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The Prisoner Society: Power, Adaptation and Social Life in an English Prison (Clarendon Studies in Criminology)

Ben Crewe

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While the use of imprisonment continues to rise in developed nations, we have little sociological knowledge of the prison's inner world. Based on extensive fieldwork in a medium-security prison, *The Prisoner Society: Power, Adaptation and Social Life in an English Prison* provides an in-depth analysis of the prison's social anatomy. It explains how power is exercised by the institution, individualizing the prisoner community and demanding particular forms of compliance and engagement. Drawing on prisoners' life stories, it supplies a detailed typology of adaptive styles, showing how different prisoners experience and respond to the new range of penal practices and frustrations. It then explains how the prisoner society - its norms, hierarchy and social relationships - is shaped both by these conditions of confinement and by the different backgrounds, values and identities that prisoners bring into the prison environment.

Through this analysis, this meticulously researched book aims to revive and update the dormant tradition of prison ethnography. It provides an empirical snapshot of a modern prison, documenting the aims and techniques of contemporary imprisonment and illuminating the social structures and behaviours that they generate. Through a penetrating account of power relations throughout the institution, the author documents the pains of modern imprisonment, the new techniques of survival, and the prison's distinctive forms of trade, friendship and everyday culture.

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