



Stuck in the Carceral Web: Prisoners' Experiences of Electronic Monitoring

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to examine the experiences of feeling and being “stuck” within the larger carceral web of people and practices associated with monitoring and managing the marginalized in society. Qualitative interviews were conducted with 10 prisoners from HMP Edinburgh who experience electronic monitoring (EM) in Scotland. By drawing upon carceral geography and mobility, I supplement the clarion call by researchers for a more detailed and spatial analysis of EM while giving voice to an unheard and marginalized population. Findings suggest that reconsidering these individuals as being stuck sheds light on the issues they face with EM stigma, with sticking to the time of the curfew, and the pains of being stuck in place while their loved ones and their lives remain “on the move”. In effect, questions must now be posed to begin to ameliorate the issues of the excluded-as-stuck, as a greater concern for the expansion of the carceral state and the widening and diffusion of the “carceral web” calls for consideration over its disentanglement and reduction.

Keywords: electronic monitoring, criminology, carceral geography, carceral state, Scotland

Introduction

Increasingly, scholars now speak of living in a “carceral age” (Bosworth & Kaufman, 2011), especially with the extensive nature of surveillance, control and punishment now permeating outside typical spaces of incarceration. As French and Smith (2016, p. 4) suggest, citizens of Western, liberal democracies are consistently and routinely managed by various institutions in our society, their bodies profoundly exposed to surveillance, and their personal information “scanned, recorded and registered multiple times in countless networked databases” (French & Smith, 2016, p. 4). Indeed, such thinking can illuminate a variety of actors, institutions, practices and spaces, all of which intermesh and circulate within aspects of carcerality and various networks of surveillance (Gill, Conlon, Moran, & Burrige, 2016). As a result, the presence,

proliferation and expansion of the electronic monitoring (EM) of offenders becomes an insightful and creative example of the way in which the normative nature of the carceral age has taken shape in the West.

Yet there is a need to examine EM not merely as a technology implemented within institutional and community corrections, but as one node of surveillance entangling people within aspects of carcerality through state-sanctioned penalties. While a litany of literature has theorized the far-reaching consequences of surveillance and control at the national and international level (Hucklesby, 2008, 2009, 2013; Nellis, Beyens, & Kaminski, 2013), there exists a research lacuna that examines how offenders experience EM, the pains of their exclusion and being “stuck” within a world forever “on the move” (Cresswell, 2006). According to Hage (2009, p. 4), “stuckedness is by definition a situation where a person suffers from both the absence of choices or alternatives to the situation they are in and an inability to grab such alternatives even if they present themselves”. As Hage suggests, we now live within a world that fears this state of stuckedness caused by various neoliberal successes (governmental deregulation, privatization and maximized fiscal austerity, to name a few) that aim to have us believe that “a viable life” is only rendered meaningful when it senses that it must be “going somewhere” whilst adding productive value to society (2009, p. 1; for further examples see Wafer, 2017). Such people then become anxious when they cannot find a life “where they feel they are going somewhere as opposed to nowhere” and become afraid of being left behind (Hage, 2009, p. 2). The extent to which EM influences the rhythms of offenders’ activities suggests that such technology can be vehicles of punishment that accelerate, decelerate, interrupt or distort their mobilities and lives. Yet, as we will see below, offenders are not merely rendered “stuck” spatially through their homes; in fact, these individuals felt stuck temporally, socially (through their interpersonal relations) and through the stigma-based perspectives concerning body image in their communities. Taken together, offenders are asked to “wait out” their states of stuckedness to see their penal situations end, yet it is this form of waiting that makes EM “a governmental tool that encourages a mode of restraint, self-control and self-government” all through an imagined existential stuckedness (Hage, 2009, p. 6).

Moreover, EM has become an increasingly complex entity within the expanding carceral state, a notion that Villanueva rightly refers to here as “a set of institutional configurations and actors that prioritize punishment, containment, detention and/or incarceration for treating poverty and marginalization” (2017, p. 150; see also Beckett & Murakawa, 2012; Sparks & Gacek, 2019; Wacquant, 2009). As Gottschalk (2015, p. 34) contends, the construction of the carceral state resulted from a complex set of developments: “No single factor explains its rise, and no single factor will bring about its demise.” Indeed, the resiliency of the carceral state is ascribed significantly to the elasticity of its web, inasmuch as “the various permutations of the carceral state suggest that it is informed by and contours itself around the ways in which the economic, political and social structures interrelate with each other at different moments in time” (Kato, 2017, p. 217). Such structures have the potential to connect to the everyday life of marginalized groups engaging with surveillant technologies, thereby further spinning the carceral web. In effect, EM and other technology-driven surveillance and management innovations effectively extend carceral space into every-

day life, rendering carcerality and surveillance commonplace (Gill, 2013; Sparks & Gacek, 2019).

To offer a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between (1) the people and practices associated with monitoring and managing the marginalized in society, and (2) the experiences of feeling and being “stuck” within the larger carceral web, I first discuss EM as a form of punishment imposed upon offenders. Following this, I examine EM alongside carceral geography, highlighting the significance of this interdisciplinary field of research for the paper. I then establish the methodology and analysis implemented in the study. Drawing upon experiences from 10 prisoners in Scotland, my findings suggest that reconsidering these individuals as being “stuck” sheds light on the issues they face with EM stigma, with sticking to the time of the EM curfew, and the pain of being stuck in place and waiting while their loved ones and their lives remain “on the move” (Cresswell, 2006). I also address and discuss further implications of EM in concert with the current climate of the carceral state, and reflect upon prisoners’ experiences in conclusion. In effect, these findings offer a thought-provoking entry point for criminologists and carceral geographers alike to further investigate and interrogate the widening and diffusion of the carceral web.¹

What is electronic monitoring?

Nellis et al. (2013, pp. 4–5) define EM as “technology [that] must be understood as nothing more or less than a form of remote surveillant control, a means of flexibly regulating the spatial and temporal schedules of an offender’s life”. The technology has a chameleon-like character of a multi-usable device and can be presented as a solution to different types of penal problems. As Nellis et al. (2013, p. 5) argue, the intended effect of monitoring is to remind the offender that “he [sic] is being watched (continuously or haphazardly and regularly), and that his compliance or otherwise with the spatial and temporal regulations that the court or prison has imposed on him will be relayed to a judicial or penal authority”. Should the offender “breach” the conditions imposed on them within the EM period, they will be subject to a more severe penalty (or recalled to prison) if a violation has been deemed to occur. There are several uses of EM in criminal justice systems, such as during the pre-trial phase, during parole, as a sentence itself or in conjunction with other sanctions (e.g. imprisonment). In the latter case, the offender receives a prison sentence and is then placed on the EM system when released back into society (Payne & Gaine, 2004).

As a relatively new way of controlling (and punishing) offenders in the community, EM has been taken up in varying degrees (either as localized experiments or nationwide schemes) in over two dozen countries over the last three decades (see, for example, Nellis, 2009b; see also Gacek, 2019). In its original and predominant form, EM is implemented, alongside curfews and home detention, as a form of offender supervision in the community. Generally, the offender has a tag attached to their ankle (and in rare cases, the tag is worn on the wrist) (Nellis, 2009b, 2013). EM can exist as a generic term or as several remote loca-

¹ Aspects of this paper build on earlier versions of my work (for example, see Gacek, 2019, 2018, 2017). However, this article endeavours to engage in a discussion that adds substantially to the findings with newer information and theoretical analyses.

tion-checking technologies that each make possible the micro-management of offenders' (or in some cases pre-trial detainees') schedules and locations at various points in the criminal justice process (Nellis, 2013).

Examining EM through carceral geography

The term "carceral geography" was coined to describe the relatively new and vibrant field of geographical research into practices of incarceration, viewing such carceral spaces broadly "as a type of institution... whose distributional geographies, and geographies of internal and external social and spatial relations, could be explored" (Moran, 2012, p. 306; Moran, Piacentini, & Pallot, 2012). Carceral geography has been able to account for and critique the so-called "punitive turn" in the West (Wacquant, 2002), characterized not only by the growth in legal, state-sanctioned incarceration sentenced to ever-longer prison terms in punitive conditions, but by "the extra-penal mass supervision of increasing numbers of people whose lives are penetrated by the criminal justice system" (Moran, Turner, & Schliehe, 2017, p. 666). This has brought about new ways of thinking about geography, the state, and spaces of incarceration, detention and captivity.

Technologies of surveillance and control to track offenders are a prime example of this carceral turn in academia, as such EM technologies "enable a carceral 'fix' to operate beyond conventional carceral spaces", permitting people to remain mobile in their communities relative to the curfews imposed upon them at sentencing (Moran et al., 2017, p. 666). Scholars have become increasingly mindful of how the "carceral" is conceptualized within any research project undertaken, and the trajectories through which the "carceral turn" will lead future research (Gacek, 2019; see also Gill et al., 2016; Gutiérrez Rivera, 2017; Moran et al., 2017; Peters & Turner, 2017). Indeed, scholars have critically discussed Goffman's (1961) notion of the "total institution" in order to call attention to the interconnectedness of prisons and other carceral spaces (for example, see Moran, 2015; however, for an overview of this critique and a recovery of Goffman's work in terms of (re)presenting experiences of solitary confinement, see Gacek, 2018). The intention of this attention has been to counter the imagination of the cloistered carceral institution, discussing instead the liminal, carceral spaces "betwixt and between" the inside and outside of prison (Moran, 2015, p. 90). The EM of offenders provides us with a unique penal method with which to attend to the multi-scalar contexts witnessed within carceral and non-carceral spaces, as these technologies and techniques of confinement and restricted mobility "leach into everyday domestic, street and institutional spaces with which both former [prisoners] and their loved ones...come into contact" (Moran et al., 2017, p. 670).

What this "mobility thinking" has accomplished is a re-examination of how one might consider and study a world that is always "on the move" in late modernity (Cresswell, 2006). While the notion of mobility has generally been linked to autonomy, movement, freedom and transgression, it did not always have these

meanings (for a review, see Cresswell, 2006). Current representations of mobility are connected to Western modernity, the expansion of global capitalism and the rise of technologies (Gutiérrez Rivera, 2017).

Aside from such representational meanings, mobility is also physical; in other words, mobility is “practised, experienced [and] embodied” (Cresswell, 2006, p. 2). Yet mobility is also not value-neutral; it can be an instrument of power, but not all people have equal access to its operation or implementation (Fishwick & Wearing, 2017; Gutiérrez Rivera, 2017; Moran et al., 2012). As indicated above, neoliberal capitalism is decidedly characterized by and experienced as “*left-behind-ness, and a simultaneous fear of missing out*” (Wafer, 2017, p. 406; italics added). Similarly, EM is not value-neutral; as Bülow (2014) reminds us, the technological design of EM, coupled with its potential technological functions, can have ethical implications for tagged individuals (for a greater discussion and examples, see Gacek, 2019). Certain individuals undergoing EM may have restricted movement or limited access to a place or area, while others may be forced to move (Nellis et al., 2013). In any case, we must remain mindful that mobility and punishment are experienced differently among individuals and groups (Payne & Gainey, 2004): while some may not be affected by the sanction, others may be unfairly punished through EM, such as placing a burden upon an offender’s mobility through experiences of stuckedness and left-behind-ness in a world constantly on the move.

Taken together, such carceral scholarship also highlights various forms of confinement and mobility, examining how they join together in particular ways within the shadows of the carceral state (Beckett & Murakawa, 2012). For instance, the use of the private security firm G4S Scotland by the Scottish government to monitor offenders in the community through EM could be seen as one tool in the carceral state’s arsenal – put simply, the penal arm of the state, which is charged with the task of “containing the surplus populations constantly (re)produced by the neoliberal paradigm of capitalist development” (De Giorgi & Fleury-Steiner, 2017, p. 3). Drawing upon carceral geography and EM, this paper extends the critique of the carceral state in a direction that supplements the academic clarion call for greater recognition towards the extension of carceral logics outside of prison walls and the larger “punitive governance of social marginality through carceral expansion” (De Giorgi & Fleury-Steiner, 2017, p. 2). Indeed, the multi-scalar effects of the carceral state now include not only a country’s “vast archipelago of jails and prisons but also the far-reaching and growing range of penal punishments and controls that lie in the never-never land between the gate of the prison and full citizenship” for the excluded of society (Gottschalk, 2014, p. 289). While notable scholars anticipated these penal developments (Cohen, 1979, 1985; Feeley & Simon, 1992), continued interest in carceral web-widening must remain paramount.

Methodology

This paper draws upon semi-structured interviews conducted with 10 prisoners (eight men, two women) at Her Majesty's Prison (HMP) Edinburgh, located in Scotland². Prisoners were identified and recruited for interviews using snowball sampling, and these interviews were audio-recorded and then later transcribed. Furthermore, I recognize this type of sampling strategy "as convenience (based on contacts available), non-random and non-probability (not necessarily reflective of a broader population, making wider inferences difficult) and often purposive (targeting certain groups or types)", so of course the usual caveats will apply (Geddes, Parker, & Scott, 2018, pp. 347–348). Notwithstanding, this method of sampling can be beneficial to qualitative research, as it creates and develops a unique type of social knowledge that is emergent, interactional and potentially political (Noy, 2008, p. 327).

These prisoners were serving a sentence and all technically in the custody of the Scottish Prison Service (SPS). This sample of prisoners comprised individuals who had breached Home Detention Curfew (HDC), a scheme in Scotland (as well as in England and Wales) in which prisoners gain release from prison ostensibly as part of a reintegrative transition back to the community but also functionally used to manage the prison population and crowding (Armstrong, Malloch, Nellis, & Norris, 2011). The study participants were all individuals who had breached the conditions imposed on them within the EM period and had been sent back into the SPS.³

While participants had been held in different prisons before being released to EM (including HMP Edinburgh, HMP Polmont, HMP Addiewell and HMP Corton Vale), breaching had resulted in their reimprisonment at HMP Edinburgh, where interviews took place⁴.

HMP Edinburgh provided a small room inside the prison where these meetings between the men and myself could take place. Given the personal nature of the prisoners' experiences, and coupled with the highly controlled prison environment in which access for me to interview prisoners in their cells was unobtainable, interviews were carried out off-wing (i.e. away from prisoners' accommodation). Interviews were conducted in private interview rooms within the "Agent's Visit" area of the prison (i.e. in spaces reserved for private consultation with legal representatives, social workers and psychologists).

² Ethical approval was received from the Scottish Prison Service as well as the Research Ethics and Integrity.

³ Recollections of time served in the SPS were approximations at best. Participants found it difficult to remember exactly the amount of time spent for each prison sentence they had received, or the total number of months or years spent within a particular prison. Nevertheless, the incorporation of the prisoners' narratives into the study remains significant, particularly when connected with an understanding of what the narratives are trying to say about carceral experiences in their own words. As always, acknowledging the very real human aspects that exist within data collection and analysis must remain the gold standard for qualitative research.

⁴ It is important to note that there are additional prisons within Scotland that house prisoners. However, the sample interviewed at HMP Edinburgh did not mention these additional prisons when they recalled their experiences in the interviews. In effect, these additional prisons are not included in the discussion presented here.

Although for security reasons HMP Edinburgh staff were present in the corridor outside the interview rooms, the interviews could not be overheard⁵.

Once collected, the contents from the interviews were coded to facilitate the analysis process. I implemented a type of coding that Coffey and Atkinson (1996, p. 29) refer to as “coding as an analytic strategy”. Each piece of data was (re)read to examine broader assumptions, themes and meanings underpinning what was articulated within the text (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). Instead of focusing on specific quantities of words or phrases, this strategy emphasizes the presence and absence of information within the data. This coding process is significant for prisoner interviews as it can make the data more manageable, while simultaneously allowing for a more comprehensive analysis of my sample’s experiences (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p. 30; see also Gacek, 2019).

Additionally, I recognize that a bias in snowball sampling may exist in the study, insofar as prisoners interviewed could have similar ideas and experiences and give each other’s references to SPS operations management or to the researcher himself (Flick, 2009, p. 110). Notwithstanding, the study generates “context-dependent knowledge” pertaining to the impact of incarceration through the experiences chosen by the sample to be shared (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 222). Recognizing my privileged position as researcher, aspects of Bourdieu and Wacquant’s (1992) self-reflexive sociology were introduced in the study to understand how to position myself in relation to the respondents at HMP Edinburgh, the research encounter and the analytical themes that arose from the data. Doing so allowed me to engage in a critical and reflexive analysis of my own positionality and social location alongside my observations of, and interactions and conversations with, those interviewed (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

While the information obtained from the sample is in no way generalizable to the prison population in Scotland generally, the inherent importance of qualitative research suggests that even a sample size of one interview or one narrative is meaningful; such research supplements the ongoing knowledge mobilization inherent within criminological and carceral geographical inquiry and the minute yet complex intricacies of everyday life. In effect, the capacity of research to provide understanding, give voice to unheard populations and to even potentially evoke positive social change demonstrates the need for continued “carceral work” (Peters & Turner, 2017).

⁵ Any information that could identify the participants personally was kept confidential by the researcher.

Findings

Struggles with sticking

Through a carceral geographical lens, it becomes clear that there is more to the carceral than a mere anchorage to the prison (Gacek, 2019). Indeed, Gill (2013, p. 26) explored the use of EM as a natural extension of, or an alternative to, mainstream carceral environments, suggesting that confinement can be independent of physical restriction. Gill (2013) observed that forms of punishment that are not explicitly prison-based can be just as constraining, in a different sense, as traditional spaces of incarceration.

The constraint and risk of stigmatization was a theme that emerged from my respondents' experiences. As Bülow (2014, p. 511) indicates, "the EM device is not only a technological artefact, but also has social and cultural content that may lead to stigmatization of the individual wearing it". As EM can lead to stigmatization, people who meet individuals undergoing EM "may ascribe normative expectations to that person, which may result in both social disadvantages and social exclusion" (Bülow, 2014, p. 512), especially if one considers how the stigmatization can relate to future employability (see, for example, Nellis, 2009a). Perceptions of whether respondents would hide the fact that they were tagged were similar in this regard:

I used to get kind of anxious about people seeing me wearing a tag. Because dealing with it, or out in the community anyway, it's easy for people to be judgmental of those that had a brush with the law. So it was just another, you got to sort of deal with once tagged.

And it wasn't easy to wear, as I was tagged in the summer, and that wasn't easy – I ended up walking around with long trousers on, and even that would be suspicious, you know? I do get quite anxious about being seen with the tag. But now being back in the prison it's just something I just want to put it in my past. Now that I'm back, would I hide it? No. But would I willingly disclose it? No. (Danika)⁶

No, but obviously I don't want people knowing. If I wear skinny jeans, then it's hard with my body being pumped, and people are gonna notice. But if they notice, they notice. (Carl)

I mean I wouldn't walk around in shorts with it on. I would be embarrassed. So aye, I would hide it, aye, even if I was roasting in the summer months, I would hide it. (Isaac)

⁶ Pseudonyms were assigned to ensure confidentiality.

So these respondents would hide the fact that they were tagged, but only in particular contexts and certain situations. For instance, being tagged in the summer months for respondents was particularly difficult as it would indicate to others in the community that they had had “a brush with the law” and they did not want people in their communities “to be judgmental” of them (Danika).

In addition, Danika reframed her thoughts to indicate that rather than hiding the tag she would not disclose this knowledge to others, potentially for further anxiety of judgment. And hopefully, with the passage of time, the stickiness of the stigma would rub off and be less noticeable in the community. While Carl suggested that he would not hide the tag, he felt similarly to Danika about disclosure: that “obviously” he would not want people to know; however, should the community notice him wearing a tag, then so be it, but it would not be because he had disclosed this information from the outset.

Besides the focus of stigma sticking to them, respondents also indicated that the hardest thing to deal with once released was “sticking” to the time, or monitoring the time they had before their curfews began:

The time was the hardest to deal with, yeah. There were some times I was late getting in, but sometimes it was just the initial looking at the watch, sometimes from like half six, quarter to seven, constantly looking at the watch and asking myself “Am I going to make it? Am I going to make it? Am I going to be 10 minutes late?” So it was really “*watch time*” that was the only issue. (Aaron)

When you get tagged, you’ve got to figure out how much time you could do things before the curfew, and that put a strain on my relationship with my girlfriend. And when I was in here it was hard for her to see me, as there’s not many buses that will take her from Dunbar to here, so that also added to the strain. (Billy)

Sticking to the time. Aye, sticking to the 7pm to 7am time. I’m a nighthawk, and I like being out of the house if I can. Especially if I’m taking my dogs for a walk and it’s hard to collect them. *You can lose track of time without even realizing it.* (George; italics added)

Indeed, the theme of sticking to or being/feeling stuck is a significant theme that spans the experiences of my respondents. In a sense, the sample of prisoners, like most prisoners post-release, is governed by “unruly mobilities” (Fishwick & Wearing, 2017). Therefore, the state imposes time restraints on them (i.e. like sticking time to prisoners post-release) or responsabilizes prisoners post-release to stick to time (and self-monitor) themselves. This grants the state the ability to further manage post-release prisoners’ “unruliness” and monitor their whereabouts across a range of geographies (for a further discussion on individuality and self-governance, see Rose, 2000).

Guiding the excluded towards individual choice and responsibility has the power to shift the burden of compliance onto their shoulders; however, such guidance has the potential to maintain “a particular, state-defined subjugation in which the individual who takes responsibility for herself ends up paradoxically following the directions given by others”, most notably the carceral state (Moore & Hirai, 2014, p. 8).

Along parallel lines, I concur with Gill (2013) here and elsewhere (Gacek, 2019) that while imprisonment does cast a long shadow, one that may start from the prison and extend outward into society, EM as a form of punishment imposes a particular pain of confinement – a pain that is imposed within a state of stuckness. Like glue, the adherence to stigma and time leaves behind a residue that exacerbates the detriment these marginalized individuals are already experiencing in their lives in the community (Gacek, 2019). In particular, the feelings and experiences of being in a state of stuckness parallels the feelings associated with the carceral, particularly the detriment of social exclusion; the aggravation and frustration of isolation from the community; the shame and embarrassment of becoming incarcerated or electronically monitored; and in terms of EM, the annoyance attributed to micro-managing times and schedules before and after curfews (Gacek, 2019). Constellated together, the stickiness of stigma and time reveals how EM plays its part in enforcing offender compliance and ensuring that, to varying degrees, the offender feels punished, even within the comfort and the confines of their own community.

Waiting and wanting to get unstuck

Imprisonment, regardless of whether it takes place in a prison or at home, “is the exemplary symbol of waiting, of being stuck in a space and for a time not of our choosing” (Armstrong, 2015, p. 133). It is not a far cry to suggest that home may be a space where we choose to be “stuck”, especially when passing the time with loved ones. Home is also a place where we can engage in a diverse range of activities that might have productive value (e.g. housework and cooking versus checking social media, watching DVDs, etc.). To this end, I remain cognizant that the inside/outside dichotomy of the home has been analysed and critiqued, “with feminist scholars pointing out the patriarchal character of the association between masculinity and the public, and femininity and the private/domestic, in the light of the fact that the domestic can be the locus of oppression rather than freedom” (Moran, 2015, p. 31).

Yet spatialized through the home, the punishment of time imposed by EM gives us a view of imprisonment in which we observe post-release prisoners coping with passing the time, allowing both them and ourselves to understand penal time and penal waiting as sitting around. While not physically trapped in their homes, EM provides the insightful perspective of viewing these individuals as penal “waiters” immersed in their own dysfunctional, marginalized and “suspended” lives (Medlicott, 1999) and wanting to be liberated from waiting. In terms of the struggles post-release prisoners and their loved ones face during the EM period, focusing upon this waiting provides a crucial insight into how EM as a penalty sub -

sumes the personal territories and lifestyles of those who come into contact with it. Indeed, “the analytical power of waiting...derives from its capacity to highlight certain features of the social process that might have been hitherto foreshadowed by others or entirely hidden” (Hage, 2009, p. 4).

When asked about what activities they engaged in while the EM curfew was in place, respondents shared how they attempt to pass the time:

It was mostly playing Xbox, or watching TV, but you get bored of watching TV after being in here [prison] for so long, because that’s all you can really do to *pass the time*. Outside, I’d go on social media and talk to people. But otherwise it’s playing Xbox and that’s pretty much it. (Billy; italics added)

Just watching TV, playing on the computer and watching DVDs. Maybe I’d read books too. These activities helped yeah, light reading would *help me take my mind off of stuff*. Finding a room in the hostel and getting into a book *helped time pass*. (Fred; italics added)

I never really had many activities, to be honest with you. I was staying at my mum’s place, and there’s not much to do there in the evening. So when I was on curfew, I would just go to sleep, basically. I knew *I would hate to be awake and missing out on being out* with pals, so I figured I should just go to sleep. Other times, I would sit in my room and watch TV, but sleeping was it most of the time. (Isaac; italics added)

The point underscoring this form of confinement is that for a particular time slot (for example, 7pm – 7am within a physical residence), what we may actually experience are feelings of being trapped or “locked up” within a particular area, all the while preferring the relative freedom of just “being out” (Isaac). While prison waiting may be experienced as particularly burdensome because it stops time (for the prisoner) while the rest of the world remains “on the move” (Cresswell, 2006), this type of waiting produces the particular pain of “time standing still but passing away” (Armstrong, 2015, p. 134, citing Wahidin, 2006, para. 6.4), a pain that is witnessed from my respondents’ experiences.

Generally, the temporality of imprisonment finds its spatial translation in the prison cell (an arguably crucial space of imprisonment), in which “time itself [is] compartmentalized through space” (Matthews, 2009, p. 37). However, to understand penal waiting, as Armstrong (2015, p. 134) rightly contends, we should not solely consider it as “a form of stopped time and stilled movement” that focuses on particular moments and populations and constructs their needs in particular ways. We must recognize the mobility embedded within experiences of imprisonment, examining how “waiting can be a mobile experience” (Armstrong, 2015, p. 135) that makes visible the prisoner as a “waiter” (or in the context of EM,

the offender released to their home and/or physical residence in the community) and other “waiters” feeling similar pains (the loved ones of the tagged offenders). My earlier work suggests that prisoners will attempt to lessen the impact of carceral regimes by engaging in activities that take their minds off or help them forget their carceral environments for short periods of time (Gacek, 2017). Indeed, the mobility of prisoners “to psychologically enter the inner spaces of their minds to avoid and distance themselves from...prison life” (Gacek, 2017, p. 73) existing outside their anatomical control can be similarly compared to the activities engaged in by these respondents (i.e. watching television, playing video games, going on social media, drinking, etc.). Notwithstanding, once the EM curfew begins, “the swirling flow of life is broken up...into boxes of time” in which particular activities and movements are authorized or not, much like what is seen in the prison (Armstrong, 2015, p. 137). By slicing up life into spatio-temporal boxes, this logic of control through EM reveals a Foucauldian penal power in which “[w]e...become disciplined through the waiting process” (Kohn, 2009, p. 225).

This adherence to a space renders a particular visibility to the offender and/or former prisoner, rendering them “stuck” in a particular space to be further managed and monitored by both G4S Scotland specifically and criminal justice authorities generally. In effect, multi-agency collaboration and public-private organizational relationships are forged through the excluded-as-stuck, all the while ensuring that the maintenance of offender monitoring proceeds as planned, managing and containing offenders-as-risks along the way and for the foreseeable future (Garland, 2001; Rose, 2000; Sparks & Gacek, 2019).

Discussion and implications

The carceral states in the USA and the UK have become worrisome leviathans of confinement, and to resolve this situation one could argue that EM has been legitimated as a viable alternative to increase diversion and decarceration and to decrease incarceration rates and costs (for further discussion and debate, see Graham & McIvor, 2016; Nellis, 2013, 2015; Nellis et al., 2013). While I acknowledge this argument as a fruitful attempt to deal with mass incarceration in the West, I query whether a focus upon population rates and costs of prison on the one hand, and EM on the other, simply obscures the culture of control pervading our understanding of punishment (Garland, 2001). As Kato (2017, p. 198) contends, while demands in the West to dismantle mass incarceration “are increasingly gaining traction, it will not necessarily lead to a reduction of the carceral state”. Kato (2017, p. 198) suggests that emerging trends that centre on surveillance and security, as well as the processes by which policymaking is negotiated and social upheavals are managed, “put more of the burden upon the controlling aspects associated with the carceral state and less upon the enclosing characteristics of traditional incarceration”. Therefore, declines in incarceration and increases in EM “should be seen as more of a realignment than an end to the carceral state” (Kato, 2017, p. 198), and while people may elude incarceration it is through EM that “they are nevertheless *enmeshed within a carceral web that is more widening and diffuse*” (Kato, 2017, p. 217; italics added). Now is the time to reconsider cognitive assumptions, normative commitments and emotional

sensibilities that guide and coordinate crime and social control of our society (Gacek, 2019; Sparks & Gacek, 2019). We must reshape how we feel about marginalized groups, specifically how they are made to feel punished, excluded, isolated, mobile, immobile or stuck within the carceral web in numerous ways (Gacek, 2019). Whether we are debating the use of prison versus the use of EM, such penalties merely represent two different ways of understanding and managing the same situation, that is, the legitimation of the carceral state's continued management of impoverished and marginalized groups with little to no consideration of ameliorating these social issues outright (Sparks & Gacek, 2019). In the end, EM represents a form of confinement similar to prison while simultaneously widening the carceral web across a diverse range of geographic scales; it does nothing to assist or support the excluded in a meaningful way that could lead to their actual inclusion in our society, nor does it redress the collateral effects of imprisonment imposed upon the loved ones of the offender (Gacek, 2019). While it may be the case that such redress is neither within the nature of the technology nor the outlines of its use (Bülow, 2014), releasing the offender to their community to wait and to be rendered stuck without proper support in place hardly sutures a wound that requires greater attention, assistance and resources. Should we decide that EM be allowed to expand further (both in technological prowess and punitive means), appropriate social policies and programmes must be paired with EM to directly redress the actual needs of the offender and assist them in unsticking from the carceral web and ameliorating their particular social circumstances (Sparks & Gacek, 2019).

Unfortunately, mounting fiscal pressures alone will not be enough to spur communities and governments to make significant shifts in how they perceive punishment in nature, form and function. The “carceral clawback” remains persistent (Carlen, 2002), and as the carceral web widens so does “the political clout and political acumen of groups, institutions and organizations with vested economic interests in maintaining [it]” (Gottschalk, 2015, p. 35). While each may have their own vested interests in the carceral state, and while such interests were not the main catalysts for the origins of the carceral state, they have certainly become major impediments to reducing prison populations significantly and to reconsidering why certain forms of punishment in our society are allowed to persist (Gacek, 2019; Gottschalk, 2015; Sparks & Gacek, 2019).

Finally, EM as a creative carceral extension could also be described in part as “pre-emptive”; that is, EM, whether it be through the private or public sector, represents one measure or method among many within the shift from prevention of crime to pre-emption of crime and future risk (for a discussion on this shift, see Zedner, 2007). This shift is indicative of a unique set of social ordering practices, creating, developing and maintaining “liminal carceral spaces and new forms of mobilities that engage communities...and individuals” (Fishwick & Wearing, 2017, p. 51). In this light, techniques of incarceration that manifest themselves in the local community and in wider society “are now possible in unprecedented ways that were not feasible in earlier periods due to a lack of infrastructure and technology for security” (Fishwick & Wearing, 2017, p. 49). Such techniques could expand and include technologies like “DNA analysis; high-

-powered satellite surveillance cameras; taser guns; electronic tracking devices; Internet surveillance; and new security forces...introduced to police migration and ‘terrorism’” (Fishwick & Wearing, 2017, p. 49). Notwithstanding, a geographically expansive understanding of the carceral opens up incarceration as a multi-institutional, fluid and indeterminate practice. Further scholarship needs to continue to engage with these extensions of the carceral state as they come into contact with those stuck and entangled within the widening carceral web beyond traditional spaces of incarceration (Gacek, 2019).

Concluding remarks

This paper reconsiders both the micro-scale complexities of daily life for EM offenders and the macro shifts in carcerality spreading across society. Taking into consideration the shadowy auspices of the carceral state, this paper galvanizes attention towards reproduction of the carceral beyond the anchorage to the prison and the current climate of the carceral state.

While my own research attempts to investigate the meanings, interpretations and representations of carcerality in its various forms (Gacek, 2017, 2018, 2019), it cannot be accomplished without the experiences my respondents have chosen to share. The excerpts of experiences presented here are the respondents' stories, and they deserve to be shared and discussed, rather than discredited, neglected or silenced. In concert with this study, these excerpts are not just a contribution to carceral scholarship and wider discussions about EM, but also to the growing and pressing desire to ameliorate the unfortunate circumstances of the excluded-as-stuck – in other words, the marginalized, monitored and/or incarcerated in our society. Moreover, while the carceral state may be exceptional in its size and tenacity, “many of the political, economic and social forces that sustain it and stand in the way of genuine penal reform are not” (Gottschalk, 2015, p. 39). Going forward, research and policy need to continue to critically query and examine how particular forms of punishment are legitimated through society’s “deep attachment to [punishment] and its centrality within our culture, vocabulary and sensibilities” (Sparks, 1994, p. 19). Only then can we reconsider EM’s place within the carceral state’s arsenal of penalties to impose. We must redress the state’s tendency to couple carceral logics with carceral expansions. With the aid of studies such as this one, we can hear more clearly marginalized voices. This clarity can aid researchers in disentangling the carceral web that is being spun throughout our communities, townships and nation states.

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