A PLACE OF GREATER SAFETY(?):
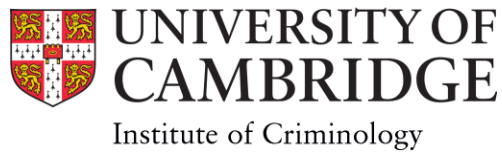# AN ANALYSIS OF PENAL SACRED SPACES

'A Church Service at Wormwood Scrubs' (1945), from the Mary Evans & Peter Higginbotham Collection

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THESIS DECLARATION

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Has this thesis, or any part of it, been submitted for any purpose other than the MSt. examination? **No** **Do you assert that except as indicated by specific references to or acknowledgements of other sources, this dissertation is your own original work?** **Yes**
I am happy to give permission for this thesis to be read by Institute of Criminology staff and students.

Signed: R. McDonald

Dated: 3rd January 2025

Submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the Master's Degree in

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Writing a thesis for a master's at Cambridge is not something I will quickly forget as a working-class boy who tried – and failed – twice, to get into Oxford (no hard feelings). I'm therefore indebted to those who have helped me to get here.

To Sîan Hawthorne and Samantha Langsdale, my Professors at SOAS who taught me to think critically about religion and grand narratives. To Lucia Dolce, who encouraged my first ethnographic study of sacred spaces in Japan. To Loraine Gelsthorpe, a towering and sobering presence in the field of Criminology, who has supervised me with care and encouragement.

The incarcerated of HMP Berwyn and WWS. Regardless of the respite faith and religion may offer you during your residency, you still face immense difficulties during your imprisonment, and yet treated me with deep respect and candour.

The Chaplaincy teams at these institutions, thank you for letting me in to observe the work you do, and for giving me so much of your time and energy to ensure that I got to see the many ways religion touches the lives of those in your care. To Zahid and Mr. Singh, thank you for giving me such great access to your teams and establishments, despite your busy jobs as Managing Chaplains.

Thank you to HMPPS, for contributing in part to the cost of the course and for supporting my development.

To my mother, the thanks are boundless.

A sacred space is first of all a defined place, a space distinguished from other spaces. A church, a temple, a mosque – all of these are sacred

because they are places set apart for worship. Sacred spaces reflect the belief that certain places are worthy of reverence, capable of transforming both the individual and the community through their inherent or assigned significance – **Mircea Eliade,** *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion (1959)*

From a time when Chapel attendance was part of the disciplinary mechanism of the institution, the religious spaces in today's prisons have a multiplicity of meanings for inmates. They are places where inmates might find the privacy for tears, or counselling with the chaplain. But religious spaces have not lost their capacity for manipulation either, and some prisoners see religious activities as an opportunity to share news or contraband, or to simply to 'escape' from their cell – **Sophie Gilliat-Ray, From Chapel to Prayer Room** *(2005)*

They can put you on basic, you can lose your missus and kids, but they can't take away your faith.

- **'Alex', HMP Berwyn**

ABSTRACT

This dissertation emerged from a curiosity as to what the term 'sacred' would mean in a prison environment, and more specifically, how spaces could be made sacred within them. While there is plentiful literature addressing the rehabilitative role of religion, there is less said about how carceral religious spaces *affect* those moving through them. Therefore, this dissertation adopts the thesis question: 'How are time and space made sacred (if at all) in English and Welsh prisons', with supplementary research questions to guide and sensitise research design.

Employing qualitative research methods (participant observation, interviews, and thematic analysis), I spent a week at HMP Berwyn and HMP Wormwood Scrubs respectively, using convenience sampling to speak to participants about sacred spaces. Field Notes and interviews were coded, and the resulting themes form the basis of the Findings chapter.

Spaces in Berwyn and Wormwood Scrubs were found to be made sacred through a process of 'setting apart', noted in the literature as the key element of sacralisation. However, the distinction between the sacred and the profane, so fundamental to traditional definitions of the sacred, was challenged by prison environments where 'outsideness' or 'normality' seemed to strengthen feelings of sacredness, not diminish it. The findings (albeit partial owing to a range of practical limitations) pose a challenge to reductive definitions of the sacred that position it as a purely non-carceral phenomenon of traditional religious spaces. The distinct emotional and material economies of prison life produce a unique process of sacralisation, with (but not limited to) physical, imagined, and relational elements. Also considered however, is how the distinct regimes of Berwyn and Wormwood Scrubs encourage and inhibit access to sacred spaces, highlighting the need to think beyond purely spatial paradigms.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Whilst there are numerous references to the role of religion and chaplaincy in the history of prisons, there is less literature addressing how chaplaincy spaces are experienced physically and relationally, or if - and how - these spaces are rendered 'sacred'.

The research question is: *how are time and space made sacred (if at all) in English and Welsh prisons?* The answer, while partial (owing to a range of practical, conceptual, and methodological limitations), has been attempted through qualitative research methods, namely participant observation and supplementary interviews, at HMP Berwyn and HMP Wormwood Scrubs ('WWS' hereafter). Research questions have largely been developed in line with a 'Third Space' theoretical framework to probe the concept of 'space' from physical, imagined, and relational perspectives. Space and time are established here as largely inseparable, with numerous spatial frameworks concurring that discussions of space must always consider time.

Criminological, theological, and sociological research literature supports the assumption that studying carceral religion may enrich our understanding of the 'emotional geography of prison life' (Crewe, et al. 2014). Work touching on faith, religion, and prison chaplaincy notes that these spaces may offer productive and meaningful diversion from the 'pains of imprisonment', albeit not entirely (Crewe, et al. 2014:68-69). Religious spaces do not fully escape from the prison regime and may further affirm regulatory and disciplinary measures or provide a reminder of what 'has been lost'. This dissertation employs a sensitising theoretical framework leveraging Edward Soja's (1996) notion of Third Space[1] and a qualitative approach that compares the way 'sacred space' is cultivated and perceived in two institutions.

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[1] That space, and our experience of it, has physical, imagined, and relational elements. See chapter 2, where this theory is differentiated from other similarly named concepts.

This dissertation considers a range of theological, anthropological, and sociological work to define the term 'sacred', which can often be a proxy for a range of feelings, emotions, and religious connotations relative to one's culture. However, across definitions of the sacred there is a shared notion of 'setting apart' that can be gleamed as the 'crux' of sacredness, ratified here as also fundamental to sacred space and time in HMP Berwyn and HMP WWS. The term 'sacred' is used rather than 'religious', given a clear distinction between the two terms in theory, and the acknowledgement in literature that religion does not have a monopoly on the sacred (van der Tol & Gorsk, 2022).

Although 'setting apart' is affirmed as fundamental to sacredness in the two sites, this dissertation will urge that the normalcy or 'outsideness' of faith services can strengthen perceptions of sacredness. This may be immediately confusing given that the sacred is normally considered as set apart from the 'normal' (the mundane). However, what is mundane in prison is not the same as the outside world. The unique and often difficult contours of prison life and the material and emotional economies on which they feed, appear to render normalcy/outsideness as a rare pleasure and a reminder of what has been lost with imprisonment. This challenges reductive notions of 'sacredness' as belonging merely to the quarter of churches and groves. Sacred spaces which are set apart from a prison regime that feels abnormal may find that normalcy/outsideness increases feelings of safety, nostalgia, and sacredness. Thus, while 'setting apart' is a shared key feature of sacredness inside and outside of prison, the distinct emotional geographies of prison life produce a version of the sacred which challenges traditional definitions. This is the fundamental conceptual provocation of this dissertation.

The conclusion will affirm the view of established literature that carceral religion and faith services provide transformative settings which may be accurately but not exhaustively understood as 'sacred', given a range of functional uses of these spaces (swapping contraband, acts of resistance, seeking physical sanctuary, etc.). It takes a conceptual departure from standard discourses on chaplaincy (which largely seek to appraise its rehabilitative value) by approaching these spaces through a conceptual spatial framework, allowing ethnographic research to test three separate aspects of space. However, factors beyond this triad were expected and indeed emerged, such as the enabling effects of chaplaincy/religious leadership and the discontents of post-COVID prison regimes. Acknowledging that this is just one way to think about space, a reflective critique of the Third Space approach is considered in the literature review and findings[2]. In short, the research approaches space not by objectively defining it as *only* having three conceptual elements, but by acknowledging it as demarcated by culturally distinct social processes, of which the physical, imagined, and relational are important facets. Adopting a purposefully porous and loose framework was intentional, to allow for a structured probing that did not lock the researcher into a hard interpretative framework.

The project is limited namely by the two prisons explored, a short research window, and the specificity to the English and Welsh context. Given these, this research does not suggest exhaustive conclusions or recommendations but presents some common themes across sites that provoke conceptual reflection. The conclusion suggests opportunities for further research that employ different methodologies and analytical or interpretative frameworks, or that consider different aspects of religious life in prison, including gender, non-Western/non-Christian chaplaincy frameworks, and prisons of other categories and regimes.

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[2] This includes consideration of a consequential and competing definition of space given by a prison chaplain that "A place is a space with a story".

This dissertation takes its name from the Hilary Mantel novel *A Place of Greater Safety*, a historical novel about the French Revolution. The title is an ironic reflection on the gratuitous violence of the revolution, which itself tried to overcome the inequities of a monarchical French society. It is employed here in a similar ironic capacity to resist any reductive interpretations of sacred spaces in prison, for example, that prison chapels and religious spaces offer ubiquitous safety from incarceration and only positive experiences. They of course, do not. While offering a respite that is very real, they are a feature of incarceration, and so the title is a reference to a sense of safety which is bound together with – and made possible by - the wider pains of imprisonment. Or as one prisoner put it: 'If prison wasn't this bad the chapel wouldn't feel so safe' (Berwyn Field Notes, 2024).

The thesis is structured into the following chapters. Chapter 2 surveys a range of literature from criminological, anthropological, and sociological disciplines to establish what is meant by 'space' and 'sacred' and how to critically situate these terms in the prison context; Chapter 3 appraises the methods used and their limitations, including research design, coding, and ethical reflections; Chapter 4 includes the findings, structured into the three aspects of Third Space, with an additional section for themes beyond that framework[3]. Chapter 5 offers concluding reflections, and the Appendices contain: photographs of religious/sacred spaces in both sites ('Annex A'); a Participant Information Sheet ('Annex B'); a Consent Form ('Annex C'), and an Interview Schedule Exemplar ('Annex D').

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[3] The Sections are *Physical, Imagined, Relational,* and *Beyond Third Space,* which align to the research questions.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1: Situating the Research

It is important to ground this dissertation in a broader account of the emotional and material weight of incarceration in England and Wales, especially since the theoretical framework considers the 'relational' and emotional elements of these spaces. The 'Emotional Geography of Prison Life' (Crewe et al. 2014) outlines the complex emotional, relational, and spatial dynamics within carceral environments. Individuals do not experience prison uniformly or just physically; rather, each interaction within the establishment is tinted by emotional experiences: frustration, tension, camaraderie, fear, and sometimes, solace (Crewe, 2014). Religion and faith services, while peripheral in Crewe's work, emerge as alleviating the 'pains of imprisonment' by adding a positive texture to the emotional geography:

> *...in education, religion and artistic activity, they find alternative normative systems, and somewhat transcendental sources of meaning, comfort and psychological safety.* (Crewe, et al. 2014:70)

Elsewhere, 'The Sociology of Imprisonment' (Crewe, 2007) stresses that prisons are not just spaces of confinement, but saturated emotional landscapes. Furthermore, they are shaped by interactions between the incarcerated and institutional structures. Crewe's use of the 'pains of imprisonment' references the seminal work of Gresham Sykes (1958) who defines these pains as an assemblage of deprivations and frustrations, including the loss of autonomy and personal relationships. Crewe's integration of emotional dimensions contends that the emotional toll of imprisonment exacerbates these pains. Religion and faith-based spaces within prisons then assume a unique role in this geography.

The research of Liebling and Williams (2023) complements this, making clear the socio-political challenges that have intensified within the penal system and how contemporary prisons are shaped by:

...excessive sentences, changing population demographics, austerity (leading to staff inexperience and shortages), a declining quality of governance, and changing forms of security-oriented knowledge and power. (Liebling & Williams, 2023:98)

These pressures are flagged as eroding prisoner-staff relationships, considered fundamental to effective prison management. This aligns with Crewe's depiction of modern prisons as marked by disorganisation, heightened tensions, and a diminishing of meaningful prisoner-officer relationships (Crewe, 2014). This has altered the fabric of prison life, impacting all aspects of institutional operations, including faith services, which are delivered within an atmosphere of heightened suspicion and security. This dissertation therefore holds an analysis of specific prison regimes as of interest to the question of sacred spaces, given the complicated relationship between these spaces and the site they are 'set apart' from.

Liebling's research examines how religion (especially Islam) is frequently perceived through a 'matrix of risk', with prison staff seeing some forms of religious identity as indicative of radicalisation or anti-social behaviour (Liebling et al. 2011). This risk-oriented perspective suggests a need to view faith services as not neutral, but as touchpoints of managerial anxiety, bureaucratic oversight, and institutional control. Furthermore, this perspective impacts both the freedom with which faith can be practised and how chaplaincy services are monitored and evaluated. Ryan Williams further sensitises us to the ways in which:

Existing racial tensions in prison create an environment in which race, ethnicity, and religion are palpable, often taking pre-existing societal anxieties and repositioning them in a more intense social framework. (Williams, 2021:1780)

'Outside' social anxieties, religious tension, and identity-based grievance can bleed into prison life, taking on new meaning in an emotionally dense carceral environment. This reminds us that prison research does not take place in a silo, but in a site of rearticulation for the alleged discontents of a pluralistic society. Crewe, Liebling, and Williams offer a useful background of a prison system that is struggling with wider socio-political religious tensions, austerity, changing modes of bureaucracy, and staff churn.

Prison chaplaincy has historically been viewed through a functionalist lens, often as a method of 'soft control' (Beckford & Gilliat, 1998). In this view, prison chaplaincy and religious services aim to pacify prisoners, reducing unrest and reinforcing the broader objectives of institutional control and the 'traditional and conventional features of Christianity' (Beckford, 2001:380). This interpretation aligns with Foucault's observations in *Discipline and Punish* (1977) regarding the carceral deployment of religion to encourage the incarcerated to: '...correct themselves and acquire the habit of work' (Foucault, 1977:123). However, this reductionist interpretation has been challenged by more recent scholarship; Beckford and Gilliat's work indicates that, while chaplaincy does retain a moralising or stabilising function, largely owing to the still dominant yet diminishing hegemony of the Anglican Church (Phillips, 2017); it simultaneously provides genuine opportunities for personal growth, reflection, and community, elements that do not strictly align with the carceral regime's objectives (Beckford & Gilliat, 1998).

Beckford considers how religion in prison has resisted rampant secularisation, with increased participation and access to a range of faith services *generally* seen as positive behaviour.

He stresses that religious spaces are '...among the few places to which all prisoners normally have conditional rights of access beyond their cells and wings' (Beckford, 2001:374). Beckford states that 'the sacred' is impacted by a context of regulated time and free movement, with the incarcerated forming 'exceptionally powerful attachments' to: '...images, photographs, books...religious artefacts' (Beckford, 2001:375), which gives cells a sense of ownership through the presence of sacred objects.

Synthesising these perspectives, it seems that the role of religious spaces has been – and remains - of interest to prison research. Chaplaincy and religious spaces offer not only safety but a contested terrain where prisoners engage with their identities in ways otherwise difficult in prison. Any sacredness attributed to these spaces is perhaps contingent on religious meanings, but also on their function as emotional and transformative sanctuaries.

2.2 Theories of Space and Time

Theories of space and time are important for understanding how individuals interact within a carceral regulation of space, time, and movement. 'Carceral Geography' contends that space is not merely physical, but layered with meanings, practices, and power relations that engender 'restriction and immobility' in experiences, identities, and behaviours (Moran, et al. 2017:668). This section will examine multiple theories of space, noting that Soja synthesises many aspects of the previous attempts by Foucault and Lefebvre into a porous theoretical tool: Third Space.

Henri Lefebvre's (1991) notion of social space is one of social interactions, economic forces, and political ideologies, forming a triad of perceived, conceived, and lived space (Lefebvre, 1974). This: '...[recognises] space as more than the surface where social practices take place' (Moran, 2015:181), acknowledging how 'specific spatial structures   ...   can   organise   affect   to   have   effects

upon motion and emotion' (Adey, 2008:440). Lefebvre, crucially, notes the role of social interaction and subjective experience in our perceptions of what defines a space (Lefebvre, 2009:186-187).

Michel Foucault's notion of 'heterotopia' identifies cemeteries, brothels, prisons, and ships (etc.) as examples of 'spaces outside of and different from other spaces, but still inside the general social order', spaces with 'incompatible juxtapositions', such as 'a lack of delineation between inside and outside' yet perceivably clear boundaries (Baer & Ravneberg, 2008:212-214). Prisons are defined by Foucault as 'heterotopias of deviation' (Foucault, 1984:25) insofar as they are socially porous (with a flow of people, ideas, identities, contraband, etc.) (Moran, 2015), but function primarily to hold and control those deviating from moral norms. While the heterotopic framework challenges reductive definitions of the 'total institution' by emphasising porosity and their incongruous nature, Foucault's approach to space tends to flatly emphasise its ability to control and regulate, avoiding the vibrancy of social interaction within them. This is a shortsightedness that has been ascribed to Foucault's Eurocentric attempts at universalising operations of power (Bhabha, 1994:241-245).

Baer and Ravneberg (2008) assert that carceral space is often defined by the ephemeral or observational researcher, which potentially obscures the subtleties of space felt by the incarcerated. This poses an opportunity for qualitative approaches that allow incarcerated people to explain the affective dimensions of space in their own terms, which this dissertation has attempted through a style of participant observation that prioritises conversation and verbatim quotes (Baer & Ravneberg, 2008:214). Although it is important to note that this theoretical limitation has not been fully overcome in this dissertation, as my access to the object of study and any interlocutors was always conditional, temporary, and brokered. That is to say that something

is often lost in the representation of the incarcerated – and their experiences - by the non-incarcerated.

Edward Soja's (1996) notion of Third Space emerged in response to perceived limitations within existing theories of space, particularly an alleged fixation: '...on the concrete materiality of spatial forms, on things that can be empirically mapped...' (Soja, 1996:10). It was developed via engagement with - and critique of - Lefebvre and Foucault (Soja, 1996:10, 145-150). Third Space emphasises space as containing physical, imagined, and relational aspects (Soja, 1996:57). Yet, Soja's Third Space is one 'of radical openness' (Soja, 1996:68) where binaries of public/private, inside/outside, and real/imagined are always in question, similarly to Foucault's heterotopia. Soja's framework therefore allows for consideration of 'additional otherness'[4], providing a framework that acknowledges space as constantly negotiated, contested, and redefined. This is useful in prison research as it is open to discovering the unique cultural and physical realities of each prison.

Soja's theory of 'Third Space' should be differentiated from similarly named concepts such as Homi Bhabha's 'Third Space' and Ray Oldenburg's 'Third Place'[5] though there are similarities. Bhabha's 'Third Space' speaks to spaces where different cultures intermingle and create new 'hybrid' identities (Bhabha, 1994). Oldenburg's 'Third Place' refers to institutions and places such as libraries, cafes, and – perhaps – prisons[6], places neither the home ('First Place') and workplace ('Second Place'), crucial in the building of strong community relations

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[4] The full range of unique factors that may be part of demarcating 'space' in each environment, rather than asserting that all spaces will be constituted by the same paradigms.

[5] See the unpublished MSt thesis *Exploring the Concept of 'the Third Place' in Prison* (Stevens, 2024), for an example of a recent deployment of this term in the prison context (available from the Institute of Criminology library).

[6] Or places within prisons, to which access may be contingent upon factors such as IEP status (Stevens, 2024:54)

(Oldenberg, 1999:16). All these approaches seek to appraise the relational dynamics of public space, with Bhabha and Oldenberg asserting their positive role in public life and community building.

Third Space has seen some use in prison scholarship. Munn and Sanjenko analysed prisoner-written Christmas newsletters to consider how the festive season: '...allowed prisoners to move beyond the free/captive binary and metaphorically and temporarily escape the penal space' (Munn & Sanjenko, 2022). They note that a distinct festive Third Space emerged, characterised by a diminishing of the 'total institution', with festive events, physical changes, and a general ironic juxtaposition of prison and Christmas aesthetics. Christmas in prison, and events which involve the local community, allow prison to become a 'domestic satellite', a place where the institution briefly allows a more lucid performance of 'private life' (Comfort, 2002:470), figuratively changing the physical, imagined, and relational dynamics. This highlights 'space' as never fully differentiated from time: prison is, after all, a place where experiences of space are inhibited by temporal regulation.

Soja's Third Space, while praised for its openness, receives critique for its abstract nature, with Soja citing Hebevre's own: '...meandering, idiosyncratic, and wholesomely anarchic style and structure' (Soja, 1996:8) as crucial to an academic approach that queries space in an iconoclastic manner. Critique urges that Soja is more concerned with an activist approach to academia rather than building a theory that is exhaustively relevant beyond his usual case study, Los Angeles (Ramalhete, 2016). However, Paul Chatterton has contested this, arguing that it is for others to take Third Space and apply it to different institutions and contexts (Chatterton, 2010:1). Soja has also been critiqued for an ideological and postmodern epistemology (Paul

Resch, 1992:146), which has been seen as engendering an unclear methodology and contradictions (Dear, 1990).

Third Space, of course, is not the only useful spatial theory. It is not entirely original or analytically exhaustive. However, I have chosen this approach largely because it will support me in remaining open-minded (as someone new to prisons research) and able to challenge – and not ratify - my own assumptions about prisons, and because it has seen some useful (albeit limited) deployment in prison research. Siserman has claimed that studies of how the physical prison facilitates behaviour change are limited in Criminology, and so to respond to this alleged dearth, I have prioritised a theoretical approach that is to some extent, reflexive, broad, and cursory (Siserman, 2012).

Third Space may appear unwieldy and esoteric, especially when read against prisons, where control and restriction are profoundly material and physical. However, the core offer is a tool that allows complicated social spaces to be approached from a set of conceptual perspectives, while being open to surprising discoveries. This thesis adopts 'Third Space' as a sensitising framework that builds on the prior spatial theories of Lefebvre and Foucault. It is a means by which to question interlocutors about the physical, imagined, and relational dynamics that constitute carceral sacred spaces. Third Space is not an exhaustive analytic definition, and as later sections will make clear, emergent coding enabled additional factors to emerge from field notes and transcripts. The research affirms to some degree the usefulness of the Third Space perspective, but offers caution that this is partial, and largely through its use as a sensitising interpretive tool.

In conclusion, Soja's Third Space extends Lefebvre's and Foucault's spatial theories by synthesising a dynamic and hybrid understanding of space. While Lefebvre's *The Production of Space (*1974*)* introduced the influential spatial triad of perceived, conceived, and lived spaces, Soja's Third Space merges these categories to emphasise the fluidity and potential contradiction inherent in certain spaces. Where Lefebvre considers these dimensions as distinct, Soja urges them as inseparable, positioning Third Space as a site where the physical, mental, and social, clatter. This 'trialectic' approach resists the structuralist leanings of Lefebvre and encourages a view of space as constantly in the process of becoming, where multiple narratives, identities, and possibilities coexist. Soja also attempts to exceed Foucault's *Heterotopia* and its focus on ideology and control. Soja's Third Space is less prescriptive, and therefore offers less theoretical baggage to the researcher.

The role of space in the spatial theories of Lefebvre, Foucault, and Soja is intrinsically connected to time. Lefebvre emphasises the historical and social production of space, viewing it as dynamically shaped by the temporal rhythms of everyday life, such as work and urban movement. Foucault highlights the temporal regulation of spaces like prisons, where routines and schedules are used to discipline, and explores heterotopias as spaces defined by temporal and social 'otherness' such as cemeteries and museums. Soja proposes a spatial-temporal perspective, arguing that space is always simultaneously real, imagined, and lived, with time playing a critical role in shaping its meaning. Where 'space' is used henceforth, the reader is asked to always consider that as inseparable from time.

2.3 Theories of the Sacred

The sacred has long held importance in understanding how groups demarcate spaces, objects, people, experiences, and practices imbued with unique - and often religious - significance. This dissertation springs from a curiosity towards whether sacred spaces are cultivated and experienced in prison as they are outside, and if not, why? An inherent limitation here is that what is 'sacred' rests on numerous theological and cultural antecedents. The Catholic sacred differs from the Islamic sacred. The role of time in demarcating sacredness in Judaism will differ from the role of time in Buddhism. A complete taxonomy of religious definitions of the sacred is not attempted here, as that is superfluous to the thesis question. Instead, a survey of the most consequential descriptions is undertaken to establish a working 'cross-cutting' definition. This will be employed critically, in the full understanding that the findings may challenge traditional views of sacredness and sacralisation.

Mircea Eliade and Émile Durkheim offer consequential definitions of the sacred. Durkheim postulates that a key element of sacralisation is the 'setting apart' of areas and rituals that promote *collective effervescence*, that is, a shared emotional connection that transcends the individual and the *profane* (William & Vogt, 1979:28). Durkheim's key exposition of sacralisation is within *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1912), which marks a departure from earlier religious theories that rooted sacredness solely in the divine. For Durkheim, the sacred is defined not always by inherent spiritualism but by a societal function: it represents the *collectively revered*, setting it/them apart from the mundane[7] and the everyday. The 'Sacred and the Profane' duality is the backbone of Durkheim's wider sociological theory of religion. This grand division is 'the distinctive trait of religious thought' (Durkheim, 1912:32-35) and foundational to establishing meaning and order. The Durkheimian view is that the sacred is not

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[7] 'Mundane' and 'profane' often take on a synonymous role in sacral literature, but occasionally 'profane' may represent that which is a direct threat to the sacred (that with the power to desecrate, such as profane language, or 'profanities'), as opposed to the 'mundane', which represents the everyday, the routine, or the non-sacred.

an intrinsic attribute, but a symbolic value assigned by a community through rituals, symbols, and collective representations. Thus, the sacred is a product of social consensus, a reflection of the values and moral ideals that a society or group holds dear.

A crucial aspect of Durkheim's theory is his concept of *collective effervescence*, an intense emotional energy engendered when individuals gather in communal rituals. This heightened state can create a sense of unity and shared purpose which enables the sacralisation of certain objects, symbols, or concepts. In the collective act of reverence, a group 'consecrates' these symbols, imbuing them with a significance that absconds their ordinary function. Durkheim suggests the example of a totem, which embodies the identity and strength of the clan that venerates it (Durkheim, 1912; William & Vogt, 1979:32).

Durkheim's account has met critique for its 'reductionist' nature. A focus on social functions may reduce religion to little more than social cohesion, leaving scarce room for the transcendental experiences associated with the sacred. More pointedly, Durkheim has been accused of adopting a secular interpretive framework that: '...[fails] to accept mankind's belief in the actual existence of an unseen supernatural order...' (Paden, 2009:37), thus obscuring the non-social elements of sacralisation. Clifford Geertz has noted that religious symbols go beyond mirroring the social order to reflect a 'broader cosmology', and a 'general order of existence' that exceeds the social functions assigned by Durkheim (Geertz, 1973:90). Further to this point, Levi-Strauss has argued that Durkheim's reduction relegates complex cultural processes to simplistic explanations, avoiding accounts that consider universal cognitive processes (Xie, 2021). Talal Asad has also challenged reductionist separations between the 'sacred' and the 'profane', arguing that these boundaries are always being redrawn for theological or political reasons (Van deer Veer, 1995:367). Durkheim may also be criticised for not taking seriously Non-Western (or non

Abrahamic) religious perspectives in his assumption that the sacred means the same thing, wherever it may be found.

Mircea Eliade's work advances and diverges from Durkheim. It emphasises the intrinsic, transcendent qualities of sacred experience rather than a dogged focus on its social function. Eliade broadens the concept by suggesting that the sacred is a universal, ontological reality that shapes human experience across cultures. In *The Sacred and the Profane* (1959), Eliade offers a phenomenological view of the sacred as a reality wholly separate from ordinary existence. Eliade argues that the sacred 'ruptures' the profane, forming a space or moment that is 'set apart' from mundane reality. For Eliade, the sacred is not simply a mirroring of belief, but an intrinsic quality that transforms spaces, making them worthy of reverence and capable of altering individuals. In this view, spaces such as churches or temples are not merely places of worship but ontologically different realms capable of instilling a sense of transcendence and spiritual connection. Eliade also adds a temporal element to ideas of the sacred: 'For religious man time too, like space, is neither homogeneous nor continuous' (Eliade, 1957:68). Eliade acknowledges that many sacred spaces and events are marked by their separation from the natural temporal flow, with sacred events attempting to harken back to a real or imagined past.

2.4 Sacred in Carceral Contexts

Beckford has discussed at length how religious space and time in carceral contexts are impacted by resource pressures, the sharing of space, and scheduling. He argues that this 'sharpens' religious differences, and the 'boundaries between them' (Beckford, 2001:380). Sophie Gilliat-Ray has built on the political and corporate push for 'multi-faith' approaches to faith provision in prison:

There are a number of prisons... which contain within their boundaries a space that functions as a Mosque. Sometimes such a facility is called a 'Muslim Prayer Room', but it might also be quite explicitly called a 'Mosque'. The fact that Muslims in some instances have achieved their own exclusive space, but have also spaces provided for their sole use, is a poignant reminder of the fact that sacred space is almost inevitably 'entangled in politics'. (Gilliat-Ray, 2005:288)

Through participant observation, Beckford and Gilliat-Ray note how chapels have been 'amputated' to carve out spaces for gyms and Islamic worship/prayer, with neutral architecture, including moveable furnishings to allow for musical performance, meetings, etc. (Beckford & Gilliat, 1998:53-54). Gilliat Ray also surveys the chapel in the historical Victorian prison, a place that 'emphasised the largely disciplinary intentions of compulsory Chapel attendance' and suggests that this was instrumental in bodily control and the disciplinary order.

Religious space in prison is adapting to meet the needs of the modern and pluralistic establishment: '...religion operates a*longside* other activities, not in ascendancy over them' (Beckford & Gilliat, 1998:53). Gilliat-Ray acknowledges that the diminishing dominance of 'the chapel' is due to 'increasing religious diversity', pressures upon 'institutional religion in wider society', and the moving away of religion from punishment: '...towards education of the ignorant, admonition, and salvation' (Gilliat-Ray, 2005:289).

Chapels and carceral religious spaces may also be sites of resistance and agency, both in historical and contemporary accounts, where hymns would be used as moments to spread illicit gossip, contraband could be distributed, and opportunities 'for contesting power relations' emerged (Gilliat-Ray, 2005:289). Thus, while these spaces aim to pursue rehabilitative ambitions, they also present opportunities for self-expression and challenge against the wider prison regime.

This affirms the term 'Emotional Geography' as apt in conveying the complicated emotional economies of religious spaces in prison.

This dissertation therefore acknowledges a helpful definition of sacred space which is those spaces that are 'set apart' from their surroundings[8], and that also hold some spiritual, religious, transcendental, or otherwise notably affective character. However, while traditional sacralisation involves setting apart the sacred from the profane, that may be impacted by a carceral environment where the profane/mundane is additionally associated with 'outsideness'. These additional meanings give the profane more vibrancy in prison than traditional literature might expect, causing oxymoronic moments where the 'profane feels sacred'. The 'sacred' is not exhaustively moored to religion, and incarcerated individuals may call things 'sacred' that hold no religious or metaphysical value. A scarce chance for personal reflection, quietness, acts of kindness, shared moments of vulnerability, coffee with some visitors, personal transformation, the building of a new identity, a baptism, a break in the cycle of regulation – are these too not the offerings of a sacred time/space amongst the pains and morass of the prison regime?

The literature explored here is not exhaustive but has enabled a critical appraisal of the key terms employed in this dissertation, a survey of the epistemology of Soja's Third Space, and the care needed when employing such terms to the prison. This research responds to the relative dearth of studies into sacred space and religion in prison, where religion is more often considered with an: '... aim at finding out to what extent religion favours pro-social behaviour' (Becci, 2011:2).

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[8] While noting the dynamic nature of the boundary between the sacred and the profane.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

3.1: Research Overview and Research Questions

This thesis examines the question: *How are time and space made sacred (if at all) in English and Welsh prisons?* It does so by investigating four key research questions: how the physical (1), imagined (2), and relational (3) dimensions contribute to the creation of sacred space and time in HMP Berwyn and HMP WWS, and (4) whether further factors beyond Edward Soja's Third

Space framework play a role. The research employs qualitative methods which support the limited deployment of a Third Space framework (considering the physical, imagined, and relational aspects of space) while allowing further reflections to emerge. The methods employed were: participant observation, interviews, and thematic analysis (coding). This chapter outlines the justifications for these, how they support the theoretical framework, and how limitations were acknowledged and mitigated where possible.

3.2: A Comparative Case Study?

Research at two establishments naturally holds comparative elements, although this research is not exhaustively comparative. The aim is not to say which 'is better', or to frame findings as a litany of differences and similarities, but to highlight shared and unshared themes to answer the thesis and research questions from a more informed position than a single-site study.

Studying two establishments allows for a greater understanding of how unique institutional features impact the phenomenon under study. Comparative Case Studies (CCS) enable researchers to explore points of similarity and difference that can draw out nuanced understandings of social phenomena (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017). While comparative methodologies raise ontological questions about where objects of study begin and end, I acknowledge that while Berwyn and WWS are two separate institutions, some corporate linkages and ideologies cut across both:

> *Multi-sited ethnography does not contrast places assumed to be unrelated; instead, it looks at linkages across place, space, and time* (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017:7).

This methodology is well-suited to examining how prison environments affect religious spaces, particularly given the differing historical, structural, and operational characteristics of the sites, and the shared emotional and physical economies that influence both. A single-site study was not appropriate as the research questions seek to make limited conceptual claims about the nature of prisons more generally. As Robert Stake notes:

> *Historical context is almost always of interest, but so are cultural and physical contexts. Others that are often of interest are the social, economic, political, ethical, and aesthetic contexts. The program or phenomenon operates in many different situations. One purpose of a multicase study is to illuminate some of these many contexts, especially the problematic ones.* (Stake, 2006:12)

Thus, the comparative element here supports the triangulation of findings and the emergence of themes and commonalities that would be obscured in a single-site study, ultimately increasing the generalisability of findings.

3.3: Sites of Inquiry

Architecturally, Berwyn and WWS represent opposite ends of the spectrum in terms of prison design. HMP Berwyn (opened in 2017) is purpose-built with rehabilitative ideals in mind. Its design includes larger (than average) cells, communal areas, and dedicated multi-faith spaces that reflect contemporary approaches to correctional architecture. HMP WWS is a Victorian-era prison, constructed in the 1870s with a heavy, enclosed architecture of that period. Its physical layout is based on the older 'panopticon' design model, with wings radiating out from a central point to maximise observation. Religious space at WWS consists of an enormous chapel, with

two supplementary rooms fashioned out of the old Roman Catholic chapel: the 'World Faith Centre' and a prayer room (mainly used for Islamic prayers). There is, clearly, a *prima facie*[9] architectural contrast which urges a comparison of how the different physical designs influence the perception of – and access to - religious and sacred spaces.

HMP Berwyn is a Category C training and resettlement prison in North Wales, built to Category B standards (TP Bennett, 2017), primarily housing men who are not considered to pose a high escape risk but require focused rehabilitative support. One of the largest prisons in the UK, it has a capacity of over 2,106 prisoners. In contrast, WWS is a Category B local prison, serving as a remand and short-term holding facility for men from the London area. Located in West London, it has a capacity of around 1,200 prisoners and a shorter average stay for prisoners, many of whom are awaiting trial or sentencing. These differences in category and security level mean that WWS often sees a more ephemeral population with acute, short-term needs, while Berwyn's population is more stable.

There is no publicly available data on the exact demographics of prisoners in the institutions and given the nature of incarceration, this is a fast-changing picture. Given different 'catchment areas', prisoner demographics at Berwyn and WWS will likely have different demographic pools (including faith affiliation) that influence religious scheduling. HMP WWS, situated in an urban London context, pulls from a more ethnically and religiously diverse population with notable rates of gang affiliation. In contrast, HMP Berwyn's population is drawn more broadly from across England and Wales, with fewer individuals concentrated from any single metropolitan area. A more dispersed population generally reduces the intensity of gang-related issues. This distinction urged a consideration of whether a relatively stable and broad-

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[9] 'On the face of it'

based prisoner population might interact with sacred spaces differently from one shaped by the specific social challenges of a high-density, urban prison. As will be explored, the two different regimes did indeed impact how the different prison cohorts experienced sacred spaces.

3.4: Participant Observation

Participant observation is the principal research method used. I spent a week (respectively) at each establishment, an immediate limitation of the research made necessary due to time constraints. Participant observation enabled an engagement in immersive fieldwork within both institutions, including observation and interaction with users of these spaces (Jacobs, 1974). This approach was deemed appropriate for understanding how sacred space manifests as it allowed physical consideration of the sites under discussion. It also allowed for capturing the subtleties of interpersonal dynamics, rituals, and individual expressions that might be lost in structured interviews, nuances raised in the literature review as essential to spatial theory and analysis. Roughly 8-9 hours a day were spent in each establishment, in chaplaincy areas, religious spaces, and on wing visits. Participant observation has seen plentiful use in prison research, but early research paid little attention to how researchers: '…gained entrance to the prison, how [they] developed informants, how [they] carved out a viable research role, or how [they were] able to gain inmate cooperation' (Jacobs, 1974:221-240). This is outlined below.

The two prisons were chosen through discussion with 'Chaplaincy HQ' within HMPPS Headquarters, who suggested a small number of prisons with diverse physical attributes and differing approaches to faith services. A preliminary conversation with the Chaplain General further contextualised these differences. Contact was made with several managing chaplains at establishments. Berwyn and Wormwood Scrubs became the most appropriate choices given

notable physical differences, and an introductory conversation was held to set expectations and negotiate access. Both sites produced comprehensive timetables that exposed me to the full range of weekly faith scheduling. Care was taken to stress that although an employee of MoJ, and formerly HMPPS, the researcher was attending in a purely academic capacity. Participant Information Sheets (Annex B) were shared with the institutions to distribute these to staff and prisoners before my attendance.

Prisoner cooperation was developed over time, with prisoners receiving verbal briefs of the project, normally at the start of sessions, with the second half of both weeks becoming more productive in terms of producing field notes and having direct conversations. Prisoners explained this was due to my presence slowly becoming expected, and familiar, and the news of the research spreading.

3.5: Sampling

Participants included all who used these spaces while I was present, allowing for a 'convenience' sampling strategy that allowed me to speak to a broad range of chaplains, prisoners, chapel orderlies, prison officers, and members of the public who came in for services. Convenience sampling was identified as the most used in a recent survey of prison research methods (Abbott, et al. 2018:4), and was the most obvious approach for this research given that a detailed schedule for my time in both prisons gave access to an exhaustive range of chaplaincy services and prisoners of all faith groups.

There are potential limitations to this approach that methodological literature urged I consider in research design (Golzar et al. 2022). Notably, due to regime constraints in the movement of prisoners in WWS, it could not be assumed that all people scheduled for a certain

service would be let out of their cells. This approach also (when coupled with participant observation) relies on an assertive observer to approach participants, which was slightly inhibited at WWS due to the need to quickly return men to their blocks. However, this did not totally impede research. Numerous wing visits and the ability to walk with prisoners to – and from – the wings allowed me to engage in long-form discussion, and speak to those who may not have attended religious spaces that week, or who do not attend services at all. This also mitigated a potential limitation in the research which was the risk of selection bias towards individuals with more regular access to chaplaincy spaces (those with a chosen religion), who may view chaplaincy more favourably than those who do not attend. More to the point, it was a chance to ask those who do not attend whether they found those spaces bereft of 'sacredness', and test direct challenges to the thesis and research questions. Wing visits also enabled conversations about personal spaces (cells) and their role in carceral religious life.

A potential limitation would have been a lack of engagement with those of no religion, or with those whose religion was not declared. Services at both institutions tended to be for those with stated religions, and Berwyn (at the time of research and writing) does not have a humanist chaplain[10]. However, the research saw plentiful engagement with those of no religion, either on wing visits, or in services which those of no faith attend for more cultural or functional reasons. Faith scheduling, in general, did not extend the same level of provision to those of these groups (although WWS does have a humanist chaplain, they primarily support the Faith chaplains with the delivery of their services, and perform wing visits). This (the provision of pastoral chaplaincy services to those of no faith) is a live debate across chaplaincy and was not a limitation or curiosity unique to this research.

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[10] However, Berwyn also had 0 registered Humanists among the prison population. Men who register as 'No Religion' receive pastoral support from the wider chaplaincy team.

3.6: Interviews

Interviews were originally intended as the cornerstone of this project; it was assumed that participant observation would not allow for exhaustive contact and conversation. This was not the case. Upon completion of the first week of research at Berwyn, the depth and breadth of field notes and the ample exposure time to chaplaincy staff rendered further interviews superfluous and would have placed an additional time pressure on chaplaincy staff. During research, I enjoyed hours in the chaplaincy office, discussing observations and ideas in great depth. These long-form conversation 'filled the gap' intended for formal interviews, benefitting from an organic and in-person informal setting, and often occurred while walking around the prison with chaplains. Therefore, semi-structured interviews were employed only as a supplementary method to capture the views of chaplaincy staff who were absent during observation week, and in one case, to speak to the Faith Advisor for Wales, who was previously the managing chaplain at Berwyn.

In total, 3 interviews were undertaken: a Faith Advisor and two chaplains, all of whom were absent during the research window. These allowed for some triangulation of assumptions and observations in a semi-structured manner, with some questions aligned to Third Space, and others emerging out of the discussion itself[11]. A similar interview schedule of 'core questions' was developed for each interviewee and provided ample time for a discussion of factors beyond the scope of Third Space. Interviewees completed a consent form (see Appendices), and all gave a higher level of consent, allowing the researcher to quote interviews verbatim where necessary,

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[11] See an example interview schedule and themes in the Appendices which note the **core questions** asked of all interviewees.

understanding that this may render contributions somewhat identifiable[12]. The informal, semi-structured, and open-ended nature of the interviews was adopted to emulate the informality cultivated in participant observation, which I had found successful in building camaraderie. For this reason, many productive questions emerged during the interview itself as conversations took unexpected turns beyond core questions[13], as interlocutors felt able to relax, pause, and give conceptual and candid responses. The interview transcripts (produced by MS Teams and then quality-controlled by the researcher) were coded in the same manner as field notes.

3.7 Archival Research

I spent time in the archival research holdings in the Cambridge University Library Rare Books reading room reading autobiographies of Victorian-age chaplains. Access to these holdings served as a means of contextualising the present-day construction of sacred spaces within a historical framework, enabling a comparison between past and current approaches to creating chaplaincy spaces in prisons. This was especially important since WWS is indeed, a Victorian prison. Therefore, given the reflections in previous chapters around the need to consider historical antecedents in case studies, archival sources provided insights into the evolution of chaplaincy within English and Welsh prisons and the ways these spaces were envisioned as part

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[12] Risks of – and comfort with - identifiability were fully discussed with interview participants prior to the interview. Where interviewees have been referred to in an identifiable manner ('Faith Advisor for Wales...', for example), explicit consent was sought to do so.

[13] For example, topics such as food/drink, questions regarding the 'post-COVID' regime, and discussions regarding HMPPS Faith and Belief Policy

of the disciplinary regime. It also helped to contextualise the *primus inter pares*[14] role of the Anglican church in prison chaplaincy. However, this activity was largely for context only, as the content of these works did not seem to bear on the creation of sacred space in contemporary settings (beyond accounting for the architectural intention of Victorian-era prisons and the disciplinarian nature of early chaplaincy), and so reflections on archival research are not presented here in detail.

3.8: Field Notes, Coding and Analysis

Field notes were written verbatim during periods of observation, capturing direct quotes, detailed descriptions of rituals and interactions, and reflections on spatial dynamics and emotional atmosphere. Observations were recorded by hand and later digitised, ensuring a comprehensive capture of nuanced interactions. A mix of shorthand and prosaic writing allowed for no Dictaphones, which literature attests may disrupt the 'organic' nature of conversation (Rutakumwa et al. 2020). This shorthand was expanded every evening into full sentences for coding.

Notes were coded and analysed using NVivo software, and the coding methodology took an integrative approach given the limited use of Third Space as a theoretical framework. Only three themes were decided in advance, to specifically answer the first 3 research questions: 'Physical', 'Imagined', and 'Relational'. Aside from this, the actual coding of field notes and interviews utilised inductive thematic analysis methodology (Naeem & Ozuem, 2023) where the codes were developed from the patterns in data collected (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). This

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[14] 'First among equals', a term used in literature to describe the primacy of the Anglican Church in the historical and contemporary Prison Chaplaincy Service.

ensured that the role of Third Space would be limited to an alerting one and would not ratify it as a hard interpretative framework, which would potentially obscure reflections beyond its scope. Indeed, codes emerged (forming themes such as 'Regime Issues') which escaped the Third Space rubric. This emergent coding method provided flexibility in interpretation, allowing the theoretical assumptions underpinning the research to be challenged by unexpected findings 'beyond the spatial' (Adu, 2019).

The integrative approach was taken so as not to: '...limit your ability to transcend to more conceptual and theoretical levels of analysis and insight' (Saldaña, 2013:95). In retrospect, it may have been simpler to explicitly test the Third Space framework, and thus take a hard content analysis position with entirely pre-conceived themes, or conversely to not adopt a sensitising framework at all. However, this integrative approach has produced data that is guided theoretically while still porous to allow for challenge of its assumptions, which has led to findings with a unique interpretative approach that raise issues of conceptual weight.

A further limitation of coding is that one needs to take care to not treat codes as entirely distinct realities. For example, the code discussed later 'Food and Drink' is deeply related to the code 'Normal Sociality', as the former largely enabled the latter. Coding, while representing: '...a datum's primary content and essence' (Saldaña, 2013:4) can also strip out – even with verbatim quotes – the tone and context in which something was said, and so effort has been made to situate codes in a lucid context, with illustrative examples, and an annex of images to support the reader. The interconnected nature of codes will also be highlighted where appropriate to challenge their rendering as discrete units (Miles, et al. 1994).

Coding allowed my own reflections to become part of the data; however, care was taken to triangulate initial observations and assumptions with interlocutors in interviews and during observation to not ratify any early misunderstandings.

3.9: Ethical Considerations

Methodological literature brought many ethical issues to the fore in research design and implementation, particularly in the use of participant observation (Jones, 1995). Firstly, consent is a constant negotiation, and while participant observation sheets were given in advance, care was taken to verbally explain the project to chaplains and prisoners daily and at the start of all religious services. The researcher made clear to participants that anonymity would be enshrined in the field notes, and they were given the opportunity to ask questions about the researcher, organisational affiliation, and the purpose of the research.

Ethical issues did arise. On the last day of observation at WWS a musician involved in a religious service fell ill, and I suggested that I could step in. After consulting with the chaplain, it was determined that intervention would blur my observational role, risking undue involvement, centring me in the 'story of the place' and disrupting natural dynamics. Such decisions are never ethically perfect and is reflective of a critical tension in participant observation: balancing researcher detachment with empathetic engagement, or the: '...moral realities and challenges of qualitative prisons research' (Liebling, 2014:481). This example highlights the attempt at *ethical reflexivity* in this study, where power dynamics and personal boundaries were negotiated with informants to protect participants' autonomy. My dual role as a researcher and employee, and

the tensions this brings, were apparent in this situation. I was interpellated[15] by the resource pressure of a missing musician as an employee, eager to 'work' and support the establishment, but restricted by the perceived ethical constraints of my methodological commitments. This situation impressed on me the importance of researcher reflexivity, negotiation with interlocutors, and adherence to pre-agreed boundaries as the best way to approach such dual pressures.

Another ethical challenge (at Berwyn) stemmed from the 'SDS 40' early release scheme, which was in motion during the data collection period. This affected conversations, as some individuals, understandably, focused on the possibility of being released for family events rather than on chaplaincy or sacred spaces. One informal discussion needed to be stopped mid-way due to a participant displaying an emotional need to process the magnitude of this potential change to his sentence. Noticing disengagement, I asked if the person would like to change the topic to discuss SDS40 and its impacts on them, which was agreed. This illustrates the flexibility afforded by participant observation, as I adapted to the participant's priorities. This is also a clear indication of where consent requires an assertive hand: while the participant did not ask the researcher to stop, the clear emotion and signs of disengagement were acknowledged and discussed. Thus, the success of navigating the ethical morass conjured by participant observation in prisons requires an assertive ethical reflexivity, an understanding of consent as in need of constant review, and a clear explanation to prisoners about their agency as participants in research.

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[15] *Interpellation* is an originally Marxist term often associated with Louis Althusser. I use it here in the manner rearticulated by Judith Butler to describe a process by which different aspects of our identity are called to the fore either by direct naming, or by situations in which we are urged to perform our identity, in this case, my sense of responsibility as an MoJ employee to help chaplaincy colleagues deliver a service (Butler, 1990)

The photos in the annex are used with the express permission of managing chaplains and contain no prisoners. The photos were taken for the purposes of this thesis on cameras by chaplains. It felt obvious that a dissertation so preoccupied with the material and physical dimensions of prison ought to provide some visual aid to the reader.

3.10: Procedure and Practical Reflections

The observation was largely unhindered, with both institutions providing generous access to chaplaincy services and users. Observations captured regular rituals, informal interactions, and a range of individual and group engagements. However, logistical adjustments were necessary due to unforeseen changes, including reducing the observation period from four weeks to two due to work commitments. While this reduced the potential depth of immersion, the shortened timeframe was mitigated by intensive daily observations, ensuring comprehensive data collection. Participant Observation allowed the researcher to soundly test the sensitising framework of Third Space, spending time in the *physical* spaces, getting a sense of the *imagined* through conversation with participants, and observing the *relational* dynamics at play in services.

Participant observation was undoubtedly easier at Berwyn than WWS. Berwyn has a chaplaincy *area* that I navigated freely. The fragmentation of chaplaincy space at WWS, the need for keys to move around the establishment, and the need to move men efficiently to/from wings drastically curtailed the ability to move ephemerally *between* spaces and required me to more opportunistic and assertive. 'Wing visits' took on a crucial value at WWS, whereas at Berwyn they were largely supplementary. In retrospect, the ease of movement should have been discussed in advance to assess the feasibility of participant observation in different regimes.

Wing visits were not planned but became a core part of research. Conversation felt different on the wings: at times, it was just disturbed by general noise and activity. Elsewhere it was intimate and personal, perhaps owing partly to the fact that wing visits were largely undertaken to visit people needing holistic care. Time spent speaking to men in their cells led to productive and lucid conversations, with a heightened sense of privacy, about a range of subjects including sacred objects in their rooms and private religious practice. I shadowed chaplaincy staff during wing visits, and this coupling approach was crucial. chaplaincy staff command a level of respect and deference that allowed me to explain the research and build camaraderie with live support from chaplains. This allowed for a level of access and relationship-building that would have been difficult to achieve otherwise.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

This chapter is presented in sections aligned to the four supplementary research questions, which cover the three elements of Third Space, with an additional section exploring those themes beyond that framework. Each section explores themes, with analysis and conceptual reflection supported by verbatim quotes. This chapter begins by outlining the physical establishment, with Annex A containing a range of photos to support the reader. There is no extensive analytic summary at the end of this chapter, instead, analysis is interspersed throughout.

Notably, most prisoners focussed their comments on the spatial aspects of spacetime, with time being specifically discussed only to emphasise the *regulation of it* and the sense that religious services 'pass too quickly'. There is therefore a relative 'flatness' to the discussion of

time throughout the findings, which participants suggested was a response to the irony of asking about time in a space in which time flows abnormally, and in which an increasingly large amount of time is spent in cells and on wings.

4.1: HMP Berwyn

Berwyn has two rooms used for faith services, both of which are in a multi-faith style and are situated next to each other. One room houses Christian, Buddhist, and Pagan (multi-faith Room 1, or 'MFR1', henceforth) religious objects and paraphernalia, with the second room containing Muslim, Sikh, and Hindu (MFR2, henceforth) items/shrines.   These rooms are in a wider chaplaincy area and are a short, seconds-long walk from the main chaplaincy office. The area also includes: a dedicated room for Orderlies; a room for ablutions (ritual Islamic washing); other meeting rooms; a tea/coffee area; a 'vestry' for the storing of religious items and books; toilets, and a room for the prisoner who runs the 'Listener' service (a peer support role). Orderlies base their operations in a room in the centre of the chaplaincy area, and hold various duties such as cleaning, food/drink preparation, and general operational support. More broadly, Berwyn is a visibly modern prison set in North Wales, with architectural intention:

> *The design premise of Berwyn is to help people rejoin society via a process of 'normalisation'. Within cells, strict safety standards have been applied. The prisoners are not called prisoners but 'men', and the cells 'rooms'. It's part of an evolution of UK prison design towards rehabilitation.* (TP Bennett, 2017)

MFR1 has a Christian aesthetic primacy; with an altar at the centre of the room and pews facing towards it. Christian symbols, such as several crosses, adorn the walls. The Christian symbology

is both Catholic and Protestant in nature, with plain crosses but also symbols of Mary and a cloth draping the altar with the '☧' ('chi ro') symbol often employed in Catholic heraldry. In one corner, a Buddhist altar displays a statue of the Buddha, and opposite this is a Pagan shrine with symbology corresponding to a range of Hellenistic, Heathen, and Wicca[n] traditions. A stoup of holy water is next to the entrance to MFR1.

MFR2 has an Islamic aesthetic primacy, with the room directing attention to two rows of Islamic prayer mats and a *minbar,* the chair used by an Iman during *khutbah* (Friday prayers) and other significant events. Two draping curtains flank this chair, with text venerating Allah and the Prophet Muhammad (respectively). Of note, this is the only room where we see any element of permanent separation; at the opposite end of the room, two drawn curtains shield a large image of the *Harmandir Sahib,* the Golden Temple of Amritsar, the pre-eminent spiritual site of Sikhism. This is flanked by two similar curtains inscribed with Sikh aphorisms. To the left of this, is a small *mandir*, or Hindu shrine, indicating a *puja (*a sacred space for worship); typically, the style used for home worship. It houses a statue of *Lakshmi* in a traditional *padmasana* (lotus position). It is flanked by separate photos of Hindu deities/avatars (Lord Rama, Sita, Hanuman, etc.) on the left and right. This small Hindu area is separated by a solid partition which obscures its view from most of the room. Thus, Berwyn's chaplaincy offices and religious spaces are contained in one distinct area of the prison

4.2 HMP Wormwood Scrubs

WWS has a Grade-II listed Victorian chapel, the largest in the UK, which sits in the centre of the prison bounds. It is complemented by multi-faith rooms a short walk away (in an old Roman Catholic chapel), all of which are some distance from the chaplaincy office, which prisoners

cannot go to, and staff need keys to travel between them. Chaplaincy architecture is therefore distributed across the prison in 3 spaces (office, chapel, and a conjoined World Faith Centre/ Prayer Hall) and is more difficult to navigate than Berwyn, especially when coupled with the lack of free movement of prisoners and the inability to mix wings due to gang affiliations.

The chapel is equivalent to a small cathedral and has a capacity for around 400 people. Romanesque arching and Portland stone floors contribute to a traditional, ecclesiastic aesthetic. The room is physically and aurally cavernous, and cold. It is, largely in purpose, a purely Christian space with a traditional altar, pulpit, and baptismal fonts. Paintings of saints on sack cloths (by prisoners), arch around the altar. Succinctly, it is not too dissimilar from a standard (albeit large) Protestant Church.

The WFC and prayer hall are conjoined rooms in what was a Roman Catholic church. The WFC is a small, multi-faith room with cabinets/shrines labelled for different religions (including Buddhism, Hinduism, Rastafarianism, and Sikhism) which can be opened for different faith services. It is unembellished, with no overt religious symbolism. The Prayer Hall is a large room, primarily for Islamic prayers, and has an Islamic aesthetic primacy, with a range of posters pertinent to Islam covering a long partition down the side of the room, which creates a discrete female praying area (for staff). Given the different architectural layout of WWS, there are less ancillary or connective spaces between these rooms.

4.3: The Physical

'The Physical' theme contains sensorial codes such as *quietness and silence*, *aesthetic beauty and distinctiveness*, and *physical sanctuary and safety*. These aspects all represent a physical

'setting apart' of chaplaincy / Religious spaces from the relatively loud, sensorially unpleasant, and unsafe aspects of prison life.

Quietness was highlighted as a comforting feature of religious spaces in both prisons:

> *When you close your eyes, you can hear the Priest's voice echo, like you're in a Church outside. You don't get this kind of silence anywhere in here, especially not on the wing. You can hear yourself think, or actually have a meaningful conversation. (Berwyn Field Notes, 2024)*

> *Listen – nothing! Do you know how rare that is here? Even when the lads come in, they sit down and shut up. They know why they're here. Even the gobby ones, they sit and have respect. They wouldn't be like that in a Church outside, but they know this is the only time we get to be like this. (WWS Field Notes, 2024)*

Silence emerged in various forms; the spaces in both chaplaincy areas were relatively quieter than the wings and the rest of the prison. The Quaker service at Berwyn cultivated an extended and undisturbed silence for reflection. Participants in most services were largely silent for the entirety. Interestingly, participants even described services as 'quiet' where a priest spoke for the duration, noting that the difference in sound was so extreme compared to wings, that even to hear one person speaking was relative quietness. Participants of services that emphasised silence communicated that 'time seemed to pass quickly' compared to time in cells in which time seemed to 'last forever', conveying a sense of the 'scarceness' of the respite offered by quietness.

Quiet and silence have been considered instrumental to religious and secular endeavours of reflection and meditation. Max Picard's philosophical work on silence highlights that it is

transformative because it removes us from the incessant noise of everyday life and allows us to think clearly:

We are left alone...we are afraid...In silence, man stands confronted once again by the beginning of all things... (Picard, 1948:6)

Scholars from a range of traditions (Merton, 1958; Lane, 2007) have identified the role of silence in the sanctification of space. Anthropological work has commented that communal silence, especially when facilitated by a leader, is a sign of group respect and submissiveness to the shared set of community values and is a key element in creating 'sacred liminal space' (Turner, 1966:103). In short, 'Silence is a place of thinking' (Vlăduțescu, 2014:49), and in the 'complex emotional world' (Crewe, et al., 2014: 57) of prison, where time away from wings is limited, the power of reflective silence is all the more distinctive, and rare.

Notable outliers were present, especially Friday (Islamic) prayers and the Roman Catholic mass at Berwyn. Discussion with a Muslim chaplain provided further context: he explained that talking during an Islamic service may constitute poor behaviour, or more subtle attempts at undermining the authority of the Imam or the prison officers. During Friday Prayers, I indeed observed officers informing participants to 'keep quiet' and 'shut up', which received an acerbic response, highlighting Gilliat-Ray's reflections on the 'resistance and agency' that can emerge in such spaces (Gilliat-Ray, 2005:289), and how silence as a product of group respect or submissiveness can be inverted. When speaking with congregants after Friday prayers, someone remarked:

They can't really do anything to you in here. It's your space, you wait all week for it, so some of them, yeah they get a bit lairy. They take the p-s a bit. Some of them have agendas as well, so it's about trying to make a bit of a reputation. (Berwyn Field Notes: 2024)

This links to another code explored later regarding the sense of ownership/purpose that participants feel towards spaces, and the reality of religious risk profiling. Alison Liebling has identified the 'increased risk responsibilisation', through which Islam is observed and regulated across the prison estate, leading to higher levels of suspicion (Liebling & Williams, 2023). Research affirmed this, albeit more so at Berwyn than at WWS, where participants during Friday prayers made a conscious effort to ask me questions such as 'are you an officer', and other assertive and pointed questions about the research. An interesting moment was observed where the intermittent talking during prayers disappeared instantly upon recitation of the Quran and the associated prostrations, with individuals self-policing each other to prevent further discussion. Conversation with the Iman revealed:

Even the ones who talk, they know that talking during the recitation of the Quran undoes all good deeds received up until that point. (Berywn Field Notes, 2024)

Thus, we have an example of where a theological perspective increases the perceived sacredness of a moment. While talking during the Imam's general preaching may be an acceptable albeit impolite gesture, talking during quaranic recitation holds potentially existential and metaphysical consequences. The silence cultivated here reinforces Turner's assessment of silence as a sign of adherence to an invisible or intangible social order, commanding an authority beyond the mortal and secular (Turner, 1966). Rastafarian and Buddhist services were conversely distinguished by group drumming and chanting (respectively), centring sound as a crucial part of the sanctification of these spaces, similar to the role of devotional music and chanting in these

religious traditions more generally (Murrell, et al., 1988) (Mabbett, 1993). Participants assigned these practices with the same capacity for reflection and meditative states as silence:

> *The chanting, it brings you to a meditative state. It's about feeling the repetition to let the world around you disappear.* (WWS Field Notes, 2024)

> *Drumming is a Rasta thing. Yes, it's sacred because we've done it since before slavery. It connects us to the past and makes your body feel alive.* (WWS Field Notes, 2024)

Music and silence produced similar affects in their ability to deliver participants to a heightened spiritual state, reminiscent of Durkheim's *collective effervescence*; enriched by their cultural and historical relevance, which participants confirmed were key, if not the most important, moments in the respective religious services. This suggests the role of silence and music played a role in setting apart distinct moments of worship as particularly transcendent.

Aesthetic Beauty and Distinctiveness emerged as the primary way participants perceived religious spaces vis-à-vis the rest of the space in both prisons. They referred to a range of physical attributes, including: general cleanliness; the presence of religious aesthetics and artefacts; the bareness of certain spaces; the church-like appearance of the chapel at WWS, or the presence of real Church pews in Berwyn; and general aesthetic difference. An interview with the Faith Advisor for Wales helped with the triangulation of these comments:

> *The design of the chapel [in Berwyn], if I think back to the way of working where you have a space that's cleared of everything. What I have tried to do is stretch that slightly, so that the place contains some of its 'set apartness' during its down times as well, which may make it easier for some to connect with. I'm more than happy for anyone to use the chapel, but I want them to*

know where they are so it doesn't become a multi-purpose sports hall. (Personal Interview, September 2024)

This makes it clear that an aesthetically religious and distinct space at HMP Berwyn was created with intent. It is indelibly marked as religious amidst a context of increasingly secular use of MFRs. It enables prisoners to move into a physical environment loaded with a clear aesthetic purpose, showing an interlocking with the code **'A sense of ownership or purpose',** discussed later. Recent academic attention has considered the phenomenology of architecture and: '...architecture's aesthetic power to elicit spiritual cognitive responses' (Bermudez, 2022), which includes otherwise '...profane buildings' (Bermudez, 2020:4). Thus, even MFRs can be designed in such a way as to direct attention to spiritual and religious meaning. The scale of physical attributes cited by participants shows the range of subjective, cultural, and religious antecedents that render religious spaces in Berwyn and WWS as 'beautiful' or distinct', but what further enables these associations is its divergence in aesthetic from the rest of the prison.

Participants were asked to explain how they felt religious areas looked compared to the rest of the prison:

Well, it's [the prison] one colour isn't it? Grey. It's like an asylum or derelict hospital. It's dilapidated. But the Church – well, it's like a cathedral really – it's from a different time. It's enormous, it doesn't look like anywhere else in here. (WWS Field Notes, 2024)

*Berwyn is like it's made from Tupperware. Everything is sleek and modern, but this [the chaplaincy area], they've made an effort. There's the stations of the cross on the wall, it's like its own contained bit of the prison. It's a part of the prison but also, it's not. (*Berwyn Field Notes, 2024)

This juxtaposition of difference through feelings of 'outsideness' permeates many reflections, underscoring how carceral religious architecture disturbs the perceived bounds of 'inside/outside'. Distinctiveness of spaces appeared to be crucial in the 'setting apart' of sacred spaces and attests the architectural view that: '...the design and experience of the built environment can assist spiritual development' (Bermudez, 2020:75). WWS benefits in this regard from an incredibly large chapel, which conjured feelings of nostalgia, pride, and awe in prisoners, who felt the presence of a 'church-like' building symbolised the presence of God. Participants also cited the famous prisoner paintings of saints in the chapel as emblematic of the history and prisoner ownership of this space, in a prison they largely described as being aesthetically 'barren' and 'overwhelming'.

Physical Sanctuary and Safety stressed how faith services act as a physical escape from the prison regime and the discontents of wing life:

> *I hate it. This is the only place I feel safe. There's so much spice going around, and they pass it through here too – but there's no violence here. They wouldn't dare. Don't get me wrong there's people in here I just can't look at, but when you come in, you're sort of 'under manners'.* (Berwyn Field Notes, 2024)

The MFRs at Berwyn mix a range of men (Vulnerable Prisoners, 'VP's', have separate services, by and large), and so there is the real risk of interpersonal tension permeating the space and disturbing a sense of safety. However, the physical removal from the wing to access religious

spaces seems to offer an escape from the: '...the under-regulated and violent *sub rosa*[16] economies present in England & Wales' (Martens & Crewe, 2024:15).

Spice[17] was a constant irritant in the social fabric of prison life that prisoners felt unable to get away from, a '... a fundamental part of prison life' (Norton, 2017:111). Several participants stressed that although there was obviously a functional use of chaplaincy space (swapping contraband), this was largely discrete or limited (particularly in WWS), and the space felt like a genuine reprieve from unabashed and explicit drug use, creating a space set apart from the material narco-economies of incarceration (at least, on the surface).

VPs expressed a unique perspective on physical sanctuary; at Berwyn, VPs attended their own services and live on their own wing, whereas at WWS, they are mixed through the standard population and may live on a specific floor. VPs in Berwyn commonly reflected that the chaplaincy area 'felt safe' and offered a socially active respite, reflecting broader reports of VP loneliness and exclusion due to their limited access to the wider prison community (HM Inspectorate of Prisons, 2023). The presence of VPs in the standard population was a point of contention for some non-VP prisoners at WWS, who were visibly angered at the potential presence of those convicted of sexual offences in sacred spaces. A handful of prisoners claimed that this diminished their ability to fully relinquish the anger and concerns of prison life.

As Soja notes, the 'physical' is not merely cartographic or material, it is a catalyst: '...an active force shaping human life' (Soja, 2009:2). The references to the physical dimensions of religious life in Berwyn and WWS make clear that architectural distinction and the physical

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[16] 'Under the nose'
[17] A synthetic cannabinoid

'setting apart' of these spaces from other prison environments contributes to a 'spiritual charge' and sense of purpose that reorients the focus of those attending services.

Time was a strong cross-cutting element of participants' physical experience of the religious spaces: 'I wait all week for this one hour. And then sometimes you aren't even let out of your cell' (WWS Field Notes, 2024), highlighting the inseparability of 'free time' with the regulations and bureaucracies of physical movement. Thus, religious spaces are set apart also by their brief tenure in the routines of prison life, which prisoners look to with anticipation.

4.4: The Imagined

Key codes that emerged under this theme included *Feelings of Sacredness, Sanctuary* and a *Sense of Ownership / Purpose,* ratifying a range of overwhelmingly positive associations of religious spaces in Berwyn and WWS, and endorsing the primacy of 'setting apart' as inherent to sacred spaces in both prisons.

Feelings of Sacredness were lucid in both establishments, but conversations had to be handled with care to drive interlocutors to pin down what this meant in real terms, owing to the slightly esoteric nature of the word. To support participants, I would give a broad definition of 'the sacred' as something 'set apart' for religious or reflective purposes, that might be considered holy, blessed, sanctified, or reverential. I would stress the secular potential of the term, acknowledging that sacred may be a state of being, moment, or space of magnified spiritual importance. Participants were actively asked to challenge or expand these definitions, should they wish.

A range of responses highlight the diversity of feelings of sacredness in Berwyn and WWS:

> *Of course, these spaces are sacred. God is here. When we gather and sing, praise him, he is here. It says that in the bible, and we respond to that. It's overwhelming. We are doing what we need to do to make this space, and ourselves, holy.* (WWS Field Notes, 2024)

> *I come because my family is Irish Traveller, we're all Catholic. Taking the bread, being blessed by the priest – it's very important. It's a part of, you know, Holy Communion, and being a Christian. I ask him to bless my cell if he can.* (Berwyn Field Notes, 2024)

This diversity is why this dissertation does not consider the sacred an objective property that can be determined solely through a positivist framework, given the range of theological, situational, and emotional antecedents. The first quote highlights a Christian view of sacredness in that religious spaces are those that may be closer to God. The participant references an oft-quoted biblical verse: 'For where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there among them' (Matt 18:19-20 KJV). The sense of this perceived presence being 'overwhelming' is reminiscent of Rudolf Otto's concept of the *numinous* in religious experience, a word which C. S. Lewis claims engenders: '...a sense of inadequacy to cope with such a visitant and of prostration before it' (Lewis, 1940:5-6), often associated with experiences in which the 'divine' is close at hand.

This is concordant with the sense of 'giving oneself over to God' that permeated the conversations with many Christian participants, who were more likely to perceive the actual presence of the divine and to reflect on moral responsibility and redemption. This was not

limited to services; a bible studies class at Berwyn focussed on building a pro-social religious identity through engagement with doctrinal interpretation and personal responsibility. The Chaplain leading this session noted: 'Even in your cell, they cannot turn off the light inside you'. Discussion with this chaplain later uncovered the explicitly theological notion of the 'sacredness of each person' underpinned this teaching:

A room cannot be sacred. The human is what is sacred. How can a room be more sacred than that which God himself has made in his image? (Berwyn Field Notes, 2024)

Irish Travellers were notable for a range of responses stressing the importance of attending faith services together and receiving *sacraments* for their cultural and familial resonances. Several Irish Travellers also stressed the need for rosary beads, holy water, and other Catholic paraphernalia for the sanctification of personal spaces. This is supported by a report from the Irish Chaplaincy in Britain (ICB), which notes that Irish Travellers tend to trust chaplains the most out of any prison staff, use religious objects to 'reference their community's faith practices', and found chaplaincy-led sessions 'reassuring and familiar' (Mac Gabhann, 2011:75). This marks the imbricated nature of 'the sacred' with a shared set of cultural values and beliefs, as per Durkheim's notion of *collective effervesence,* and Soja's acknowledgement that Third Space is a realm of 'the real and the imagined', where a physical or act (the consumption of the communion wafer) can accrue a range of symbolic associations (Soja, 1996:65).

The blessing of cells was witnessed in both WWS and Berwyn. Irish Travellers cited that this was an aspect of religious hygiene that they would avail themselves of regularly 'outside'. In WWS, the researcher witnessed a specific request for a blessing due to a distressing circumstance where a prisoner had been placed in the cell of a friend who had recently committed suicide and

was distressed due to cultural beliefs in ghosts. The chaplain offered a blessing that was partly religious in language, but also comforting, and acknowledged the passing in a gently emotional and meaningful manner. This is a stark rendering of the role of chaplaincy to perform services that may be described as 'sanctifying', but perhaps in a more secular sense as a form of holistic care or 'grounding', that is not performed by other staff.

Thus, chaplains, through the auspices and authority of their religious position, create sacred personal spaces beyond chapels and MFRs through blessings and individual provision of religious care, helping to bring some redress to the spiritual weight of incarceration. Numerous prisoners also decorated cells with religious paraphernalia, with one prisoner noting that just the sight of an image of Jesus helped him to get through each day, with other prisoners acknowledging the talismanic, emotional, and cultural value of religious objects such as prayer cards, crosses, and incense, which helped to 'set apart' personal spaces, celebrate religious identity, and aid personal religious practice.

The following quote focuses our attention on how 'the sacred' has been helpfully re-challenged by participants, especially those of no religion:

I don't think I'd use that word, particularly. Sanctuary, yes. But sacred – that feels religious. I'm just a bit uncomfortable with that. When I meditate, there's no God. Sacred to me means it has a kind of religious thing going on (WWS Field Notes, 2024)

Although the literature acknowledges secular sacred experiences, the word still carries a religious connotation for some. Thus, many participants re-translated the word back as 'sanctuary', to denote a heightened sense of spiritual, emotional, or reflective awareness or peace felt in these

spaces. Some prisoners stated that they attended Christian services and bible study as atheists, due to cultural attachments, but also for the feeling of sanctuary these spaces provided, and for the precious time out of cells. In this vein, it's important to stress that for those not fully availing of the *religious* potential of these spaces, the level of pleasure derived from a brief escape from the toils of prison life were described as a form of secular sacredness.

A sense of ownership and/or purpose was instrumental not just for prisoners, but also for chaplains in 'activating' spaces with religious value, orienting them to the needs of adherents, and in creating a sense of tenure and sacredness over the space. During a wing visit with a chaplain at WWS, I was questioned on the exact definition of 'space' employed in the research. A useful discourse then ensued on the meaning of space with the chaplain, where they offered a competing definition: 'A place is a space with a story'. This definition has proved to be instrumental in highlighting the relevance of this code, and how MFRs specifically navigate the need for religious harmony and avoid claims of desecration or related tensions.

During a Hindu service in the World Faith Centre (an MFR) at WWS, the researcher witnessed the segmentation of space with carpets, and during the start of the service, chaplains attending to a separate service walked through, and around the carpets. The Hindu chaplain explained that the carpets helped to demarcate the 'active' religious space from the more transitional parts through which others could walk through without causing extreme disruption. This act of compromise and brokerage helped to lubricate the use of two adjoining spaces, and to reduce any perceived religious tensions, highlighting the role of chaplains in taking pre-emptive decisions to protect a loose sense of tenure and ownership of multi-faith Spaces.

MFRs are not just a prison invention and are found in airports, Probation offices, and other public spaces. In prison, they are borne out of a desire to maximise space and reflect the: 'multifaith, multicultural mode of chaplaincy', and are an approach to creating shared religious space seen across Europe (Tipton, 2011:3). In many ways, the use of MFRs resembles the changing nature of chaplaincy over the last few decades into a multi-faith team focused on providing holistic emotional and spiritual care, as opposed to converting (Tipton, 2011:4). However, MFRs, like delivering multi-faith chaplaincy services, have been recognised as needing compromise and respect to ensure that diversity of use is conducive to positive spiritual experiences, rather than creating opportunities for feelings of desecration, which this leads into a more general comparison of the two broad conceptual approaches taken to the 'multi-faith' approach in Berwyn and WWS.

In Berwyn, all religious symbols and iconography (with a few exceptions) stay out and visible in MFR1 and MFR2, and the interview with the Faith Advisor for Wales revealed that this was an intentional approach that represents a 'Third Way' in chaplaincy design. The 'first way', is to leave spaces largely neutral (as WWS' 'World Faith Room' largely is), allowing faiths to bring out their objects for worship, and then putting them back. The second way is to accept the Christian aesthetic dominance of a space, perhaps a traditional chapel, with different faith groups practising within it. The Third way is a radical approach that seeks to expose all faiths to the numerous active 'stories' of the space at once, which tries to urge a sense of shared and concurrent ownership, as opposed to ownership that is tenured, brokered, and partial.

Neither of the approaches at Berwyn or WWS seem inherently 'better than the other', and both were largely appreciated and understood by participants as being pragmatic uses of space in prisons with diverse cohorts. At Berwyn, prisoners expressed genuine pride in practicing

their faith in rooms with a diversity of religious symbols and commented that this encouraged faith literacy and mutual respect, with one prisoner noting surprise that other prisons did things differently. Muslim participants (at Berwyn), when asked how they felt about the image of the Golden Temple being covered, understood this as a preventative measure, given its visual centricity in the room, and stressed that they felt no issue with praying in its presence. That is not to say that there were no religious tensions, or times when faith scheduling caused conflict due to administrative error, which will be explored in the 'relational' sub-chapter.

The research did not find evidence to suggest that either MFR approach enabled or inhibited the creation of 'sacred space' in a noticeable manner. Prisoners seemed generally positive, or ambivalent, about sharing space with others[18], suggesting that in Berwyn and WWS this is not a heavy determinant of experience senses of the sacred.

Returning to the Hindu service in the WWS World Faith Centre, a cupboard with the word 'Hindu' written on top was opened, revealing a large shrine filled with a profusion of statues and images of avatars/deities. The service focussed attention on this shrine, and the rest of the room (in its aesthetic neutrality), seemed to disappear as the focus increasingly homed in on the Hindu shrine. The chaplain noted that the intention for the shrine was for it to 'activate' the space with intention, focus, and a story, that overlaid a neutral MFR with a sense of religious ownership. Notably, Christians in WWS did stress the importance of the chapel to their worship, noting a sense of pride to attend services in the biggest and most famous chapel in the prison estate.

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[18] In response to such questions, several prisoners humorously reflected on the fact that prison life is often characterised by having to accept sharing personal spaces.

Further reflections on places and stories followed throughout the week at WWS, including the ethical reflection detailed in the methods chapter. It was not for the researcher to take a leading role in this story, nor was the method 'active participation', which would entail an entirely different research design and ethical clearance. However, that is not to say that the participant observer can totally avoid becoming a part of the story. During a Buddhist service, the researcher sat away from the meditating participants but was actively invited to sit with them and take part. The decision was made that it would be appropriate to do so, and the researcher engaged actively with the session for an hour. Was this ethical or unethical? Sometimes, there is no perfect answer, but to refuse the invitation in this setting would have potentially presented a cold detachment that would have written off an opportunity to build camaraderie and show respect for the very religious practice under observation. In that sense, I became part of the story, albeit with the consent and invitation of prisoners. I was able to appreciate the silence and calm of meditation, and the solemn camaraderie formed in a shared religious experience, just a bit more than if I had remained 'set apart', in my chair.

4.5 The Relational

Key codes of the relational theme include *Food and Drink, Chaplaincy Managerialism,* and *Pro-Social Religious Identity Building.*

Food and Drink was a code that was primarily limited to Berwyn. In Berwyn, it was common for men to receive a hot drink after services, given that the MFRs are in the same corridor as a hot drink station, and this allowed for the sharing of food and drink (served by Orderlies) and organic conversation for anywhere up to 15 minutes. Conversely, services at WWS would end with prisoners needing to be quickly escorted back to cells, often owing to the inability to mix wings. This meant organic conversation could be more easily broached in

Berwyn, as the post-service chatter provided ample opportunity for long-form discussion and relationship-building. At WWS, this would be largely replaced by speaking to prisoners on the wings, or while walking to and from services with prisoners, which often did not occur at Berwyn.

Enjoying food and drink after services (or during them) is a normal and important part of ritual and is a common social element of religious services. For prisoners, it represented a moment of 'intense normalcy' that briefly obscured the reality of the carceral environment. A particular moment illustrates this: after a service at Berwyn where members of the public joined for worship, the whole cohort began to mingle in the corridors with coffee and biscuits, and the prisoners became entirely indistinguishable from members of the public. One chapel orderly noted:

> *In that moment, you feel equal, normal. People don't ask 'are you a prisoner', even though they might already know. But it's like after a Sunday service outside. It's such a basic thing but it means something special in here.* (Berwyn Field Notes, 2024)

Creating spaces and experiences that foster normative sociality were particularly enriching for prisoners in a space in which sociality is regulated and specific to the carceral environment. To this extent, food and drink, even coffee and a biscuit, is conducive to sacred carceral space in Berwyn as it supports the 'setting apart' of the space from an establishment in which free movement and snacks are regulated, enhancing the feelings of freedom and independence that come with organic conversation, especially with members of the public.

Similar comments attested to the chaplaincy as both a less criminalising space and more normal social environment at Berwyn, with participants describing the interconnected and 'open'

chaplaincy space offering a sense of free limited free movement. Prisoners – in both WWS and Berwyn – stressed that relationships with chaplains felt free of disciplinary aims, with chaplains primarily concerned with their welfare and talking to them more as equals, feelings concordant with literature across the European jurisdiction (Becci, 2011).

Food and drink can also be an important cultural signifier, and there were some tensions in this regard (Brumberg-Kraus, 2024). Chaplains mentioned that great thought had to go into the provision of snacks or other light refreshments, as in prison these can take on new roles as rare commodities and could lead to prisoners changing their stated religion to gain access to such goods or complaining about inequities. While these slight discontents of food do not directly contribute to the creation of sacred space, they may indeed inhibit the 'imagined' of chaplaincy by inviting feelings of grievance and inequity into the perception of faith delivery for certain groups.

Chaplaincy Managerialism largely relates to the ways in which chaplains (including volunteer chaplains, chaplains who volunteer their time; and chaplain volunteers, non-chaplains who volunteer to support chaplaincy) conduct their faith delivery as a team and individuals. Both chaplains and prisoners attest with alacrity that the chaplaincy are crucial in cultivating sacred space:

> *We wouldn't be here if it wasn't for them. This is just a room but it's them that I trust. I pray, obviously, and that's what matters, but to have someone who you know has given their life to this. You can trust them to lead you. You wake up on the wing and you don't know which screw you've got. But I know I'll see the same chaplain every week.* (WWS Field Notes, 2024)

Chaplains regularly went above and beyond their stated role in both prisons and were in wide agreement that they acted as a bulwark against officer churn and low experience, often able to 'lubricate' bureaucracy to 'get things moving' for prisoners. Chaplains in both prisons, unprompted, recited the aphorism: 'All roads run through chaplaincy' on numerous occasions. Prisoners were also cognisant of this, seeing chaplains with an elevated level of respect compared to other prison staff, often saving up grievances or requests to beseech chaplains for support. Chaplains, for many, represent the epitome of nun-judgemental pastoral care and fulfil a unique role in prisons which many may experience as troubling, unfamiliar, and difficult to emotionally navigate (Tipton, 2011:4). This is relevant to the creation of sacred space: it is chaplains who lead prisoners through services, and their perceived acumen and leadership is essential, as literature attests, to their perceived ability to 'mediate the divine' (Cooke & Macy, 2005:22). A chaplaincy, which is seen as efficacious and holistically broad in its service to prisoners, commands a greater image of efficiency and respect among the prison cohort. Prisoners reflected this, often stressing that they 'behaved' in the presence of chaplains and in services, given their ability to navigate prison bureaucracy with unusual aplomb.

Chaplains, while confirming their various theological definitions of the sacred, were primarily concerned with balancing two key elements of their job: (1) the reactive daily pressures of responding to crisis and those in need and (2) facilitating long-term dialogue, rehabilitation, and spiritual development in prisoners. When asked about how they navigate working with those with vastly different religious beliefs, chaplains tended to give one of two answers: one answer would be that they would avoid discussing theological matters in any serious manner - or at all - with colleagues and simply focus on their own duties. The second, would focus on a genuine jubilance and pleasure in working in an environment of impassioned religiously diverse people,

and they would engage in discussion from a place of curiosity and interest. During the research, I witnessed long-form religious dialogue in the chaplaincy office, discussions of theological concepts and religious approaches to criminality. It was clear that chaplains, while all representing something slightly different to the communities they served, were actively straddling the two identities: 'Secular Civil Servant' and 'Religious Leader'.

The role of managing chaplains in both prisons was critical in ensuring the smooth running of chaplaincy services and in the maintenance of a shared values system, camaraderie, discipline, and prioritisation. Chaplains in both prisons, when asked about the key things that ensure the apt delivery of faith services, made clear the strong leadership of managing chaplains was essential. One managing chaplain summed this up aptly: 'Chaplains are supporting their own communities, whereas I need to ensure all people of all religions get the right treatment' (WWS Field Notes, 2024), reinforcing the claim that diversity needs direction and careful cultivation to ensure that potential tensions are placated (Tipton, 2011). Compromise, either regarding administrative quirks of faith scheduling, minor conflict between chaplains, or other disgruntlements which risked disturbing the efficacy of faith delivery, were in many cases resolved through quick adjudication by the managing chaplains, who ensured that chaplains were focussed on delivering effective holistic care.

This is relevant to the cultivation of sacred spaces, as it is the chaplains who are charging spaces with stories and meaning, writing and delivering sermons, and building positive personal spiritual relationships with prisoners. As a prisoner at Berwyn put it: '...They were the first smile I saw in here, the first person to ask me if I was effing okay' (Berwyn Field Notes, 2024). Chaplains are thus not only responsible for cultivating spaces with religious meaning and

direction, but for leaving prisoners with positive experiences and emotional care that, again, set apart the chaplaincy experience from the more disciplinarian relationship with prison officers.

Pro-Social Religious Identity Building was of particular importance to participants who were notably devout or determined with their spiritual development:

> *I've done some horrible s***. But I've always been a Christian. I left God, he never left me. I never read my bible, but in here, I think I'm here for a reason. This is the only place I would have met God again and I'll leave here a Christian.* (Berwyn Field Notes, 2024)

Christian participants tended to stress the redemptive power of faith and would exert effort to explain the renewal of their Christian identity in prison, with the phrase 'I have been 'born again'' appearing many times in field notes. Other groups, such as Rastafarian participants, for whom their political beliefs were deeply entwined with religious identity; found the opportunity to attend a regular Rastafarian service and debate historical and political matters as critical to their Rastafarian identity, and similarly expressed a pride at having developed this identity with their peers in prison. Irish Travellers, as discussed, emphasised partaking in sacraments and blessings as a form of religious hygiene, tended to sit together in mass, and emphasised the 'normality' that attending mass engendered. Buddhist participants found that the opportunity to speak in their own languages offered a distinct and at times emotional sense of 'home' that also reinforced the power of religious services. For all groups, what it means to be 'a religious person' will differ, but in Berwyn and WWS, it was clear that all groups found solace in the nostalgia, reflection, sociality, and camaraderie that spending time with one's religious community invites.

Rituals and momentous occasions in one's life outside of prison are often marked by the community 'coming together' to mark this occasion (Cooke & Macy, 2005:26-27), and while individual religious practice is also a defining hallmark of religious life, it is common for services across religious traditions to emphasise the relational aspects of faith to consolidate religious identity. This was reflected in the research, but again, the carceral regimes of regulation and the pains of imprisonment seemed to further inflate the sense of solace and spiritual weight that the relational aspects of religious space made available to prisoners.

4.6: Beyond Third Space

The primary theme that emerged beyond the Third Space framework which impacts the proliferation of sacred space in prison, concerns *Regime Issues*, which contains several inhibiting elements of the wider establishments that change the context in which faith services are delivered, received, and perceived. At times, they physically prevented people from attending services, provided a distraction *during* services, affected the ability of chaplaincy to provide direct holistic care on wings, or left an impression of a lack of empathy that prisoners associated with chaplaincy.

WWS presented as having the most inhibiting regime regarding access to sacred/religious spaces. Prisoners, staff, and chaplains all acknowledged that the prison had not returned to its pre-COVID operational state, with restrictions on prisoner movement ('free flow') meaning it took longer to physically deliver prisoners to – and from – wings. All constituencies noted that prisoners were spending an increased amount of time on wings or in cells (at both establishments), with this being cited as having a pointedly negative impact on morale and prisoner mental health. A range of commentary has cited the post-COVID regime as creating a

'post-COVID torpor' across the estate, compounded by staff shortages, staff inexperience, and high attrition. Succinctly, this:

> *...means that education, training, work, and other activities are cancelled at short notice, that healthcare appointments are delayed, and that people spend even more time locked in their cells* (Coomber, 2022).

The sacred, clearly, does not form in a vacuum spirited away from the regime. Through the research, the emotional disposition of prisoners and their availability to engage was clearly impacted by these regime pressures, and in many cases these pressures directly (physically) or emotionally impeded their spiritual development.

Prison officers themselves were also cited as being inhibitive to prisoner access to religious services, with a stronger affirmation of this in WWS:

> *You wake up, ready for church, and they don't let you out of your cell. You're sat there wrecking your brain like 'Whose fault is this?'. You don't want to be angry at the chaplain, but you've been waiting all week for this. And then it's gone* (WWS Field Notes, 2024).

A particular event at WWS highlights this. A man had been planned to be baptised on a Sunday, having responded well to Christian services. Due to an administrative error that could not be fully discerned, he had been not let out of his cell and he missed his baptism, causing distress. Nearly all religious groups at WWS noted examples of these lapses, and at times visible irritation was witnessed towards chaplaincy staff over these. It was clear that in some cases, these lapses had become sticking points in the minds of prisoners, who began to associate it with a

direct lack of care from the institution, but were often quick to stress that they knew chaplaincy 'were not to blame'. Other instances of prison officers vaping and eating during services also drew negative remarks from prisoners, who found these actions to be disrespectful, drawing their attention from services and providing an opportunity for feelings of grievance.

Wider criticisms in both prisons of staff behaviour seemed concordant with the critiques of 'new penological managerialism'. Some prisoners felt that prison officers '...viewed them as numbers, not people' and were not 'static' enough to get to know their religious beliefs and needs. They believed that this led to the lapses explored above, a lack of empathy and camaraderie, and increased feelings of isolation on wings. Liebling offers a useful summary of the difference between prisons of the 'new penological order' (with strong features of managerialism and 'risk management'), where: '...staff did not know their prisoners but experienced them as dangerous and unfathomable' with the 'old penology', where strong prisoner-officer rapport enabled the 'foundation of dynamic security and legitimate order' (Liebling, 2015:93).

Prisoners described Berwyn as an establishment of extremes: while the provision of services was described as good or exceeding expectations, certain basics (such as having cell phones set up) were described as taking an inordinate amount of time, leaving prisoners without outside communication during (at worst) the first few weeks of their imprisonment. While it is ancillary to the production of sacred space, it is a crucial reflection as the regime issues in both prisons cultivated a feeling of general grievance and despondency that seemed to eat at the energy, engagement, and emotional investment of prisoners that chaplaincy requires to deliver meaningful spiritual experiences. Thus, the distinct regime issues of both prisons impeded to some degree the ability of prisoners to readily available to engage with and access religious services, long-term spiritual development, and sacred spaces.

Across the range of themes explored above, we see that chaplains largely encourage prisoners to practice religion in ways like 'outside' to enforce a sense of normalcy, with a heightened focus on reflection and rehabilitation. This carves out experiences that provide reprieve from the emotional, material, and disciplinarian economies of prison life. Several requisites and antecedents to carceral sacred spacetime have emerged, but cutting across all of them is a critical action of 'setting apart' these spaces (whether chapels, MFRs, or cells) and experiences from the rest of prison life, offering a positive starkness that increases the meaning of these spaces and services to participants. So too have moments of *collective effervescence* appeared useful in sanctifying space, or in charging spaces with stories. Time has been communicated by participants as a discrete but ever-present reminder of the ephemerality of access to sacred spaces, summed up succinctly:

> *Any time in here is sacred. We barely get any of it. It's not like outside where you go to church once a year and need a calendar to tell you when to go. We go when we can. Time doesn't mean the same thing in here, it's not ours.* (WWS Field Notes, 2024)

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Pursuant to the thesis question, this research indicates that there are sacred spaces in Berwyn and WWS, as affirmed by chaplains, orderlies, and prisoners. Given the shared operational and physical systems of English and Welsh prisons, it is possible that these findings speak to a broader reality across the estate. Sacred spaces in the sites observed are places of transformation, religious value, spiritual development, hidden functional use, perceived 'outsideness/normalcy', and places where the regime may be simultaneously avoided and reaffirmed. They are dense and complicated realms with physical, imagined, and relational capacities. They are places both familiar and unfamiliar to the non-incarcerated. They are a unique thread in the emotional texture of prison life.

Sacred spaces in prison seem to hold true to the definition offered in literature: spaces and times set apart in physical, imagined, and relational terms. Similarly, participants and interlocutors confirmed that the three elements of the Third Space framework were relevant to their experiences of sacred spaces. They also concurred with relevant literature that the role of (for example) quietness, food, identity, *collective effervescence,* and religious leadership in cultivating sacred experiences are important in prison. Clear too, is that changing prison regimes also physically and emotionally inhibit prisoners from 'giving themselves fully' to faith services.

Architectural literature and interviews explored in this thesis make clear that conscious thought has gone into the design and demarcation of physical space, both in the Victorian religious architecture of WWS and the radically multi-faith approach at Berwyn. Literature and research attest to the psychological impacts this has on residents. However, research also suggests that there are multitudinous factors to consider: the post-COVID prison regime, bureaucracy, the new managerial approach, prison cultures, chaplaincy management, and specific prison

concerns (gangs, etc.) are also strong factors in determining access and efficacy of faith interventions and how prisoners experience religious space.

We should therefore avoid consideration of carceral religion through a conceptual silo that prioritises only a few aspects, and Soja's Third Space was radically open enough to allow me to capture a breadth of material and emotional economies that enabled and disabled sacred spaces. Prisons are not static, and continue to face emerging political, economic, and managerial constraints. This research suggests, albeit in a highly limited fashion, that traditional definitions of the sacred may struggle to exhaustively account for processes of spatial sacralisation in prison contexts.

Whether or not a space or time is to be deemed sacred is largely subjective and rests on multiple factors. Of course, a religious space, or a 'space set apart' in a setting defined by high levels of danger, aggression, violence, and regulated space/time is a prime space for feelings of 'sacredness' in that it presents a sanctuary from the prison regime and its discontents. However, these moments are also open to tension, or more subtle reminders that the regime still flows around and through them. Perceptions of sacredness are also dependent on the different theological concepts that demarcate an object, space, or time as having sacred value. While this research sought to appraise sacred space *and* time, time took on more of a cross-cutting role for participants, with the structured regulation of personal time in prison heightening a sense of the sacred by cultivating scarcity and anticipation of access to physical spaces.

Future research may further expose the limitations of this thesis. A range of literature, for example, highlights the ways in which Women's experience of religious life and ritual differs from that of men (Relke, 2002), including in carceral settings (Ellis, 2023). This dissertation could

not attempt to make any certain claims about the sacralisation of space in prison *per se* when it has not explored the experiences of women. This thesis has also only considered two prisons that are not inclusive of the diverse regimes, categories, and emotional economies across the English and Welsh prison estates. International and comparative approaches may also uncover different findings in systems that do not employ a christian chaplaincy framework, such as Japan (Lyons, 2021), in which the core function of chaplaincy serves a notably different set of values and purposes. A range of different research and coding methods could also further illuminate the subject, highlighting the interconnected nature of the elements explored in this thesis. There is also a range of theoretical frameworks that could orient research beyond spatial ones, including perspectives from phenomenological (Tan, 2001) and ritual studies (Turner, 1966), in addition to a wide range of geographical frameworks, including psychogeography (Richardson, 2015) and emotional geography (Pile, 2010), which may help to press aspects of sacralisation with greater specificity, as opposed to the more wide, conceptual, and cursory approach taken here. This approach, it is hoped, is useful in its invitation of broad conceptual reflections on the dynamic and complicated process of the sacralisation of space in prisons.

The last word goes to a prisoner from Berwyn who sums up the transformative power of chaplaincy and sacred spaces in prison:

> *When you say sacred... A lot of lads in here might not call it that. We're just thinking about getting out of the cell. But yeah, when you sit and think about it, when you really appreciate how far you've come in here, it wouldn't have happened without this space. There's nowhere like it. This place is cruel, but they call it 'Hotel Berwyn'. It isn't. I've lost everything in here. I don't know if I believe in God but there's something happening here. Yeah, it's a cup of coffee and a chat, but bloody hell,* **I actually feel like myself again.** (Berwyn Field Notes, 2024)

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Appendices

Annex A: Photographs

Items 1-3: MFR1 in Berwyn

Items 4-6: Pagan Altar in MFR1, Berwyn
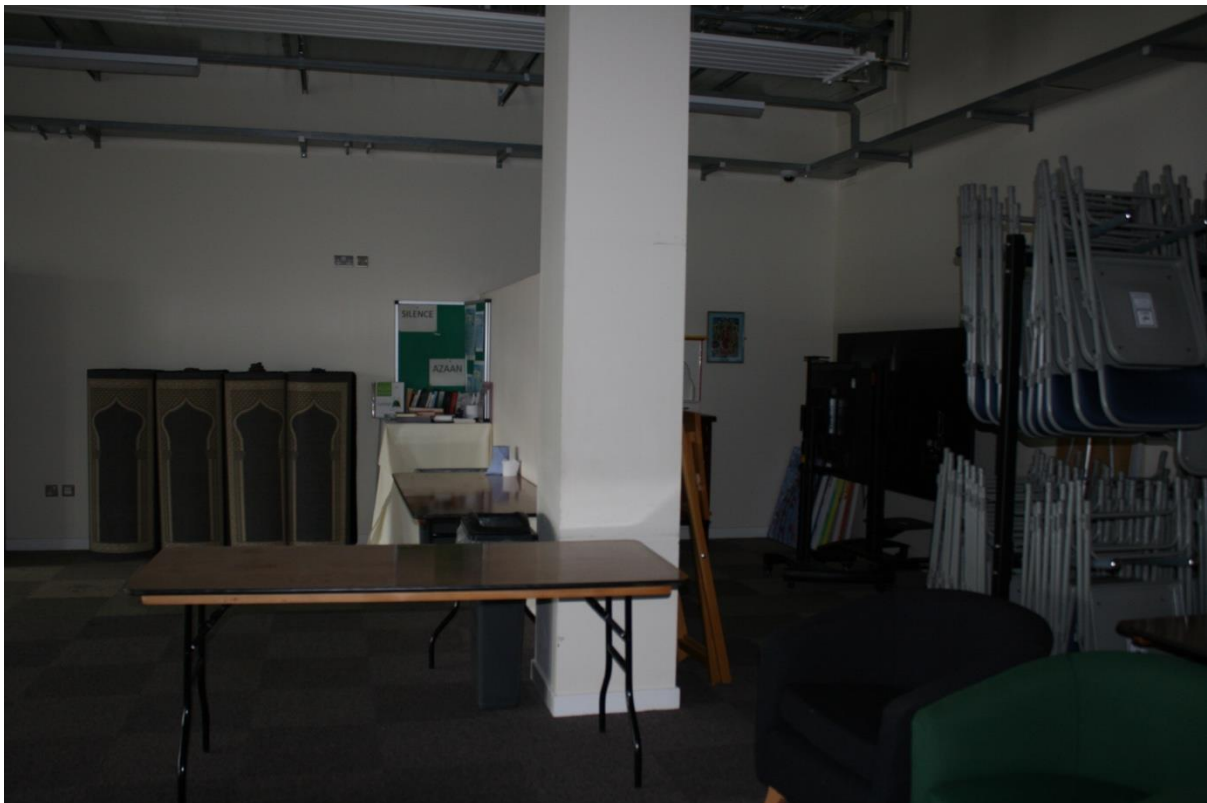
Items 7-9: Covered and Uncovered 'Golden temple' in Berwyn MFR2

Items 10 – 12: MFR2 in Berwyn

Items 13-15: Berwyn chaplaincy Area

Items 16-18: The chapel at WWS

Items 19-21: Radha-Krishna Temple in the WWS Multi-Faith Room

Items 22-24: Prayer Hall in Wormwood Scrubs

Annex B: Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

Research Project: Understanding Sacred Spaces in English and Welsh Prisons
Researcher: Risteard McDonald
Degree Course: MSt Applied Criminology, Penology, and Management at the University of Cambridge
Address: 102 Petty France, Ministry of Justice
Contact: Via Chaplaincy Staff

DISCLAIMER: Throughout the week, the researcher ("Rish") will deliver a shortened verbal version of this information. Chaplains are also available to explain the research and the contents of this sheet at any time. You are also welcome to direct any requests for information, complaints, and queries through your prison establishment.

For transparency, the researcher works for the Ministry of Justice in HR, is a published academic in the field of Criminology and Religion and is completing a HMPPS-funded degree of which this research is an element.

Invitation to Participate
To decide to take part in this study, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. If there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information, please contact me using the details above. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.
Purpose of the Study
This study aims to explore whether and how time and space are made sacred (special, spiritual, powerful, important, ...) in two English and Welsh prisons. It focuses on where and when spaces are considered sacred, how these spaces become sacred, and how/why these spaces are important to you. The study will be completed between July and September 2024.
Why Have I Been Chosen?

You may be in scope for this research if you use the spaces I will be researching in while I am there. Your experiences and insights are valuable to understanding the role of these spaces.

Do I Have to Take Part?

Participation is entirely voluntary. If you decide not to take part or wish to withdraw, you can do so by informing a chaplain by October 1st, 2024, who will let me know - and I will not include any aspect of your presence in my 'field notes' (a book in which I will write down my observations). Your decision will not affect you in any way. I stress that all my field notes are entirely anonymised.

What Will Happen If I Take Part?

As a participant, you will be observed during religious services and worship sessions. These observations will involve taking detailed field notes but will not require any interaction during the activities. Additionally, I may have informal conversations with you to understand your experiences better. No formal interviews will be conducted with you, nor will I collect your name or any other defining information about you such as personal data.

For those with extremely specific roles, such as Orderlies and Chaplains, I will make particular effort to ensure your anonymity, and there is a separate consent form for interviewing these roles to gain your consent for interviews after my observation. These are, again, voluntary.

What Do I Have to Do?

Just act as you would. Your regular participation in religious activities is all that is required. No video or audio recordings will be made, and all notes will be anonymised. I do welcome you talking to me about your religion and experiences of your religious life in prison.

Are There Any Possible Disadvantages or Risks in Taking Part?

There are no foreseeable risks or disadvantages to taking part in this study. The observation is non-intrusive, and any conversations will be conducted respectfully and confidentially.

What Are the Possible Benefits of Taking Part?

While there are no direct benefits to you from participating, your involvement will contribute to a better understanding of how religious spaces function in prisons, which may inform future improvements in prison religious services.

Will My Taking Part in This Study Be Kept Confidential?

Yes, all information collected about you will be kept strictly confidential. However, the following information has to be disclosed: behaviour that is

against prison rules and can be adjudicated against, illegal acts, and behaviour that is potentially harmful to the research participant (e.g., intention to self-harm or complete suicide) or others.

What Will Happen to the Results of the Research?

The results of this research will be published in a master's thesis in January 2025. You will not be identified in any report or publication. If you wish, you can obtain a copy of the published thesis by contacting a chaplain, as I will make the thesis available to them upon publication.

Who Is Organising and Funding the Research?

This research is funded by HMPPS as part of an MSt Postgraduate degree in Applied Criminology, Penology, and Management at the University of Cambridge.

Ethical Review of the Study

This project has been reviewed by the HMPPS National Research Committee and the relevant ethics committee at the University of Cambridge.

Annex C: Participant Consent Form

Participation Consent Form

This form is to be read in conjunction with the **Participant Information Form** but is specifically for HMPPS Chaplains and Chapel Orderlies who may be formally interviewed as a part of the project. As detailed elsewhere in my NRC application, consent will be obtained from prisoners for my observation through a daily verbal detailing of my project, organisational affiliation, purpose of visit, and a clear explanation of the anonymity inherent anonymity in the way I will use field notes. The right of any prisoner to opt-out will be asserted and respected. Furthermore, a Participant Information Sheet will be physically available which outlines all of this in greater detail.

If you elect to be interviewed, please complete the consent form below, which will be stored on a HMPPS Government laptop.

Your interview will be held at a time convenient for you on MS Teams, so that an electronic transcription will be held until submission of the thesis, at which point it will be deleted. MS Teams is not 100% encrypted, so it is suggested that the interviews avoid discussing specific cases or naming individuals.

Consent Form
- I confirm that I have read and understand the **Participant Information Sheet.**
- I confirm that I have read and understood this **Participant Consent Form**
- I consent to an interview with Risteard McDonald for the purposes of this research
- I consent to this interview being conducted on MS Teams
- I consent to a transcript being held for the duration of this study and write-up
- I understand that all personal information will remain confidential, and all efforts will be made to ensure I cannot be identified.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. Opting out will not be possible beyond October 1st due to the anonymisation of responses.
- I agree to take part in this study.

Participant's Signature: _____

Name (Print): _____

Date: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____

Name (Print): _____

Date: _____

Additional Consent:

I PROVIDE ADDITIONAL CONSENT FOR THE RESEARCHER TO REFER TO OUR INTERVIEW 'VERBATIM', THAT IS, WITH WORD-FOR-WORD QUOTES REGURGITATED IN THE THESIS, BUT WITHOUT ANY REFERENCE TO MY NAME OR IDENTITY, FOR EXAMPLE: "A CHAPLAIN AT HMP XXXX REMARKED...". I UNDERSTAND THAT THIS MAY INCREASE THE RISK OF MY COMMENTS BEING IDENTIFIABLE BUT UNDERSTAND THAT THE RESEARCHER WILL TAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ANONYMISE MY RESPONSES.

SIGN HERE IF <u>YOU DO</u> GIVE CONSENT FOR THIS:

PARTICIPANT'S SIGNATURE:

Thank you for considering participation in this research. Your involvement is greatly appreciated

Annex D: Interview Schedule Exemplar ('Core Questions')

Theme	Interview Questions
Generic (warm-up, building camaraderie, setting context…)	1. Could you please give an overview of who you are and your role? 2. Do you perform chaplaincy at any other prisons? 3. Why did you want to be a chaplain?
'The Physical'	1. How important is the 'physical space' in creating sacred space at WWS? 2. How do chaplaincy spaces look compared to the rest of the prison? 3. How do these rooms smell, and sound, compared to the rest of the prison?
'The Imagined'	1. What does the term 'sacred' mean to you from a personal perspective? 2. Do you think the word 'sacred' means something else in prison than it does outside? 3. Do you think feelings of sacredness in chaplaincy spaces in HMP Berwyn are primarily due to a perceived religious connotation?
'The Relational'	1. Do prisoners interact differently in religious spaces compared to elsewhere in the prison? 2. Are there any religious tensions between different religions, and how important are chaplaincy in mitigating these tensions? 3. How important are the orderlies in the delivery of faith services?
Cross-Cutting	1. How does time effect access to and experiences of sacred spaces?
Beyond Third Space	1. How does the Multi Faith approach influence experiences of sacred spaces? 2. How does the regime enable or inhibit experiences of sacred spaces?