and if you were there you'd see how they get treated differently, say if one of them said 'put my laundry in' and then the kid that's being good said 'put my laundry in' the one that's being bad all the time, they'll put his laundry in first because they don't want him to cause any problems, so it's kinda like, the more bad you be, they reward you in a way, because they get things done straight away, because it's like they're scared for him to do something.'

HMIP survey comment juvenile YOI 2016: 'I feel the staff treat the bad young people here with more respect because the staff feel intimidated so they get away with a lot of things. I feel the staff are more strict to the good young people because they feel they have more control so they target the good young people not the bad.'

Although the YCE is better resourced than the young adult/adult estate, issues with staffing were evident in the YOIs. This meant that the staff available focused on maintaining security and control rather than engaging with young people and providing a crucial 'trusted' adult role⁵⁴. The data presented in the following section highlights how this is exacerbated upon transition.

Staffing within the young adult/adult estate

Stakeholders reported that the drop in level of care and staffing provision within young adult/adult prisons

came as a shock for young people who transitioned from the YCE. Relationships between staff members and young people were frequently reported to be poor, impacting upon perceptions of safety and support for rehabilitation. Staff were not viewed to be effective with or supportive of young adults:

HMIP survey comment young adult prison 2017: 'It is very hard to express safety to staff here because most of them, such as [name] especially, treat us with complete disrespect so it is very hard to approach them. Most staff on my wing act like they couldn't care less, even when it comes to seeing a nurse, they literally take hours and sometimes you might not end up seeing the nurse. I think staff on my wing pick and choose who they want to help, and this is a very scary thing to be around.'

...it's kinda like, the more bad you be, they reward you in a way, because they get things done straight away, because it's like they're scared for him to do something.

From the perspective of stakeholders, staff members' ability to help young people is constrained due to resources and training:

Probation Officer One: 'The training isn't, no way near sufficient enough to deal with half the issues we have in the estate, especially going back to vulnerability and also self-harm' (Young Adult/Adult Institution One)

Offender Supervisor Two: 'When I first started the job, you'd have five or six people to a wing, of 70 and you'd be leaning over the railings, chatting away [...] I knew everybody's name on that wing I could tell you something about every single person. Now I go on a wing, I haven't even got a clue who they are' (Young Adult/Adult Institution Three)

Offender Supervisor One: 'You can put as many policies in place as they like but if they haven't got the staff and the funding to do it ... there's only so many jobs that one person can actually do, and do them correctly, effectively, and [...] if you're doing

54. Hughes, N. and Strong, G. (2016) 'Implementing the evidence on young adult neuromaturation: the development of a specialist approach in probation services', *Probation Journal*, 63 (4), pp. 452-459.

that, there's something else that you're not doing. [...] you couldn't stretch us any more, so it's really hard' (Young Adult/Adult Institution Two)

This has numerous safety implications on young people, impacting upon their behaviour and ultimately safety within the institutions. The distinct drop of staffing provision across institutions means that this is exacerbated for those that transition:

Academic three: 'I think we underestimate the impact of being locked up in your cell for long periods of time, it has a huge impact on men in their late teens and early twenties, and I think, some of the violence that we see is simply because people spend too much time locked up, and if you're bored, you're going to do things like bully other people and you're going to do things like misuse drugs and you're going to sell things and you're going to become embroiled in conflict and all of that can quickly spiral out of control and you then consequently have segs filling up, people on ACCT documents, people self-isolating, high levels of violence, injuries, and they're not going to fix all of that because staff are off sick, staff become fearful whilst at face value simply curtailing the regime, shouldn't, or it mightn't look like it would affect safety and security it inevitably does in a number of ways.'

Probation Officer One: 'I think at the moment, whether you would class an individual as vulnerable or not, as prison estate we clearly fall down on being able to support those individuals whether that's staffing levels or what we have available within the prison itself, we don't have enough to give them.' (Young Adult/Adult Institution One)

Staff within young adult/adult institutions are managing larger numbers of prisoners on each wing than the YCE, impacting upon their ability to provide support and guidance to young people who instead were directed to, or sought help of other prisoners:

Alejandro: '[...] if you put your bell on to speak to an officer, and they're kinda in a

rush, because like on [wing] there's, like, forty odd people so they can just say 'just go to a listener's pad, knock on the door' and they'll help you, speak to you, know what I mean, they've got nothing else to do [laughs]'

The MoJ⁵⁵ expect that, young people 'adapt to the greater levels of autonomy expected once they reach legal adulthood', this is reflected in the larger establishments in which they are held with fewer staff. Whilst some young people such as Darren felt seeking help reflected greater 'independence', other accounts here show how young adults are expected to be responsible for their own safeguarding due to the lack of staff seemingly willing or able to provide care:

Engagement and Resettlement Worker: 'what one of the young pe[ople] said to me actually, 'we're responsible for our own safety, if we keep our heads down, you know, don't get involved in anything, we're okay', so I think they take it upon themselves to safeguard themselves.'

Young adult/adult institutions are unable to meet the distinct needs of young adults and it is evident there is a lack of opportunity to build relationships with staff responsible for their care. This has numerous implications as discussed within the conclusion.

Conclusion

The data contained within this article demonstrates the issues associated with the cliff-edge of staffing training and provision for young adults which is seemingly an accepted aspect of the young adult/adult estate. Resource pressures further affect staff members' ability to engage with young people in a way that adequately acknowledges and meets their distinct needs. Day-to-day interactions are limited across estates and young people quickly learn that institutions cannot meet their needs. The distinct drop in staffing levels between the YCE and young adult/adult estate is premised on the view that children aged under 18 years are vulnerable and have more complex needs. However, evidence shows that neurological development is ongoing up to age 25 years and as such, young adults also have distinct needs to older adults.

Upon transition, young people also have lower contact with staff, a practice acknowledged in official

55. Ministry of Justice (2013) PSI 64/2011 (9th September 2013 F&S Revised) *Management of prisoners at risk of harm to self, others and from others (Safer Custody)*. Available at: <https://www.justice.gov.uk/offenders/psis/prison-service-instructions-2011>. (Accessed: 24 November 2020), 14.

guidance⁵⁶⁵⁷ although not conceptualised as problematic. Based on the assumption that ‘adults’ no longer require distinct support comparable with that offered to ‘children’ despite the ongoing neurological development of this population, it means that many young people are left to try and guard against their own vulnerability without similar resources that provide a sense of safeguards. Staff do not ‘have the time to build positive, effective relationships with young people’⁵⁸. Staff working with young adults have less training and they may not recognise how ongoing neurological development manifests in behaviour and resource pressures can impact upon their capacity to intervene. Instead, staff have to focus their attention onto maintaining the security and control of institutions leaving vulnerability overlooked. Despite recent initiatives to recognise maturity, and forthcoming ‘transitions from youth to adult custody policy framework’⁵⁹, unless adequate staffing provision is provided across institutions young people will continue to see a depletion of support as they

progress through the system which will continue to have negative impacts upon their experiences and outcomes.

In 2004 HMCIP⁶⁰ stated that ‘for young adults, there is nothing to compare with the joined-up, centrally funded training and resettlement for under-18s’, this view resonates today due to the blunt distinction between estates. This article offers a critical view of the differences in staffing provision between the YCE and young adult/adult estate. The accounts of staff and young people presented here demonstrates how their experiences of diminished resources through to the young adult/adult estate are insufficient to provide the level of support required. It is argued that there should be greater numbers of suitably trained prison officers within institutions holding young adults to work effectively with this distinct population. It furthers the argument made by independent inspectorates and reviews⁶¹⁶²⁶³ that young adults require a tailored approach to their treatment — more reflective of the acknowledgement of the needs of those within the YCE.

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56. National Offender Management Service (2012) *The transition process: guidance on transfers from under 18 young offender institutions to young adult Young Offender Institutions*. London: Ministry of Justice and National Offender Management Service.
 57. Youth Justice Board (2018) *Joint National Protocol for Transitions in England: Joint protocol for managing the cases of young people moving from Youth Offending Teams to Probation Services*. London: Youth Justice Board, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service and National Probation Service.
 58. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (2018) *Incentivising and promoting good behaviour: a thematic review*. London: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons, 22.
 59. House of Commons Justice Committee (2021) *Children and Young People in Custody (Part 2): The Youth Secure Estate and Resettlement: Government Response to the Committee's Sixteenth Report of Session 2019–21 Eleventh Special Report of Session 2019–21*. London: House of Commons Justice Committee, April.
 60. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons (2004) *Annual report of HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales 2002-2003*. London: The Stationery Office, 43.
 61. Harris, T. (2015) *Changing prisons, saving lives: Report of the independent review into self-inflicted deaths in custody of 18-24 year olds*, (Cm 9087) July, 2015. London: Home Office.
 62. House of Commons Justice Committee (2016) *The treatment of young adults in the criminal justice system. Seventh Report of Session 2016–17* (HC 169). London: The Stationery Office.
 63. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (2021) *Outcomes for young adults in custody*. London: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons, January.

Prisoners' feedback on a formally set-up peer mentoring scheme in a prison in South East England

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Introduction

For almost two decades there has been a drive in the UK to provide those in prison with a mental health service which is equivalent to that provided to the general population.¹ The Bradley Report published in 2009² reviewed the needs of prisoners with mental health problems in the UK and made recommendations, which included the provision of a range of mental health interventions and a comprehensive mental health service within each establishment. For equivalence to be achieved, the report identified that services needed to provide comprehensive psychological and emotional support for prisoners with depression, anxiety and a range of other personal difficulties. Therefore, some prisons are expanding their use of peer mentors to provide face-to-face emotional support, facilitate engagement in therapeutic activities, and broker appropriate access to services for vulnerable prisoners. These initiatives have been implemented alongside prison based mental health and psychological services.^{3,4}

As it stands, there is no established research base demonstrating the impact of peer health education.⁵

Furthermore, it is surprising, or maybe not, that most research into peer support in prisons looks at the benefits for those providing the support rather than those receiving it.⁶ The benefits for peer mentors providing emotional support to prisoners include increased self-enhancement and the feeling of 'giving something back'. In short, those providing peer support undergo a process of transformation.⁷ In summary, the research base mainly considers the impact of those providing peer mentoring, rather than those receiving it and the barriers within prison establishment to implementing such schemes.

Further challenges lie within the organisational set up. For example, the hierarchical, confidential and boundaried approach in secure health care settings can prevent schemes from being implemented or even initiated.⁸ There is often a reluctance in giving prisoners a role, which is traditionally reviewed as a professional statutory responsibility.⁹ If the peer mentor remains in prison, they cannot provide continuity of contact after release.¹⁰ Peer mentors have expressed the view that they are not taken seriously and regarded with suspicion by management.¹¹ There can be boundary issues within prisoner relationships, dependence on certain individuals, confidentiality and not

1. Forester A, MacLennan F, Slade K, Brown D and Exworthy T (2014) Improving access to psychological therapies in prisons. *Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health* 24: 163–168
2. Bradley K (2009) *The Bradley Report: Lord Bradley's review of people with mental health problems or learning disabilities in the criminal justice system*.
3. Portillo S, Goldberg V, and Taxman F (2017) Mental Health Peer Navigators: Working with Criminal Justice– Involved Populations. *The Prison Journal* Vol. 97(3) 318–341
4. Rousseau D, Long N, Jackson E and Jurgenen J (2019) Empowering Through Embodied Awareness: Evaluation of a Peer-Facilitated Trauma-Informed Mindfulness Curriculum in a Woman's Prison. *The Prison Journal* Vol. 99(4S) 14S–37S
5. Harty M, Jarrett M, Thornicroft G and Shaw J (2012) Unmet needs of male prisoners under the care of prison mental health services. *Journal of Forensic Psychiatry and Psychology* Vol 23 No 3 285–296
6. Ullrich S and Coid J ((2011). Protective factors for violence among released prisoners—Effects over time and interactions with static risk. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 79, 381–390.
7. Perrin C and Blagen N (2013) Accumulating meaning, purpose and opportunities to change 'drip by drip': the impact of being a listener in prison. *Psychology, Crime & Law*, 20:9, 902–920
8. Bagnall A, South J, Hulme C, Woodall J, Vinall-Collier K, Raine G, Kinsella K, Dixey R, Harris L and Wright N (2015) A systematic review of the effectiveness and cost effectiveness of peer education and peer support in prisons. *BMC Public Health* 15:290
9. K and Forrester A (2015) Shifting the paradigm of prison suicide prevention through enhanced multi-agency integration and cultural change. *The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology*, 2015 Vol. 26, No. 6, 737–758
10. Daigle M, Daniel M, Dear G, Frottier P, Hayes L, Kerkhof A, Konrad N, Liebling A and Sarchiapone M (2007) Preventing Suicide in Prisons, Part II International Comparisons of Suicide Prevention: Services in Correctional Facilities. *Crisis* 2007; Vol. 28(3):122–130
11. South J, Woodall J, Kinsella K and Bagnall A (2016) A qualitative synthesis of the positive and negative impacts related to delivery of peer-based health interventions in prison settings. *Health Services Research* (2016) 16:525

demonstrating weakness to other prisoners.¹² Other studies describe staff resistance based on security concerns.¹³ There have also been concerns that being in a position of trust made peer support members a target of other prisoners for being in league with the staff who are viewed as authority figures. In this respect, careful consideration needs to be given to recruitment, organisational support, funding, training and evaluation of any peer mentoring schemes' effectiveness as well as to the protection of the peer support worker.¹⁴

The contribution of this article is its focus on the experiences of the prisoners receiving peer support by fellow residents rather than the views of the peer mentors. It examines the perceptions of the prisoners, who have utilised the peer mentoring scheme to cope with emotional, family and mental health problems.

The Emotion and Well-being scheme (EWB — scheme)

A prison in South-East England established a peer mentoring scheme to complement its existing mental health provision. It is a Category B Training Prison, holding up to 1050 men who are serving 4 years or more, or should have at least 18 months left to serve. It is further a main centre prison for those in the first stage or second stage of their life sentence. These stages indicate the level of security required to detain the prisoner. The first and second stages would involve being in a category B training prison, before moving to a resettlement establishment to prepare for release in the third stage of working towards release.¹⁵

This prison utilises the prison Assessment Care Custody and Teamwork scheme. Prisoners who are deemed to be at risk of self-harm are assessed and provided with a comprehensive support plan called a *Care Map*. The *In-reach team* provides secondary mental health services within the prison, equivalent to a community mental health team.¹⁶ It consists of one psychiatrist, one team manager, two mental health nurses and two mental health practitioners. They have

primary and secondary caseloads. They assess all those referred to them, including self-referrals. The prisoners they work with on an ongoing basis will be those with serious mental illness and associated difficulties. This mirrors the practice of Community Mental Health Teams. The workers of the in-reach team became aware that a lot of prisoners were not receiving a service, as they did not meet the criteria to be accepted onto the in-reach case load, such as a diagnosis of serious mental illness.

The EWB scheme was established in May 2015 and continues to run. It was initiated by the prison staff with modest resources and using existing facilities. The existing working relationships between departments within the prison and with external services helps facilitate the referral of prisoners to the scheme, and from the scheme to other support services.

Prisoners who are deemed to be at risk of self-harm are assessed and provided with a comprehensive support plan called a Care Map.

Recruitment and training of peer mentors:

Staff from the mental health and counselling service selected the prisoners to be trained as peer mentors to provide emotional support to fellow prisoners, who are experiencing emotional distress. Three full-time paid mentors, and six unpaid mentors, all serving prisoners, were recruited. Only the mentors who chose to work

full time were paid, the part time mentors were voluntary. Recruitment criteria included: being on enhanced level of the incentives and earned privileges scheme, having at least 2 years left of sentence and working towards mentoring course.

Such prisoners were deemed trustworthy and were given extra privileges and jobs entailing greater freedom of movement within the establishment. They were also not deemed a security risk to others. The final stage of selection involved an interview. Peer mentors are supervised by two prison counselling staff, who oversee the quality of service provided. Bi-weekly supervision meetings took place, which also address updates on training, discussion around any difficulties, sharing information and forward planning. New peer

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12. South J, Bagnall A, and Woodall J, (2017) Developing a Typology for Peer Education and Peer Support Delivered by Prisoners. *Journal of Correctional Health Care*, Vol. 23(2) 214-229
 13. Forrester A, Exworthy T, Olumoroti O, Sessay M, Parrot J, Spenser S and Whyte S (2013) Variations in prison mental health services. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*. 36 326-332
 14. Schinkel M and Whyte B (2012) Routes Out of Prison Using Life Coaches to Assist Resettlement. *The Howard Journal* Vol 51 No 4. September pp. 359-371
 15. PSO 4700 indeterminate sentence manual (justice.gov.uk)
 16. Forrester A, Exworthy T, Olumoroti O, Sessay M, Parrot J, Spenser S and Whyte S (2013) Variations in prison mental health services. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*. 36 326-332

mentors start by working alongside more experienced mentors. Prison mental health staff serve as advisors, where challenging matters are escalated and discussed further.

Once recruited, the prisoner working as peer mentor undertook the following courses:

- ❑ National Certificate in Further Education level 2 Award in Mentoring
- ❑ Level 2 Award in Introduction to counselling skills
- ❑ Self-help course in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) for low mood and depression
- ❑ Anger Management
- ❑ Facing up to conflict
- ❑ Mood management course
- ❑ Understanding Personality disorder course
- ❑ Shannon Trust mentoring

Peer mentors regularly work over 25 hours a week. The peer mentors undertake one-to-one support work for over 300 men as well as having a dedicated area in the prison for 42 prisoners who receive intensive support. A prisoner is assigned a mentor who will see them for every session, subject to their availability. They run several psycho educational courses based on self-help information, including anger management, CBT, low mood and depression and facing up to conflict. These are awareness courses and do not enable the mentors to act as therapists but give them an overview of the links between thoughts and feelings and the appropriate communication skills to use. The latter group also receive more options such as taking part in therapeutic groups making art, music and creative writing.

Obtaining Prisoners' feedback

A paper-based questionnaire was distributed to 300 participants who had used the EWB scheme and 228 of those questionnaires were returned (76 per cent uptake). The questionnaire contained demographic data, regarding age and length of sentence. There were a series of closed questions regarding the participants' frequency of contact with the EWB mentors and around the perceived impact of the scheme on their

self-harming behaviour. The questionnaire included three open questions asking participants to comment on how the scheme had helped with thoughts of suicide, self-harm and any other comments. The majority of participants (90 per cent) had problems with self-harm and/or suicide. Those who did not (10 per cent) answer the any other comments section questions, commenting on coping skills and support accessing prison activities. The last three questions are the focus of this article and from which we report their experiences.

Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis was used. Descriptive statistical analysis was used mainly for the demographics. Demographic data was tabulated using software from the Excel spreadsheet provided by the researchers, who carried out the evaluation (initial blinded for review). These spreadsheets collated information from the questionnaires. The responses to open ended questions were analysed using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006)¹⁷. Two researchers independently reviewed the free text comments for the last three questions. Researcher (blinded for review) developed initial codes, which researcher (blinded for review) reviewed and extended. After discussion the researchers (blinded for review) agreed on six codes and developed two themes to describe the participants experiences of the scheme.

Results on the closed questions eliciting either a yes or no answer or pre-determined value will be reported on in a different paper

Demographic data

The majority of participants were prisoners in the 26-30 years age group (23.5 per cent), followed by 31-35-year olds (21.5 per cent). The majority of respondents were serving 11-20 years (31.5 per cent) followed by those serving 5-10 years (26.5 per cent). Those with an established pattern of offending are most likely to be in their mid-twenties to mid-thirties at the start of their first long sentence¹⁸. This is representative of the overall population in a training prison. The majority of respondents were not serving IPP (Imprisonment for Public Protection) sentences (77.5 per cent). IPP sentencing was introduced in 2005 in the

The peer mentors undertake one-to-one support work for over 300 men as well as having a dedicated area in the prison for 42 prisoners who receive intensive support.

17. Braun V and Clarke V (2006) Using thematic analysis in psychology, *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3:2, 77-101,

18. Owen N and Cooper C (2013) *The Start of a Criminal Career: Does the Type of Debut Offence Predict Future Offending? Research Report 77* The Home Office

UK to ensure that offenders who had committed violent and/or sexual offences remain in prison for as long as they were assessed to be a danger to the public¹⁹. The majority of referrals to the EWB Scheme came from the peer mentors themselves meeting vulnerable prisoners and suggesting them joining the scheme (39.5 per cent). Within the questionnaire participants were asked to comment on whether they had issues with self-harm and/or suicide. Only 10 per cent said they did not have issues with either. They were also asked to comment on the length of time they had been using the scheme and their frequency of contact. The majority of participants, 76 per cent, had been in contact with the scheme for over a month, 11 per cent had been in contact for two to three weeks and 13 per cent within the last week. The majority of respondents, 49 per cent, had weekly contact, 29.5 per cent had daily contact, 14.5 per cent had monthly contact and the remaining 7 per cent has less frequent contact.

The Prisoners' experiences

The questionnaire asked two open questions 'How have the mentors helped you with your self-harming behaviour?' and 'How have the mentors helped you

with your thoughts of suicide?'. The answers given by the respondents did not specifically differentiate between suicidal thoughts and self-harm behaviour nor did the questions ask about specific triggers and context. The further comments box was frequently used to emphasise key points from previous answers and to add grateful comments about the EWB scheme.

Therefore, all comments were considered together, and the following two themes were identified:

- ❑ Perceived value of receiving peer mentor support
- ❑ Peer mentor support initiating personal action (towards a healthier life)

The themes are presented in turn. A degree of overlap needs to be noted between codes and themes (see table below). For example, 'developing coping skills' is an aspect which initially falls into the theme of the value of receiving peer support, but once coping skills are internalised by the prisoner, it can be a means to take control in their life, thus implying action by the prisoner which could include, for example, re-kindling social contacts.

Theme 1: Perceived value of receiving peer mentor support	Theme 2: Peer mentor support initiating personal action (towards a healthier life)
Value of peer support	Support with mental health problems and substance misuse
Developing coping skills	Promoting social and family engagement
Improved self-worth, positive attitude and outlook	
Inspiration and role modelling by mentor	

Theme 1: Perceived value of receiving peer mentor support

Value of peer support

The following comments demonstrate the importance of peer mentors being perceived as non-judgemental as a consequence of them also having the lived experience of imprisonment. Since the peer mentors physically came to the prisoners, the vulnerable prisoners found them available, approachable and genuine.

Dave: 'My mentor first introduced himself to me in May when I first arrived on G-wing. Since then I have pushed him away at least four times while being very abusive. Despite this he remained calm and professional, even

making time to talk to me when I wasn't at my best and being off. After each outburst he comes and talks to me where I say I'm sorry. He says he doesn't take it personally and I believe this, he is a very genuine person and he has done far more for me than anyone else I've met. He is always there when I need him and he will always tell me straight, even if I don't want to hear it

Sami: 'Being able to talk to someone that does not judge you. When they say they 'understand how you feel' they mean it, they've been through it. That's the difference that makes it help.'

Adam: 'They have first-hand experience of what it is like so can help and relate to it'

19. Beard J (2019) *Briefing Paper 6086: Sentences of Imprisonment for Public Protection*. House of Commons

Prisoners appreciated being visited by the peer mentors, which gave them the opportunity to talk and be listened to. This appears to have made them feel more secure with their situation and feel part of 'something'.

Ryan: 'Mr 'Q' comes to see me every day to see what I am up to and asks me if things are ok with me and do, I feel good about myself.'

Ryan 'Knowing someone cares and someone is letting you know they care is more than enough for anyone'

The approachability of the peer mentors and their genuine wish to support also seemed to help vulnerable prisoners in preparing to speak with staff or other health care professionals.

Ian: 'They are easier to talk to than staff, it helps build up confidence to speak to professionals'

Developing coping skills

Part of developing coping skills is the ability to recognise ones emotional and mental state. Vulnerable prisoners reported that through meetings with their peer mentor, they were able to develop an awareness of their emotional well-being.

Ashley: 'The frustrations that were ruling my life are still there, but they helped me learn to manage them better. I no longer feel helpless and lost. My mentor has been able to help guide me through my issues.'

The respondents reported how the scheme helped them to cope with being in prison, understanding their triggers for mood changes and negative thoughts, and finding alternatives to suicidal thoughts and self-harm.

Noel: 'Since working with my EWB mentor I have noticed my mood doesn't get down so much but when it does it is good to know that I can talk to 'Q' at any time and he helps me see things in a positive perspective.'

Anil: 'Chatting about my issues with the mentors helped me to look at problems in a different way and now I do not self-harm. Really changed my life, I thank them all for this.'

When feeling or thinking about suicide they will talk it through why I feel like that and help me do other things, so I don't go through with my thoughts'

The peer mentors were perceived to have guided their mentees to take up activities that supported their emotional well-being, attending education, art therapy and using the gym.

Mel: 'Good to do courses then be able to use the gym as an outlet/coping skill'

At the same time prisoners were aware that funding was limited to support the development of coping skills through therapy.

Ted: 'More art therapy type stuff would be really good, but I know they don't get funding so it's hard'

Improved self-worth, positive attitude and outlook

The EWB scheme appears to achieve improved self-worth, positive attitude and outlook with their participating prisoners. Several of the respondents made comments about feeling better about themselves and more positive about the future.

Wayne: 'I think the EWB guys are a very positive idea, I feel like a new man after months of mayhem and I really felt like 'going off on one'. But EWB have made me look at things in a more positive way. I have a very poor prison history but in the 8 months I've been seeing my mentor I feel that I've come a long way from where I was before. He has helped me through my nan's sudden death, my relationship breakdown, my appeal failure, bullying, addiction etc. He has helped me to stop and think before acting negatively through impulsive behaviour. Thank you'

Inspiration and role modelling by mentor

The peer mentors of the EWB scheme were seen as role models with regards to the way their shared experiences and how they interacted.

Cyril: 'The time D has given me has made me feel better about myself, I am now writing to my family after shutting everyone out for over a year as I felt they'd be better off without me. He has a very unique way of talking and some makes life seem so simple and easy even if in prison. He is a fantastic role model I love

how he sees himself as a man in prison rather than a prisoner, that one statement made me stop and think.'

Their work seemed to also inspire some to become peer mentors themselves.

Des: 'I've met a few of the mentors and they are great role models always making time for me. I've also seen how they are with others and they really are a great team.'

Cyril: 'They are role models; they have been in the same place as some of us and got through it and are doing amazing. I would love to be an EWB mentor one day and help people too'

Theme 2: Peer mentor support initiating personal action (towards a healthier life)

Support with mental health problems and substance misuse

The majority of the participants clearly expressed the benefits of having a supportive peer checking on them. They felt they could speak to peer mentors more easily and were encouraged to seek further help with self-harm or substance abuse when negative thoughts persisted.

Nathan: 'They [EWB mentors] are giving me support to give up drugs. Also, the mentors are easy to approach and talk to, especially as they are prisoners'

Errol: 'I have been seeing the EWB mentors for over six months, they come down and ask me if I am ok. I don't even have to ask to see them at times as they just come to see if everything is ok. Their support has stopped me from cutting up and helped when I'm depressed or just needed a chat.'

John: 'Helped me give up drugs, which were massive in my mental health and self-harm

since having the help to give up drugs I haven't thought about self-harm'

Rick: I was suicidal when I got down here [the vulnerable prisoners wing] and now I am

stronger. My mentor comes down regularly to play chess and cards with us, he is a god send.

Some of the participants compared the EWB scheme to other prison support services they had used previously. Their perceptions suggest that they found the EWB scheme more beneficial, which appeared to be due to the proactiveness of the peer mentors and their approachability even at night time.

Les: It's really useful to have people to talk to who don't just listen like the Listeners, EWB mentors can actually help you get things done and move forward.

Barry: Done more for me than drug programmes have, helped negotiate when I had debts to pay which could have resulted in my being badly assaulted or killed

Promoting social and family engagement

The EWB mentors were also perceived to help prisoners with isolation, by promoting engagement with social activities.

Darren: 'They've helped me socialise with others which I didn't do before'

The increased social contact by the prisoner with other prisoners also seemed to improve relationships with their families and sense of being a parent.

Lance: 'As I am on a duty of care regime due to the conflict in this prison and fear of violence, I am doing 23 1/2 hours bang up daily with 30minutes for showers/cooking/phone calls. EWB came to see me weekly and sit with me listening to me. They are, also very kindly provided me with art card making materials so I can have meaningful contact with my daughter. Thank you'

Discussion: What we have learnt from the prisoners about the value of the scheme?

Previous research suggests that emotional support alleviates stress and isolation, which is a major factor in coping with prison life.²⁰ The respondents described the benefits of engaging with people who had lived experience and so understood how they were feeling. They reported that they did not feel judged by the mentors and found them easier to approach than staff.

20. South J, Woodall J, Kinsella K and Bagnall A (2016) A qualitative synthesis of the positive and negative impacts related to delivery of peer-based health interventions in prison settings. *Health Services Research* (2016) 16:525

Peer mentoring for prisoners is a dynamic social process which has benefits for the recipients.²¹ However, there is no consensus on what life experiences are necessary and how exactly this helps.²² It may be the personal characteristics and resilience of the mentor, or that they are perceived as a good role model because they have lived experience, is what is important here.²³

The experiences reported in this study suggests that the mentor plays a vital role in helping people to access other services within the prison, by bridging the gap between staff and prisoners, and encouraging prisoner engagement with services which can help them.²⁴ Prisoners are a group who typically experience multiple health and social problems simultaneously, and therefore may need to access multiple support services within the prison.²⁵ These services are often separate from each other and prisoners may find it challenging to decide which to access and prioritise. The peer mentors' ability to engage and their local knowledge seems to enable them to support prisoners to navigate the system.

Respondents cited examples of developing their awareness of factors which may trigger problematic responses, such as aggression or self-harm, and how they have developed alternative coping strategies, such as through distraction, activity or speaking to someone.

The responses further indicate that prisoners may view the peer mentors as role models for personal development. Some seemed to have recognised they may have held self-limiting beliefs, and that helping others in the future may further increase their sense of

self-worth.²⁶ The existing research suggests that those who become peer mentors develop positive attributes such as emotional development, personal responsibility, increased self-esteem and a sense of purpose.²⁷ A number of participant responses in this study suggest that they share this perception of the benefits for them in wanting to help others in this way.

Positive social relationships with mentors help build self-efficacy and reinforce adaptive behaviours.²⁸ This in turn has a positive impact on integration and health and well-being.²⁹ The value of peer support interventions appears to be that they connect with vulnerable isolated groups and have meaningful social influence.³⁰ This in turn can extend to a reinvestment in family relationships and parenting.³¹

Limitations

The written answers were pragmatic and did not elaborate on the emotional and psychological dynamics of the relationship between prisoner and mentor. The researchers felt that this may be due to the limited emotional language and literacy of the client group. The researchers also felt that a questionnaire would be less challenging than face to face interviews for this reason. The use of a simple questionnaire may have enabled the good

response rate and required simple responses which were not emotionally and personally challenging. The limitation of using questionnaires compared to interviews is the lack of opportunity to explore the statements further and consider a more in-depth

The peer mentors' ability to engage and their local knowledge seems to enable them to support prisoners to navigate the system.

21. Nixon S (2020) 'Giving back and getting on with my life': Peer mentoring, desistance and recovery of ex-offenders. *Probation Journal*. Vol 67. Issue 1 Accessed online <https://doi.org/10.1177/0264550519900249>
22. Clark C, Barrett B, Frei A and Christy A (2016) What Makes a Peer a Peer? *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal* Vol. 39, No. 1, 74 –76
23. Bagnall A, South J, Hulme C, Woodall J, Vinall-Collier K, Raine G, Kinsella K, Dixey R, Harris L and Wright N (2015) A systematic review of the effectiveness and cost effectiveness of peer education and peer support in prisons. *BMC Public Health* 15:290
24. South J, Bagnall A, Hulme C, Woodall J, Longo R, Dixey R, Kinsella K, Raine G, Vinall-Collier K and Wright J (2014) A systematic review of the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of peer-based interventions to maintain and improve offender health in prison settings. *Health Service and Delivery Research*. Vol 2 Issue 35 DOI: 10.3310/hsdr02350
25. Forrester A, Exworthy T, Olumoroti O, Sessay M, Parrot J, Spenser S and Whyte S (2013) Variations in prison mental health services. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*. 36 326-332
26. Perrin C, Blagden N, Winder B, and Dillon G (2017) "It's Sort of Reaffirmed to Me That I'm Not a Monster, I'm Not a Terrible Person": Sex Offenders' Movements Toward Desistance via Peer-Support Roles in Prison. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment* 1 –22
27. Bagnall A, South J, Hulme C, Woodall J, Vinall-Collier K, Raine G, Kinsella K, Dixey R, Harris L and Wright N (2015) A systematic review of the effectiveness and cost effectiveness of peer education and peer support in prisons. *BMC Public Health* 15:290
28. South J, Bagnall A, and Woodall J, (2017) Developing a Typology for Peer Education and Peer Support Delivered by Prisoners. *Journal of Correctional Health Care*, Vol. 23(2) 214-229
29. South J, Woodall J, Kinsella K and Bagnall A (2016) A qualitative synthesis of the positive and negative impacts related to delivery of peer-based health interventions in prison settings. *Health Services Research* (2016) 16:525
30. Bagnall A, South J, Hulme C, Woodall J, Vinall-Collier K, Raine G, Kinsella K, Dixey R, Harris L and Wright N (2015) A systematic review of the effectiveness and cost effectiveness of peer education and peer support in prisons. *BMC Public Health* 15:290
31. South J, Woodall J, Kinsella K and Bagnall A (2016) A qualitative synthesis of the positive and negative impacts related to delivery of peer-based health interventions in prison settings. *Health Services Research* (2016) 16:525

exploration of the mentor and prisoner relationship. Three of the respondents commented on the lack of activity on the prison wing where they were located, but there were no negative comments about the Peer Support scheme

The scheme was a new initiative plus the prisoners were asked for their opinions and experiences, not something they are usually asked to do. Their responses may have been influenced by feeling 'important' and this have made them more positive than they would have been about an established service or in another context. This could be an example of the novelty effect.³² Perhaps only those who had a positive experience and continued to use the scheme chose to respond.

Further Research

However, further research is needed to explore the quality of the renewed social engagements. The prisoners' ability to interact with greater insight may be at odds with the prison culture and may not be reciprocated by their family or external contacts. This

new found insight could lead to a greater sense of isolation and emotional distress. The authors are Jconsidering rerunning the evaluation, to determine if there are any significant differences, once the scheme has become more established and is no longer new or novel. It may also be useful to include questions about the impact of the scheme on a variety of factors, such as family engagement, coping with prison life and preparing for release, rather than just self-harm and suicide.

Conclusion

Prisoners report an overwhelming positive experience of the formalised EWB scheme. Since it is the first time this group of vulnerable prisoners received this support in the prison it is not surprising the feedback is positive and the scheme made a difference. More research is needed to establish whether this formalised scheme continues to be so positively received with prisoner and peer mentors maturing with the EWB scheme.

32. Gravetter F and Fernanzo L (2017) *Research Methods for the Behavioural Sciences*. Cengage 10

Religion, Social media and the discourse on prisons: An analysis of the responses to the Church of Pentecost (CoP) prison project in Ghana

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Introduction

The main goal of this paper is to analyse how social media discourses refurbished the debate that religion and development are irreconcilable and also misconceptions about prisoners. It is also to demonstrate how the Church of Pentecost (CoP) is breaking binaries between religion and development through its prison projects to contribute to the socio-economic development of Ghana. The CoP, as part of its five-year vision, dubbed, 'Possessing the Nations', is contributing to building prison facilities to help in decongesting Ghana's prisons. Since the 1980s, the implementation of neoliberal policies, collectively labelled as Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs), mandated by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, compelled the state of Ghana to decentralise development.¹ The impact of the SAPs compelled the regime of Ghana's erstwhile military leader, Jerry John Rawlings, to adopt a decentralised approach to development. His strategy led to the invitation of faith-based organisations, civil societies, and traditional authorities to participate in the country's socio-economic development.² In response to Rawlings' call, many religious organisations, including the CoP, have positioned themselves as key actors in Ghana's quest for economic and social transformation.

I have identified two main factors that have partly accounted for the CoP recasting its image as a key actor in the socio-economic development of Ghana. The first was the re-democratisation of Ghana since 1992. Until 1992, as I have indicated, Ghana was ruled by a military leader who focused on a state-centric approach to development. This was primarily because religion,

particularly Christianity and traditional authorities, were considered anti-revolutionary. But the narrative changed when the economic recession in the 1980s compelled Rawlings to incorporate faith-based organisations and traditional authorities into the development grid. The second reason is the increasing growth of the humanist groups that have been criticising religions in Ghana for their unproductiveness in meeting Ghana's developmental needs. Since the last five years, one such group — the Common-sense Family, founded by Avraham Ben Moshe — has intensified the crusade against religion — particularly Christianity in the country. The main argument of these humanist groups is that religions in Ghana — which is confessed by about 90 percent of the country's population³ — have not been supportive of Ghana's development.

Partly in response to the perceived failure of religion to support Ghana's socio-economic development, most religious groups have embarked on robust social services. The CoP, which is the largest Pentecostal denomination in Ghana,⁴ has also sought to position itself as one of the key actors of Ghana's socio-economic development. Consequently, as part of his five-year term vision (known as Vision 2023), Apostle Eric Kwabena Nyamekye, the current chairman of the CoP, is partnering with the state to embark on some social services. The vision is dubbed 'Possessing the nations: Equipping the church to transform every sphere of society with values and principles of the Kingdom of God'. The church seeks collaboration with the Ghana Prisons Service to initiate the construction of (cells) for selected prisons in the country, to ease congestions in those prisons."⁵ The prison project is based on the poor state of prisons and the despising of ex-convicts in Ghana. There is a paucity of empirical

1. Giles Mohan, "Adjustment and decentralization in Ghana: a case of diminished sovereignty," *Political Geography*, Vol. 15, no. 1 (1996), p. 81.

2. Ho-Won Jeong, "Liberal economic reform in Ghana: A contested political agenda," *Africa Today*, Vol. 42, no. 4 (4th Qtr., 1995), p. 97.

3. Ghana Statistical Service (2010). *2010 Population Census*. Accra: Ghana Statistical Service.

4. Amos Jimmy Markins (2019). *Transmitting the spirit in missions: The history and growth of the Church of Pentecost*. Eugene/Oregon: Wipf & Stock, p.1.

research on the perceptions of Ghanaians about prisons. But in an interview with Justice Tankebe, a Ghanaian professor of Criminology at the University of Cambridge, he stated that most Ghanaians see prisoners as incorrigible. He maintained that the criminal justice system in Ghana is poor, as it imprisons petty thieves. This is because the country relies heavily on imprisonment as the primary form of social control. He noted that the prisons are also not in good shape to contribute to reforming inmates.⁶ It has been observed that Ghana's criminal justice system is faced with challenges, such as corruption and high cost of legal services. This contributes to prison overcrowding and recidivism rates.⁷

Nevertheless, the CoP's initiative which has been endorsed by the government and other stakeholders has suffered a backlash and mixed responses from church members and the general Ghanaian community. Social media, specifically Facebook, has been the main avenue for the expression of dissent and support for the project. The content of most of the critiques against the CoP's prison project is that the church should stay clear of projects that belong to the state. I argue that the critiques refurbish and rehabilitate the old debate that religion and politics are irreconcilable. I also argue that while religion percolates most aspects of life in Ghana — and usually expressing visibility in state functions — many Ghanaians who took to social media to comment on the CoP's prison project assumed that the church was stepping beyond its boundaries. In this sense, most of the commentators maintained that the CoP should concern itself with the spiritual nourishment of its members and other forms of development and allow the state to take care of prisons. But it is a simple argument to draw a neat demarcation between what the church can or cannot do, based on Ghana's developmental challenges.

Nonetheless, given the responses from the public, it is important to understand the debate that has been built around the complex interactions between religion and development. It is also important to explore how social media contributed to rehashing the perceived

binaries between religion and development. The question is asked: can religious groups engineer development in Ghana? Consequently, I spend the next section discussing the place of social media in broadening the scope of 'freedom of expression in Ghana', which is considered one of the foundations of liberal democracy. The next section analyses the contents of public Facebook comments, as well as the views of some key respondents on the CoP's prison project. But in all of this, my argument is that the church is deconstructing binaries between religion and development, sacred and secular, and religion and politics as it rationalises its prison project.

Methodologically, I conducted a year's ethnographic fieldwork in Ghana on the CoP and development. I purposely selected and interviewed 10 youth in Accra and church officials who are directly involved with the CoP's prison project. Also, because the CoP has a public Facebook account for publicising its activities, I used purposive sampling to track the public responses to the church's prison projects for about a month. Using the snowball approach, I identified two ex-convicts who preach in commercial mini-buses (labelled as trotro) who helped me to identify a few other ex-convicts in Accra. Their participation in the research was voluntary. To protect the integrity of my respondents, including Facebook commentators (apart from key respondents), I anonymise them when I cite them in the paper. Given that I did not find any empirical work on the perception of Ghanaians about prisoners, I interviewed two Ghanaian criminologists and prison officers to support the paper.

Ghana's criminal justice system is faced with challenges, such as corruption and high cost of legal services. This contributes to prison overcrowding and recidivism rates.

Social media and popular discourses on CoP's prison project.

In reframing the debate over religion and development with particular reference to CoP's prison project, social media has been very instrumental. Most members of the church, as well as non-members, deployed social media to articulate their disagreement with the CoP's prison project or register their support

5. CoP (2019). Vision 2023: Five-year document for The Church of Pentecost covering the period 2018-203 – Possessing the Nations. Accra: Pentecost Press Ltd., p. 62.

6. Interview with Dr Justice Tankebe on April 27, 2020.

7. Joseph Appiahene-Gyamfi, "Alternatives to imprisonment in Ghana: A focus on Ghana's criminal justice system," PhD thesis submitted to Simon Fraser University, 1995.

for the project. In this section, I argue that social media, alongside the traditional media,⁸ has become an important means of broadening the opportunities available to most of the youth in Ghana to contribute to public discussions. Some Ghanaians are taking advantage of social media to forge their own identities and agenda. Social media gives universal access to Ghanaians who have access to the internet to contribute to reshaping public discourses on topical issues. In many countries in Africa, many of the youth are embracing technology and digital platforms as spaces to challenge political dictatorship in their respective countries.⁹ This is because political party organisation that favours people with wealth has limited the access most of the unemployed youth have to contribute to public discourses and policy formulation.¹⁰ The youths unequal access to power is also due to the gerontocratic nature of the political regime in Africa.¹¹ Social media has enabled the youth in Africa to negotiate their place and space with patterns of authority and control.¹² The preponderance of social media also implies that some of the youth deploy it to engage in spreading fake news, conspiracies, and political mudslinging. In Ghana, like other African countries, many Pentecostal churches have innovatively used social media to engage in robust evangelism. It is argued that through the internet, converts into Pentecostal Christianity are made without the convert having physical contact with the religious clergy and establishing contact with physical religious service.¹³ The CoP has registered itself on social media for more than a decade. Through social media, the church engages in cyber-evangelism and communicates its activities. With

Social media has enabled the youth in Africa to negotiate their place and space with patterns of authority and control.

a prison project as a novel religious project in Ghana, the CoP's Facebook account became one of the handles that church used to announce its prison projects.

The CoP, as part of its Vision 2023, is partnering with the government of Ghana to build prison facilities for the state. This is to help decongest the prisons and also contribute to reforming prisoners for social living.¹⁴ In pursuing this vision, the CoP has cut the sod for the construction of a holding facility for prisoners in Damongo, in the Savanna Region capital. The facility is expected to house about 350 inmates. It will comprise two dormitories, each housing 150 inmates. On July 21, 2019, the chairman of the CoP cut another sod for work to begin on the construction of a new facility the Nsawam Medium Security Prison. It will accommodate 300 inmates. The prison facilities will have workshops that will train the inmates, as well as a church, recreational centre, and an administration block for officers of the Prison Service.¹⁵ The church is also building an ultra-modern holding facility for the Ghana Prison Service in Obuasi and Ejura in the Ashanti Region, Hawia in the Western Region, and Kenyasi in the Brong Ahafo Region.¹⁶ The CoP deployed its presence on social media to announce this grand and unprecedented project. In response, there were dissents and approval that were expressed by church members and the Ghanaian public, largely through Facebook. I gathered the following responses to the publication of the project on Facebook on November 1, 2019

Akua responded that, 'Stupidity will kill our church leaders, because they eat free, sleep free, drive free, best schools for their children, free hospital, free medication, and they have everything for free. That is

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8. Felicitas Becker & Joel Cabrita (2018), 'Introduction' in Felicitas Becker & Joel Cabrita (2018), *Religion, media, and marginality in modern Africa*. Ohio: Ohio University Press, p. 2.
 9. Nanjala Nyabola (2018). *Digital democracy, analogue politics: How the internet era is transforming politics in Kenya*. London: Zed Books Ltd, p. xviii.
 10. George M. Bob-Milliar, "Party Youth Activists and Low-Intensity Electoral Violence in Ghana: A Qualitative Study of Party Foot Soldiers". *African Studies Quarterly*, 15(1) (2014): 125-152.
 11. Adebayo, Joseph Olusegun, "Gerontocracy in African politics: youth and the quest for political participation". *Journal of African Elections*. 17 (1) (2018): 140-161.
 12. Akin Iwilade, "Crisis as opportunity: Youth, social media and the renegotiation of power in Africa," *Journal of Youth Studies*, 16(8), 2014, pp. 1054-108.
 13. J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, "'Get on the internet!' Says the Lord: Religion, cyberspace and Christianity in contemporary Africa," *Studies in World Christianity*, Vol. 13, no. 2 (2007), pp. 225-242.
 14. CoP (2019). Vision 2023: Five-year document for The Church of Pentecost covering the period 2018-203 – Possessing the Nations. Accra: Pentecost Press Ltd., p. 62.
 15. Zion Abdul-Rauf (Class FM Online), "SR: Church of Pentecost to build 350-capacity prison in Damongo," <https://www.classfonline.com/news/general/SR-Church-of-Pentecost-to-build-350-capacity-prison-in-Damongo-10462>; Accessed: January 29, 2020; Pentecost News (July 23, 2019), "Chairman cuts sod for the commencement of Nsawam Camp Prisons Project," <https://thecophq.org/news/chairman-cuts-sod-for-commencement-of-nsawam-camp-prisons-project/>; Accessed: January 29, 2020.
 16. Graphic.com.gh (September 22 2019), "Church of Pentecost constructing 5 prisons," <https://theindependentghana.com/2019/09/church-of-pentecost-constructing-5-prisons/>; Accessed: February 9, 2020.

why they are building police station and prisons, the next one is going to be shooting range.'

Another gentleman, whom I refer to as John, criticised the church as follows:

Nonsense, why the building of prisons but not factories as there is a lack of work in the country whilst government officials use government money to enrich themselves. Did you think before coming out to say this thing, do you know the number of Pentecost Church members that can't reach at the end of the month with their salaries but they fulfil their obligations as church members? The church is losing it.

Kofi who identifies as a member of the CoP, corroborated John by claiming, 'what you are saying is very true, most of the members are in the church and don't have a job but they manage to give an offering every time they attend church. If this factory is built these members can be employed even if GH500 per month as salary is fine.' The idea that the CoP could have rather built factories was supported by Dr Caleb Nyanni, a Pentecostal pastor of Elim Pentecostal church in the UK (the sister church of the CoP), a lecturer at the CoP's Bible College — Birmingham Christian College in the UK, and son of the immediate past chairman of the CoP, Apostle Prof. Opoku Onyinah. He asked whether the CoP by building prisons was seeking to encourage crime. He maintained that the church should focus on reforming prisoners, instead.¹⁷ Rev. Dr. Johnson Afrane-Twum, also a Pentecostal pastor who runs a transnational church service in Ghana and the UK and provides pastoral counselling at the Birmingham University College, said that it is not the duty of the CoP to build prisons. He was convinced that the church was transgressing and deviating from its core mandate of preaching the salvation message.¹⁸ These responses reinforce the assumption that religion and development should be separated.

In response to this division, a church member wrote, 'I don't blame you, John. It is because of the hardship in Africa. We think every generous act should directly end up giving someone a job. We need generational thinkers, not those who are only conscious of today because of their stomach. If more prisons are built, are we not creating jobs for masons, carpenters, tilers, and prisoners?' The church leader responsible for the project said that people are attacking the project because of their ignorance of the prison and criminal system, as well as politicisation of all social issues, in Ghana.¹⁹

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The Ghana Prison Service, the main beneficiaries of the project also responded. Superintendent Courage Atsem, who is also the Public Relations Officer for the GP, appealed to the congestion of prisons in Ghana and Hebrews 13:3, which reads: 'Remember those in prison, as though you were in the prison with them; and also, those mistreated, as if you felt their pain in your own bodies,' to applaud the CoP for its prison project.

Given the mixed responses that the announcement of the CoP's prison project generated, on December 3, 2019, when the chairman of CoP, Apostle Nyamekye, met with ministers and officers of the Kasoa Area of the church in the Central Region of Ghana, he waded into the debate by adding to the benefits of the prisons as follows:

The Nsawam Medium Security Prison, I am told was built for 800 inmates, but currently houses close to 3500 inmates. That is an excess of about 2700 inmates! If as a church, we can put up very big and magnificent auditoriums, which we only use on Sunday mornings and in the evenings, and look on unconcerned as our brothers and sisters struggle to find a place to lay their heads then what kind of followers of Jesus Christ are we?²⁰

Following the responses of the CoP prison project generated, it is clear that the public was either ill-

17. Personal communication with Ps. Dr Caleb Nyanni on February 7, 2020.

18. Personal communication with Rev. Dr. Johnson Afrani-Twum, February 6, 2020.

19. Personal communication with Ps. James Agyin on May 5, 2020.

20. Starrfm.com.gh (Dec. 7, 2019), "Our prison project is aimed at decongestion, not encouraging criminals – Church of Pentecost," <https://theindependentghana.com/2019/12/our-prison-project-is-aimed-at-decongestion-not-encouraging-criminals-church-of-pentecost/>; Accessed: February 9, 2020.

informed about the type of prisons the church was constructing or had a different priority. This is because the church has a vision of constructing modern prisons that will perform the core function of reforming and economically empowering prison inmates. Consequently, the prisons are to have chapels and well-stocked workshops. As Eric Nyamekye, the chairman of the CoP, indicated the chapels will enable the church to reach out to inmates with the gospel of salvation, while the workshops will enable inmates to receive vocational training so that, upon discharge, they can become responsible, productive and law-abiding citizens who can also contribute to national development. James T. Tetteh, an apostle of the CoP, who is also Assistant Director of Prison Service, added that the prisons have been strategically located in areas that have two farming seasons in a year. The church will, therefore, redirect the energies of able-bodied inmates to cultivate crops that could boost Ghana's quest for food security and sovereignty. He also indicated that the prison project of the CoP is necessary because, apart from Nsawam Medium Security Prison and Ankaful Maxim Security Prison that were built as modern prisons, all the others were either slave castles/dungeons or storehouses that are not fit for human beings.²¹ As to whether the CoP's project will be encouraging prisoners, he responded that the church was only going to outsource prisoners from existing prisons, not directly from the court.

It could be gleaned from the mixed responses that many assumed that it is only 'abominable' crimes that take people to prison. As part of writing this paper, I interacted with an ex-convict (whom I anonymise as Kwao) who said that the prison is a contraction of 'People's Rejection In a Society Of Nations.' According to him, this expression represents the situation of persons who have been neglected and often subjected to poor and inhuman treatment in prisons. Most of the Facebook respondents also disdain prisoners because they consider them to be people who are incorrigibly evil and unfit for society. In an interview with Abena, a student at the African University College of Communications, Accra, she confirmed this when she said that, 'why should the church spend money on people who are evil and not fit for society?' For people

like Abena, they assume that prisoners cannot reform to fit into society. They also assume that prisoners have a genetic predisposition to crime and must be caged. This stigmatisation shapes public discourses on prisons. It does not leave room for prisoners to be reformed to participate in building society. This also reflects on how the state treats prisoners. The overcrowding of prisons in Ghana predisposes inmates to all forms of infectious diseases.

The prejudices against prisoners also assume that society cannot tolerate ex-convicts, who desire to reintegrate into society. Some of these ex-convicts, therefore, take to doing works that they know will enhance their self-esteem. For example, a few of the ex-convicts I interviewed for this paper have taken to

freelance preaching in buses or at the public square, usually markets one of them, whom I refer to as Yaw, preaches in commercial buses (known locally as Trotro) that run within Accra. During their preaching, they deploy their prison experiences and their 'criminal' activities in the past as a direct contrast to how they have been saved by Jesus Christ to preach the gospel. In the Ghanaian society that celebrates religious conversion as converts rupturing with their past,²² the conversion narratives of ex-convicts give them legitimacy to evangelise. The preaching helps them to achieve the objectives of reintegrating in

society that will hardly employ them to work and also earn a living.

The conversation also bordered on the lines of demarcation between religion and development. The concerns that the CoP should concentrate on building factories and not prisons assumes that there is a line of demarcation between what the church can do and cannot do. This configuration of religion and development resonates with the debate in the 1960s that demanded the separation between religion and development. The broad base of human life was compartmentalised into two spheres: the sacred and the secular. Religion was to occupy the sacred sphere (which was private) while politics was to occupy the secular sphere (which was public). Religion was considered 'irrational' and anti-progress and should be left to survive as an individual private affair. Politics was rather considered to operate on rationality and

... 'why should the church spend money on people who are evil and not fit for society?' For people like Abena, they assume that prisoners cannot reform to fit into society.

21. Personal communication with Apostle James T. Tetteh on February 7, 2020.

22. Birgit Meyer, "'Make a complete break with the past.' Memory and post-colonial modernity in Ghanaian Pentecostal discourse," *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 28(3) (1998), 316-349.

modernity and should be allowed to exist in the public sphere. That religious beliefs were 'irrational' and should be relegated to the private sphere had implications for the idea of development. Development was considered to hinge on rationality, logicity, and the will to challenge the status to bring about progress and improvement in the lives of people. Since religion was said to be conservative and less inclined to change, its role in the provision of social services was considered tenuous. In the same way, development was conceived as modernization — which is a radical break with the past. This radical break with the past implied challenging the status quo and conventions and questioning received 'wisdom'. Religion was considered incapable of breaking away with the status quo and challenging its convention. The disdain against religion in the public sphere was such that development literature and development practices avoided the discussion on religion as religion was considered a taboo.²³ It was taken for granted that one could not be modern without throwing off religious yoke.²⁴ The responses also seek to limit the activities of the CoP to prioritising evangelism as primary responsibility with all others as secondary. This, however, contradicts the church's vision 2023. The church's building of prisons is part of bridging the boundaries between the 'religion' and 'development'. Through the bridging of this gap,

the CoP is positioning itself as a key actor in Ghana's development. It is also resolving a social challenge that renders life difficult to prisoners and ex-convicts.

Conclusion

It could be concluded that the CoP's prison project the religion or development binaries. The church is seeking to provide a holistic mission that incorporates what is generally considered mundane, such as the building of prisons, into its repertoire of activities. Through this, the CoP is strategically and innovatively repositioning itself as a key actor in meeting Ghana's socio-economic development. There is a lot of research on the challenges facing prisons in Ghana.²⁵ Over the years, the state-centric approach to development has not significantly helped in the course of Ghana's development. As I indicated, the debilitating effect of the SAPs compelled the political elite to extend an invitation to faith-based organisations, traditional authorities, and civil societies to participate in Ghana's quest for development. In this respect, the CoP's prison project should be read as part of the church's efforts at helping the state deal with a challenge that undermines the lives of a section of its citizens. But more importantly, the CoP could work on its communication strategies to mobilise support for its activities.

23. Kurt Alan Ver Beek, "Spirituality: A development taboo," *Development in Practice*, Vol. 10, no. 1 (2000), pp. 31-43.

24. John Micklethwait & Adrian Wooldridge (2009). *God is back: How the global rise of faith is changing the world*. London: Penguin Books, p. 10.

25. For a comprehensive report see: Amnesty International (2012). "Prisoners are bottom of the pile": Human Rights of inmates in Ghana. London: Amnesty International.

Book Review:

Prison Governor's Journal

By Brendan O'Friel

Publisher: Brendan O'Friel (2021)

ISBN: 978 152 62 0847 7

(paperback)

Price: £17.99 (paperback)

Brendan O'Friel worked in HM Prison Service from 1963 to 1996, becoming a distinguished governor of HMP Featherstone, HMP Manchester and HMP Risley. This book offers a thoughtful and considered inside account of thirty-three momentous and eventful years in the history of British prisons. It is also a book in which the character of the author is very much apparent. O'Friel had a reputation as an effective leader with a sense of purpose and that can very much be discerned in these pages. He is a man with values shaped by his Christianity and his parent's public service. He is also a man who built his leadership craft over time, learning from others and honing his own approach through a deep understanding of those who lived and worked in prisons, how the institution functioned and infusing his work with values.

O'Friel's career started at the tail end of the post-War welfare optimism, working in the borstal system, attempting to help children to engage in education, training and community service. Conflict and crises were never far from the surface, and O'Friel worked through the crisis of security in the mid-1960s and the creation of high security prisons following the Mountbatten Report, then the years of industrial conflict, economic turmoil and prisoner disorder in the 1970s.

During the 1980s, O'Friel was a central figure in some of the most significant events of the decade. He was a key player in the setting up of the Prison Governors Association in 1987, and he was often called to publicly discuss the issues of the day, including overcrowding, poor conditions and disorder. In 1986, O'Friel was appointed as Governor of HMP Manchester. This was always a

challenging post; a busy local prison, over a hundred years old and with poor conditions for the 1400 prisoners. He offered energetic leadership, initiated improvements in activities and facilities, and introduced reforms of staffing. Yet he also faced chronic problems including underinvestment and an increasing prison population putting greater pressure on the already inadequate facilities. The Chief Inspector of Prisons gave a positive assessment of Manchester in March 1990, while also recognising the chronic problems. Despite the efforts of O'Friel and his colleagues, the prison descended into a riot starting in the chapel on 01 April 1990. The prisoners held out for the next 25 days there were copycat riots across other prisons in the country. O'Friel's account of those days are an important insider account. He faced immense pressures, attempting to contain and then end the disorder, maintain staff morale and prevent abuse, navigate the political and organisational challenges, respond to the public and media scrutiny, while also managing his own emotional reaction to such a devastating set of events. The detail of this account is a valuable historical record, and it is also a human portrait of leadership in an operational crisis. The subsequent inquiry into the riots, led by Lord Justice Woolf, credited O'Friel for his leadership at HMP Manchester both before and during the riot. The report did, however, forensically examine the poor conditions of prisons across the country and set out the need for significant reform and modernisation.

Following the inquiry, O'Friel took up post as Governor of HMP Risley, where he led an energetic effort to realise the post-Woolf vision. In 1994, the Chief Inspector of Prison praised the efforts to improve education, employment, offending behaviour programmes and voluntary work. It is testament to his resilience that O'Friel was not only able to survive the events of 1990,

but he was able to retain his energy and drive.

Although he retired in 1996 and has continued to have more than a passing interest in penal affairs, O'Friel has waited quarter of a century before committing his working life to paper. This is to the benefit of the book, written as it is with a sense of perspective and reflection. O'Friel rationally describes the events of his working life, but also imparts professional wisdom on the challenges of prison leadership, and he offers a measured critique of the problems of imprisonment and potential reforms.

This is a rewarding book that is well worth reading. For those interested in the history of prisons, it is an insider account of some of the major events of the late 20th century, but also offers a more personal story of how prisons, and society, evolved during those years. For those working in prisons, particularly those leading prisons, O'Friel's humane values and people-centred approach offers an alternative to the dominant managerial model. Although this is ostensibly an account of the past, there is certainly much that O'Friel has to say that continues to be relevant today.

Dr. Jamie Bennett is a Deputy Director in HM Prison and Probation Service

Book review

Privatising justice: The security industry, war and crime control

By Wendy Fitzgibbon and John Lea

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(paperback)

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The role of the state and private sectors in criminal justice remains a contentious, controversial and polarising issue. As this book reveals,

different perspectives draw upon competing values: economic rationality; public accountability; justice and fairness, and; power and inequality. The authors of this book, Wendy Fitzgibbon, a Reader in Criminology at University of Leicester, and John Lea, Visiting Professor at Goldsmiths, University of London, are clearly deeply concerned about the spread of privatisation into military, security and criminal justice fields.

The authors set their critique in a long historical perspective. When living in the here and now, it is easy to be lulled into a belief that the current dominant ideas are inevitable and that alternatives are not realistic. Historically, justice was largely a private concern, with local landowners funding and operating systems of justice that served their own interests. It was only with the coming of the industrial revolution and the creation of the modern bureaucratic state that justice became increasingly under central state direction. In prisons, this culminated in the Prisons Act of 1877, which brought all local prisons under the direction of the Home Office. The nationalisation of criminal justice, it was argued at the time, was justified on grounds of efficiency and consistency of justice. By drawing upon this long view of history, Fitzgibbon and Lea neatly illuminate that the dominant ideas of today have not always held sway and it is not inevitable that they will continue to do so. The historical account also highlights that these changes happened incrementally and over a protracted period, many decades, rather than there being violent and dramatic ruptures and transformations.

The contemporary growth in private sector involvement emerged in the 1980s. This was integral to a wider set of economic and social changes, sometimes described as

neo-liberalism, which embraced the market as a solution to social problems, encouraged consumer capitalism and sought to reduce the role of the state. This process has been ongoing for the last four decades and remains contentious. Fitzsimmons and Lea seek in this book to subject this period to a sustained and rigorous critique.

In terms of public accountability and values, the authors explain that proponents of privatisation in criminal justice have often argued that the state retains the power to determine criminal justice actions such as arrest and sentencing, but the administration of these need not necessarily be a state function. As Fitzsimmons and Lea counter, such simplification does not bear up to sustained scrutiny. Those charged with administration have significant powers of discretion and can therefore determine whether fines are enforced, what the conditions of detention are and what access there might be to goods and services in prison. The authors argue that the profit motive clouds judgement and turns the prisoner into a commodity rather than a conditional citizen.

Advocates of the private sector have long argued that the public sector is inefficient and ineffective, while lean and agile commercial operations offer a solution to complex problems. While there are many examples of good practice in private sector prisons, there is, of course a litany of failures that have filled the last thirty years. These include operational failures, such as the loss of control at HMP Birmingham¹ or the persistently poor conditions at Rainsbrook secure training centre.² Of course there have also been similar failures in public sector prisons during this period. There have been financial scandals including Serco being fined £19.2 million for fraud and false

accounting³, while G4S had to pay £38.5 million for fraud⁴, both prosecutions related to electronic monitoring contracts. With probation, the 'Transforming rehabilitation' programme saw the privatisation of the community supervision of released prisoners judged to be a low and medium risk. This reform was unsuccessful, widely condemned, including by the House of Commons Justice Select Committee⁵ and ultimately reversed.

One of the arguments advanced by Fitzsimmons and Lea is that privatisation encourages de-skilling by reducing delivery to contractual compliance rather than any sense of meaningful quality. They describe this as 'control by neglect', characterised by a lack of human concern, hollowed out relations, facilitated by "working to contract and paying by results" (p.170). Again, this is not limited to private sector organisations. The public sector has sought to emulate this 'managerial' approach with significant consequences for human relations, fairness and quality of working lives⁶.

Some of the novelty of this book comes from the way it attempts to situate the privatisation of criminal justice within the wider context of change including reducing the role of the state and the increase in individualism. As the authors describe:

Neoliberalism has functioned as an ideology that both condemns the 'excesses' of the welfare state period and celebrates the necessity for private responsibility and private enterprise in the solution of societal problems. (p. 145)

From this perspective, deindustrialisation and increased inequality has created a section of society who have been economically, politically and socially marginalised. In such circumstances, Fitzsimmons and Lea argue that rehabilitation is

1. See <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-45240742> accessed on 28 December 2020

2. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/inspectors-urgent-action-needed-at-rainsbrook> accessed on 28 December 2020

3. See <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-48853870> accessed on 28 December 2020

4. See <https://www.sfo.gov.uk/2020/07/17/sfo-receives-final-approval-for-dpa-with-g4s-care-justice-services-uk-ltd/> accessed on 28 December 2020

5. See <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmjust/482/482.pdf> accessed on 28 December 2020

6. See Bennett, J. (2020) Against prison management in *Prison Service Journal*. No.247 p.4–13.

futile, as opportunities for work and education do not exist in deprived communities⁷, and simply creates a problematic population to control. These populations are both a threat to the more powerful sections of society, and an opportunity to exploit through private security. The authors describe how private security acts to create zones of exclusion, where the powerful live in protected spaces, while the marginalised are left to live in neglected wild spaces and are subjected to surveillance. The authors look to a dystopian future where these divisions are exaggerated and intensified. They offer the prospect of worlds conjured up in popular science fiction such as John Carpenter's film *Escape from New York* (US, 1981) or PD James's 1992 book *Children of Men*. While this analysis is compelling, there is a question over whether there are changes afoot. The Brexit vote and the general election of 2019 show that marginalised communities retain some political significance and they cannot simply be romanticised as victims or written off as the powerless oppressed, lacking in agency.

Fitzsimmons and Lea have produced a lively and engaging book, which neatly captures a wide range of concerns about the role of privatisation in contemporary criminal justice. They highlight the myriad failures that expose the limits of the ideological belief that the market is the solution to every problem. They also set their analysis within a broader social and historical context, which adds significantly to their critique. The book is, however, essentially a polemic. It does not seek to reveal the failures of the public sector nor does it really have anything to say about the benefits of private sector involvement. It is

unlikely to convert many people, but will do much to invigorate the critics of privatisation.

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Book review

Positive Growth and Redemption in Prison — Finding Light Behind Bars and Beyond.

By Lila Kazemian.

Publisher: Routledge (2021)

ISBN: 9781032048338

Price: £36.99

Positive Growth and Redemption in Prison is a fascinating and long-awaited book. It pushes the boundaries by highlighting a major gap in studies about prisons and desistance especially in relation to long-term prisoners.¹ It also encapsulates the complete lack of foresight within criminal justice systems to seize the opportunity to nurture desistance in prison. One of the overarching themes is thus that desistance theory has tended to focus on criminal behaviours and crime reduction rather than the ongoing transformations that desisters develop. In the introductory chapter, Kazemian offers a very useful explanation of desistance related terms as many people, including criminologists, are still not 'au fait' with the concept of desistance. The chapter also outlines the four main objectives of the study: (1) the barriers to achieving positive growth in prison, (2) the adjustment process of long-term prisoners, and how to better understand the changes that occur over the course of a long-term sentence, (3) the process of desistance in prison, and (4) by drawing on detailed,

prospective interview data, the ways in which prison prepares for release, and assesses individual and social factors that may impact reintegration efforts after release from prison.

A vital point, made in the book, is that although desistance is about agency and transforming oneself, social structures need to be in place to allow growth and the prison system is missing a glaring opportunity to provide this. This is very poignantly emphasised by the prisoners themselves who felt that reintegration should be a focus from the start of a sentence rather than towards the end. Sadly, this is completely ignored by practitioners (see chapter 2) where the ethics committee felt discussions around reintegration should be asked of the participants close to release. This epitomizes the failure amongst some practitioners to recognize the importance of hearing the voices of those with lived experience.

Although the impact of long-term imprisonment is central, rather than focussing mainly on the negative aspects of prison, it draws out positive, transformative aspects of prison life aiming to answer the key research question which explores: 'the circumstances under which individuals thrive in prison' (p.32). The author unashamedly emphasises the need for positive experiences (even in prison) to be in focus for desistance to progress. This may seem like a controversial claim amongst some scholars who might feel uncomfortable with the idea that imprisonment may provide anything but pain. However, there is a growing body of research which demonstrate that some prisoners do find prison to be an opportunity for self-change.² Authors of this topic may be cautious that their claims might be viewed as advocating prison as a positive

7. For a fuller analysis of post-industrial areas and their inter-relationship with prisons, see Maguire, D. (2021) *Male, failed, jailed: Masculinities and 'revolving door' imprisonment in the UK*. London: Palgrave MacMillan

1. The book is about a longitudinal study of 58 male long-term (10 years or more) prisoners. Seven of the individuals interviewed were foreign nationals, but almost a third of the respondents had parents of foreign nationality.

2. McNeill, F. & Schinkel, M., 2016. Prisons and desistance. In: J. Bennett, B. Crewe & Y. Jewkes, eds. *Handbook on prisons*. Cullompton: Willan Publishing, pp. 607-621.

McLean, R., Matra, D. & Holligan, C., 2017. Voices of Quiet Desistance in UK Prisons: Exploring Emergence of New Identities Under Desistance Constraint. *The Howard Journal*, 56(4), p. 437-453.

Crewe, B. and Ievins, A. (2020) 'The prison as a reinventive institution', *Theoretical Criminology*, 24(4), pp. 568-589. doi:

10.1177/1362480619841900. Honeywell, David (2021) *The Ambiguities of Desistance: ex-offenders, higher education and the desistance journey*. Emerald Publishing.

experience, but this misconception has been addressed previously by Crewe and Ievins³ who state that while there should be no defence of imprisonment, the narratives of the few who do find prison to be transformative, are worthy of further analysis. This is not the case for many, but rather gives hope to those who can seize the opportunity to turn a difficult situation to their advantage.⁴ Kazemian makes this clear in her core arguments: 'Because this study examines some of the constructive changes that may be experienced by individuals over long periods of incarceration, this should not be interpreted as a call for more people in prison, or longer prison sentences' (p.7). Referring to Comfort's⁵ concerns about whether prisoners can thrive in prison, the author makes an important point that in this study, the prisoners' anguish began before prison. This is also highlighted in other studies whereby prison for some was an extreme yet beneficial escape from their dysfunctional lives. Desistance is not straightforward but rather a very complex set of experiences and identity transformations and as the author purports, does not reflect the many complex offender identities such as those who have committed severe crimes. These complexities are often overlooked which is raised in chapter 5 'Lotus in the mud'. Here Kazemian points out that previous desistance literature is not always pertinent to prisoner populations.⁶

One such complexity is that for some long-term prisoners, prison offers the time and space to reflect, so in chapter 4 'The desistance

paradigm' Kazemian argues for long term prisoners to be given the encouragement to flourish. Long term prisoners do learn to adapt and here Kazemian draws from my own reflective paper⁷ where I recall how during my time of incarceration in the 1990s, I requested to be moved to the prison unit where the majority of lifers were housed. This was because I was aware of their stabilising influence. Chapter 6, 'The Barriers to Positive Growth in Prison' highlights the gaps within the French systems where there is a disparity between the physical and mental health services whereby psychologists' input is not provided for release decisions. This leads to some prisoners not engaging with psychologists. Despite these obstacles 'Achieving Positive Growth in Prison' (chapter 7) gets to the crux of utilising prison time and space to reflect and be introspective. But whereas some found long term imprisonment to be a time of self-reflection, it eventually lost all meaning. Chapter 8 'the Desistance Narrative' draws on how the participants saw themselves as victims rather than offenders and how a significant number of the participants were open to mediation with victims of crime although not the victims linked to their own offences. Yet despite such positive intentions by the prisoners, there is a weakness of progression because bad behaviour is always the main focus with little if any reward for good behaviour. Perhaps this is because of the points raised in chapter 9, 'Life After Prison' where there was a lack of interest by the

prison to focus on reintegration at the start of a prison sentence. Yet most of those who were desisting were clear that the process of self-construction needs to be initiated at the beginning of a prison sentence. Kazemian describes perfectly how the prisons focus on security results in a 'crippling neglect of the reintegration needs for prisoners' (p.182).

Overall, this is a book that crosses many boundaries of desistance scholarship. It draws the often overlooked and possibly controversial aspect of desistance. This is how and why some individuals are able to make positive transformations while serving prison sentences. It is a discussion that many would most certainly find difficult to comprehend given the punitive nature of incarceration. It also highlights the multicultural similarities across prison cultures which makes such a compelling contribution to the academic disciplines of criminology, criminal justice and cognate disciplines. Moreover, for practitioners within the criminal justice system and third sector organisations who work with prisoners and ex-prisoners, it evokes a discussion that needs to be kept alive because by listening to the voices of those with first-hand experience of prison life, we can do so much more to improve things.

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3. Crewe and Ievins (2020)

4. Honeywell (2021)

5. As discussed on pages 5 and 6. Comfort, M. (2012). "It was basically college to us": Poverty, prison, and emerging adulthood. *Journal of Poverty*, 16(3), 308–322.

6. As discussed on page 91. Bottoms, A. & Shapland, J. (2011). Steps towards desistance amongst male young adult recidivists. In S. Farrall, R. Spark & M. Hough et al. (Eds.), *Escape routes: Contemporary perspectives on life after punishment* (pp. 43–80). London: Routledge.

Sing Sing Prison Blues

Reflections of a New York City Street Cop turned Warden

Michael Capra is the Superintendent of Sing Sing prison in New York State, USA. He is interviewed by **Bryonn Bain**, Director of the UCLA Prison Education Program, and Associate Professor in the Department of African American Studies, and the Department of World Arts and Cultures/Dance at the University of California-Los Angeles.

In the summer of 2015, my then 13-year-old son, Indigo, reluctantly began the summer bridge program for rising freshman at *University High School* in Los Angeles. We were told ‘Uni’ High, as Angelenos call it, is one of the most diverse schools in the city. With reports of a track record of high achieving black and brown youth, this predominately Latinx public school came highly recommended by several educators and colleagues in the area. Nevertheless, Indigo’s reluctance was born of his disdain for moving away from family and friends in Brooklyn, and his desire to be anywhere in the world but school during his eagerly anticipated summer vacation. As I picked him up and asked how the second day was, his response alarmed me more than most of the challenges I have faced to date as the young father of a child the color of chocolate: ‘The teacher said, don’t be late for school and don’t miss class. If you do, the police will come to your house and take you to juvenile hall.’

Press rewind. Over a decade and a half earlier... I’m in a workshop led by a grassroots prison activist organization—*Prison Moratorium Project*—in the Brooklyn we knew and loved in the 1990s.¹ I hear a hauntingly similar report: ‘They have been building prisons in New York State based on 4th grade test scores.’ From elementary school children in New York to high school freshmen in California, rather than preparing our nine-year-olds and 9th graders to be better, to become their best selves, to be astronauts or animators, astrophysicists or human rights activists, my

son and I witnessed forces from coast to coast preparing our next generation to be sent up the proverbial river.

Fast forward. In the summer of 2016, I have the opportunity to interview the warden of Sing Sing prison — the ex-super cop turned Superintendent, Michael Capra. The man with the parking spot directly in front of the maximum security facility 30 miles north of New York City on the east bank of the Hudson River.²

Pause. Unlike other interviews I have conducted, several men in the hip hop and spoken word workshop I am teaching at the prison helped me develop the topics and questions I discussed with the warden. The team of brilliant minds inside who urged me to ask the questions that follow included: Jermaine, Lawrence, Ivan, Laron, Dennis, Tyrone, Chris, Markey, J.J, Laron, Dennis, and the poet laureate, Simeon aka ‘Sundiata.’ At first, I was surprised by how many of these men respected the ‘top cop’ in the big house for championing the range of arts and educational programs offered in the prison. This was a paradox for me — a source of personal conflict. On the one hand, I would rather see these brothers home rather than living in iron cages. At the same time, I saw the immeasurable value in recognizing their humanity through these opportunities for growth and development. Beyond my class, several of these students were involved in everything from pursuing college degrees and Ted Talks with the *Hudson Link* initiative founded by a formerly incarcerated advocate, to theatrical productions with *Rehabilitation Through the Arts*, and even music lessons and concerts with Carnegie Hall.

1. The Brooklyn-based *Prison Moratorium Project* (PMP) raises the question of whether the prison system is indeed the right form of punishment for crime and aims to reimagine alternatives to prisons. For details, ~ PMP: <http://www.nomoreprisons.org/>. See also: Adrienne Brown, “An Interview with Activists at the Prison Moratorium Project,” *Grist*, June 22, 2005. <https://grist.org/article/brown-prison/>.
2. After two years of workshoping poetry with some of the brilliant bards there, I learned the iconic colloquialism for sending someone to prison—“up the river”—emerged from the history of this fortress of iron and stone constructed by the water. And that beautiful water, visible from within the prison itself, is as ironic as the prison is iconic. That 315-mile stretch of water flowing from its origins in the Adirondack Mountains of Upstate New York flows through the Hudson Valley into the Atlantic Ocean. It serves as the political boundary between the states of New Jersey and New York, whose flow is influenced from as far north as Troy. That river is named after the British Henry Hudson who sailed for the Dutch East India Company back in the early 1600s when the Dutch dubbed it the *North River* by the world’s first multinational corporation.

Sing Sing is the closest maximum-security prison to New York City.³ Its roots reach back into the generation before chattel slavery was legally abolished amidst a civil war so violent it claimed the lives of more Americans than both world wars combined: reportedly as many as 750,000. Both that conflict, and the legacy of racial violence before, through and after Reconstruction, and into the Civil Rights Movement, remind us of the broader political and economic realities of race and class, law and labor. The tension between forces of social control and movements for social justice remains alive and under the radioactive pressure cooker that is one of the most famous—and infamous—spaces on the carceral landscape.

Play. Over the last decade, the epidemic of viral video footage has turned state-sanctioned violence into a recurring phenomenon for millions, but left black and brown communities mourning and outraged with outpourings of 'We told you so!' But what happens when the top cop calls out the violence caught on video in the big house? Does it matter when the law enforcement officer accused of abuse is black and the victim of the violence is white? I sat with the warden of Sing Sing prison, on the heels of a trial unlike any he remembers, as he wrestled with these very questions and shared his take on a case he testified in against one of his very own correctional officers.⁴

BB: In the 1600s, the Mohegans, native peoples indigenous to this area we now refer to as New York, called this land 'Sinck Sinck' — which meant 'Stone by Stone.' They also called their leader the Sachem.⁵ I think it is important to recognize that in light of your title as 'Superintendent,' whereas in most prisons across the country the person in the top position is called the 'Warden.' What is the difference?

MC: Warden was used in New York but over the years it was changed to Superintendent in New York State. The definition of Superintendent means the chief administrative officer of the correctional facility. As in most things, perception carries a lot of weight with the general public.

BB: The questions I'm going to throw at you today came from men who have been in leadership roles in many of the programs at the prison. We have been talking about them for

weeks so I'm just going to jump right in. To start off, on a personal note: who was Michael Capra before Sing Sing? And how are you the same or different today?

MC: Well, I think it's a lifetime of experiences. It starts with your upbringing, your family life, your faith base, and success, certainly a realization that I'm not here because of me. I'm here because the good Lord has put me here. I started this job thinking this would be a temporary situation until I was old enough to join NYPD. I never intended to make this my career. I started this job as a correction officer in 1981 and slowly climbed the ladder to my current position.

BB: There is an ongoing conversation, especially within Black communities, but increasingly in every community, around 'Black Lives Matter.' How do we actually change policing, law enforcement, and 'corrections' to focus resources on the humanity of people who have historically been dehumanized. In particular, let's focus on the recent incident with a corrections officer who was caught on video beating an 'inmate' to the ground. How do you handle the responsibility to be fair and balanced when mediating charges of officer abuse of force in dealing with men in the population at Sing Sing?

MC: It is very trying. However, my decision isn't difficult at all. As the top cop in your facility, you have got to be confident in who you are and know what the right thing to do is. What is the expectation of law enforcement? Don't people expect more from us, to do the right thing? In the case that you are speaking of it is very rare, if ever, as a Superintendent to testify in criminal proceedings against one of your own officers.⁶ I am the designated subject matter expert for the southern part of NY for DOCCS (the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision) and was directed by my principles to testify in this case.

BB: Did that go over well?

MC: No, it did not. Does that still affect staff? Yeah. I still have to make the right decisions. The first day that person returned he was told to come directly

3. Sing Sing was built in 1826—four decades before General Ulysses Grant was celebrated for winning a war, but within just five years of the rebellion inspiring sermons of Nathaniel Turner. Today, the prison formerly known as the Ossining Correctional Facility is less than a decade from its bicentennial. It has seen nearly two centuries of confinement for approximately 1,700 men and execution of 614 before the Supreme Court found in *Furman v. Georgia* that the death penalty is (actually) unconstitutional in 1972.

4. This interview was conducted on August 5, 2016 at the Sing-Sing Correctional Facility in Ossining, New York. The interview was edited with support from researcher associate Joanna Itzel Navarro.

5. Scharf, John Thomas, *History of Westchester County: New York, Including Morrisania, Kings Bridge, and West Farms, Which Have Been Annexed to New York City*. Vol. 2, L.E. Preston & Co., 1886.

6. Based on the *National Inmate Survey* conducted by the Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Human Rights Watch* wrote a report in 2015 which showed in New York between 2010-15, 120 abuse cases were brought against guards, 80 abuse cases settled with disciplinary action (no dismissal), 30 guards were up for dismissal, and only 8 were officially dismissed.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
-against-

LAVAR THOMAS

354 Hunter Street, Ossining, New York

05/10/1979

Defendant

Be it known that the complainant herein Investigator Mario Castillo, of the New York State Police, accuses the defendant named above of the following offenses committed at the Sing Sing Correctional Facility, 354 Hunter Street, Ossining, New York on May 6, 2015, at approximately 12:25 p.m.

COUNT ONE: The Offense of ASSAULT IN THE THIRD DEGREE, a violation of Penal Law PL 120.00 01 AM3

COUNT TWO: The Offense of HARRASMENT IN THE SECOND DEGREE, a violation of Penal Law PL 240.26 01 V2

The Defendant with intent to cause physical injury to another person, causes such injury to such person or to a third person. The defendant with intent to harass, annoy or alarm another person, strikes, shoves, kicks or otherwise subjects such other person to physical contact, or attempts or threatens to do the same.

To wit: The defendant, a Corrections Officer at the Sing Sing Correctional Facility, at the above date, time and place, with intent to cause physical injury to Daniel Hyers, and with the intent to harass, annoy and alarm him, punched inmate Daniel Hyers about the head and face thereby causing a bruise under the victim's left eye.

The above allegation(s) of fact are made by the complainant herein based upon direct knowledge and upon information and belief, with the source of complainant's information and the grounds for his belief being the attached supporting deposition Daniel Hyers, and the two attached CPL 710.30 notices.

NOTICE: PURSUANT TO THE PENAL LAW, SECTION 210.45, IT IS A CRIME PUNISHABLE AS A CLASS A MISDEMEANOR TO KNOWINGLY MAKE A FALSE STATEMENT HEREIN.

September 17, 2015



Signed

up to my office. We had a discussion and I reinforced that my position had not wavered: 'You are back. That is good. You are not a bad person. You had a bad day.' He agreed and shook my hand and thanked me. We are going to move forward because that is what we do

BB: What impact does that have on your day-to-day work and the culture inside?

MC: It does not make you the popular guy all the time, and you have to accept that. Some staff believe that the facts do not matter. They look at you differently. Like whether you are on *our side* or not on our side. But the bigger picture has to be what was the right thing to begin with. You need to understand what the current culture is and decide if you have made a positive change in the future culture. What is acceptable and what is not. Then you have to take another step back and say, Leadership is what staff are looking for, consistency in having the reputation of doing the right thing is very important.

BB: Some advocates of criminal justice reform argue that training is the key to transforming the culture of law enforcement. I'm not convinced that's the only major change necessary, but I was surprised to learn that in the United Kingdom it is not uncommon for COs there to receive hundreds of hours of social work and conflict resolution training. For police and prison guards in the United States, I've been told hundreds of hours of firearms training is customary. Beyond that, the other nationwide norm I've learned of is the "Cooper Standard." What exactly is the Cooper Standard?

MC: The Cooper Standard is a minimal, physical fitness requirement for most law enforcement organizations. Depending on your age and sex you are required to run a 1.5 mile in a specific amount of time, do so many pushups, so many sit ups and a specific type of stretch. This is a prerequisite to enter many academies. There are also levels of education that one

needs to enter some of the law enforcement academies. Now, I don't think that a degree makes the person, but I believe that a combination of things attracts the right type of person for this type of job. We need to look at the acceptable norms of law enforcement today. Because of technology, cell phones, body cams, people recording cops on the street during physical force situations that the whole world gets to judge. We also see what their norms are. What's the accepted level of what was right from wrong? We are charged to keep order and are trained to use force when necessary. This is the toughest job on the planet. Some of the best law enforcement people in the world work behind the walls of the prison system.

BB: How did your previous work prepare you for challenges you face today?

MC: I started as an officer and I learned my trade and developed my leadership abilities. As a Sergeant you may have 50 officers working directly under you. You learn a lot from experience. I was also a commissioner of police in a small police agency. I started off there as a Police officer and worked my way up there also. On one occasion I had to fire one of my own cops. I knew ahead of time this guy was a bad apple. When I first took over, I brought him in and said: 'I know you did this, this, and this, and if you do that while I am in charge...' He didn't listen and had to be discharged. But that process was all my decision. The state has other divisions that handle discipline and the appropriate fines, suspension or termination. I recommend action and then other divisions investigate. Other divisions decide what they are going to get, then there are union contracts which stipulate the discipline process, many times there is a third-party arbitrator who makes the final decision.

BB: What impact does it have when an incident is recorded on video?

MC: If you see an incident on videotape, and it seems very clear what happened, you would think there would be no question. Well, it sometimes becomes what the public thinks about the incident, what was portrayed by each side, because then it becomes this whole public perception.⁷ We had an incident and the

inmate was in prison for a horrific act. This was a jury trial. This was a case that was not about the facts. No one cared about the responsibility of law enforcement. It was who had the better attorney.

BB: How exactly did that have an impact on the trial?

MC: In this case, the high-priced attorney convinced the jury how bad this inmate was, which was irrelevant to the case. So, anything short of flogging the inmate would have been acceptable to the jurors because he is a 'bad guy,' which had nothing to do with this case. But it is the human element — when you play to that human element, and if you are a better actor than the next guy, you will win.⁸ My officers put their lives on the line every day to protect others and maintain order throughout the facility. They have been assaulted, thrown on, and verbally abused on a regular basis. They are professionals. No one wants the bad apple in the bunch to represent them.

BB: That's heavy...

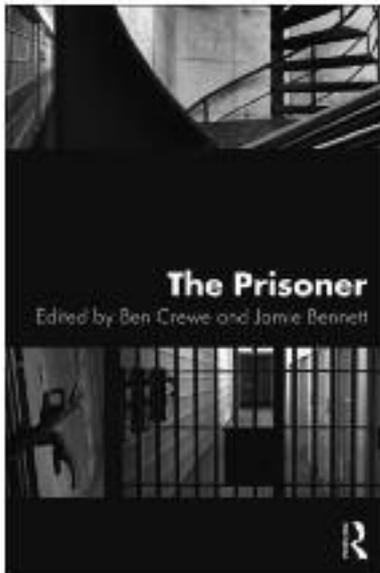
MC: It is heavy, but when you put it into the context of, we are human beings on this planet, and we are judged by certain things. When it is all over, it is really all about your belief system. I believe... strongly, not necessarily in just being a 'good person,' but doing the right thing by others. Leadership is a major component. Being sensitive at times and steadfast at others. Sometimes you have to come down hard on people: kind of like a parent and a child. Sometimes your child needs to be punished. Sometimes they need a hug. Knowing when to — and when not to — is the secret. You know, if you look at things in that simplistic way and understand your responsibility, and your response to that scenario, whether you should come on strong or you should back off, means the world of difference on how you succeed in changing the culture in a positive way. It is a delicate balance.

Conducted in the summer of 2014, this interview was revised by Bain and Capra in the spring of 2021, and will be published in the forthcoming book, currently titled - A Justice Movement Mixtape (University of California Press, 2022)

7. Prosecutors cited video evidence against officers in 10 of the 18 felony cases filed against officers in 2014 — twice as often as video played a role in prosecutions over the previous decade, *The Washington Post* [//www.washingtonpost.com/sf/investigative/2015/12/26/a-year-of-reckoning-police-fatally-shoot-nearly-1000/](https://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/investigative/2015/12/26/a-year-of-reckoning-police-fatally-shoot-nearly-1000/)

8. *Calaff v. Capra*, Superintendent, Sing Sing Correctional Facility. United States District Court, Southern District of New York. 31 Jan. 2017.

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