UKDS Metadata

**UK Data Service collection:**‘Prison Regulation for Safer Societies: Participatory, Efficient, Effective?’

**Grant ref** –MR/T019085/1

**Project Title** –‘Prison Regulation, for Safer Societies: Participatory, Effective, Efficient?’

**Project Description** -

In May 2019, Dutch courts refused to deport an English suspected drug smuggler, citing the potential for inhuman and degrading treatment at HMP Liverpool. This well publicised judgment illustrates the necessity of my FLF: reconceptualising prison regulation, for safer societies. It seeks to save lives and money, and reduce criminal reoffending.

Over 10.74 million people are imprisoned globally. The growing transnational significance of detention regulation was signalled by the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Torture/OPCAT. Its 89 signatories, including the UK, must regularly examine treatment and conditions. The quality of prison life affects criminal reoffending rates, so the consequences of unsafe prisons are absorbed by our societies. Prison regulation is more urgent than ever. England and Wales' prisons are now less safe than at any point in recorded history, containing almost 83,000 prisoners: virtually all of whom will be released at some point. In 2016, record prison suicides harmed prisoners, staff and bereaved families, draining £385 million from public funds. Record prisoner self-harm was seen in 2017, then again in 2018. Criminal reoffending costs £15 billion annually. Deteriorating prison safety poses a major moral, social, economic and public health threat, attracting growing recognition.

Reconceptualising prison regulation is a difficult multidisciplinary challenge. Regulation includes any activity seeking to steer events in prisons. Effective prison regulation demands academic innovation and sustained collaboration and implementation with practitioners from different sectors (e.g. public, voluntary), regulators, policymakers, and prisoners: from local to (trans)national levels. Citizen participation has become central to realising more democratic, sustainable public services but is not well integrated across theory-policy-practice. .

This FLF examines three diverse case study countries: England and Wales, Brazil and Canada, developing multinational implications. This approach is ambitious and risky, but critical for challenging commonsensical beliefs. Interviews, focus groups, observation and creative methodologies will be used. There are three aims, to:

i) theorise the (potential) participatory roles of prisoners and the voluntary sector in prison regulation

ii) appraise the (normative) relationships between multisectoral regulators (e.g. public, voluntary) from local to (trans)national scales

iii) co-produce (with multisectoral regulators), pilot, document and disseminate models of participatory, effective and efficient prison regulation in England and Wales (and beyond) - integrating multisectoral, multiscalar penal overseers and prisoners into regulatory theory and practice.

This is an innovative study. Punishment scholars have paid limited attention to regulation. Participatory networks of (former) prisoners are a relatively new formation but rapidly growing in influence. Nobody has yet considered agencies like the Prisons Inspectorate and Ombudsman alongside voluntary sector organisations and participatory networks, nor their collective influences from local to transnational scales. Nobody has tried to work with all of these agencies to reconceptualise prison regulation and test it in practice.

Findings will be developed, disseminated and implemented internationally. The research team will present findings and engage with diverse stakeholders and decision makers through interactive workshops (Parliament, London, Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham), and multimedia outputs (e.g. infographics). This FLF has implications for prisons and detention globally, and broader relevance as a case study of participatory regulation of public services and policy translation.

**Sponsors** – ‘the Economic and Social Research Council under the University of Nottingham Impact Accelerator Award and Nottingham Impact Accelerator Knowledge Exchange Prize; and *SPF-QR funding* awarded to the University of Nottingham by Research England (2021).

**Grant Holders**: Dr Philippa Tomczak

**Project dates** – 01/11/2020-31/10/2024

**Data Creators** – *pre-populated with grant holder but need to acknowledge the other creators of this data \*NB ORCID identifiers as URLs required alongside name, email, affiliation. Populated with PT and Sara Hyde.*

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**Rights owners** *State the copyright holding individuals and/or organisations for the data collection. Only include the name of your organisation or university (not department) as affiliation* Gillian Buck, University of Chester; Philippa Tomczak, University of Nottingham.

**Contact** – The main point of contact for enquiries about the data collection. May be an individual, or an organisation. Only include the name of your organisation or university (not department) as affiliation. An [ORCID](http://orcid.org/) persistent identifier can be submitted as an URL (Open Researcher and Contributor ID).

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**Contributors -** *Enter any additional accreditation you wish to give for the production of this data collection*

**Data Collection Title**: A verbatim film-research collaboration seeking to raise awareness of prison suicide.

**Data Description (abstract)**

This is a qualitative data collection of semi-structured interviews conducted between June-July 2023, and online surveys conducted throughout 2022, within a study that examined how verbatim film can be used to increase the impact of research findings. Prisoner suicide rates are consistently higher than rates among communities living outside. Between 2012 and 2016, England and Wales’s prison suicide rates more than doubled, hitting record numbers in 2016. Often those most invested in prison safety are those personally impacted, and campaigns by prisoners’ families can have material effects. This project included a collaboration between an academic research team, a bereaved parent and a theatre company, which aimed to raise awareness of prison suicide through verbatim film and communicate key messages to stakeholders across criminal justice.

Within this project, 2 semi-structured interviews were undertaken with film co-creators and 27 anonymous online surveys were completed by audience members in film screenings. Filmmakers offer valuable situated insight into the process, complexities, and possible impacts of film-research collaborations, contributing messages for future collaborators with regard to practical and ethical planning, safeguarding decisions and arts-based dissemination. Audience survey responses evidence the impact of the film on viewers. The research demonstrates how film can engage audiences within and beyond social science, making complex subjects accessible, humanising people and potentially inspiring broader social change, but an ethic of care is required to mitigate harms and manage expectations.

For data storage and analysis purposes, the participants were divided into two categories: 1) filmmakers, and 2) Audience members.

Further information about the project and links to publications are available on the University of Nottingham SafeSoc project webpage <https://www.safesoc.co.uk>

**Key words:** Prison, Suicide, Verbatim Film, Arts-based dissemination, Collaborative research

**Topic classification –** selected option box: Law, Crime and legal systems

**Temporal coverage –** data collection period (entered as 1/1/2022 – 31/12/2023)

**Geographical area** – noted as England and Wales

**Spatial Unit** – no spatial unit added (seems to be standard practice based on three other data collections)

**Methodology**

*Data Collection method*

Within this project, 2 semi-structured interviews were undertaken with film co-creators and 27 anonymous online surveys were completed by audience members in film screenings.

The sample was purposive for all groups, as appropriate for our exploratory analysis and the resources available, however the sample is not representative of collaborative film creators or audiences.

Telephone and videoconferencing (Microsoft TEAMS) interviews (at the participant’s preference) were conducted with filmmakers between June and July 2023. Anonymous online surveys were completed at film screenings between March and November 2022.

*Observation unit*

Ticked ‘individual’ and ‘organisation’

*Kind of Data*

Ticked ‘text’ (as the interview audio recordings were transcribed into text documents – this is also how other interview data sets have been deposited, see Jewkes)

*Data sourcing, processing and preparation*

All interview transcripts have been edited by the research team to protect confidentiality. Personal information has been anonymised and where necessary omitted due to identifiable data e.g. names of people and institutions, geographical locations; specific details regarding individuals. Both interviews have been carefully anonymised through a three stage anonymisation process to remove any identifiable details.

Three stage anonymisation process involving a three-person team: first person conducted full initial anonymisation, second person conducted anonymisation scan, third person conducted a dip-check of 10% of total anonymised interview transcripts. The process was repeated in full when remaining identifiable information was found.

*Type of Data*

Ticked ‘qualitative data’

TABLE 1: DATA LIST

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Pseudonym | Organisation | Gender | Ethnicity | Age bracket | Interview date |
| Filmmaker 1 | Theatre company |  |  |  | 27/6/23 |
| Filmmaker 2 | Theatre Company |  |  |  | 11/7/23 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Audience members n.1-14 | Social Work students |  |  |  | 18/3/22 |
| Audience members n. 15-21 | Criminal justice voluntary sector staff |  |  |  | 5/7/22 |
| Audience members n. 22-27 | HM Prison and Probation Service, Governing Governors |  |  |  | 2/11/22 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |