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POST-DOMESTIC
HABITAT
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PAD

via Festa del Perdono 1 – 20122 Milano – Italy
via Roma 171 – 90133 Palermo – Italy
info@padjournal.net – editors@padjournal.net

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Rethinking Carceral Domesticity

Electronic Monitoring, Punishment and Home as Prison

Ece Canli

University of Minho

Orcid id 0000-0002-4827-0857

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Abstract

This article explores the evolving dynamics of *carceral domesticity* in the context of Electronic Monitoring (EM) as a contemporary techno-penal practice. While the prison, as the main outlet for punishment, keeps blurring the boundaries between the private and public by challenging traditional conceptions of domesticity, recent prison reforms driven by mass incarceration and overcrowding, have led to the proliferation of EM-based house arrests as alternatives to imprisonment. However, technologies and punitive implications of EM on people and their households remain underexamined. Therefore, drawing on emerging theories, testimonies and government reports through a Post-Domestic lens, this article argues that EM devices, such as wrist bracelets and ankle shackles, complicate notions of privacy, autonomy, dignity, economy and safety within domestic spaces. It further discusses how such techno-carceral practices perpetuate and reinforce existing inequalities, particularly affecting gendered, sexualized, and racialized bodies disproportionately and consolidating the status quo of the criminal justice system. In doing so, the article engages with prison abolitionist theories to speculate on alternative approaches to transforming spaces and justice, by shedding light on the intricate power dynamics inherent in carceral domesticity and EM-based confinement, aiming to contribute to the discourse surrounding the reconfiguration of domestic spaces within the context of harm.

1. Foreword. Confinement, Interrupted

Looking from the post-pandemic lens of late 2023, one can recall in awe how the COVID-19 pandemic, among its many life-altering ramifications, introduced the notion of *confinement* to our daily lives and turned this once medical and juridical term into a colloquial language. By 2020, billions of otherwise free citizens, forced to stay in enclosed spaces for uncertain periods in absolute solitude or with intensively close company of their household members, experienced for the first time what the *deprivation of liberty* physically, psychologically and mentally meant, even if the space of confinement was called *home*. This dire situation, thereby, entailed a radical reconsideration of households and the use of the domestic space, transforming private abodes into semi-open (online) multi-functional dwellings that were simultaneously classrooms, playgrounds, workplaces, gyms and cafés, overloaded with tasks and cohabitants (Moreira & Farias, 2023). It, unsurprisingly, not only necessitated spatio-material rearrangements of home environments and redistribution of domestic tasks (e.g., cleaning, cooking, childcare, bread-winning) but also complicated the boundaries of the private and the public – or namely, the intimate boundaries between bodies. Moreover, studies demonstrated that the pandemic lockdowns interrupted the Post-Domestic narrative of gender emancipation and equality as it reinstated patriarchal power dynamics and imposed more burdens on women’s shoulders as working caregivers while increasing the rates of interpersonal harm indoors including sexual and domestic violence (Kay, 2020; Piquero et al., 2021).

Such experiences of being locked up, on the other hand, have not been unfamiliar to a substantial portion of the global population; those who have been already legally confined, either in mental hospitals, work camps or penal institutions including immigrant detention centres, juvenile correctional facilities and prisons.¹ For those behind bars, in particular, daily activities from working, sleeping, eating and bathing to running errands already take place in either extreme segregation (e.g., in the case of solitary confinement and cell systems typologies) or amid the prison masses under constant scrutinization with strict duties and almost no privacy, as a normalised reality of these *total institutions* (Goffman, 1961). In this regard, it can be argued that prisons have already been places where the private and the public are constantly entangled; places that have long challenged the conventional articulations of domesticity in many ways (Issacharoff, 2019; Frödén, 2021): while home has been considered a *haven* for *docile* bodies, prison has been what allegedly provided safety for society whereas being an unsafe space itself for its inhabitants.

In recent decades, due to the controversies of proliferating apparatuses of the criminal justice system, mass incarceration and the prison industrial complex thereof, physical spaces of punishment have been under critical examination, being renegotiated by new prison reforms (Davis, 2003; Gilmore, 2007; Angelis,

1 The COVID-19 lockdown affected prisoners detrimentally, as the preventive measures against transmission of the virus (e.g., hygiene standards, adequate nutrition, quality health services, etc.) were not sufficiently taken – nor prisoners’ health was a priority concern for governments (Söderholm, 2021). In early 2021, the reported number of infected prisoners was more than half a million worldwide, with almost 4,000 fatalities (Söderholm, 2021).

2022). This included the exponential growth of the penal design and architecture industry which has responded to these reforms with their new *humane design* structures exalting aestheticization of carcerality with new glass facades, smart AI technologies, and green sustainable prisons to provide prisoners decent and *normalised* spaces promising the *comfort of a home* (Swan, 2013; Sperry, 2014; Puddu, 2022).² In the past years, though, thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic³ and the exorbitant costs – and inadequacies – of physical prisons, non-custodial alternatives to imprisonment– from community service orders to bail–ing – have been increasingly implemented, the most favoured of which till this day has been house arrest and its technological enabler: *Electronic Monitoring* (EM).⁴

This article aims to examine the conditions of EM as a highly praised technological alternative to incarceration, by problematising its repercussions on bodies, households and on justice system at large. EM has been increasingly in operation since the mid-90s, although its intensified punitive implications (e.g., 24/7 surveillance, movement tracking, deprivation of liberty) and how it perpetuates oppressive power dynamics

2 For a close examination of these new reformist prisons designed by big architectural firms which fallaciously present prisons not as spaces of punishment but as luxury dwellings (Canlı, 2020), and for the normalisation of prisons (Puddu, 2022).

3 Considering the joint statement of UNODC, WHO, UNAIDS and OHCHR on COVID-19 in prisons, criticisms of human rights organisations and activists, and the escalating number of COVID-19 cases and consequential deaths in prisons, by 2021, many governments – including France, Norway, Turkey, Ireland, Colombia and Indonesia and some states of the US – took decongestion measures such as probation under judicial control, temporary release and release under house arrest (Bruce-Lockhart, 2021; Söderholm, 2021).

4 While *Electronic Monitoring* is an encompassing term that can cover various monitoring technologies and approaches, in this article I use it strictly as a wearable technology that confines one's liberty to a certain domestic space.

by extending carceral spaces into the everyday lives of individuals are rarely put under scrutiny.

By taking into account these side effects, substantiated by government reports and theories of spatiality and domesticity, the article reads prisons as places where *carceral domesticity* is traditionally exerted *vis-à-vis* practices of EM; a technology that not only underpins the intricate power structures present within domestic spaces but also brings the intensified forms of surveillance, control, and punishment associated with the prison from the public realm to the private one – the home (Granja, 2021; Kilgore, 2022). The presence of EM devices, ranging from wristbands and ankle monitors to GPS tethers, exemplifies how techno-carceral practices deployed in domestic settings complicate especially the issues of *privacy, autonomy, dignity, economy* and *safety*, as well as the reconfigurations of space. By applying a Post-Domestic lens to the study of *carceral domesticity* and *e-carceration*,⁵ the article aims to analyse the power dynamics at play and how these dynamics perpetuate and reinforce existing inequalities, particularly for gendered, sexualised and racialised bodies – those who are affected by the carceral expansion disproportionately (Davis, 2003; Gilmore, 2007; Rodríguez, 2020). The conclusion speculates with/in/through prison abolitionist theories as ways of transforming spaces and justice against the consolidation of punitive regimes and recidivism (Kaba, 2021; Angelis, 2022).

5 *E-carceration* refers to technologies of mass incarceration, electronic surveillance and punishment ranging from physical confinement and GPS tracking to data extractivism, including CCTV, drones, face and voice recognition softwares, biometric scanning, social media monitors, risk assessment tools and many emerging others (Kilgore, 2022)

2. Prison, Punishment and Carceral Domesticity

To take a critical look at the conditions of EM as a new domestic techno-apparatus of punishment, it is crucial to understand its still fully operating and expanding precedence: Prison. According to *Penal Reform International's* annual *Global Prison Trends Report* of 2023, as of today, there are approximately 11.5 million people behind bars worldwide – one-third of whom are imprisoned more for pre-trial detention than post-conviction – while this number increases exponentially and globally in every passing minute (Penal Reform International, 2023). This growth is both constituted by and constitutive of the vicious circle which neoliberal capitalism and the criminal justice system co-created in the name of the *prison industrial complex*⁶ (Davis, 2003); and despite a great number of new prisons with hundreds of thousands of new beds being announced to be built every year all across the world, infrastructures and capacities of prisons keep falling short (Penal Reform International, 2022). In 2023, there are 120 countries with occupancy rates exceeding prison system capacity by 100%, while 15 of these countries host 250% more people under inhumane spatial conditions (Penal Reform International, 2023). On the other hand, research, statistics and prison abolition activists demonstrate that growing prison population is not about increasing crime rates but about what counts as a crime in different temporal, geographical and political contexts, how more people (especially groups discriminated against based

6 *Prison Industrial Complex*, or *PIC*, denotes the interlocking networks of imprisonment, capitalism, and governmental authority that sustain the growth of the prison system to generate profit (Davis, 2003). It includes the design and architecture industry of prisons as well as other technologies of carceral expansion, including EM.

on their race, ethnicity, class, gender and sexuality) are put behind bars with longer sentences to be controlled, managed and cleansed out of the public realm, and how the punitive system is so much more fixed on confinement than prevention of harmdoing (Gilmore, 2007; Lamble, 2011; 2014; Penal Reform International, 2023).⁷ In this carceral swelling, those who are caged are compelled to incessantly build their everyday domestic environments against the odds of the extremely impersonal prison environment.

Prisons and domesticity may seem like two extremely contrasting concepts at first glance, for two main reasons: First, while the concept of domesticity is historically associated with femininity, women's realm and production of gendered space, the prison has ontologically been a hyper-masculine space, designed by and for heterocissexual male disposition, firmly safeguarding, reinforcing and reproducing gender hierarchies (Lamble 2011; Frödén, 2021; Sanders et al., 2023).⁸ Second, although the domestic sphere denotes the private space centred on the home, family and intimacy, the very constitution of prison is precisely based on the deprivation of these notions, as the pre-eminent earmark of penal justice. However, analysing these seemingly unrelated domains in terms of space-making reveals the nuanced ways in which domesticity – or the notion of home – and prison culture influence each other reciprocally

7 This is not to downplay the prevalence of what is called violent crimes including homicide, sexual assault, kidnapping and so on. However, as prison abolitionists and research demonstrate, there is also a generational dysfunctionality of the punitive justice system to respond to such harms (Davis, 2003; Levine & Meiners, 2020; Kaba, 2021).

8 This design includes not only military-like behavioural structures, but also architectonic characteristics of prisons with their female-unfriendly material environments.

(Puddu, 2022). For instance, as Issacharoff (2019, p. 26) aptly observes, “the prison and the home suffer from a similar historical problem”; both having “no distinct history in the public imagination” and being “so deeply enmeshed in a cultural mythology of how society reproduces itself as an ordered and just community of citizens [...]” Similarly since prisons are considered micro-scaled replicas of real life (Frödén, 2021), both prisons and traditional domestic spaces have historically prescribed women’s roles for caregiving and homemaking and men for power and sociability.⁹ Although prisons have disproportionately incarcerated men, especially those with racial and ethnic backgrounds in the Global North (Gilmore, 2007; Alexander, 2010), the criminal justice system has also disproportionately affected women and LGBTQI+ individuals who have been victims of domestic violence or incarcerated for nonviolent offences – e.g., providing for via illegal economies such as drug dealing and sex work (Lamble 2011; Canlı 2020).¹⁰ Ideology of domesticity here is inflicted on these bodies, with the expectation of female prisoners and those who are deemed inferior in the *heterocissexual matrix* (e.g., lesbians, gays, trans*women, non-binary and intersex individuals) to, for instance, exhibit qualities of subservience and rectitude, dispense free labour and keep the penal space neat and organised. This gendered dynamic, despite the everyday production of these spaces as intimate homes crafted not only by women

9 This can be seen especially in the educational programs and work training which are mostly divided into handiwork for women and arm power for men.

10 By 2023, the number of incarcerated women and girls exceeds 740,000 – 6% of the entire prison population, and this figure is on the rise in nearly all regions – 60% for women since 2000, while there is no verified statistics about the number of LGBTQI+ prisoners (Penal Reform International, 2023).

and LGBTQI+ individuals but also by men, is indicative of how societal notions of domesticity extend their influence into the punitive realm, impacting not only female prisoners' experiences but also the broader structure of the carceral culture (Issacharoff, 2019; Puddu, 2022).

Moreover, prisons as *total institutions* are characterized by their ability to exert profound control over individuals' lives, shaping their routines, behaviours, and interactions where strict norms and roles regulate the daily lives of inhabitants (Goffman, 1961). The state dictates their schedules, movements, and even interpersonal relationships not only through self-regulatory structures but also through the design of prisons' living areas such as cells, blocks and dormitories that mimic bedrooms; as well as the surveillance mechanisms reminiscent of familial supervision that are illustrative of how carceral domesticity manifests as a means of imposing power and discipline on prisoners. These conditions lead them to adopt coping strategies that mimic aspects of domestic life, such as reorganising their interiors through personal belongings and forming surrogate family structures within the prison community – especially seen in non-heterocissexual intimate formations (Lamble 2011; Puddu 2022; Sanders et al. 2023). On another front, the prevalence of *carceral feminism*¹¹ also underscores how the state and domesticity intersect through policies and practices such as mandatory arrest policies for

11 *Carceral feminism* refers to an approach that advocates for the criminal justice system and imprisonment as a means to address gender-based violence – mostly criticised by abolition feminists for corroborating the punitive *status quo* and individual cases rather than tackling structural problems of sexual violence (Levine & Meiners, 2020; Davis et al., 2022)

domestic violence incidents, while these policies reflect the state's involvement in regulating and intervening in domestic spaces, blurring the lines between private and public domains (Levine & Meiners, 2020; Davis et al., 2022). In this context, prisons serve as a punitive extension of the state's intervention in domestic issues.

Last but not least, if the *carceral domesticity* signifies the relationship between the space of confinement and the home at large, it can be observed that the experience of having a family member or loved one in prison reshapes and disrupts the dynamics of domestic spaces and relationships beyond the prison walls, too, with profound emotional, economic, and social consequences for families, leading to aggravated stress, financial instability, and disruptions in family roles and caregiving responsibilities (Kaba, 2021; Davis et al., 2022; Kilgore, 2022).¹² Unsurprisingly, this is a gendered dynamic too: Women, often wives or mothers or daughters of incarcerated relatives, may find themselves taking on the role of primary breadwinners and caregivers especially in marginalised communities where prisoners get stuck in *carceral continuum* with recidivism and unpayable bails in unpredictable periods (Alexander, 2010; Rodríguez, 2020). This shift in gender roles can challenge traditional norms of domesticity and reshape the power dynamics within the household – yet with extra burdens.

12 In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic taught us different ways of communicating, collecting information and relating to each other in public spaces, most of which were based on non-physical intimacies, imitating proximity. The Pandemic took an extra toll on those behind bars since keeping their distance, communicating with families or lawyers and handling daily practices were hardly possible.

For these and many other unaccountable reasons, everyday re-makings of carceral domesticity in prison is a relentless attempt to reclaim one's space, existence and individuality within the constant power displays by authorities and peers – from abrupt check-ins in private cells, possession controls and strip searches to immobilisation of furniture and such (O'Nils, 2014). In the meantime, prison reformists, who have long observed these predicaments, have been heralding EM as a progressive solution to eliminate the alienation the prison environment begets. However, along with many activists and researchers, I propound that, if prisons are spaces of dwelling and should be treated as domestic spaces, “[...] inversely, dwellings can also be considered prisons” as EM materialises and demonstrates to us, as elaborated in the following sections (Martinez-Millana & Alcaraz, 2020, p.19).

3. EM as Home or Body as Prison

3.1. Uses of EM

The aforementioned phenomenon of mass incarceration and PIC, derived from and attributed mostly to the US criminal justice system, has spread its techniques all across the world (Gilmore, 2007; Rodríguez, 2020; Davis et al., 2022). The overt brutality of expanding carceral techniques has thereby brought about criticisms of retributive practices and dysfunctionality of rehabilitation endeavours, as well as debates on reforms in the areas of penal justice, science and psychology inquiring about the roots of crime, possibilities of positive punishment and soft on crime approaches (Angelis, 2022; Kilgore, 2022). Blended in ascending neoliberal interests of competing states and private

tech companies, EM emerged as a saviour praxis for decarceration, promising custodial supervision to beat the overcrowding problems of prisons, reduce the costs of imprisonment, lower recidivism and preserve the social ties for better integration to the society (van der Veen, 2014; Belur, 2020; Granja, 2021).¹³ On the other hand, the global prison population has not decreased as promised since the emergence of EM, nor is there sufficient evidence that EM has helped reduce crime rates and that there is a shared understanding of its implications (van der Veen, 2014; Kilgore, 2022). The use of EM is, nevertheless, proliferated and is being proclaimed as the future of justice by many (van der Veen, 2014; O’Nils, 2014; Granja, 2021; Penal Reform International, 2023) compared to other non-custodial sanctions including bailing, periodic reporting to police, international travel bans and curfew.¹⁴

While EM is mostly utilised instead of pre-trial detention and during probation or parole, today it has several modalities in terms of its use for several outlets and purposes, depending on the country’s legislation, sometimes implemented in different stages of the criminal justice process with various goals and criminal sanctions (O’Nils, 2014; Belur, 2020; Granja, 2021). For instance, in Norway EM is used as “an alternative to short prison sentences or as the final part of a longer sen-

13 EM was first adopted in 1983 by Florida and then in New Mexico in the US, and expanded rapidly to other states and countries in Europe, Australia and the Americas. Today more than 30 countries are operating with EM while new ones are on their way to joining. For a detailed history of the development and use of EM in the US and beyond, (Kilgore, 2022).

14 *The Tokyo Rules* outline numerous sentencing alternatives to incarceration to be executed effectively, some of which are monetary and status penalties, non-institutional treatment and verbal sanctions (UNODC, 2007).

tence in prison” to be implemented around the period of 30 days (Rokkan, 2018, p.226), in Portugal it is used as an alternative to preventive detention, in place of prison sentence as house arrest, for adaptation to parole, as a protective measure of victims of domestic violence and perpetrators’ monitoring, and as domestic confinement for forest fire crimes (Granja, 2021, p.250-251). In many countries, including the US, Turkey and Scotland, it is also used to monitor substance consumption, to prevent sex offenders from accessing certain places, to secure “immigration laws, as part of alcohol abstinence maintenance requirements and [...] to track those refusing to pay child support” (Belur et al., 2020; 1). For each condition, EM substitutes confinement in one way or another.

3.2. Technologies of EM

EM devices are designed principally based on a few technologies: *Radio Frequency Monitors* (RF – also called Curfew Monitors), active or passive *Global Positioning Systems* (GPS) tagging, *Remote Alcohol Monitoring* (RAM) and *Breathalyzer Monitoring*. These schemes operate “in tandem with professional supervision and supports, or can be used as a ‘stand-alone’ option”, while they also contain *temper-resistant technology* to “detect attempts of forced removal” (Graham & Mcivor, 2017, p.4). While RF alerts authorities if only the individual under EM is not home or within a specific range, conforming absence/presence of the person to the monitoring centre, GPS monitors track and record the individual’s location 24/7 through satellites (either transmitting location information live or by storing them to be downloaded later) (Geiger, 2017). RAM “samples sweat on their skin to detect the presence of alcohol”

while a camera-mounted breathalyzer monitor tests the person's breath to estimate their blood alcohol content (Graham & Mcivor, 2017, p. 5). Most of these devices are in the form of a black box to be wrapped around the ankle as a "bracelet";¹⁵ some in the shape of wristbands or a mobile app – while in the case of domestic violence, there is also a safety box on the side of the victim. EM are all attached to a person's body constantly, transmitting information to the monitoring centre through mobile, wi-fi or landline phone, and all dependent on electricity to be charged for several hours a day, the lack of which might mean the person is sent back to prison. Such technologies, some of which also capture persons' heartbeat, blood pressure, and other biometric and vocal data,¹⁶ are stored in databases which profile and criminalise especially underprivileged communities – e.g., BIPOC people, undocumented immigrants, underclass people in illegalised economies, people with mental health issues, LGBTQI+ individuals etc. (van der Veen, 2014; Geiger, 2017; Media Justice, 2019).¹⁷

In the meantime, whereas in some [European] countries EM services are free of charge (Granja 2021), in others and several states of the US, the daily cost of EM may rise to 25\$ per day – or more for those privileged ones requiring special conditions – which make them accessible only to those who can afford

15 Kilgore (2022, p. 11) calls them *shackles* instead of *bracelets*, warning us that we should not “confuse decoration with incarceration”.

16 For instance, in the Netherlands, EM has been used to keep hooligans away from matches at particular times and games, through biometrics and voice verification technology (van der Veen, 2014).

17 See also the reports and ongoing meticulous research of *Media Justice* and *Challenging E-carceration Project*; Retrieved July 4, 2023, from <https://mediajustice.org/unshackling-freedom/what-you-should-know/> and <https://www.challengingcarceration.org/>

them, such as celebrities as presented in popular culture (Media Justice, 2019; Kilgore, 2022). Those who cannot/or barely afford EM mostly undertake it due to their family, work and health-related duties. This makes EM a service for which people spend, literally, at the expense of their freedom.

3.3. Spatial and Corporeal Conditions of EM

In addition, for EM to be granted to a person, many suspected or convicted individuals are expected to fulfil certain legal prerequisites, demonstrating no flight risk and so-called good behaviour. Some qualifications are also contingent upon physical conditions: For instance, in some Scandinavian countries, “[...] rules require a physically delimited space with access to kitchen and bathroom” within a stable relationship if the person lives with others while “the cohabitants have to accept the restrictions and imposed conditions” (Rokkan, 2018, p. 226).

Even if a person meets these requirements, EM is based on stern schedules in terms of daily activities – and where, at what time and how these activities would be executed – which designates the offender’s punctual departure from and arrival at home/work, pre-permission for short leisure activities or emergencies, and ban on drug and alcohol use supervised by regular tests. Depending on each case, there can also be other restrictions, from prohibition from entering certain public and private areas or using substances (Rokkan, 2018). Moreover, “the location of the apartment to work, transportation, and friends” becomes of utmost importance, since its distance to work, transportation, educational programs and loved ones are all about time (Rokkan, 2018, p. 231). In this regard, it can be said

that EM is a Post-Domestic apparatus that turns not only homes but also bodies into prisons – or *portable prisons* (Gacek, 2022), carrying the prison on oneself 24/7, having imprisonment embodied and inscribed on one’s body – body as the prison itself.

4. EM and Post-Domestic Concerns

While the abovementioned conditions of EM offer potential benefits such as opportunities for individuals to serve sentences in their homes and prevent incidents of domestic violence, it also raises complex questions about the intersection of technology, surveillance, and domesticity – which, can be seen as a reflection of broader shifts toward Post-Domesticity, as it challenges traditional notions of imprisonment and the separation of the domestic and public spheres. Rafaela Granja (2021, p. 249) calls the unprecedented praise of EM *techno-optimism* and warns us against it camouflaging “the expansion of the penal network”, facilitating “the co-optation of the family in the penal sphere and the transmutation of the domestic space into a space of confinement” and narrowing the public debate on the causes of harms – especially when it comes to domestic violence. In this section, thereby, I briefly consider such ramifications of EM according to five critical – yet not limited to – criteria of (post)domesticity: *privacy*, *autonomy*, *dignity*, *economy* and *safety*, to open up discussions around EM and for its reconsideration.

4.1. Privacy

In his book *Understanding E-carceration*, James Kilgore (2022, p. 7), activist, ex-prisoner and researcher tells his experience of sleeping with EM for the first time after his release on pa-

role as feeling of the “presence of a third person” with himself, since the vigilance of the third party (e.g., monitoring centre, parole officers, family members) is unabating akin to an amplified panopticon. As EM transforms the domestic space into a place of detention where daily routines are rearranged and interrupted, “[...] family members become active agents in surveillance processes” as a form of participatory monitoring, “that involves not only the individuals under monitoring but also their relatives” (Granja, 2021, p. 258). This compels families to live together in these “techno-cells” Kilgore (2022, p. 10), by disrupting the individual boundaries and the sense of physical, psychological, visual and acoustic *privacy* – as the *prima facie* fundamental moral right – and allowing unwanted intrusion or observation. This is an ultimate level of loss of “control over one’s environment and therefore the offender has no privacy” (O’Nils, 2014, p. 511).

4.2. Autonomy

While EM proponents argue that EM does not deprive people of liberty in contrast to prisons, it indeed “restricts liberty by limiting autonomy”, or what Rokkan (2018) calls *elasticity* – one of the fundamental qualities of human living in domestic spaces (Payne & Gainey, 1998, p. 155). Offenders on EM cannot decide in which activities and when/how/where they would participate unless it is approved by correctional services. Depending on variable legislations and contexts, they might be obliged to stay home 24/7 unconditionally, might be able to work outside the house for certain hours a day or might even have leisure and sports time. Either way, when they need to leave their places or EM zone outside the settled times, they need a preconcerted

permission which means they cannot move even in emergencies. In some incidents, people recounted that they “[...] could not open the front door of the building without calling the EM office to get permission to go out of the control zone to unlock the door.” (Rokkan, 2018, p.230) Those who live in the outskirts of the cities or remote areas get affected by this even more, as their access to workplaces and home is already spent on transportation. Also, the fact that EM machines operate on batteries and should be charged a few times a day restricts offenders’ movement entirely, by compelling them to cling to the plugs on walls, even outside in cafés and restaurants (Kilgore, 2022).

4.3. Dignity

Such visibility of EM – especially in situations of the above-mentioned public charging or in zones with high temperatures – makes it an element of humiliation for many, as it exposes not only the person as *criminal* to the public but also their household, as an overt scratch on their dignity. For the “EM device is not only a technological artefact but also has social and cultural content that may lead to stigmatization of the individual wearing it” (O’Nils, 2014, p. 511), It also likely affects the person’s employability and income, as well as how they are treated for basic services (from healthcare to education) (O’Nils, 2014; Media Justice, 2019; Kilgore, 2022). In addition, the fact that the house of the offender can be raided by officers anytime (due to e.g., signal rupture between EM and the centre, bugs in the system giving the wrong alarm) which would include house search, handcuffing on the floor and using shock teasers, abash the person in front of their beloved ones which harms the person’s dignity irreversibly (Kilgore, 2022).

4.4. Economy

As mentioned earlier, while EM is opted for being a cheaper option for governments “[...] whose legislation, implementation, and expansion has been promoted and controlled at the State level” (Granja, 2021, p. 253), it profits both the states and private companies who manufacture them physically and technologically (O’Nils, 2014). This makes EM highly profitable, especially in countries like the US, where the offender has to pay for their own shackles to keep the service at the expense of being home – a literal meaning of buying one’s freedom. Moreover, this situation disproportionately affects underclass communities, especially women, who often bear the brunt of caregiving responsibilities within the household, as they are often both in charge of overseeing and assisting with monitoring requirements for family members and earning income. Such circumstances entangle traditional and neoliberal gender roles which can be seen as a setback in the context of Post-Domesticity, where gender roles supposedly become more fluid and equitable and gendered precarity is ideally eliminated.

4.5. Safety

Both prisons and other technologies of confinement exist not only to punish – and control – but also to keep society allegedly safe from those who pose a danger to the common good, although the notion of *safety* has several conflicting dimensions both for the person on EM and for other parties. First of all, EM can be hardly safe for the offender, not only because they are constantly profiled and targeted under 24/7 vigilance, but also because the material impacts of the physical object on bodies (e.g., from skin allergies to sleep deprivations) are

severe (Media Justice, 2019). For instance, just like prisons, EM is mostly designed for men, not for “the different circumstances and needs of all wearers, including body dimensions, skin colour and the impact on certain medical conditions” (Penal Reform International, 2023, p. 13). On the other hand, EM is claimed to benefit many domestic violence victims; however, as long as the solution is not structural – to unravel the main causes of domestic violence against women – but individual – to treat each case through monitoring and punishment, neither public nor domestic space becomes safe for victims.¹⁸ Also, this makes clear “ [...] how a system designed to protect victims ends up making them responsible for their safety and, ultimately, for the preservation of their own lives” (Granja, 2021, p. 260). Also, in many cases, *crime* can be committed – or, namely, harm can be done – before the officer warned by EM even arrives; therefore, the lack of deterrence challenges the argument for safety. The question is whether it is “sufficient to deter people from committing crime if the punishment they will receive is [eventually] EM?” (O’Nils, 2014, p. 515).

Apart from the drawbacks above, EM practices, like other reformist solutions, instead of reducing harmdoing in society, underpin the criminal justice status quo, neoliberal carceral capitalism and expanding apparatuses of control further which simultaneously imperil our domestic as well as public lives (Granja, 2021; Lamble, 2014; Kilgore, 2022).

18 Just like what happened during the COVID-19 pandemic, forced confinement of EM holders might endanger the household, especially women and children, who have to stay confined with the person (Piquero, 2021).

5. Conclusion. Towards E-Domesticity or Dissidence?

Considering the evidence presented above, it can be argued that with EM, homes increasingly become *total institutions* in their own right, where an assemblage of private and public tasks is exerted under the omnipresence of *e-carcereation* which turns our experience into, what might be called in the future, *e-domesticity*. A domesticity that is governed by techno-apparatuses of omnipresent surveillance, punishment and immobility not only for those considered *criminal* but for anyone whose calendars, text messages, speeches and geolocational and biometric data are extracted and “radiated across [...] personal networks [...] liable to seep onward, to unintended eyes” (Geiger, 2017).

This concern is not to underestimate nor discard any useful aspect of new technologies of a penal justice system that aim to improve the conditions of people in such institutions, nor is to undervalue the experiences of those who were/have been opting for EM instead of prison as abolitionist theories also urge to respond the short-term urgent needs of detainees (Davis et al., 2022) On the other hand, abolitionism keeps also appraising us of the menace of such technologies as they are part of the greater *surveillance capitalism* (Kilgore, 2022), born amid a neoliberal transformation of discipline and control and grown into broader criminalisation and invasion – making into our homes. Today, new developments in AI rapidly pervade penal institutions in the form of smart prisons that promise no-stuff facilities yet amplified vigilance blended with augmented biometrics and other individual monitoring. These attempts are continuations of reformist endeavours performing hand in

hand with transnational financial interests against resolving meta-problems of crime/harm, but fastening crime on certain populations – BIPOC, Latinxs, immigrants, women, queers and gender non-conforming people.

Amidst this storm, Kilgore (2022, p. 15) asks “[h]ow do we reimagine technological power and creativity in the image of freedom” instead of punishment and control? Or, is it even possible to resist monitoring, targeting and profiling in any form, especially when one is confined? Is it, then, possible for confined subjects to create *dissident domesticity* to “[...] respond to the overwhelming spatial and temporal control of confinement” and turn home into “[...] a site of dialectical mediation, a pivotal conduit for processes that appear to originate from a macrorealm of the exterior, to shape the microrealm of the interior” (von Zinnenburg Carroll et al., 2017, p. 114)? If “[...] domesticity is shaped as a form of political control”, can it be, conversely also “a space for new forms of embodiment that elude or trick recognition”; a space for dissidence “demarcated not only by struggles over the control of information but also by domestic aesthetics, social habitation, and sabotage of proper forms of sociality” (von Zinnenburg Carroll et al., 2017, p. 115)? The *hows* of EM abolitionism might be too complex to discuss, but researching, discussing and writing on unveiled conditions of EM might be a start, especially if it comes from the real-life experiences “produced specifically under conditions of domestic incarceration” (von Zinnenburg Carroll et al., 2017, p. 131). In parallel to that, questioning the design industry as one of the pillars of carceral logic – for both prisons, EMs and other technologies

– might sow the seeds for its possible reversal or interruption, towards and via critical (un)making (Sperry, 2014).

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