

REMOTE CONTROL

TELEVISION IN PRISON



Victoria Knight



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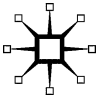
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Victoria Knight

De Montfort University, UK

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For
Olive Florence Roberts (2006–)
Lois Helen Roberts (2012–)

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1

Research Foundations

This book is about the role of in-cell television in a male adult closed prison. Its focus is to capture the experience of television use by prisoners within the prison context.

1.1 Introduction and rationale

1.1.1 Research origins

The impetus for this book arose from work on the consumption of mass communications in a closed male young offenders' institution which I completed in 2001 followed by a focused study on television (Knight 2012). British studies, Jewkes's (2002a) and my earlier research in 2001 came at a time when in-cell televisions were just being introduced to prison cells in England and Wales. The introduction of television in prisoners' cells, following New Labour's announcement by the Home Secretary Jack Straw in 1998, revealed some interesting effects on the prison environment. The British research could not systematically document these effects, as in-cell television at this time was only available to 'privileged' prisoners. In-cell television is now firmly fixed into the prison environment. This introduction took 12 years to complete from its official launch to the last prison receiving television in cells in 2010. Installation was not straightforward and many cells had to be modernised to receive electricity. There were, however, approximately 1000 prisoners who benefited from in-cell television from 1991 and this disparity in availability of in-cell television called for an official review (Ministry of Justice [MoJ] personal correspondence 2011). The research that was carried out provided a snapshot of its early introduction and its effects were limited to those prisoners who complied with current behaviour management strategies. The *Incentive and Earned*

Privilege (IEP) system, introduced in 1996 (PSI 11/2011), following a review of disturbances at HMP Strangeways by Lord Justice Woolf in 1990, sought to manage prisoner behaviour much more robustly. Policymakers were tasked with ensuring that prisoners complied with the prison regime. Incentives were needed in order to motivate prisoners and in-cell television became a key incentive to enable prison staff to encourage compliance. Along with other incentives such as access to goods and services, visits from friends and family, time out of cell and access to work and education, the IEP system sought to organise prisoners based on their compliance and behaviour. Within limits, the more prisoners complied with the prison regime the more access they were allowed to goods and services. Non-compliance could lead to privileges being withdrawn and prisoners placed on a 'basic' regime. The introduction of in-cell television and other privileges received highly contested focus in public discourse, as an index to broader concerns about the penal system going 'soft on' criminals and losing its direction. In defence of this, in-cell television became framed in political rhetoric. In-cell television was therefore positioned as an earnable privilege for 'deserving' prisoners; for example, those who proved to be drug free (Hansard Vol. 314, 1998). The Prison Service employed television to directly manage behaviour, a method which is directly mirrored in many households with children (Silverstone 1999a).

Tracing the introduction of mass communications into British prisons is difficult, as scarce public historical or policy documents report their introduction. Staff and prisoners anecdotally related¹ that early access to mass media was originally through newspapers and magazines. It was common practice for staff to read out news in chapel every week. By 1954 prisoners could directly access radio and newspapers, under supervision. Radio was broadcast onto prison landings, shortly followed by prisoners' opportunity to buy their own transistor sets. Films were sometimes shown in communal areas like the chapels or gyms on a weekly basis. Communal television sets were introduced to 'association' areas where prisoners spent leisure time out of their cells in some prisons from the 1970s, but this was never formally standardised. Prisons, therefore, are media-poor environments.

Only one prison contributed to a formal evaluation of in-cell television (McClymont 1993), which outlined concerns about the decline in prisoners attending associations and other activities; a theme also echoed by Jewkes (2002a). It was also noted that in-cell television had an influence on the atmosphere in the pilot prison, where it was observed that prisoners appeared calmer (Jewkes 2002a). Despite claims

to 'monitor closely' (Hansard Vol. 314 1998) its introduction to prisons, no official evaluation has been carried out by the Ministry of Justice (Home Office²). This study therefore marks the only independent evaluation of in-cell television since its official introduction.

1.1.2 Research foundations

The sociological perspective underpinning this book departs significantly from the recent trend in prison research based on measuring 'what works' agendas and assessments of prisons as 'performing' enterprises (Raine and Wilson 1997; Liebling 2004). The dominance of performance-related research has eclipsed the sociology of imprisonment (Simon 2000; Wacquant 2002; Liebling 2004). These changes have resulted in the prison culture and its prisoners and staff becoming increasingly lost, even invisible, in managerialist discourse (Liebling 2004:203). Access to prisons to conduct sociological research is difficult, as prisons' resources are locked into key performance targets, as well as managing high numbers of prisoners with limited resources. Furthermore, pressures to reduce reoffending and a move to foreground victims' rights are also evident (Williams 2002). Many offenders come to prison with a range of complex physiological and psychological needs (Prison Reform Trust 2009; Scott and Codd 2010). In addition, a significant proportion of prisoners return regularly back to prison (Padfield and Maruna 2006). The cost of incarceration, set at £45,000 per year per prisoner, highlights the cost of using prison as a punitive instrument; for some, this is too much for the tax payer to bear (Prison Reform Trust 2010). Prisons are therefore under extreme pressure to perform and the sociological dimensions of prison life are not a priority. The sociological paradigm brings the human experience to the fore and is a mirror image of the policy and strategies that are routinely implemented (Simon 2000:288). As Jewkes (2002a:x) observes, audience research in prison is limited, yet provides a curious site for audience investigation. Gersch (2003:53) highlights the 'uses and gratifications' which can generate peculiar effects in the prison environment:

The notion of 'escape' gains special meaning in the prison context, where the media are one of only a few links for inmates to the outside world.

Researchers of prisoner audiences have been uncomfortable with the frameworks and typologies of audience behaviour derived largely from research on audiences in domestic settings. One example is Jewkes's

modification of the 'uses and gratifications' model defined by McQuail et al. (1972) to account for how the structural features of the prison can impact on prisoner agency and their responses to their incarceration.

Her work moved away from the deterministic typology of uses and gratifications model to highlight how prisoners' *motivations* can capture the role that media has in their lives. Through conversation she was able to document the ways in which the male prisoners interpreted and made sense of their experience and also of themselves. The *meanings* they reported provided a view of their subjectivity and how it is negotiated within the prison setting. In a similar way, Vandebosch (2000) highlighted that prisoners had 'media related needs' and increased degrees of dependency on media use. A common finding across most of the prison audience, including my earlier research, is that prisoners actively draw upon media resources in powerful and active ways during incarceration. All of the studies challenge the view that prisoners are passive both to the system and to the messages they consume through mass media. As much broader research on audiences has shown, media consumption is an active phenomenon in which audiences negotiate power, meanings and identity (Silverstone 1999a). Media can also transform time and space and provide an insight into how public and private life is negotiated and resisted by audiences (Moore 1995a). Prisoner audience research has found that these features take on heightened meanings for people in prison.

My earlier work (Knight 2005c) raised some important questions about the role of media consumption in relation to its time-passing qualities. Media use helps to fill time with meaningful activity. Broadcast media can help to minimise boredom, and at this stage I interpreted this in relation to the inescapable 'empty' time that prisoners routinely endure especially behind their cell doors. Upon review of prisoner audience studies, boredom and the experience of the prison cell remain underexplored. These studies had not sufficiently mapped time and space in relation to media use or the kinds of 'excursions' (Moore 2006) prisoners were making. In light of overcrowding, prison cells that were once intended for single occupancy are now mostly accommodating two or more prisoners (PSI 2750); these dynamics impact significantly on the management of time and space by prisoners. Other than Gersch's (2003) insight into communal viewing and the hierarchies of access and selection based on race in US prisons, little is known about the dynamics of sharing cells. Therefore, the everyday living arrangements between cell co-occupants remains an enigma and more generally are a relatively unexplored feature of prison life. Cell-sharing received much

attention when Zahid Mubarek was murdered by his racist cell-mate, Robert Stewart, at HMYOI Feltham in 2000. This brought about a policy review to risk-assess cell-sharing. Now that all cells in England and Wales have the capacity to have in-cell television as standard, this dynamic deserves attention.

These prisoner audience studies have consistently fallen short of interrogating the feelings engendered by media reception. Jewkes (2002a) demonstrates how the 'pains' of incarceration are managed (or not) through media use with *implicit* reference to emotion. Vandebosch (2000) also discusses the therapeutic qualities of media use but does not report sufficiently on the nature of media's effects on well-being. Garland's (1991) thesis on the use of punishment highlights that emotionality is central to the ways in which punishment, like imprisonment, is both managed and experienced by its stakeholders (see also Crawley 2004). To this effect, according to Garland, emotionality is actively controlled by penal agencies or the 'rationalisation' of punishment (1991:177). As Hochschild (1983) found, organisations or settings demand composure of emotion. These 'feeling rules' are also valid in the prison setting (Crawley 2004). Crawley found that in this context certain feelings are tolerated and accepted and others are not. The 'inmate code' is also thought to be a powerful force on the ways in which prisoners interact and do their time in prison; 'prisonisation' or prison socialisation (Clemmer 1958). The regulation of emotion is therefore part of socialisation. In a landscape where some, if not most, emotions are purposefully masked, the salience of media, especially broadcast media, has been identified as psychologically nourishing (Zillman 1988). It is claimed that television has 'care-giving' qualities and is a particular site for achieving 'ontological security' (Silverstone 1999a). This begins to indicate that media use stretches beyond pure functional and environmental features (Lull 1990, 1988). Silverstone's work has paved the way for a fuller exploration of the kinds of emotive relationships audiences have with television, and prisoner audience research should not be excluded from this. The sociology of imprisonment continually points to the pains and harms of the incarcerating experience and yet these have not been fully developed to account for specific forms of emotionality and how they become, or the extent to which they are registered as, painful. The deprivation models developed by Sykes (1999) and Goffman (1991) are significant, but their models of deprivation do not cater for the emotional dimensions of institutional life. Goffman's (1991) discussion of a 'civic death' on entering an institution is powerful, yet lacks the emotional vocabulary to deal with

how incarceration is felt by inmates. Even alternative models such as prisonisation and importation models may also be accused of the same omissions (Clemmer 1958; Irwin and Cressey 1962).

These aspects of prison life, with television firmly rooted within it, present ever pressing challenges. The government's response to the green paper *Breaking the Cycle* (MoJ 2011) sets out a series of aims whereby time in prison should be better spent or 'purposeful'. Historically this has been an aim; with the mission statement to get prisoners to 'lead a good and useful life' (Prison Rule 1), this is now becoming intensified. Achieving purposeful activity has been an instrumental and guiding target for prisons for some time (PS7100, PS4350), yet the current claims to engage all prisoners in work and training are now for the first time going to be linked to the 'payment by results' policy. Here prisons will compete to deliver provision and support for prisoners in order to achieve the aims and objectives set out in the government response. Prisoners' use of time is therefore a renewed issue and scrutiny of their time is about to enter the debate much more fiercely than in the past. Secretary of State for Justice Kenneth Clarke added to this response:

too many prisoners are able to pass their time in prison in a state of enforced idleness, with little or no constructive activity. Prisons must become places of hard work and training, where prisoners are expected to work a 40 hour week, with money from their earnings deducted to support victims' groups.

(MoJ 2011:1)

This perspective highlights how the Prison Service is criticised for allowing prisoners to 'sleep through their sentences' (London Evening Standard 2011). How in-cell television is framed within these discussions remains uncertain, but it is likely that television viewing by prisoners will be attributed, as it has been historically, as a passive and non-productive activity. Yet rhetoric about making prison 'hard' and where prisoners will be expected to make reparation or 'payback' and take up 'treatment' may not necessarily position the current incentives system too favourably. Jewkes (2002a:x) explains that this 'sits awkwardly alongside the prison service's self-proclaimed aim to engage prisoners in purposeful activity' (ibid.:x). The anxieties about watching television, especially within the prison environment, hark back to concerns about the 'effects' model. Here viewers, particularly the disenfranchised and vulnerable, are susceptible to the unrelenting enticement and powerful messages that mass communication delivers. Jewkes argues that

this perspective ‘misses the important point that media resources fulfil a wide range of motivations and gratifications and desires, many of which are felt acutely among the confined’ (ibid.:xi). As Jewkes and others (Vandebosch 2000; Gersch 2003) have demonstrated, media use by prisoners is an important route to power and control; it is one of the few activities and aspects of their lives where they can make choices for themselves. The purposeful negation of autonomy and choice that prisons actively construct may contradict the current government’s aim to get prisoners active in meaningful ways.

Rose, in his discussion on governance, shows that the state’s project to cleanse society of pathological groups requires a ‘neo-hygienic strategy’ (1999:188). Inculcating the individual in this project ‘it is necessary and desirable to educate us in the techniques for governing ourselves’ (ibid.:221). Therefore the extent to which prisoners are expected and encouraged to self-govern can also be traced within the prison setting (Pryor 2001; Bosworth 2007). If the government plans for ‘payback’ are going to be ratified, ‘vocabularies of the therapeutic... [need to be] deployed in every practice addressed to human problems’ (Rose 1999:218). The prison regime, now with in-cell television, currently provides prisoners with an additional site to ‘look inwards’ (Rose 1999:227). The extent to which forms of self-regulation are mobilised with communication outlets like television remain an unexplored dimension in prisoner audience research.

1.2 Research on prisoners and audiences

This book is based on a qualitative study, which uses an ethnographic research strategy to explore the role of in-cell television in prison. The foundations of this study are informed by Layder’s (2005) theory of ‘domains’ and his ‘adaptive’ approach. Together these theories have provided a conceptual and practical guide to the research process. An ethnographic strategy was selected to operationalise the research, by employing television-use diaries as well as semi-structured interviews with prisoners and staff. The research was conducted in a single prison (local adult male closed). Decisions to employ this methodology are informed by qualitative traditions of research carried out with prisoners and media audiences. This short section provides an overview of some of those influences and how they have shaped the design of this study. This takes into account the role of the ethnographic approach, methods for capturing data, accessing and reaching the prisoner audience and the ethical implications of undertaking this type of research.

1.2.1 Ethnography

Moore's (1996) as well as others (Silverstone et al. 1991; Gray 1992; Jewkes 2002a; Bird 2003) have adopted ethnographic strategies in their work on audiences of mass communications. Although methods of data collection and immersion in the field may differ from 'traditional' ethnographic strategies, audience reception studies can also share the same intentions (Moore's 1993a:4). These include Moore's (ibid.) own work on satellite television and Jewkes's (2002a) study of male prisoners' media use. The critical ethnographic approach³ adopted by Moore's (1993a) 'is committed to critically analysing culture as well as describing it' (ibid.:4). Moore's asserts critical ethnography can

...take extremely seriously the interpretations of the media constructed by consumers in their everyday routines. At the same time, it [ethnography] is not afraid to interrogate and situate their spoken accounts...

(Moore's 1993a:5)

However, Moore's asserts that accessing television audiences is difficult for researchers, because the 'private sphere of the household' is physically separated from the public sphere (Moore's 1993a:4). Lull (1990) and Hobson (1982) also report such difficulties, explaining that viewers' consumption of television is also a private activity. Similar challenges are also relevant to prison researchers, as they are often constrained by the nature of the regime and the willingness of social agents to disclose personal and private information. Consequently, there is 'insufficient knowledge about the ordinary world of the prison' (Crewe 2005:349). Interrogating private activities, like watching television and imprisonment, cannot duplicate the traditional ethnography where the ethnographer is immersed within the field of study for extended periods, thus moving beyond the anthropological roots of this tradition (Hammersley and Atkinson 2010). Moore's (2006:3) asserts that media use in everyday life is taken for granted and ethnographic strategies can allow researchers to access social reality in systematic ways (ibid.:14). Moore's (1993) makes the point that ethnographic strategies allow researchers to interrogate everyday life with television, even though they have spent no more than a couple of hours in a household. In prison environments visiting researchers are also constrained by time.

An ethnographic strategy can help to illuminate meanings, motives, action and feelings of social actors,

...attending to the meanings produced by social subjects and to daily activities they perform, qualitative researchers have frequently sought to explain those significances and practices by locating them in relation to broader frameworks of interpretation and to structures of power and inequality.

(Moore 1993:5)

The value of an ethnographic strategy lies in its capacity to provide a mixture of techniques by offering an account of social reality in its natural setting (Hammersley and Atkinson 2010:3). In the context of the prison this means that a critical description of the impact of television on prisoners, prison staff and prison culture can be reproduced. Audience research asserts that private modes of media consumption should fully take into account the context of this activity (Silverstone et al. 1991). Adopting Layder's sociological model provides an important platform to qualify the relationships between the domains in everyday life. Television consumption, as research has shown (see Chapter 4), is not an isolated activity and encompasses a range of diverse and complex activities and interpretations. In essence an ethnographic approach can allow the researcher to locate the phenomena of inquiry across an intricate web of networks, action and subjectivity by also paying attention to broader social structures and discourses.

As Alasuutari (1999) identified the 'ethnographic turn' celebrates 'natural settings' research within predominantly domestic contexts (see Morley 1980; Moore 1989, 1995; Lull 1990; Ang 1991; Gray 1992; Silverstone 1999a; Wood 2009). This important body of work highlighted the social, political and economic complexities of family life, revealing much about features of class and gender in relation to audience relationships with mass communications. Significantly, this body of work helped to identify much about the felt experiences of domestic life and the spatial and temporal dimensions of everyday life. There has been a smaller raft of studies that shifted their focus to audience receptions outside the domestic sphere. McCarthy's (2003) study of television in public places captures the influence of context on television reception: that audiences' use of television is modified depending on the context in which it is received. Hajjar's (1998) study of media use within a nursing home also supports this perspective. These shifts in context have enriched debates about theoretical models of audience activity. In particular, the body of prison audience research has extended understanding about the ways in which audiences make sense of their relationships with mass communications. Jewkes's (2002) revision of

the 'uses and gratifications' model proposed by McQuail et al. (1972) identified that prisoner audiences explained their reception behaviour in terms of *meanings and motivations*.

1.2.2 Ethnography in prisons

The value of the prison ethnography is best summarised by Jewkes (2013) where she argues that this approach can counter the tide of prison statistics, account for social interaction and relationships, allows the researcher a voice and counters the dominance of psychological assessments and auditing. Yet reaching the private and inner sphere of the prison is increasingly hard to achieve. With limited resources and policy agendas driving a 'what works' evaluative research culture and a focus on the growing size of the prison population, the prison ethnography is in danger of disappearing from view (Simon 2000). As Wacquant (2002) has famously articulated, this 'eclipse' shifts the felt, everyday experiences of prison life off centre and thus skews understandings of our prisons. Liebling (1999b) further talks about 'the absence of pain' in quantitative research and she stresses the importance of emotions in research and the field of criminology. Ethnographic accounts of the prison go some way to reaching the emotive dimensions of prison life, but much of this dialogue has routinely drawn on Sykes' typology: the pains of imprisonment. Qualitative prison research relies heavily on this model of pain. However, more recently, Crewe (2011) has suggested that contemporary penal experiences mean that 'new' pains are emerging. Crewe's analysis (2006) is located within the ethnographic tradition and his access and closeness to the field and those that inhabit these spaces means that he is able to develop and continue important discussions about the ways in which incarceration is felt by prisoners and staff.

As Simon suggests, the creeping invisibility of prison social order means that 'the prison regime is now hostile to the production of inmate discourse' (2000:290), thus the voices of the prison experience are muffled and de-centred by the ebb of prison sociology. With these aspects in mind prison ethnography has a complex role to play in the penal landscape (Jewkes 2013). Sensitivity around the ways in which prison ethnographies are reproduced by researchers requires careful handling. Robust methods and modes of inquiry, along with credible modes of analysis, as well as the inclusion of researchers' narratives, means ethnography can, with integrity, continue to enliven the penal landscape and put people at its centre. This monograph seeks to mirror these values.

1.2.3 Capturing data

1.2.3.1 Structured television-use diaries

Television's role in the use of time and routine has waned in recent audience research and 'critical reception' seems to have dominated the audience research (Moore 1996:7). Academic audience research has largely progressed along a qualitative paradigm, and mapping and measuring time (in quantities) in relation to television consumption is largely constrained to the television industry. The quantitative techniques of audience measurement have received criticism, based on the assumption that this will not necessarily provide a clear and precise image of audience behaviour (Moore 1996:5; see also Ang 1991). Silverstone et al.'s ethnography of householders' use of technology adopted time-use diaries, along with other methods such as interviews, in order to access and record *private* consumption of household members which provide 'an objectification of a week's activities, and one that can be cross-examined' in interviews (1991:214 – see also Zimmerman and Wieder 1977:484). They argue that time-use diaries provided the 'first indication... of the space-time geography of the home' (ibid.). Gershuny and Sullivan (1998) also assert that time-use diaries can offer researchers a valuable gateway into understanding the sociological features of everyday life.

Prison audience research has not benefited from the same analysis of television that has taken place in traditional 'domestic' settings such as that collected by the Broadcast Audience Research Board. Whilst the use of diaries can provide illustrative detail they cannot be analysed independently, rather they are illustrative to the setting's routine, which can be built upon through descriptions made by prisoners based on their own viewing repertoires and experience of the prison. The design of the diary format adheres to what Corti (1993:137) describes as 'structured', where the respondent makes entries and annotations to the format provided by the researcher. Each day of the diary sheet contains 24 separate hourly slots to record the television programme watched according to the time of day. The other fragments allowed the respondent to note where the programme is watched and whether this was in the company of their cellmate.

Using this particular method harnesses important theoretical propositions in relation to 'social domain' (Layder 2005), in that agency and structure cannot be fully interrogated unless all domains are fully captured (Layder 2004:49). The diaries provide access into the *social setting* in which television is consumed. It is possible to identify points

at which television flows into prisoners' lives and 'the kind of 'journeys' that are made' with television (Moore 1993:366). Furthermore, diaries can account for the kinds of *contextual resources* that diarists are accessing through television, such as types of television programmes selected.

1.2.4 Semi-structured interviews

Building on the data from the diaries to produce rich, interpretive accounts of consumption, interviews provided an opportunity to understand the context of viewing (Moore 1996:6–7). Rather than observe them, the most reasonable method to understand the activity of television consumption was to directly ask prisoner respondents about their experiences. These principles also applied to staff, since they are directly engaged in prison life. The role of the prison staff was also important and a wave of interviews was also introduced to capture their views of prisoners' television consumption and access.

Interviews are co-constructed and the balance of power between the interviewer and interviewee is not equal or neutral. As a tool for data collection interviews are based on a complex mix of values, beliefs, agendas and power of researcher and researched. Bird (2003:14) identifies in her ethnography that interviews are 'power charged verbal encounters' and that participants have different goals. Hammersley and Atkinson (2010:102) advise that

All accounts must be interpreted in terms of the context in which they are produced. The aim is not to gather 'pure' data that are free from potential bias. There is no such thing. Rather the goal must be to discover the best manner of interpreting whatever data we have, and to collect further data that enable us to develop and check our inferences.

Commentators have stated that the prison and its people are routinely 'silenced' (Liebling 1999b; Wacquant 2002). O'Connor (2003) asserts that interviews are incredibly powerful forms of interaction, especially for prisoners. They provide what she calls 'new conversations' and are an 'act of autobiography', whereby the interviewees can take control to counter the lack of autonomy they routinely suffer, and thus have the capacity to be restorative (see also Liebling 2002). In accounting for the diversity of people's experiences, Holstien and Gubrium's (1995:117) concept of the 'active interview' acknowledges the shifting and evolving dynamics during these encounters. Short biographies were prepared to

describe the prisoner sample and also a list of prison staff and their roles can be found in Appendices 1 and 2.

1.2.5 The research site

The research site visited¹ and described in this book is a local,⁴ adult male category B closed prison with an occupancy of under 1000 prisoners, a relatively small occupancy compared to other local prisons. HMP X's (HMP X from herein) purpose, apart from securing prisoners and protecting the public, is to serve the courts in the surrounding area. As a result, many of its prisoners spend time on remand, awaiting sentence. Other prisoners are convicted and often spend most of their sentence serving their stipulated time. Longer-term prisoners, including lifers and those on indeterminate sentences also find themselves at this prison, awaiting places at other prisons. Most adult male prisoners will experience a 'local' prison at some stage of their incarceration. The movement of prisoners through this establishment is phenomenal (over 200 per calendar month) compared to other prisons like training and dispersal prisons. HMP X offers limited activity or curricula for prisoners staying there. Opportunities for work are mainly restricted to the maintenance of the prison itself such as cleaning, orderly work, laundry, kitchen work and peer mentoring. Education is provided both in a designated department and on the prison landings. Many of the prisoners come from the surrounding area and visits therefore are used and accessible to most (but not all) family and friends in a visits centre. This prison also has a healthcare facility (hospital) and some prisoners are able to spend time recuperating in this facility. This prison also has a Vulnerable Prisoner Unit, a First Night Centre, a segregation facility, a large kitchen with one serving counter, chapel and multi-faith room, exercise yards, sports pitch, gym, library and specialist centre for prisoners withdrawing from drugs and alcohol. For staff, offices are located on each landing and it has administrative offices, meeting and training rooms, gatehouse and a staff room.

1.3 Ethical conduct

Liebling et al.'s (1999) 'appreciative' approach seeks to resolve the tensions that can arise in prison fieldwork, and can highlight 'both ethical and emotional strengths' across the research setting (Liebling et al. 1999:443). Following Liebling's and others' leads (Jewkes 2002a; Crawley 2004; King and Liebling 2008) sensitivity was paid to *all* aspects of the research from its inception (knowing the field of inquiry, what others

have done and said): designing the methods and research instruments (including how best to speak to people), my behaviour and ‘performance’ in prison, understanding the dynamics, protocols, prison rules, treatment and handling of data and presentation of the findings. The nature of television reception studies means they seek information on a ‘private’ activity and ‘involves making public things that were said or done in private’ (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007:212). As a result ‘making the private public may have undesirable long-term consequences’ (ibid.). Finding resolutions between gathering responses from participants and maintaining their privacy can be achieved by ensuring that, as Hammersley and Atkinson suggest, people have ‘a right to control information relating to them, and that they must give their permission for particular uses of it by researchers’ (ibid.:213).

1.4 Theoretical underpinnings of the research

Shaping the structure of this research was the employment of Layder’s (2006) ‘social domain theory’. It was useful in offering a diagram of social reality which provides a constructive synthesis of structure and agency. Furthermore it also provides an extension of these dimensions as what he calls ‘domains’ of structure and agency; *contextual resources*, *social settings*, *situated activity* and *psychobiography*. His theory therefore enables researchers to interrogate and understand aspects of social life including emotion that researchers have not been able to approach via other theoretical models. Moreover, his theory has also been influential in shaping this research strategy, scoping and interpreting the fields of study and also providing an ‘adaptive’ analysis.

The fields of emotion and governance in this study have been enabled by the use of Layder’s theory of domains, which have permitted a review of relationships or ‘linkages’ between these concepts. Rather than condense social life based on either structure or agency, it has been possible to expand upon the ‘linkages’ between the four domains Layder defines. Hence, this study captures how television use in prison is *felt*, as well as appreciating and acknowledging the broader structural elements of prison life *with* television. The affective qualities of prison life have been routinely documented in sociological commentaries and typically the ‘pains’ or ‘harms’, which are in essence shorthand for the emotionality of prison life. Seeking to measure the affective outcomes of watching television in prison would not necessarily capture the impact of the social settings and contextual resources on the feelings and experiences of the temporal and spatial qualities of cultural life with in-cell

television in prison. Layder's theory of social reality and contemporary audience ethnography (Moore's 1993a) is adopted in this study to capture these features, using a range of methods and strategies. In Layder's view, to ignore these qualities would result in the presentation of an 'emptied-out vision of the social world' (2004:9).

This provides an overview of Layder's theory and defends its appropriateness. Other major theories have also contributed to this thesis and have helped to orientate this study, especially Rose's (1999) theory of governance set out in *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self*. These are supplemented at different points in the research along with Garland's (1991) thesis on the 'rationalisation' of punishment, and Silverstone's thesis on ontological security, television's contribution to the moral economy of a setting and the care giving qualities of television. Moore's (1989, 1995a) extensive research on radio and satellite television has been important in defining this study as ethnographic and more recently his ideas on migration and place were applicable in extrapolating the spatial and temporal effects of viewing television in prison cells (Moore's 2006). His work has been influential in assisting a conceptualisation of space, place and social relations. Lull's (1990) typology of the social uses of television and Jewkes's (2002a) 'meanings and motivations' of media use have provided important frameworks for interrogating the uses and gratifications of television viewing at the design of research tools and analysis phases of the research. Jewkes (2002a), Liebling (1999a), Liebling et al. (2001) and Bosworth et al. (2005) have also provided essential guidance on conducting research in prison settings and have directed the execution of the research in the field as well as the subsequent handling of the data. Layder's (2004) own work on emotion has also provided additional theoretical resources.

1.4.1 Theory of social domains: Unpacking social reality

Social domain theory developed by Layder offers the researcher a model to understand 'social reality as multiple interrelated domains' (2006:272) as well as practical research strategies to adapt both the design of their research and a route to connect their work to social theory. This enables 'ontological variety' as well as 'disciplined epistemological inclusiveness...to incorporate and reconcile the equally valid insights of objectivism and subjectivism' (ibid.:293). General theory approaches, like grounded theory are considered 'inward-looking', which means emergent data is forced through a particular lens. Layder welcomes an adaptive, flexible and synthesising approach, where researchers can draw upon a range of theories at different stages. This

approach enables the researcher to escape theoretical dead ends or forced pre-conceptions. He argues that they ‘artificially compact the nature and scope of social reality ... [and] complexity is lost’ (ibid.:273). Overall Layder finds other models of social reality too reductive, as they flatten structure and agency. Layder recommends that researchers need to rethink the structure–agency dualism because ‘social behaviour arises in the interplay between the creative inputs of individuals and the pre-existing social resources’ (ibid.:15). He argues that dualism brings about ‘singularities’ whereas social life, when investigated and explored, can only acknowledge ‘single’ dimensions of social life (ibid.:9).

In resolving this, his model of social reality outlines four distinctive ‘domains’ (see Figure 1.1). He identifies ‘personal’ aspects of social life as ‘psycho-biography’ and ‘situated activity’. These are the components which are directly felt and experienced by individuals. Moving away from the centre of this model are ‘social settings’ and ‘contextual resources’, which are impersonal and remote from the individual yet influence the personal experiences of social agents and vice versa. Layder emphasises that social processes move continually and dynamically; as a result, time and space and domains are ‘stretched out’ (ibid.:273). Forms of power can also be traced across these domains, for example across social relations and action. Layder asserts that ‘power must be



Figure 1.1 A model outlining Layder’s theory of social domains (2004)

construed as an amalgam of influences – individual, interpersonal, positional, discursive-practical, social-structural... and symbolic’ (2004:17). Social life is therefore a complex mixture of these forms of power, which social agents are influenced by.

1.4.2 Psychobiography

This domain maps a social agent’s experience of social reality over time and can account for the ways in which they are socialised or can account for the effects of their ‘critical experiences’ throughout their life (Layder 2006:274). For Layder the psychobiography ‘embraces the unique subjective configuration of emotional-cognitive capacities acquired... during the course of their personal and social development’ (2004:10). Expanding upon this he argues that ‘we are emotionally unique beings, not simply rationally self-reflexive agents choosing the most appropriate way of maximising our satisfaction’ (2006:275). Emotions, he argues, can therefore be ‘disruptive’ to social relations and action and can thus powerfully impact on the ways in which the remote aspects of social life, such as settings and contextual resources, are perceived and organised. It is the emotionality of individuals for Layder that makes the ‘fit between the individual and society... imprecise, imperfect’ (ibid.:275). Emotions are not always visible to the observer and yet they can provide an insight into how individuals respond to a particular experience. Emotions are not always under control either, and at different times individuals have different levels of commitment to a social situation and the broader social enterprise which they inhabit. At the heart of this is a person’s ‘ontological security’⁵ or a person’s ‘inner psychological security’ system.

Layder argues that ontological security cannot be fully attributed to trust in the environment in which a social being is placed or situated. Instead, Layder suggests,

Ontological security is an ongoing, emergent accomplishment and not a mechanical outcome of everyday routines... It is more accurate to think of it in terms of a partial, fleeting achievement, hewn from the ‘chaos’ of social interaction... [it] is directly implicated in the same quest for control.

(2004:42–43)

This security, for Layder, is never achieved and is always ‘unfinished’ (ibid.:42). He argues that it is possible to experience anxiety and security and disappointment and trust simultaneously throughout social

relations. Therefore, our feelings are more often than not contradictory. He describes this as one feature of 'inter-personal' control (ibid.:13) or 'personal control' (ibid.:24). This type of control signals what Layder refers to as 'need claims' (ibid.:27). He argues that the self has an 'executive centre' which allows emotions to 'intrude into the flow of awareness', for example to deal with threats to the self (ibid.:25). Layder asserts that to accomplish personal control, 'protective devices' are employed to minimise or abolish threats to an individual's well-being. Once the need claims are worked out an individual can then attempt to act upon them and deal with the emotions as if they were in a queue (ibid.:27). Layder recognises that social agents therefore have the capacity to transform or have 'psychological resilience' (2006:276); yet the competence and ability to cope with everyday life is not the same for everyone and failures of interpersonal and personal control are also commonplace (2004:89). He also refers to the capacity that social agents have to alter and adapt to their circumstances. This is evident for example in prison settings, where some prisoners are much more able to cope with incarceration than others (Cohen and Taylor 1972; Liebling 1999a). The techniques and adjustments made by some prisoners, for example those sentenced to life in prison, are varied and are not fixed, as they can evolve and change over time (Sapsford 1978; Jones and Schmid 2000). The psychobiography is therefore striving for personal control across social relations; fuelling this, according to Layder, is anxiety (2004:43). The need to have an alert and functioning inner 'basic security' system is fundamental to how an individual engages in social relations. Imprisonment puts pressure on one's executive centre to find solutions to restore basic security.

1.4.3 Situated activity

This domain is the 'main gateway' between the psychobiography of a social agent and the domains of settings and contextual resources (Layder 2004:48). Situated activities are usually short, as they mark the arrivals and departures as encounters in social life (ibid.:44). Hence, they are a 'gathering point' for power which becomes drawn into the activity between and amongst social agents (ibid.:50). The transactions between individuals in this domain of social reality are where 'meaning is created' and brought to life (see also Blumler [1969], Goffman [1990] and Garfinkel [1967] Layder 2006:277). These theorists generally agree that it is the process of interaction in situated activity that can demonstrate the roots of meaning as a form of action, and reject the notion that private and personal constructions of meaning do not influence the ways

in which humans interact within this domain. Layder refutes this line of thought and asserts that 'subjective attitudes and feelings' or the 'inner' world (ibid.:278) play a vital part in the way meaning is constructed and made sense of in situated activity. Equally 'external' features like gender, ethnicity and class are also influential in the ways in which situated activity is encountered. Therefore, meaning needs to be appreciated and interrogated as 'an amalgam of subjective, external and situated influences' (ibid.:278).

Encounters are not emotionless and some can unsettle and thwart basic security. For some 'avoidance' of situated activity or withdrawal from social encounters can resolve these tensions. Several sociological studies of prisoners show that some prisoners withdraw from prison culture in an attempt to avoid psychological and physical harm (Irwin and Cressey 1962; Cohen and Taylor 1972; Sapsford 1978; Jewkes 2002a). Yet this is not altogether feasible or completely beneficial. Layder describes situated activity as having a 'compelling enticement' (2006:279). An opportunity to gain reward through inclusion, approval and identification can readily be achieved by direct interaction with others. Moreover, situated activity provides opportunity to achieve 'validation and support' of their emotional needs (2004:25). Layder argues that humans can employ control in encounters in three distinct ways: self-control; mutual/personal emotional satisfaction; and managing life situation. By self-control, Layder refers to the levels of composure during interaction: the area in which 'feeling rules' are learnt by social agents (Hochschild 1983). By mutual emotional satisfaction, he refers to the degrees to which humans can understand and be sensitive to the needs of others, which is often a 'mixture of altruism... manipulation and self-interest' (2006:280). Finally, a situated activity provides a network which can often mirror their own circumstances and usually involves the kinds of people inculcated into their life situation, for example the family or workplace. It is also here where one's and others' life situations are assessed by the self and the degrees to which these can be 'ratified' (Goffman 1990). This domain therefore acts as a filter between the psychobiographical and the impersonal or structural domains.

1.4.4 Social settings

Settings are the domain in which situated activity directly occurs and they are 'local aggregations of reproduced social relations, positions and practices' (Layder 2006:280). Layder describes formal and structured settings like schools or prisons, as highly structured in terms of routine and hierarchies, a feature of what Goffman (1991:15) defines as 'total