"A Perfect Storm":
An Ethnography of Practice in an Adult Male Prison

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Abstract

Prisons exist in an apparent cycle of crises that fail to achieve their stated aims: security, safety, and rehabilitation. This thesis utilises Bourdieu's *field theory* to understand how these macro aims are mediated into practice in Clarendon, a local adult male prison in England, before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. It provides an alternative interpretation of imprisonment and the inter-relations between policy, people, and practises that produce harmful outcomes for prisoners. This ethnographic case study critically analyses how a prison is a paradox of its official aims.

The study provides original insights and contributions to extant prison literature on the relationship between social structures, interpersonal attitudes, local practices, and outcomes. It theorises that many prisoners are em-prisoned by a trans-carceral *habitus*, a disposition informed by shared marginalisation and neglect before, during, and after imprisonment. This is reinforced by an infra-*doxic* sensibility to the prison, an attachment and an attuned response to its offer of protection from external social deprivation. This disposition and logic are perpetuated by a narrow definition of prison security engendered by staff, where prisoners are conceived as risks to be controlled. These staff are empowered and constrained by the *double-game* strategy of imprisonment. Policies and training turn decision-making into a theoretical model of rules and responsibilities that structure their practice and provide staff with the symbolic and physical authority to enact control. Their use of force perpetuates the prison as a place of punishment and violence.

The pandemic revealed many of these social forces. A novel analysis of the pandemic response indicates an initial disruption, *hysteresis*, to how imprisonment was experienced with more supportive relationships between prisoners and staff. However, this was a fallacy. This study highlights that Clarendon remained a place of control, hierarchy, and harm, disguised and legitimised by policy. Finally, it speaks to the personal journey of an insider researcher, from a *doxosopher* (Bourdieu, 1998) to a scholar. Together, this thesis highlights how a prison is a *perfect storm*, a metaphor for the mutually reinforcing field relations that produce the harmful outcomes of imprisonment. Clarendon is not in a crisis, it is *the* crisis, a product of its own conditions.

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This thesis is dedicated to Dr Ruth Mann and her family.

Ruth will, forever, be my role model. Her kindness, her compassion, and her hopeful approach to life have inspired many to take an interest in imprisoned people and to tackle everyday injustices and inequalities.

Ruth provided me with direction and a voice. I miss her every day but her memory reminds me that we can always be better. I can always be better.

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Introduction: The Elephants in the Penal Corner

'the ultimate expression of law is not order – it's prison' (Jackson, 1972: 95)

Introduction and Motivation(s)

> *"We've heard it [Government pledges] all before. Nothing changes... we never see the money but the population keeps going up. The wheel keeps turning and we'll just carry on with what we're meant to be doing, locking people up, protecting the public, maintaining security."* (Senior manager, Fieldnotes, 17/12/2019)

In their Annual Report for 2016-17, the Prison and Probation Ombudsman wrote that the prison system was 'still in crisis'. I had just joined Her/His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) of England and Wales as a researcher in the Security Directorate and I read the report with confusion. No colleagues, politicians, or the public seemed to pay much notice or attention to the publication. It wrote of systemic failures, of the need for improvement, and life-ending consequences. A year later, another critical report by HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2018a) wrote of 'repeated patterns of failure' and 'some of the most disturbing prison conditions we have ever seen' (p. 7). The media splashed headlines sensationalising prisons as 'hell-holes' (BBC, 2018, August), 'plagued' by violence, drugs, and appalling conditions (BBC, 2019, August). Again, prisons were in a 'crisis state' (The Observer, 2018, February; The Telegraph, 2016, December) caused by Government (in)action (The Independent, 2018, April). Again, the 'system' seemed to carry on as normal. Prison conditions may not have been invisible to the public as Wacquant (2010) suggested, but the 'prisoners' (imprisoned people) and their deaths seemed invisible in policy and practice (Tomczak and Mulgrew, 2023). As a senior manager at Clarendon prison, a pseudonym for the research site, explained in an early visit, "*the wheels*" of imprisonment just keep turning.

The wheels kept turning in the face of attempted external regulation. In 2018, HM Inspectorate (2018b, January) invoked the first 'Urgent Notification' at Nottingham prison, requiring the Ministry of Justice to develop and produce an action plan to address serious concerns at the prison. As part of my role, I went to Nottingham to support some of the recommended changes, but again, no one in the prison seemed to pay much attention to what was said outside of the prison or organisation. Within 12 months, this was followed by Urgent Notifications for Exeter, Birmingham, Bedford, Bristol, and Feltham prisons. These prisons, holding over 3000 prisoners at the time were widely assessed by the Chief Inspector as 'unsafe' and 'requiring improvement', outcomes for prisoners were poor, and those at risk of self-inflicted death and self-harm were generally 'not well cared for' (HMIP, 2018b, c,

d, e, f). Within a year, the Inspectorate returned to these prisons and found more instances of 'insufficient' and 'no meaningful progress' against their recommendations than 'good progress'. Efforts to reduce violence, drug supply, self-harm, and time out of cells were ineffective and change within these prisons was not forthcoming (HMCIP, 2019a, b, c). I started to ask questions of colleagues and managers in Headquarters. Why is this happening? Why does nothing change? The answers always seemed to come back to "funding," "Not enough staff," "Too many inexperienced staff," and "Not enough time to do what matters," there was a collective sense of powerlessness to improve prison conditions, what Garside (2020) described as a service and its prison policy 'locked in inertia' (p.12). However, these 'common-sense' generalisms felt too simple, too 'matter-of-fact' to explain what was happening in prisons and why nothing was changing. Eventually, I asked enough questions that HMPPS provided partial sponsorship to pursue this research, analysing the production of imprisonment.

It was a combination of curiosity and personal experiences that motivated this study. I had little contact or experience with the criminal justice system growing up. Aside from the odd Police caution for youthful exuberance, watching *Prison Break,* and then studying the subject matter during my Undergraduate and Master's degrees, I knew nothing of imprisonment and its inner workings. It was not until after graduation when I started working with young people in the community, Pupil Referral Units (alternative schools to mainstream provision), and Young Offender Institutions that the penal world became 'real' – human. I probably learned more from the young people in these roles than they did from me. They taught me about their worlds, their experiences, their mindsets, and their needs. As Gooch (2019) identified, these predominantly male young people were simultaneously boys and men. On the streets and on the prison wings I observed their toughness, their aggression, and their anger, in private, we worked together to build trust and a safe space for them to explore their behaviour and express any feelings of anxiety or vulnerability that manifested in violent actions. In time, I learned how their identities and behaviour were often a mask and an embodiment of their conditions, a product of wicked problems, not wicked people (Maruna, 2023). Their lives and behaviour were not as simple as issues of "funding" or staffing. This study developed from a shared interest with some senior managers in HMPPS to understand what is happening day-to-day inside prisons and a personal motivation to understand and elevate the experiences of the people in prison. Like many prison ethnographies before this study (Crewe, 2009/2012; Gooch, 2019; Herrity, 2019), I wanted to focus on what it is like 'being human' in prison, to privilege the full spectrum of relations that produce imprisonment and its adverse outcomes. This focus on outcomes became more significant in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Infectious disease outbreaks in prisons occur regularly, but the COVID-19 pandemic presented a unique problem. In England and Wales, there were 113 infectious

disease outbreaks (two or more linked cases within 14 days) in prisons between 2017 and 2019, predominantly from Influenza and Diarrhoea/Vomiting (Public Health England, 2017, 2018, 2019). Between March and April 2020, there were 135 outbreaks of COVID-19 (SAGE, 2021). The first novel respiratory virus with human-to-human transmission (transfer) to establish itself as a pandemic (a global outbreak that covers a large proportion of the world's population) in more than 50 years had deadly effects (Patterson et al., 2021). As of February 2024, the World Health Organisation (2024, Online) reported that over 7 million people had officially died from COVID-19, although the true mortality associated with COVID-19 has been estimated as three times as many due to under-reporting and inconsistencies in diagnosis and cause of death certification (Msemburi et al., 2023). In England and Wales' prisons, 990 people died between 2020 and 2022, and more than 300 deaths were caused by COVID-19 (HMPPS, 2023a; Ministry of Justice, 2024). However, with limited primary research in prisons during the pandemic, it is unclear how prisons responded to the pandemic and what can be learned. Tomczak and Mulgrew (2023) warned that current approaches to academic and policy knowledge disguise issues, obscure circumstances, and conceal the avoidable nature of many prisoner deaths. Thus, this research adapted to its novel circumstances. It critically analyses the pandemic response in a prison to understand what happened and to inform future policy in preparation for the ongoing and next health emergency in prisons.

Drawing on prisoner and staff narratives, this thesis offers a novel first-hand analysis of imprisonment before and during the COVID-19 pandemic in an adult male prison. With fieldwork split into two phases due to a six-month suspension on face-to-face data collection, the pandemic provided a temporal comparison of prison practice. It highlights the vulnerability of those in prison to external events and how prisoners are deprived of their health and their liberty, it scrutinises how prisons performed a semantic slide, a subtle linguistic change or reframing, to disguise their security-oriented response to COVID-19, and it deconstructs what imprisonment was like, how it was produced, and why.

In summary, this thesis is concerned with the people who produce imprisonment in England and Wales and how day-to-day operations are understood, interpreted, and practised in an adult male prison before and during the pandemic. In particular, how are contemporaneous circumstances of high violence and harmful conditions produced? The following section is a brief overview of imprisonment that summarises the key themes of interest.

Overview: The Problem with Imprisonment

"It can be easy for us all – when these buildings are closed off by high walls and barbed wire – to adopt an "out of sight, out of mind" attitude... So today, I want to explain why I believe prison reform should be a great progressive cause in British politics, and to set out my vision for a modern, more effective, truly twenty-first-century prison system. My starting point is this: we need prisons." (former Prime Minister, David Cameron, Ministry of Justice, 2016)

According to politicians like David Cameron, prisons play an important role in society's functioning. In England and Wales, they are managed by HM Prison and Probation Service, an agency of the Ministry of Justice. A prison refers to physical institutions that hold people aged 15 years and older upon the request of the courts for alleged or proven offences against the law. After being arrested and charged with a 'crime' by the police, processed within the court system, and then transported to a prison, an adult male is remanded in a 'local' or 'reception' prison (Category B) awaiting judgement, sentencing, or 'risk categorisation' that will determine their next prison, such as a High-security prison (Category A and B), Resettlement or Training prison (Category C), or open conditions (Category D). Unless there are exceptional circumstances regarding the status or 'risk' of the imprisoned person, the local prison will be the first contact for many people with the prison service. This section highlights the national and local prison landscape, particularly addressing how prisons overlap with their wider social context.

National Prison Context

Prisons are central to public debate. As former Prime Minister, David Cameron, stated in 2016, society "needs prisons". According to him, some people, such as "rapists" and "murderers", need to be "punished" for "public safety" and to protect victims. Based on classical deterrence theory, Cameron, like many Prime Ministers before and since, posed that individuals rationally choose to commit their crime(s) and that, when faced with the consequences of punishment, they will 'think twice' and be 'deterred' (Pratt et al., 2017: 367). Politicians have long perpetuated an association between imprisonment and crime as they argue that a strong approach to 'law and order' can reduce crime and protect society, therefore 'the prison' has become a central pillar of election manifestos (Sim, 2009; Jones, 2021). As far back as Margaret Thatcher's administration, political parties have competed for control of the 'tough-on-crime' narrative, irrespective of outcomes (Sim, 2009). Ahead of the 2024 General Election, the Labour and Conservative parties both claimed to be 'tough on crime' (The Independent, 2023, October; The New Statesman, 2023, November) agreeing that tackling crime was the 'first duty of government' (The Evening Standard, 2023, March). A zero tolerance and 'prison works' perspective

towards crimes has developed into a perennial faith in the reformative potential of imprisonment to serve 'justice' (McNeill and Schinkel, 2017), what Wacquant (1999) has termed, the 'penal common sense', the assumption being that people can change or be 'morally redeemed' (Maruna and King, 2009). To quote Cameron, prisoners are "potential assets to be harnessed" with prisons "turning remorse and regret into lives with new meaning." (Ministry of Justice, 2016) However, crime does not necessarily correlate with rates of imprisonment in England and Wales or abroad (Bottoms, 2020; Garland, 2001; Wacquant, 2009), suggesting that prisons serve another social purpose.

Imprisonment is primarily about control. Whilst estimates from the Office for National Statistics (2023) indicate a continued decline in overall levels of crime since 1995 based on self-reported crimes, more people are imprisoned today than at any other time in the history of England and Wales. In 2019, on average more than 82,700 people were imprisoned across 122 male and female prisons, not including around 250 children held in secure residential spaces (Ministry of Justice, 2023a) or more than 24,000 foreign nationals held in Immigration Removal Centres (Home Office, 2020). By the end of 2023, the total prison population increased to around 88,000 people, with projections of over 106,000 prisoners by 2027 (Ministry of Justice, 2023a, 2023b). The prison population is likely to continue growing as it is a 'criminophagous and criminogenic' institution, predominantly imprisoning the poor and socially deprived (Wacquant, 2009: 285). As Wacquant (2009) explained, prisons 'feed on' or *consume* crime and criminals by creating barriers to integration, stigmatisation, destabilisation of family networks, and providing inadequate support. Imprisonment sustains itself by creating a self-perpetuating cycle of (re-)offending to justify its existence and growth. The proven reoffending rate in England and Wales for adults released from custody or starting a court order was 33% between 2019-21, and approximately 60% for people serving a sentence of fewer than 12 months (Ministry of Justice, 2023c). Therefore, the prison population is conceived as a 'self-fulfilling prophecy' (King et al., 1980), embodying deeply political assumptions about crime, politics, and poverty. At a macro scale, imprisonment intensifies inequality and sustains the status quo (Garland, 2001; Sim, 2009; Wacquant, 2009), in which the same groups of people are repeatedly criminalised.

The official discourse legitimises the 'culture of control' by associating imprisonment with crime (Garland, 2001). Imprisonment produces the illusion of order by distinguishing between 'them', the dangerous offenders, and 'us', the law-abiding majority (Chamberlen and Carvalho, 2019), in which any deficiencies in imprisonment, such as reoffending, perpetuate the rhetorical 'need' for imprisonment. The discourse problematises the individual and presents imprisonment as the solution. The less it works, the more we feel we need it (Chamberlen and Carvalho, 2019: 112). Therefore, prison is meant to be tough, to remind prisoners of what they are and what they have done; a punishment, a

deterrence, incapacitation, and a rehabilitative experience to justify its role in maintaining social order (Drake, 2012). Within custody, these contradicting social values have profound impacts on imprisoned people.

Prisons in England and Wales are violent and unsafe places. In 2019, more than 22% of prisoners were held in overcrowded conditions and between 2017-19, prisoner-on-prisoner assaults, assaults on staff, staff using force on prisoners, and self-harm reached record highs (Ministry of Justice, 2024). During this time, there were more than 250 self-inflicted deaths among a total of 920 people who died in custody (Ministry of Justice, 2024). Since 2020, more than 1000 prisoners have died. These deaths illustrate the 'tip of the iceberg of rights and public health issues' in prisons (Tomczak and Mulgrew, 2023: 3). Scholars have concluded that imprisonment in England and Wales is 'unsafe' and poses risks to the health and wellbeing of prisoners, staff, their families, and wider society (Tomczak and McAllister, 2021). Prisons have become nothing more than 'containment' (Bottoms, 1990: 15) and 'symbolic holding tanks' (Drake, 2012: 71) that harm prisoners (Tomczak, 2018). Imprisonment is a construction of its social intention, expressing and embodying punitive social values and goals (Moran and Jewkes, 2015: 166). Thus, imprisonment represents a cultural engine of inequality (Wacquant, 2009) in perpetual motion.

To think about incarceration is to think about contemporary society (Fassin, 2017). 'The prison', as an idea, is 'woven deep into the fabric' of society (Wacquant, 2002: 388), a mirror of social values where society "needs prison" to protect itself from dangerous people and sustain 'order' (inequality). Previous research has drawn attention to this theoretical construction of imprisonment (Garland, 2001; Sim, 2009; Fassin, 2017; Wacquant, 2009), however recent trends and transformations in England and Wales have sparked consideration of how these trends are mediated in practice. As Fassin (2017) asked, society continually reinvents itself and incarceration, so how does this manifest locally? The next section describes some of the local conditions of imprisonment in England and Wales.

Local Landscape

Criminologists can theorise from a distance, but it is necessary to address the local manifestation of imprisonment: what does it look like? How does it work? Many aspects of imprisonment are hidden by its high walls, sometimes impossible to penetrate but important to investigate (Wacquant, 2002). Utilising reports from the local Independent Monitoring Board, the national HM Inspectorate of Prisons, and primary prison research goes some way to revealing what happens in prison, if not how it happens. This section provides some of the local findings that highlight a need for the contemporaneous study of imprisonment.

Inspectorate reports are useful in drawing attention to local conditions. In Liverpool, the Inspectorate (2018c) report signalled that the prison was failing the physical, psychological, and emotional wellbeing of prisoners. Among the 'appalling' conditions were cockroaches, broken toilets, and unfurnished cells (p. 5). Incidents of prisoners self-harming were increasing, as was violence and staff using force. However, reporting of incidents and paperwork was frequently 'incomplete' and injuries were 'not investigated' (p. 25). In Exeter and Nottingham, similar themes were reproduced, such as high violence, use of force, and self-harm rates, incomplete incident reporting, 'unacceptably poor' living conditions, most prisoners feeling unsafe and spending most of their time locked in their cells (HMIP, 2018b, d). In Birmingham and Bedford, the Inspectorate identified 'dangerous shortcomings' (HMIP, 2018f: 5) and a 'lack of order and control', with drugs easily available and 'significant concerns' about the standard of health and care (HMIP, 2018e). In their annual report (2018), the Inspectorate highlighted that most adult male prisons in England and Wales faced these issues, 'there were repeated patterns of failure in far too many cases'. In some prisons, the conditions 'have no place in an advanced nation in the 21st century.' (HMIP, 2018a: 7) However, Sim (2019) explains that prison stakeholders and their official reports ignore the 'elephant in the penal corner' (p. 6), the uncompromising and imposing prison culture which reproduces the results of imprisonment and its apparent 'necessity'. Academic prison research reveals some of the invisible ways that prison is constructed.

The sociological dimensions of imprisonment have been analysed in criminological research. Building on research in America by Sykes (1958) and Clemmer (1940), scholars such as Crewe (2009/2012) and Liebling (2001), have revitalised ethnographic prison research in England and Wales since it was declared 'extinct' by Wacquant in 2002. In a Category C prison, Crewe (2009/2012) analysed how power is deployed by the institution, its techniques and practices that are shaped by structural imperatives, institutional culture, and local ethos. In a Young Offenders Institute, Gooch (2013) identified similarities between the experience of adult and child imprisonment, observing that, irrespective of age, prison life is characterised by power, social order, and control, in particular, how interpersonal violence and victimisation are routine. Bennett (2012) took an ethnographic approach to understanding the relationship between managerialism and localised practices in two medium-security prisons, connecting global forces with local practices, informed by occupational culture and embedded power structures. Herrity (2019) used sound to amplify the relationship between the everyday structure and HMP Midtown's emotional climate. Independently, these case studies provide an in-depth analysis of their research sites. They also identify themes that cut across the delivery of imprisonment and point to how imprisonment is systemically socially, politically, and economically produced. These scholars have collectively investigated some of the ways prisons on the ground are linked to their wider contexts.

Prison conditions reflect and represent their broader social contexts. A prison is a construction of social life in which 'the transmutations introduced by institutions interlace directly with individual life and therefore with the self' (Giddens, 1991: 1). Individual experiences and agency cannot be separated from wider social structures and, conversely, society and institutions cannot be isolated from experience and context. Structure, rules and practices across space and time, and agency, the ability for actors to act(ion), coexist and intersect (Giddens, 1984, 1991; Bennett, 2012). Thus, the prison has been conceived as both a microcosm of society and a micro-society (Clemmer, 1940), a product of relational powers. There is no such thing as 'The prison' (Crewe, 2009/2012; Sparks et al., 1996) and prisons should not be conceived as autonomous institutions devoid of societal context but as social spaces conditioning actions and outcomes within a structure.

However, many sociological scholars have drawn attention to the dissatisfying dualism of structure and agency (Crewe, 2009/2012, 2015; Garland, 2001; Giddens, 1991; Sparks et al., 1996). Bourdieu asserted that such binaries are primitive and disregard how practice is a regulated, learned, sensed, and conditioned product of interdependent relations, more like a dance or gymnastics than algebra (Lamaison and Bourdieu, 1986: 118). Local actions and outcomes are interlinked with meso and macro structures, such as histories, policies, values, and sensibilities (Fassin, 2017; Garland, 2001), but it is unclear how the official aims and intentions of imprisonment are translated or mediated into practice. Research deconstructing interior prison life, how the what and the why occur remains somewhat scarce. As such, this study is primarily interested in the inter-relationships between penal policy, people, and practice, between what Bourdieu (1977) terms *agency*, *habitus,* and *structure*. These concepts are defined and discussed in Chapter Three before applying Bourdieu's *field theory* to explore how the stated aims of imprisonment are operationalised in an adult male prison.

The Study: Questions, Aims, and Approach

With a qualitative research approach, this study offers a Bourdieusian understanding of prison practices to theorise how issues are being produced in a local adult male prison and why. Drawing on approximately 200 hours of observations, over 110 A4 pages of fieldnotes, and 28 interviews with (13) prisoners and (15) staff before and during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, this ethnographic thesis brings together data points to examine contemporary imprisonment: its practice, experience, and outcomes.

Using some of Bourdieu's (1977) key concepts, this study adds qualitative depth to the extant criminological and prison sociological literature on the paradoxical nature of imprisonment and offers a critical configuration of an English prison at present,

including a distinctive first-hand analysis of the pandemic response. Firstly, it identifies the affective relations between people, place, and practices, presenting how the prison is physically and socially structured. Secondly, it examines how prisoners and staff are socially conditioned by their environment, embodying their social roles and status which are reinforced by their mental constructions. Thirdly, it investigates how these mental and physical constructions manifest in the use of violence. Finally, it explores how the prison responded to the pandemic, assessing the impact of policy on prisoner-staff relationships, practices, and outcomes. In conclusion, it supports extant findings that imprisonment is a paradoxical arrangement that achieves the opposite of its 'aims' and reveals some of the ways it is re-produced in practice based on the social relations between policies and people. The research aims and questions are introduced below.

The core aim of the study was to examine how imprisonment manifests in practice and this is reflected in the research question:

> How are security, safety, and rehabilitation operationalised in contemporary imprisonment?

It represents a shared interest between the sponsor (a HMPPS senior leader) and the researcher in the practice, experience, and outcomes of imprisonment. The aims are threefold: to *highlight* inter-relationships between the stated aims of imprisonment, their interpretation and practice, to *understand* how prison policy is mediated into practice, and to *consider* implications for future research, practice, and development. The unanticipated pandemic provided a lens through which to investigate these aims and it is duly represented in the underlying research questions:

(a) How is security implemented and maintained in contemporary imprisonment?

(b) How do staff and prisoners interpret and negotiate the interplay between security, safety, and rehabilitation in contemporary imprisonment?

(c) How is imprisonment affected by a pandemic?

These research questions contribute to understanding and interpreting the dominant themes of how security, safety, and rehabilitation are practised in a prison. Furthermore, these concepts represent my journey throughout the study. As an 'insider', working for the Prison & Probation Service whilst studying imprisonment, the research questions reflect preconceptions and preconstructions about the purpose(s) prisons serve. Uncritically (doxically), I, like many insider researchers and policymakers armed with 'common sense', initially assumed the stance of a 'doxosopher' (Bourdieu, 1998), a scholar of the obvious. When I embarked on the PhD, the meanings of these concepts seemed obvious; security, safety, and rehabilitation in prison were achievable, and the solution to local issues was in

practice or policy. Scholarship, critical distance, and the pandemic provided an alternative perspective, drawing attention to the links between prisons and their wider context. This study drew attention to the contradictions between macro intentions and meso and micro-level outcomes. These factors highlighted the need to 'question simple ideas' (Bourdieu, 1989: 24). Over time and with perseverance, this thesis developed to deconstruct imprisonment and the way I thought the world was when this journey began. The extant literature and related theoretical approaches underpinning this study are detailed fully in the following two chapters.

Outline of Chapters

This thesis is split into two broad sections. Chapters two, three and four establish the theoretical framework and approach of the study; the context, design, and analytical lens. The findings are presented in chapters five through eight, with the concluding chapter summarising the highlights and contributions to knowledge.

Chapter two is a literature review exploring the aims of imprisonment, recent developments, and whether prisons are experiencing a 'crisis' or not. It situates this research within the wider penal scholarship and critiques the key concepts of interest.

Chapter three explains the logic guiding the empirical dimensions of the study. It introduces Bourdieu's field theory and covers some of his key concepts for analysing the prison as a field. It explores what habitus, doxa, and hysteresis mean and how they can be applied to identify, understand, and deconstruct the production of social norms in a prison.

Chapter four explains the study design, methods, and practice. It outlines the questions and aims, describes the ontological and epistemological approach, and discusses the challenges experienced during the study. It justifies the focus on a local adult male prison in England and explains how data collection and the analytical process developed. It details the limitations and novel ethical issues with re-negotiating access to the field in 2020 and re-building relationships, referring specifically to my positionality as an 'insider' in the field and the related considerations as a 'doxosopher', or 'state thinker' (Bourdieu, 1998).

Chapter five is the first findings chapter and describes some of how Clarendon is structured and practised. It reinforces the prison as a field and provides an overview of how the case study site is configured around control and prisonisation, perpetuated by its neglected infrastructure, the liminal entry process, search procedures, and the daily timetable. It highlights how the microstructures of custody are inextricably linked with the macro aims of imprisonment as Clarendon represents wider social values and expectations.

As the previous chapter explored the 'outside' structure of imprisonment, chapter six explores the 'inside' structures: who is in prison and why. By connecting the habitus and doxa of prisoners and staff, the ways they act and think, it identifies how they interpret and embody their social roles and the field. It finds that many prisoners are em-prisoned by a trans-carceral habitus that reflects their social marginalisation. Prison is seen by some as a place of safety, protecting them from social deprivation whilst harming their reintegration upon release. Staff equally embody security, what they see as the priority of imprisonment, thereby perpetuating social inequality and the harms of imprisonment.

Chapter seven deconstructs the security disposition of staff, specifically addressing their use of force and its effects in Clarendon. It explains what using force is, who uses it and why it is of interest. Deconstructing this practice reveals the relationship between logic and practice. Force is an embodiment and normal practice of control among operational staff, who describe it as "inevitable", a doxic representation of field structure, habitus, and their fundamental beliefs. Drawing on a specific incident, the chapter identifies how force imitates security and is legitimised in policy, training, practice, and perceptions. The final section identifies how force perpetuates violence and re-produces the conditions of its use. It concludes that in contrast to findings by some scholars, prison isn't 'disrupted' by force, it is force, the "normal" functioning of a field designed, embodied, and practised through control.

The final findings chapter addresses the prison pandemic response. It analyses how COVID-19 was conceived as a 'biosecurity' threat, justifying a semantic slide which disguised the sustained practices of doxic security and exacerbated the harms of imprisonment. It finds that the pandemic did not disrupt the social norms and health remained a secondary priority to the traditional aims of imprisonment. It deconstructs how this occurred and the consequences, finding that imprisonment was a paradox of health.

The concluding chapter of this thesis highlights the key findings. It revisits the research questions and summarises the findings and contributions to knowledge. To this end, it concludes that the aims of imprisonment are paradoxical, a mismatch between rhetoric, practice, and outcomes. However, imprisonment is not in a crisis, it is the crisis, a product of its own conditions.

2. The Spiral Fallacy: A Literature Review of the Penal Landscape

'Theory without empirical research is empty, empirical research without theory is blind' (Bourdieu, 1988: 774-5)

Introduction

This thesis aims to understand how imprisonment is produced at present. It commences by reviewing germane criminological and sociological literature on recent developments and conceptualisation within the penal field. This chapter has three aims. Firstly, to describe the official aims of imprisonment as defined by the England and Wales Prison Service. Secondly, to critically examine the positivistic definition of these aims and intentions. Lastly, to contextualise the area of interest within the wider criminological literature. This establishes the theoretical foundation upon which this thesis develops to question how imprisonment is practised in an adult male prison.

It primarily focuses on extant literature addressing the context of adult male imprisonment in England and Wales to situate the study within the wider penal scholarship. Imprisonment has been described as a 'predominantly' male domain (Bennett, 2012; Warr, 2018) characterised by 'traditional male qualities of dominance, authoritativeness and aggressiveness' (Crawley and Crawley 2008/2012: 141). As the largest proportion of the prison population, accounting for over 96% (n=84,300) of the prison population in November 2023, the adult male prison population has almost doubled since 1993 (Ministry of Justice, 2020, 2023a). Comparatively, there has been a policy shift involving the decarceration of women, children, and young people in recent years (Carlen and Worrall, 2012; Smith and Gray, 2019). To understand the production of adult male prisons, this review appraises sources examining the theory and practice of its official aims: *rehabilitation*, *safety,* and *security* using "keywords" in online academic search engines and the University elibrary service *NUsearch.* Although focussed on the jurisdiction of England and Wales, it draws on penal research from international settings, where appropriate.

The first modern English prison was developed in the 19th century (Sim, 1990), but this review addresses recent developments, such as the neoliberal turn. This decision is based on arguments within scholarship that imprisonment transitioned from the 'rehabilitative ideal' in the 1970s to the 'culture of control' (Garland, 2001), characterised by new roles, ideologies, and penal practices shaping what happens in prison today, a shift Giddens (1990) calls, 'late modernity'. Although Loader and Sparks (2013) suggested that this 'history of the present' tends to construct a 'straw version of the past' (p. 14), dazzled by the expansion of imprisonment since the

1970s, these scholars acknowledge that 'critical junctures' have occurred within the last forty years that have shaped penal modernism. This chapter situates the study of contemporary imprisonment within its recent historical context.

The Official Aims and Social Responsibilities of Imprisonment

The aims and purpose of imprisonment represent strategic and practical guidelines for the system. They communicate the Government of the day's direction, its priorities and goals, and its top-down management of the criminal justice system. As former Justice Secretary, Robert Buckland explained in 2019: 'I am not here to run every prison operationally, but I am here, I hope, to set a clear steer to the civil servants about what I expect to be done' (House of Commons Justice Committee, 2019). This 'officialisation' strategy or 'steer' represents structure and intention, aiming to transmute and legitimise interests and subsequent actions and outcomes at a local level (Bourdieu, 1990a). Aims are not instrumental, but they are indicative.

The HMPPS Business Strategy (2019, November) suggests that prisons protect the public and rehabilitate prisoners by providing a 'safe, decent, and secure environment' (p. 9). This focus on safety, security, and rehabilitation informs the delivery of imprisonment – the why informs the how – but scholars explain that prison practice is not bound by the stated aims of imprisonment. It is argued that these stated aims are 'open textured' (Twining and Miers, 1982: 213), allowing for individual agency and discretion among staff (Blasko, 2013). Whilst Bennett (2023a) poses that policy regulates staff actions, Tomczak (2018) states that guidance is 'difficult to follow and out of date in places' (p. 115). Scholars generally contend that staff use their discretion and decide which rules to apply to 'get things done' (Arnold, 2016: 268). Prison officers, for example, are required to form relationships with prisoners, encourage responsible behaviour, and create a safe, controlled, and hopeful environment (Liebling, 2000; Liebling et al., 2011, 2019). This power to affect change, to 'make some difference' (Giddens, 1984: 14) has been conceptualised as a *skill* in prisons (Liebling, 2011; Liebling et al., 2011; Liebling and Price, 1999). The general criminological consensus is that prison staff are not 'mere turnkeys', but are a 'cornerstone' of 'correctional practices' (Mann et al., 2018), critical to the 'success' of imprisonment (Liebling et al., 2011: 2). They shape a prison's social climate (Crewe et al., 2015, 2022).

Prison staff have to resolve various roles and responsibilities. Liebling and Price (1999) found that staff are 'gatekeepers, agents of criminal justice, peacemakers, instruments of change, and deliverers and interpreters of policy.' (p. 86) Scott (2006, 2013) divided their varied roles into four functions or categories: security, supervision, service, and policing, and highlighted their different working personalities. Other scholars have analysed the complex and differentiated role of

prison staff in constructing imprisonment, such as the nature of power, punishment, and inequality (Arnold, 2016; Bennett et al., 2013). Studies reveal that staff have an 'embarrassment of policies they should follow' (Tomczak, 2018: 114) as they turn policy into 'daily, situated practice on the ground level' (Hjörne et al., 2010: 303). Staff use their learned skill, or *"jail craft"* to regulate the quality and purpose of imprisonment (Arnold, 2016). In discussing prison suicides, however, Tomczak (2018) writes, 'staff and governors have some agency to create material and cultural differences in their individual prisons', but 'agency and influence is limited' (p. 109). What happens in custody is dominated by a security-oriented occupational culture (McKendy et al., 2021; Warr, 2023) as staff practice condenses a 'whole web of social relations and cultural meanings' (Garland, 1990: 297). Staff adapt to their social context.

Scholars note that staff adapt to their prison role (Arnold, 2005). Whilst prison occupational culture is not generally considered homogenous (Scott, 2013; Warr, 2018), most staff develop shared attributes, 'powerless' to resist the 'insidious' institutionalisation effects of the brutal prison environment (Warr, 2008: 22). They experience 'role engulfment' (Crawley and Crawley, 2008/2012: 149) of hyper-vigilance, distrust, and feelings of emotional numbness inside and outside of the field (Kauffman, 1988). Through a process of socialisation, the prison setting alters how staff think, feel, and act in their workplace (McKendy et al., 2021). Keys, for example, form part of the everyday practice of power within the institution, signifiers of authority, expectation, and adherence to rules (Herrity, 2019). Via a management style that attempts to monitor and control employee behaviour, what Bennett (2012) labels, *managerialism*, managers internalise targets, absorbing their role into individual identity and professional practice (O'Donnell, 2012). Collectively, prison staff are responsible for mediating the aims of imprisonment into practice. As Lipsky (2010) identified in *Street-Level Bureaucrats*, prisons 'obviously' play a role in processing social undesirables and staff help fulfil its prophecy as a criminogenic place of punishment (p. 11). In *The Culture of Control*, Garland (2001) wrote that actors of the criminal justice field are the human subjects through whom and by whom historical processes are brought about. Therefore, the practice of imprisonment is representational of social expectations and aligned with the official ruling position and objectives (Crewe, 2009/2012; Garland, 1997; Sparks and Bottoms, 1996). Whilst there are few recent accounts of how the aims of imprisonment are produced in practice (Herrity, 2019), the extant literature indicates that the aims guide what prisons are for and what happens within (Scott, 2012). In other words, prison staff are required to translate the aims of imprisonment into practice. Examining these relations reveals some of the ways that outcomes, such as violence and reoffending, are re-produced to consider how to address them.

As such, Government strategies and organisational aims matter. Prisons 'mirror' and represent the societal context in which they are based, reflecting social values and

community sentiment, shaped by ebbs and flows in national and organisational tides (Fassin, 2017; Liebling and Arnold, 2004). In 2021, former Deputy Prime Minister and Justice Secretary, Dominic Raab set out the function and social position of contemporary imprisonment in the Prisons Strategy White paper:

> *Prisons keep people safe by taking dangerous criminals off our streets, but they can only bring down crime and keep the public safer in the longer term if they properly reform and rehabilitate offenders.* (Ministry of Justice, 2021: 3)

Raab was setting out 'the 10-year vision' for the Prison Service. In positivistic terms, imprisonment was framed as the answer to the social ill of crime; incapacitating "dangerous criminals" by taking them off "our streets", reducing reoffending, and keeping people safe. In contrast to the 'new approach to women' that was 'trauma-responsive' and 'empowering' (p. 54), imprisoned men were 'continually trying to subvert our security measures and drive a culture of violence and intimidation' (p. 7). The White paper set out a plan to expand prison capacity by 20,000, a 'zero-tolerance approach' to weapons, drugs, and 'contraband' items, including more drug testing and GPS-enabled alcohol monitoring, more prison staff, more autonomy for prison Governors to 'innovate', more funding for 'rehabilitation', and transparency around 'prison performance', including league tables. The vision was that prisons should be: 'safe, secure, and rehabilitative' (p.12). O'Donnell (2012) explains that these aims frame the problem. By determining the priorities and intended outcomes, they lead the eye and the mind towards the instrumental effects of imprisonment. The aims invite stakeholders to assume there are internal solutions. However, the meaning and application of these concepts appear unclear. The stated aims and provision of imprisonment have been critiqued as contradictory (Tomczak, 2018), 'too general', and incoherent (Livingstone et al., 2008: 7). Crewe (2008) questioned whether prison staff are confused about what the prison system is meant to achieve. The following sections review the intentions and the aims that officially structure what happens in prison and why.

The Fallacy of (Re)Habilitation

Rehabilitation is put forward as the long-term aim of imprisonment, a central strategy and *expectation* (Mann et al., 2018) that gives it purpose and legitimacy. Guidance from HMPPS (2019, May) suggests that rehabilitation is about change and abstaining from a previous pattern of offending, to 'change their attitudes and habits and try out new identities'. The prisoner as an agent of change is considered both rational (their behaviour is a matter of individual choice) and ill (requiring social-economic and medical treatment) but always an individual. The Strategy White Paper explains that, through education, drug abstinence, housing support, and improved job prospects, prisons will 'reduce reoffending' (Ministry of Justice, 2021: 32). This reveals the ideological and quasi-scientific interpretations of what crime is, who 'offends', and the role of imprisonment according to official policy.

The official doctrine frames prisoners and their criminal behaviour as subjective problems to be resolved. Following the Meisenhelder (1977) school of thought that 'you rehabilitate yourself', prison 'rehabilitation' focuses on a positivistic interpretation of agency – the free will and personal effort to (re-)learn (crime-free) behaviour. Rehabilitation derives from French and Latin, referring to the 're', return and 'habilis', competence – the return to competence (Mathiesen, 2006), thereby neglecting social and structural factors, such as poverty, affecting behaviour. The official definition of 'rehabilitation' proposes that prisoners can, as Buckland stated, 'become once again law-abiding citizens' (Hansard, 2019, June col. 291) if they choose to 'turn their backs on crime' (Ministry of Justice, 2021: 8). It is upto prisons to 'offer them the chance to turn their lives around whilst ensuring that prisoners who disrupt the good order and discipline of our regimes face swift and certain consequences' (p. 6). As if a crime was a predominantly rational action, the HMPPS (2019, May) 'Rehabilitative Culture' guidance explains that prisoners can choose a 'different lifestyle' when they decide to change their attitudes, habits, and identities. The HMPPS (2019) Prisons Drug Strategy is equally reductionist and deterministic, reducing drug use to 'making positive choices' (p. 15). In official prison discourse, rehabilitation is a broad term applied to an elective process of personal restoration or return to a 'functioning' (law-abiding) order.

These narratives focus on individuality and rationality. According to official penal policy and positivist scholars, desistance, like the causes of crime, is 'voluntary' and a 'choice' (HMPPS, 2019). Desistance, (over)simply defined as the absence of offending (McNeill, 2012), is a contested term. Criminologists have developed various theories about why people commit crimes, ranging from 'criminal personalities' that are stable and distinguishable (Maruna, 2000) to an ongoing journey where people desist *into* something, not from something (McNeill, 2012). The Government's position is that the criminal actor's subjective role and self-interests determine their actions. Based on individual-level psychological theories, this Hobbesian (2010) approach is advocated by 'super-agent' theorists who, compared with structural theorists, argue that people are free to act as they choose (Farrall and Bowling, 1999). It concentrates on behaviour without context. This classical theory of crime suggests that imprisonment should discourage breaking the social contract ('the law') by which citizens live and, concurrently, promote individual change (Abramovaite et al., 2023). Such interpretations have found support in the work of some criminologists and psychologists, such as Merrington and Stanley (2004), Cullen and Gendreau (2019), and Ramsay et al. (2020). They promote individual change through 'offender behaviour programmes' and medical treatment to reduce reoffending based on 'what works' or 'evidence-based practice' – using 'science' to solve 'crime-related problems' (Cullen and Gendreau, 2019). This fetishism of 'evidence', predominantly among forensic psychologists, suggests an objective and neutral truth to criminality and a rejection of relational theories

(Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Whilst Warr (2018) notes that contemporary interpretations reveal a shift towards a more multifaceted psychological, neurological, and social interpretation of crime, rooted in biological vulnerabilities and contexts, the individual, rather than their social conditions, remains the risk to be managed and 'rehabilitated'. This 'rational' approach has become 'enmeshed' in prison management (p. 35).

The conceptualisation of prisoners as 'risks' is central to the rationality of crime and rehabilitation. 'Risk' discourse is highly contentious and has different meanings, such as the probability of reoffending, violence, or potential impact of escape, producing the image of a 'dangerous' prisoner that embodies and becomes the risk (McNeill et al., 2009). Sim (2012) explains that it is core to the idea of a working prison, perpetuating and reinforcing reformist discourse. Risk organises logic, informs policy, and shapes practices and behaviour (Ricciardelli et al., 2015), producing what Garland (2001) called, a 'risk-conscious' approach to imprisonment and Carlen (2013a) termed 'risk-crazed governance'. As Hannah-Moffat (2005) theorised, modern prisons have transformed prisoners into individualised risk subjects. This risk-conscious model frames prisoners' needs 'as risks that must be managed' and controlled (Garland, 2001: 175). This 'risk/need' logic links social disadvantage to crime and imprisonment, it reframes social problems as individual problems and 'individual inadequacies' (Hannah-Moffat, 2005: 43). Post-release, the former prisoner is maintained in a cycle of stigma and recidivism (Maruna, 2011), no more than a quasi-inmate, a 'risk' to the public (Wacquant, 2009). However, O'Malley (1999) and Hannah-Moffat (2005) warn that generalisations of risk management as a common feature of modern societies, of 'risk society' (Giddens, 1998), overlook the specificity of particular constructions, histories, and applications of the term in a given social context. Risk is not control, it is dynamic, melded with other policy orientations, such as rehabilitation, public protection, and restorative justice (O'Malley, 1999). Nevertheless, there is a consensus among many criminological scholars that prison practice orients around a risk assessment/ management/treatment nexus (Sim, 2012) which 'ensnares' prisoners and their identity with ideations and notions of criminogenic risk (Warr, 2018: 39). Prisoners must 'perform a flagellant self' (Warr, 2020: 36) as they are measured, categorised, and defined by their 'offending' to allow prison staff, such as psychologists, to cast their control in the principles of rehabilitation, 'risk assessments', and treatment whilst making decisions about prisoners' future (Warr, 2018: 156). In England and Wales, this 'new penology' is 'concerned with techniques for identifying, classifying and managing groups assorted by levels of dangerousness' (Feeley and Simon, 1994: 173). The prisoner is their crime.

These notions of risk and offending are dominant in official prison discourse but are subject to critique in criminological literature. Scholars argue that positivistic definitions which individualise the prisoner and their criminality are narrow and do

not account for wider social and interpersonal factors (McNeill, 2012). Carlen (2013b) duly asked, 'Rehabilitation to what?' citing how the approach at present is 'almost exclusively' focused on returning the poor and powerless (and, comparatively, the rich) to their previous socioeconomic place (p. 33). Rehabilitation does not happen in a 'hermetically sealed vacuum devoid of other actors' (Maruna and Farrall, 2004: 15) but its practice does not address social inequality. Rehabilitation may be considered in four forms: psychological (in terms of individual change), legal (reducing barriers to reintegration), moral (indicating redemption), and social (regarding the return and acceptance of status and means) (McNeill, 2012). It is a social and personal journey. Warr (2022) also warns that 'rehabilitation' and 'risk' are racial, highlighting how myths of black criminality shape risk assessments of black people, with negative impositions of Blackness creating 'colour lines'. Accordingly, social relations affect a person's pathway. Crime and 'risk' are socially constructed and socio-structural (Bottoms, 1980). In other words, people may become trapped by their social circumstances. Across the disciplines of sociology (Van Eijk, 2017; Wacquant, 2009), economics (Wu and Wu, 2012), epidemiology (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009), and criminology (Maruna, 2000) scholars have established a strong relationship between social factors and crime, such as homelessness, poverty, and unemployment (Hopkins, 2012; Williams et al., 2012). Maruna and Mann (2019) summarise that:

> 'the best known findings in this regard suggest that people are more likely to desist when they have strong ties to family and community, employment that fulfils them, recognition of their worth from others, feelings of hope and self-efficacy, and a sense of meaning and purpose in their lives.' (p. 7)

Subjective outcomes, such as criminal behaviour, are interdependent with social conditions. Therefore, Quinn (2023) and Wacquant (2009) contend that narratives of 'rehabilitation' convert deprivation into an elective choice, disregarding how imprisonment is part of a long process of marginalisation in which prisoners embody their social inequality within, beyond, and before imprisonment. These scholars argue that marginalisation, like crime, is not a 'moment' of individual rational choice, but the product of enduring social forces.

Extant criminological literature proposes that prisoners (and staff) are subject to a process of conditioning that inhibits their ability to reintegrate into society outside the prison walls. Scholars have highlighted the porosity of prisons and permeability of imprisonment, the increasing contact with outside factors and cultures. Crewe (2009/2012) noted that prisoners bring cultures with them. People, beliefs, cultural tools, material resources, and capitalist market forces flow in and out of prison regularly (Ellis, 2021). However, some scholars maintain that prisons retain qualities of a 'total institution', 'isolating and all-encompassing' (Crewe, 2009/2012: 485) for those living and working within its field. Prisoners are shaped by their institutional

environments, a process termed *prisonisation* or *institutionalisation* (Clemmer, 1940; Crewe, 2007; Guiney and Yeomans, 2023; Sykes, 1958). Through a ritual or *liminal* process of de-individualisation, separation from society and undergoing an extreme period of liminality, citizens are transformed into prisoners (Gooch, 2013; Maruna, 2011). Prisoners are separated from their past selves and wider society as they experience the many forms of 'mundane' violence (Jefferson, 2005: 489) directed at prisoners, including the coercion of body searches (Warr, 2023) and restrictions on clothing (Ash, 2010). These everyday aspects of imprisonment 'prisonises' incarcerated people, communicating that their bodies have 'become public property' (Wahidin and Tate, 2005: 60). Although there is no one-size-fits-all model of prisonisation (Crewe, 2009/2012) and prisoners are not considered a homogenous group (Warr, 2018), prisoners acclimatise to the controls and constraints of custodial practices and adopt the customs of imprisonment, shaping their experiences, identity, thoughts, and behaviour (Crewe, 2009/2012; Neuber, 2011). This conditioning process impedes reintegration upon release.

Some scholars propose that prisons are criminogenic rather than rehabilitative. Imprisonment is described as a double-edged sword that fails to address some of the social determinants of crime that reduce reoffending, such as maintaining social support from family and friends (Wacquant, 2009). Research has identified the importance of social visits for maintaining family ties (Dixey and Woodall, 2012), improving mental health and wellbeing (Woodall et al., 2009), and supporting reintegration and social adjustment upon release (Codd, 2008). However, many scholars identify that imprisonment generally harms and 'ruptures' social relationships and reintegration (Maruna, 2011; Minson and Flynn, 2021). A rich body of literature has identified the various negative 'symbiotic' effects of imprisonment on prisoners and their families, including financial stress, increased risk of mental health, substance misuse issues, and educational problems among children, physical abuse and reduced life chances (Comfort, 2016; Condry and Minson, 2021; Minson, 2018; Minson and Flynn, 2021). Upon release, research has identified that prisoners can experience further disruption, where their new social structures clash with their learned behaviour in prison (Neuber, 2011; Quinn, 2023; Shammas, 2018). Caputo-Levine (2013, 2015) observed how the conditioning of prisoners and their learned physicality inhibited their employability, social relationships, capacity to stop offending, and parenting. In the same way that prisoners are in limbo upon entry into custody, they are released into a new environment without the disposition or support to integrate (Maruna, 2011), perpetuating a cycle of reoffending (Appleby et al., 2015). As Halsey et al. (2017) explain, even the most 'battle-hardened' would-be desister often becomes overwhelmed by their circumstances upon release, producing what they termed, 'fuck it' moments that signify their sense of isolation and loss of capacity to desist. Wacquant (2009) concludes that prisons have a 'criminogenic' effect, perpetuating and increasing the chances of criminality.

The shortfalls of prison rehabilitation suggest that this official aim of imprisonment serves an alternative symbolic function to legitimise the prison. As Chamberlen and Carvalho (2019) explain, prison is meant to be a punishment, an indication that a person has violated or departed from the common values of society. The *responsibilisation* strategy of imprisonment communicates the 'criminal' as a rational actor who is accountable and responsible for their actions (Cavadino et al., 2019), a risk to social cohesion and must be punished (Garland, 2001). This narrative reinforces a belief that society is safe, secure, and orderly. The prison embodies a 'symbolic function' of moral order, with the 'dangerous' prisoner seemingly 'rehabilitated' upon release to protect order and maintain the state's monopoly over crime and justice (Chamberlen and Carvalho, 2019: 106). Scholars contend that this 'sham' of rehabilitation ('correctionalism'), only sustains the punitive reality. Rather, rehabilitation *is* punishment, the utilitarian, managerial, and morally expressive narratives that an 'offender' must change, which binds these individuals to shared moral norms and values (Robinson, 2008). The official discourse of rehabilitation devolves and obfuscates the state of responsibility whilst maintaining social inequality and control, 'the punitive reality' (Ismail, 2021: 241). If prisoners do not succumb to the normalisation process of coerced offender rehabilitation programmes that produce societal acceptance then they remain a 'risk' to society, caught in a 'spiral' of criminal 'justice' (Mathiesen, 2006: 48). Garland (2001), Wacquant (2009), and Ismail (2021) find that when prisons fail to rehabilitate people or evidence crime-reduction, these are easily explained away by delivery problems, lack of trained staff and resources, and the perennial need for more research, knowledge, and reform. Imprisonment, like rehabilitation, evolves and re-invents itself to maintain the credibility of the system and keep its conceptual framework intact (Robinson, 2008). Rehabilitation becomes the 'scientific' and social lens through which prisoners are judged, regardless of whether prison helps or hinders. Thus, rehabilitation is conflated with security and safety, a means of regulating prisoners under the guise of public protection. The prison, it is argued, cannot fail.

The Fallacy of Safety and Security

If, as some academics propose, rehabilitation legitimises imprisonment, then security and safety may be considered its primary functions and goals (Scott, 2006). Politicians have regularly prioritised these two aims. In 2016, then Lord Chancellor, Liz Truss wrote, 'To lay the right foundations to build prisons that are places of reform, we need to improve safety and security in our prisons' (Ministry of Justice, 2016: 7). A few years later, former Prisons Minister, Damian Hinds, told Parliament that safety and security are 'our focus' in prisons:

> 'There can be no higher purpose for a Government than protecting the public from the devastating consequences of crime… to take criminals off our street' (Hansard, 2023 July, col. 757).

If rehabilitation is the means of legitimising imprisonment, security and safety represent the official ends of imprisonment. However, it is often unclear what security and safety mean and to whom, if anyone, these concepts refer. Indeed, in German *Sicherheit* refers to both safety and security. In a prison context, they are often used interchangeably by scholars and officials. This section sets out the official policy definition and the associated criminological literature to examine what prison security and safety mean and look like.

The official discourse is that prison safety and security are an objective state, a pursuit against threats evolving and changing over time, and a symbol of reassurance (Bennett, 2023a). Generally, security refers to the protection of humanity against internal and external threats (Aldis, 2008). In prison, prisoners are framed as threats. Prison must, according to former HMPPS Director of Security, Order and Counter-Terrorism, Claudia Sturt and her Ministerial seniors, protect the public and the organisation's reputation from 'dangerous criminals' by containing them inside the prison walls (Sturt and Gooch, 2021). Security is considered a means to an end where its absence produces insecurity, violence, and 'weakened civic engagement' (Bennett, 2023a: 30). Rhetorically, it is 'the bedrock' for rehabilitation (Sturt and Gooch 2021: 9), a *sine qua non* 'public good' (Zedner 2009). Such narratives suggest that prison security takes a 'social approach', integrated with the importance of staff-prisoner relationships, prisoners' perceptions of fairness, purposeful activity, and prison culture (Dunbar, 1985). However, the meaning and application of prison security are critiqued by some scholars as contradictory and incompatible with its intended aims of prison as a 'public good'.

The meaning and intention of prison security and safety are considered narrow and paradoxical. Prison security has been conflated with public protection, the prevention of escape and ongoing criminality (Scott, 2006; Sim, 2009), but Wacquant (2009) argues that it is disconnected from employment, health, housing, and subjective security. Rather, the security of imprisonment – its reputation – is better assured than the security of prisoners (Fassin, 2017). This suggests that prison security as it is conceived contradicts the goal of rehabilitation (Drake, 2012; Annison, 2020). Recent scholarship has used body searches to demonstrate this. Bennett (2023a) wrote that body searches were 'fundamental' to how prison security is managed (p. 28). Searching was 'both necessary and effective' (p. 35) in preventing ongoing criminality, with Bennett citing Government statistics on finding drugs and mobile phones as 'material basis for concern' (p. 30). Body searches were an 'indispensable' security measure according to prison staff, but produced feelings of insecurity among prisoners (Daems, 2023). With a phenomenological approach, Warr (2023) explains that the power of the state and the prison is communicated through the securitised touch on the prisoner's body, reinforcing the subordination and helplessness of the exposed other. Being searched induced feelings of shame, humiliation, and institutional harm among prisoners that

concurrently reinforced the punitive social values and hierarchy of imprisonment (Daems, 2023; Tschanz, 2023; Warr, 2023). As Tschanz (2023) concludes, searching is a paradox. It represents an everyday acceptance and 'extension of institutional power' (p. 259) that did not consider the symbolic or physical impact of its violation on the prisoner nor question the security imperative of its practice. Searching, as a 'fundamental' representation of prison security, harmed the security of prisoners.

Scholars have identified similar contradictions with staff using force. In Canada (Mckendy et al., 2021), Ukraine (Symkovych, 2019), and England and Wales (Prison Reform Trust, 2023, November) force has represented another form of 'violence' experienced by prisoners. It is a learned means of staff exerting their power and authority over others to maintain security, control, and order at the expense of prisoners (Hepburn, 1985; Marquart, 1986). By physically restraining prisoners, staff use force to 'directly control' prisoners (Sparks et al., 1996: 157). As such, Wolff and Shi (2009) found that prisoners in America felt most unsafe when staff used force. Therefore, force is part of an ecosystem of violence and pain, whereby the violators become violated who become violators in a never-ending cycle of retaliation and reprisal (Maruna, 2023). Subsequently, security is theorised as a zero-sum game that produces insecurity at a micro and macro level (Zedner, 2005). It is a 'slippery' concept that is used to justify widely divergent policies (p. 516) and is a moving target to an answer that changes day to day (p. 518). Prison security is a rhetorical device and metaphor of imprisonment that exacerbates the issues it problematises.

Subsequently, prison security is critiqued as arbitrary. Whilst official policy (HMPPS, 2023b) espouses its contribution to a 'rehabilitative culture' by creating a safer and more secure environment, scholars contend that prison security practices, such as body searches and restrictions on movement, only contribute to normalising punishment and deepening social inequalities (Wacquant, 2009). Ryan and Sim (1998) identified that the intensification of security at a macro-level has detrimental local impacts. Security conceives of prisoners as the enemy, a risk to be controlled, which shapes a repressive penal regime and justifies authoritarian control (Drake, 2012). Crewe (2007, 2009/2012) and Garland (1997) describe this shift of penal power from overt coercion and control to the normative assent of security as moving the same behaviours 'backstage'. Regulation becomes more responsibilised, socially approved, and legally sanctioned (Garland, 1997: 180). Although it may be backstage, Warr (2016) explains that coercion and control are still ubiquitous, an embedded and commonplace facet of everyday life in prison:

> every interaction, conversation, bodily movement, glance, laugh, smile, and even yawn must be monitored by the individual to ensure it is not causing offence, being taken out of context or rendering the prisoner vulnerable in the eyes of peers (p. 590).

No one, nowhere, and no action escapes the 'risk climate' (Giddens, 1991). This ideology of security, what Wacquant (2009) terms, 'security think', and its focus on risk, prevention, and otherness of dangerous people justifies the role of imprisonment, its unquestionable authority and legitimacy to 'protect the public' whilst diminishing the liberty of prisoners. Prisoners are transformed into a risk and represent their crimes (Drake, 2012) as imprisonment creates the 'illusion of safety without creating the conditions' (p. 110). Scholars argue that prisons create a facade of control and order.

In summary, criminological literature suggests that prison safety and security are narrow, arbitrary, and paradoxical concepts. However, there have been few recent critical examinations of the production of prison security in practice. Warr (2021, 2023) provides a rare account of the lived experience of being searched in prison and, separately, being trapped near a cell fire. He reveals the affective relations and symbolic communication between experiences of security and meaning at a personal level. Nevertheless, there is a dearth of literature examining the producing elements of security practices: how decisions are made, the relationship between policy and practice, and the local dynamics. As Zedner (2003) writes, security should not be discussed in terms of means and ends, but in how one goes about achieving a broader social goal. Prison practices must be situated within their wider social context.

The Role of Health

To this point in the discussion on the aims of imprisonment, health has been a footnote. In 1966, the United Nations asserted that health is a fundamental and universal right, emphasising that everyone is entitled to achieve 'the highest attainable standard of health' (Article 12, United Nations, 1966). In England and Wales, the courts ruled that prison authorities have a legal obligation to protect and address the health and wellbeing of prisoners (McGlinchey v United Kingdom, 2003, 37 EHRR 41; Price vs United Kingdom, 2001, ECHR 453). However, according to official rhetoric, it primarily serves instrumental purposes in prisons. Despite the prison service's endorsement of the 'right to health' in 1999, incorporating principles of continuity and equivalence, health was mentioned only once in the HMPPS business strategy (2019, November) concerning partnership working. In the 2021 Strategy White Paper, health was framed, along with housing and substance misuse, as a 'barrier to rehabilitation' (Ministry of Justice, 2021: 3). Former Prisons Minister Damian Hinds, explained in July 2023 that 'the right treatment' enables prisoners to 'stay on the straight and narrow' (Hansard, 2023, July, col. 758). Health was an important, albeit personal, enabler to address the individual's criminal behaviour. This official narrative continues a historical trend of individualising and medicalising criminal behaviour.

Reinforcing the positivistic definition of rehabilitation, the medicalisation of 'criminals' individualises the factors of crime. Some scholars contend that male imprisonment has undergone a medicalisation process (Conrad, 2007; Sim, 1990; Warr, 2018), shifting away from the classical ontology of rational actors to psychologically and neurologically ill or 'mad' criminals. However, these narratives maintain the individualised interpretation of behaviour. Tierney (2010) explained that medicalisation distinguishes between the criminal and the non-criminal by reducing criminality to personal factors that can be treated. Since the 1960s, this process of defining non-medical problems in medical terms, understanding behaviour through a medical framework, and 'treating' these issues with medical interventions, has framed crime as a personal problem, rather than a social issue (Conrad, 2007). These medical discourses are implicitly central to the experience of imprisonment where, as Crewe (2009/2012) and Warr (2018) established, the role and power of forensic psychologists is a predicate of the prison's disciplinary power and fundamental to its functioning. Notions of medicalisation and risk-assuaging interventions have been consumed by prison governance (Warr, 2018) as the prisoner is both individualised to regulate their behaviour and homogenised into an 'offender' category which denies their subjective experiences and justifies their control (Sim, 1990, 1995). Imprisonment is entangled with notions of illness and health.

Many scholars identify a close relationship between criminal behaviour and health issues. The World Health Organisation (2014) noted that the social determinants of crime are broadly similar to what Marmot (2005) termed, the social determinants of health. Prisons do not exist in a social vacuum (Ellis, 2021) and a strong link has been established between social exclusion, health issues, and criminal behaviour (Marmot, 2005; Reavis et al., 2013; Stürup-Toft et al., 2018). Compared with the general population, prisoners are more likely to have experienced or witnessed neglect and abuse as a child (Reavis et al., 2013; Ford et al., 2019), used illicit substances (Woodall, 2012), and less likely to access health services (Davies et al., 2020). Farmer (2005) termed this social inequality as *structural violence*, indicating how social structures perpetuate harm.

This relationship manifests in the disproportionate prevalence of health issues among people received into custody. As a marginalised group, prisoners are more likely to experience mental and physical health issues than the general population (Dolan et al., 2016; Fazel et al., 2016). Of more than 5,600 survey responses in 2022, 19% of male prisoners self-reported physical health issues and 59% reported mental health issues (HMIP, 2023). Some scholars subsequently pose that imprisonment is an 'opportunity' for stability and to redress health inequalities in an underserved population (Baybutt et al., 2014; Crewe, 2009/2012; Stürup-Toft et al., 2018; Wacquant, 2002). However, others argue that this disproportionality, termed *transinstitutionalisation*, exacerbates the issue, with vulnerable people, particularly

those with mental health issues, criminalised, separated, isolated and, ultimately, subjected to the social norms and harms of institutional deprivation in prisons or secure psychiatric hospitals (Prins, 2011; van Ginneken, 2016; Wacquant, 2009). This is compounded by the problematic practice of imprisoning mentally ill people as a 'safe' pathway to healthcare. Section 136 of the *Mental Health Act* (1983) permits the use of prison as a designated 'place of safety' for 'risky remands' (Tomczak, 2022). However, prison 'is not a safe place to wait for a hospital bed' (Wilson, 2004: 5-6). Tomczak (2022) highlights that these decisions disregard unsuitable conditions, inadequate support and treatment, and subsequent delays. Nonetheless, imprisonment is 'too frequently "tacitly accepted" as a substitute for treatment in hospital' (p. 2). Prisons 'continue to be used as a place of safety' (Criminal Justice Joint Inspection, 2021: 10) and a 'safety net for vulnerable individuals' (Ismail, 2021: 159) although the environmental conditions are not considered conducive to safety or health.

Scholars have noted how the configuration of imprisonment harms prisoners. In an English prison, Herrity (2019) explains how the prison is built to be uncomfortable and harsh with the constant physical discomfort and intrusion of noise. In a Tunisian prison, Schmidt and Jefferson (2021) highlight the heavy and weighted sensory experience of imprisonment, the lack of privacy, the inability to sleep, and multi-sensorial punishment. Indicating an alternative approach to imprisonment, Nordic prisons 'convey a sense of ease and relaxation' with the large windows and natural light (Moran et al., 2016: 125). Countries like Finland and Denmark promote the feeling of freedom, creativity and connectivity to facilitate reintegration upon release, rather than punishment and isolation (Moran et al., 2016). Reflecting on an experience in a Japanese prison, Jewkes and Young (2021) explain that prisons evoke presence and absence through a range of social, spatial, and sensory practices that reinforce a prisoner's shrunken social status. Environmental conditions are 'critically related to the philosophy of the institution, or maybe even of the entire criminal justice system.' (Wener, 2012: 7) The UK prison environment restricts space, fresh air, and light, 'imprisoning psychologically as well as physically' (Moran and Jewkes, 2015: s3.1). Scholars equally draw attention to the harms of prison overcrowding, inadequate ventilation, and sanitation (Farmer, 2005; Jewkes and Johnston, 2012; Kinner et al., 2020). It is 'designed' to be hard, a metaphor for the loss of public empathy (Moran et al., 2016: 118). In the same way that light, natural green prison spaces can be calming and health-enabling (Jewkes, 2018; Moran and Turner, 2019), punitive spaces inscribe themselves upon prisoners (Wahidin, 2002). This philosophy shapes perceptions of one's prison environment and affects behavioural outcomes (Azemi, 2020; Moran et al., 2020). Collectively, these studies indicate that carceral spaces are 'encoded' with meaning (Herrity et al., 2021: xxiii), shaping what happens in a prison, with harmful consequences.

Prisoners are more likely to experience adverse health outcomes in custody. Compounded by environmental conditions (Kinner et al., 2020), respiratory infections are twice as common in prisons (House of Commons Health & Social Care Committee, 2018). Prisons have a long history of experiencing outbreaks of typhus (Howard, 1777), tuberculosis (Smith et al., 2017), viral hepatitis (HAV, HBV, HCV), Diarrhoea/vomiting, and influenza (PHE, 2019; Kinner et al., 2020). Highlighting the porosity and permeability of prisons, 'better habitats for epidemics of airborne disease could hardly be found than overcrowded prisons' (Farmer, 2005: 121). In the most recent full reporting year before this study (2018-19), there were 43 outbreaks in prison settings in England and Wales, predominantly from Influenza and Diarrhoea/Vomiting (PHE, 2019). Suicide, self-harm, and all-cause mortality are also disproportionately higher in the prison population than those in the wider community (Fazel et al., 2008, 2017). In England and Wales, prisoners are more likely to be hospitalised and/or die from self-inflicted or natural causes than compared to their counterparts in the general population of similar ages (Fazel et al., 2005), such as COVID-19 (Braithwaite et al., 2021) and cardiovascular disease (Stürup-Toft et al., 2018). In 2018, the House of Commons Health and Social Care Committee found that the average age of people dying in prison is 56, compared to 81 in the wider community and concluded that 'The Government is failing in its duty of care towards people detained in England's prisons' (House of Commons Health and Social Care Committee, 2018: 3). In various ways, prisoners are disadvantaged.

Scholars have criticised the absence of equivalent healthcare support in prisons. Prison health services are generally de-prioritised as prisoners experience poor quality and inconsistent provision (Forrester et al. 2013), increasing waiting times and staff shortages (Ismail, 2021), and security constraints accessing secondary care (Edge et al., 2020). Before pandemic restrictions were introduced, prisoners missed 42% of outpatient appointments in 2019/20 (Davies et al., 2021). The National Audit Office (2017) stated that just 25% of prisoners receive the necessary health treatment they need. Warr (2018) identified that health services in prison are often overwhelmed by demand and it is difficult to achieve the provision of equal standard and access to what is available in the wider community. Farmer (2005) and Ismail (2021) concluded that imprisonment perpetuates and intensifies illness with a zero-sum approach to caring for prisoners. Poor health among prisoners is a 'by-product of a punitive cycle' that begins in the community and is reinforced by prisons (Ismail, 2021: 61), producing what Warburton and Stahl (2021) have termed, a pendulum of neglect, inside and outside the prison walls.

The barriers to attaining the 'highest standard' of health in prison highlight the shortcomings in the stated aims of imprisonment and, more specifically, the definition of prison security. In its basic form, security – the protection of humanity against internal and external threats (Aldis, 2008) – is directly concerned with health. As the United Nations Development Programme (1994) explained, security 'is a child

who did not die, a disease that did not spread… a concern with human life and dignity', it means safety from harm, such as hunger and disease, and protection from sudden disruption (p. 22-23). Chen and Narasimhan (2004) summarise that health protection is security protection. Yet, Ismail (2021) identifies that there is no recognition of the role of health in the stated aims of imprisonment. Rather, health and security are framed as oppositional and contradictory (Tomczak, 2018), where security is the 'core job of prisons… the basis of everything else prisons do' and health is primarily the responsibility of partners, such as the National Health Service (Ministry of Justice, 2016: 27-28). Various scholars have identified that the prioritisation of prison security compromises prisoners' health and wellbeing (Ismail, 2021; Liebling and Crewe, 2013). The balance between health and security often sways towards security as the fundamental values of health, such as empowerment and choice are obstructed within prisons (Woodall, 2020). This single-minded prioritisation of security undercuts the perception of prisoners as patients, thwarting social pursuits to address their needs (Ismail, 2021). Therefore, Wacquant (2009) argues that the traditional conception of prison security erodes prisoner health as it disregards the multidimensional and intersectional nature of security across several disciplines and fields. Without health, there is no security and by ignoring the role of health within prison security, the stated aims of imprisonment overlook the relationship between health and crime among prisoners. This indicates a need to examine how the official aims are translated into practice.

Is Imprisonment in a Crisis?

For more than 30 years, many academics and stakeholders have stated that the prison system is in a 'crisis' (Cavadino et al., 2019). To understand what that means and looks like, one must deconstruct the meaning of 'crisis' and explore the events leading to this construction. This section analyses the recent developments in imprisonment to explore whether the England and Wales prison system is in a 'crisis' or whether the rhetorical 'crisis' is, in fact, a theatrical representation of normality, a state of perpetual negative outcomes that are no longer 'unique' in time or place.

A crisis questions the social norms, inherently suggesting a change or disruption where the routines of everyday life 'cease to operate' (Bourdieu, 1988: 783). Hall et al. (2017) explain that a crisis is in opposition to relative stability. A moment of rupture or conjecture has seemingly occurred which antagonises and contradicts the way things were (Althusser, 1969). A crisis should be unique, a confrontational and elastic emergency with actual or risk of negative outcomes and requiring the need for change (Annison and Guiney, 2023). At an individual, institutional or systemic level, a crisis is a moment of theoretical and lived experience of difference that does or may cause harm. As such, scholars explain that the term is rhetorically

powerful and carries social and political weight, drawing attention to an issue that requires urgent redress with the aim of influencing government policy, media narratives, and public discourse (Hall et al., 2017; Henderson, 2014). A crisis is an opportunity.

However, crises are no longer unique, they are in fashion (Hall et al., 2017). In recent years, there has been a public health crisis, a cost of living crisis, a crisis of identity, immigration, war, and crime, framed collectively as a state of 'polycrisis', the co-occurrence of multiple risks, uncertainties, and critical events (Henig and Knight, 2023). Henig and Knight (2023) explain that the use of 'crisis' to frame contemporary events now 'marks a whole generation' (p. 3), but, as they reflect, when does crisis-as-context cease to be a crisis at all, but a 'fundamental feature of the system'? (p. 3) The chronic crisis of imprisonment provides a useful case study.

The Development of Contemporary Imprisonment

A crisis should be momentary, but the situation is chronic in prisons. Garland (2001) noted that the term crisis is misleading and inappropriate for a situation in prisons that has endured for decades. Contemporary circumstances of record violence and deaths are the latest stage in a long period of change, chaos, and suffering in England and Wales' prisons (Chamberlen and Carvalho, 2019). Since at least Sykes' (1958) study of imprisonment more than 65 years ago, prisons have experienced a 'cycle' of crises (Annison and Guiney, 2023). In 1973, Habermas posed that prisons were experiencing a crisis of legitimacy having lost control of the institution, delivery, and outcomes. Since then, scholars have identified that prisons have experienced a crisis of staffing, corruption, violence, the COVID-19 pandemic, endemic overcrowding, recidivism, spending cuts, deteriorating conditions, industrial relations, record prisoner deaths, and increasing harm to staff, prisoners, and the wider public (Annison and Guiney, 2023; Bennett and Wahidin, 2008; Sim, 2009; Tomczak, 2022). Whilst the English prisons of 1790 have 'little in common with the prisons of 1990' (Morris and Rothman 1995: vii), Sim (2009) has queried whether a 'golden age' from which to mark or compare the present moment of the prison crisis has ever existed. However, the situation in prisons has deteriorated since the development of neoliberalism.

As neoliberal ideas proliferated, prisons have been predominantly associated with social order and security. Informed by emerging academic evidence of the harms of imprisonment and the 'theory-failure' of rehabilitation that had come before, the Conservative Government of the 1970s beckoned in 'ground zero' of crime control (Garland, 2001). Rather than punish less, Governments tried to 'punish better' (Chamberlen and Carvalho, 2019: 101). Imprisonment has been shaped by neoliberal policies of managerialism, individualism, 'cost-efficiencies', accountability, 'value for money', and performance targets (Scott, 2012; Sim, 2009). A new 'penal common sense' emerged (Wacquant, 1999) as political parties pursued a 'tough on

crime, tough on the causes of crime' (Sim, 2009) approach. Multiple scholars identified that imprisonment became central to the political rhetoric of social order, part of an 'arms race' to reassure the public and convince voters of their 'credentials' on crime (Guiney, 2019; Lacey, 2008; Scott, 2012). Governments have 'governed through crime' by establishing the prison as containing and deterring 'criminal behaviour' (Scott, 2012). The state 'protects' 'us' from 'them' (Chamberlen and Carvalho, 2019) by portraying prisoners as risks to social solidarity and cohesion (Sparks, 2000). Cyclically, the same slogan of 'tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime', was parroted in 2023 by shadow Home Secretary, Yvette Cooper (BBC, 2023 February), demonstrating the pervasive and ingrained 'reassurance function' (Carvalho, 2017) of imprisonment and the belief that 'prison works' and prison is 'needed' in the public psyche. In summary, within the last 50 years, prisoners were central to political discourse, not at risk from social inequality but a risk to be contained.

At a macro-level, scholars contend that neoliberalism increased social marginalisation and the penal apparatus. The policies of managerialism blended into responsibilisation as governments repeatedly re-emphasised the pseudo-autonomy of criminal justice (Bennett, 2012, 2016, 2023b; Crewe, 2009/2012). Sim (2009) explains that security and the punitive agenda were in the ascendency as New Labour introduced 23 new Criminal Justice Acts, five new Immigration Acts, seven counter-terror laws, and 3,000 new criminal offences. Laub (2023) and Williams (2023) identify the continued 'policification' of English society with the expansion of police powers, enhanced powers of surveillance, the introduction of 'whole life orders' (sentence) without probation/parole, and the increased use of recall. Since 2002, the annual population of people recalled to prison from community supervision increased by approximately 500% to over 12,000 in 2023 as the total prison population has risen to record levels (Jones and Lally, 2024; Ministry of Justice, 2020a). During this time, unemployment, homelessness, poverty, and social exclusion increased and Black and Asian people were more likely to be stopped and searched, unemployed, and imprisoned (Hall et al., 2017). These social inequalities persist and continue to rise in the present day as Black and Minority Ethnic children and adults remain overrepresented in the heavily racialised criminal justice system (Robertson and Wainwright, 2020; Warr, 2022). Scholars have argued that this punitive agenda perpetuates cultural racism and widens the 'net' of penality among the already socially marginalised (Hall et al., 2017; Sim, 2009). Thus, the neoliberal policies of crime and punishment perpetuate a 'spiral' fallacy (Mathiesen, 2006), where the socially deprived cannot escape the deception of imprisonment, which produces crime rather than addresses its causes.

At a meso and micro-level, prisons experienced a punitive turn. Within custody, scholars have argued that neoliberalism created a 'race to the bottom' (Czerniawski, 2016), borne out of managerialism (Bennett, 2023b) and austerity (Gooch and

Treadwell, 2020; Ismail, 2020, 2021). Liebling and Crewe (2013) explained that a 'new penology' emerged with neoliberalism. Prisons across England and Wales became more risk-focused, control-oriented, and restrictive, subordinating prisoners' rights for incentives. Spending cuts prompted a deterioration of physical infrastructure (Chamberlen and Carvalho, 2019), security concerns saw pregnant women and sick patients handcuffed in hospitals (Sim, 2009), whilst the prison population and overcrowding increased (Guiney, 2019), staffing numbers reduced, and violence escalated (Ismail, 2020). Demonstrating how the prison system is an artefact of past political choices (Rutherford, 1984), the prison became a 'space of pure custody, a human warehouse or even a kind of social waste management facility' (Simon, 2007: 142) – prisoners were 'toxic' and to be managed at 'reasonable fiscal, political, and legal costs' (p. 153). The punitive turn, what Liebling and Crewe (2013) termed, 'managerialism-minus' intensified the harms of imprisonment.

Coupled with an era of punitive *minimalism*, scholars identified that prisoners were diminished, disembodied beings and risks (Liebling and Crewe, 2013). Hutton (2017) explained how the self-regulation approach of neoliberalism disproportionally harmed prisoners with mental health issues and their families. Ismail (2021) and Czerniawski (2016) observed how competition harmed outcomes as private providers minimised costs to maximise profits, deteriorating prisoner health and education outcomes. Gooch and Treadwell (2020) stated that prison life became increasingly individualised, competitive, and financially motivated, with prison drug use, violence, self-harm, and suicide common. In 2017, the prison Inspectorate identified that more than one-fifth of the prison population spent fewer than two hours out of their cells (HMIP, 2017) and in 2023, this had increased to more than 40% of prisoners, with only a small decrease from the proportion of prisoners who experienced isolation during the two years of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions (HMIP, 2023). Of the 36 prisons HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) (2023) visited in 2022-23, only two prisons were assessed as 'good' for safety and respect, and just one prison for purposeful activity. Year-on-year, more prisons decline in 'healthy' standards than improve and between 1978-2023, on average 160 prisoners died in custody every year. Between 2011 and 2023, on average 280 people lost their lives each year (Ministry of Justice, 2024). Ismail (2021) summarises that prisons have experienced a long-standing degradation in recent decades and remain ill-equipped to translate conflicting goals into integrated actions. The individualism of crime and concepts of 'rehabilitation' and 'risk' maintain the neoliberal role of prison as a place of punishment and control (Fernandes et al., 2018). The present conditions may not represent a moment of theoretical and lived experience of difference, and they may not represent a crisis, but they indicate the ongoing harms of imprisonment.

Arguably, the only recent 'crisis' in prisons has been the COVID-19 pandemic. It was a 'public health emergency' (World Health Organisation, 2022) that, according to HM

Prison and Probation Service (2020), presented a (bio)security risk to prisoners, staff, and the wider public. Prisons were required to take 'immediate steps' to 'preserve the life and health of those working and living in prison' (HMPPS, 2022: 3). The routines of everyday life ceased to exist as prisoners and staff were at risk of harm from an infectious disease. Simon (2013) argues that imprisonment has been 'repeatedly reshaped by moments of heightened concern about disease, prisons, and the general health of the public' (p. 218). The pandemic offered another 'moment' of transformation. However, prison systems resorted to what they 'do best: isolating residents from human contact' as they implemented long-term solitary confinement (Maruna et al., 2022: 60). Scholarship identified how the harms of imprisonment were exacerbated by the response (Maycock, 2022). Analysing letters from prisoners, Suhomlinova et al. (2022) described the 'devastating impact' (p. 279) as the regime restrictions deprived prisoners of access to healthcare, hot food, education, employment, social contact, and security. In partnership with Queen's University Belfast, a UK-based charity, User Voice (2022, June) used peer-researchers and surveys to identify that most prisoners saw a decline in access to healthcare and almost no prisoners felt safer during the pandemic. Based on 44 remote interviews with prisoners, staff, and policymakers in 2021, Wainwright et al. (2023) found that prison and its prioritisation of security reduced access to healthcare, prisoners felt neglected regarding their needs, and their health deteriorated. Maruna et al. (2022) concluded that state responses around the globe were an 'immense failure' as prisons regressed to their most basic state of punishment and isolation. However, due to the safety restrictions on who was in prison during the pandemic, there is an absence of critical literature deconstructing what happened during the crisis, how, and why. This thesis provides novel empirical evidence from within a prison to address some of the gaps in knowledge.

In summary, 'crisis' has become a popular term to describe chronic prison conditions. A crisis suggests a change, where past (or future) prison conditions are contradicted or opposed. However, the present conditions and outcomes seem to bear no significant difference from what has come before. Wacquant (2009) explains that the crisis of imprisonment is merely a crisis of imagination, an operational definition to describe the normative use of imprisonment, a 'myth of the moment of awareness' (Bourdieu, 1984: 191). Shaped by neoliberalism and the punitive penal agenda, prisons remain harmful and controlling as they have been for many years. What is not clear is how the macro aims of imprisonment translate into present-day practices and outcomes.

Conclusion

This chapter situates the research of contemporary imprisonment within its academic and historical context to establish the theoretical and conceptual

foundations of this thesis. It establishes and critiques the aims of imprisonment, which inform but do not determine prison practice, and it explores the meaning of rehabilitation, safety, and security. The absence of health is discussed, identifying the close relationship between social inequality, crime, and health outcomes. Finally, the question is asked of whether imprisonment is in crisis. The literature suggests that, whilst 'crisis' is a popular term to conceptualise what is happening in prisons across England and Wales, it does not represent a distinct change or failing of the prison system. Rather, some scholars propose that prisons are not in a crisis but are the crisis, a punitive contradiction.

The chapter outlines the current state of imprisonment. Violence, death, self-harm and overcrowding pervade the prison system in a negative spiral. Academics have explored why, but few have deconstructed how this occurs locally. Criminological academics, such as Crewe (2013), Garland (2001), and Wacquant (2009) have analysed how high-level policy shifts affect outcomes. Others, such as Bennett and Wahidin (2008) and Sim (2009) analysed the relationships between penal organisations and state-level actors. However, there is minimal ethnographic literature that deconstructs what happens in a prison and situates its practices within the stated aims of imprisonment. As Auty et al. (2023) highlighted, 'insufficient attention' is paid by researchers to how these key concepts are translated into practice (p. 718). This thesis examines the relationship between policy and practice within an adult male prison to understand how imprisonment is operationalised. The next chapter introduces the theoretical tools used to analyse and theorise the dynamics between people, place, and policy.

3. Through Bourdieu's Looking-Glass: The Logic of Applying Field Theory to Prison Research

'The most pressing need for the study of prisons is to challenge the terms of the discourse that frames and supports them' (Rhodes, 2001: 75)

Introduction

This chapter situates the study within a theoretical framework. Page (2013) queried that 'something is missing' (p. 152) in criminological analysis, with a dearth of empirical links between macro and micro outcomes, structure and practice. Classical theories of penal transformation pay 'little, if any, attention to struggles between actual people, organisations or institutions' (p. 164) and more research is necessary to examine the local effects of macro and meso-level trends. This thesis utilises Bourdieu's field theory to examine the local effects of imprisonment's official aims. This chapter introduces the key concepts of habitus, doxa, and hysteresis, situating them within the subject matter of this study.

To understand how the official aims are delivered in a prison against a national backdrop of increased trends of violence and the use of imprisonment, this thesis selects a theoretical framework that explores the hidden and embodied forces that shape prison policy and practice. As Bourdieu (1989) stated:

> *'to change the world one has to change the ways of world-making, that is the vision of the world and the practical operations by which groups are produced and reproduced'* (p. 23)

By considering how the practical operations of imprisonment are produced, this study 'questions simple ideas' (Bourdieu, 1989: 24). It deconstructs the taken-for-granted beliefs that produce the layers of 'symbolic violence' operating at policy-making and practice levels (Fernandes et al., 2018: 2875). Bourdieu's field theory offers a useful, although imperfect, way of analysing imprisonment and its practice.

Conceptualising Prison as a Field

Field theory provides a broad and multi-dimensional framework for understanding the production of practice. According to Bourdieu (2005), practices are governed by *fields.* These are conceived as magnetic social spaces exerting 'a force' upon those within its range, with its laws shaping behaviours and perceptions:

> 'to speak of the field is to name this microcosm, a social universe […] that is somewhat apart, endowed with its own laws, its own *nomos*, its own law of functioning, without being completely independent of the external laws.' (Bourdieu, 2005: 33)

In a bidirectional relationship, actors and their embodied practice are pulled in specific directions that, reciprocally, reproduce and reinforce the conditions of the field. Bourdieu (1990b) argued that many sociological approaches, such as voluntarism and structuralism established an 'absurd opposition between individual and society' (p. 31). His approach considered actors and their structure as linked in a mutually interdependent and influencing relationship. To Bourdieu (1983, 1990b), the field provides a conceptual break from substantialist mode of thought, it is a construct of production, a theoretical posture that is only real in so far as it is useful, rather than a pre-existing component of society. To Giddens (1984), fields are 'the parts' of society, conforming to rules and generalisable procedures. Bennett (2012) and Giddens (1984) proposed that practice could be situated within a 'stratification model of the agent' (p. 5). However, Bourdieu (1990a) holds that such logical models 'become false and dangerous as soon as they are treated as the real principles of practice' (p. 11) The rules may exist but they are indicators and pragmatic ways of thinking about the field as a method and socio-relational world, rather than determining facts. Examples of a field include prisons (Caputo-Levine, 2013), boxing gyms (Singh, 2022), or the streets (Fraser, 2013, 2015, 2021) where researchers identify that groups of individuals orient their actions and influence other actors in that distinct social space whilst reflecting and 'refracting' external and internal trends (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 17). Revealing the impact of these invisible social forces, outcomes invert macro, meso and micro levels, including conscious and unconscious intentions. Fields are unique structures of relations but porous.

As a field operates with its 'own logic, rules and regularities' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 104) prison settings may be conceived as a field. Goffman (1961), Clemmer (1940), and Irwin (2004) identified social organisation and hierarchies within prisons, operating with their own language, *inmate code*, and authority. Crewe (2011a, b), Crawley and Crawley (2008/2012), and Auty and Liebling (2020) are some of the scholars who have since identified prison-specific cultures, involving shifts in behaviour, identity, and morality among staff and prisoners. Other scholarship has explored how competition and power dynamics within custody (re-)produce actions of protests and violence (Crewe, 2007; O'Mara, 2024; Sim, 2012). In this context, incarceration is understood as producing setting-specific adjustment, with staff and prisoners adapting to and conditioned by the ways of the field. However, rather than adhering to Bottoms' (1999) assertion that prisons are each unique micro-social organisations that operate independently of each other, the prison field presents a 'structure of probabilities and necessities which in turn creates a framework of objective conditions' (Caputo-Levine, 2013: 169). Prisons are equally distinct and socially structured spaces producing a relational 'manner[s] of standing, speaking and thereby of feeling and thinking' (Bourdieu, 1990a: 54). Each is uniquely configured yet conditioned by and organised within broader social structures.

Prison is defined by its position in the wider social structures. Bourdieu (1975) theorised that the field is an 'aggregate of interactions' (p. 19) with fields exerting effects on each other. As Bourdieu (1977) wrote, '"interpersonal relations" are never, except in appearance, individual-to-individual relationships. They embody structures of which they are the product.' (p. 81) Penal scholars have identified how the prison field overlaps with others. As a sub-field within the wider 'crime control field' of social services, policing, courts, sentencing, and politics, Garland (2001) observed a struggle between political ideologies, such as law and order and social welfare, social trends, including changing class, race, and gender relations, and between agents, such as police officers, judges, and prison officials. Bennett et al.'s (2013) edited book on the intersectionality of prison staff further demonstrates the internal struggles and overlapping nature of fields, including ethnicity, gender, hierarchy, morality, and status. In studying imprisonment, the criminologist is confronting a 'whole universe of relations that are more than the aggregate of individuals they might survey.' (Shammas and Sandberg, 2016: 208) Crime, offending, and imprisonment are not isolated, static actions, but dynamic social practices, a 'reenactment', 'product', and 'legacy of history' (Bourdieu 1981: 305) deeply embedded and shaped by pre-existing relations, logic, institutions, and agents across time and space (Shammas, 2018). A prison is not reducible to a product of itself or the people in it, it is a *field*, a metaphor for a specific social space intersecting with other fields, produced by internal and external social conditions.

In prison, actors subsequently compete within the boundaries of the field. Bourdieu uses the analogy of the field as a 'battlefield' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 17), with actors struggling for position and capital. In custody, scholars have identified the internal conflicts and relational *habitus* of prisoners and different prison staff groups as they seek the various forms of capital to influence the field: economic, cultural, social, and symbolic. Scholars have identified how officers and prisoners compete for capital. For example, studies have observed how staff develop a field habitus, a way of being within their prison context endowed with authority provided and shaped by social forces (Arnold, 2005; Haggerty and Bucerius, 2021; McKendy et al., 2021). Caputo-Levine (2013) identified how violence is a form of capital in prison that enables prisoners to navigate the 'gladiator school' of imprisonment. Other studies have explored struggles between staff. Warr (2018) proposed that forensic psychologists wield disciplinary capital to occupy a central presence in penal settings. Page (2013) identified a struggle between traditional experts (non-operational staff, such as psychologists and criminologists) and 'real life' experts (prison officers with lived experience of imprisonment), culminating in prison officer Trade Unions re-defining expertise to diminish the role of criminologists, psychologists, and other professionals, and enhance the professional image, status, and compensation of their members. What happens in prisons is characterised by competing ideologies and 'ongoing negotiations of power' (Bosworth and Carrabine,

2001: 501) as prisoners and different groups of staff vie for symbolic capital and influence.

Nevertheless, there is only minimal research applying Bourdieusian theory in the penal field to explore the relationship between the micro experience of imprisonment and the macro and meso contexts. Such studies have identified the relationships between prison management and late modernity (Bennett, 2012), and occupational culture and economic structures (Page, 2013), but rarely how these dynamics manifest locally in the lived experiences and outcomes of imprisonment. Rather than replicating the top-down work of Garland (2001), which analyses the macro-level, structural trends affecting practice, such as the politicisation of punishment and commercialisation of social control, or the meso-relationship between organisations and state-level penal policies and priorities, as analysed by Page (2013), this thesis aims to describe and theorise the micro-dynamics between people, place, and policy. Conceptualising the prison as a field reveals the invisible processes that 'fuel' (Shammas, 2018: 207) the local social dynamics of imprisonment, providing a way of thinking about what happens, how, and why in prison. The following three sections describe the three 'cornerstones' of the field (Deer, 2012: 116), starting with *habitus,* the ways of talking, moving, thinking, and doing.

Habitus

Bourdieu (1994) started with the question, 'How can behaviour be regulated without being the product of obedience to rules?' (p. 65) In other words, how to reconcile *structure* and *agency* or the capacity for action. Bourdieu (1984, 1999) recognised that actors within the field are not robots subject to mechanical forces, and the mental and physical structures of the field do not simply reflect social structures. Rather, with *agency,* skilful actors actively 'construct' their social reality within a field of possibilities (Bourdieu, 1999). Yet, social norms or regularities still develop. To explain this, Bourdieu (1987) (re-)introduced the notion of *habitus,* the learned behaviour, property, and product of practice and socialisation. It was a way of explaining a mutual attraction between structure and practice where actors were shaped 'beneath the level of consciousness and discourse' (Wacquant, 2011: 87). Habitus is developed in response to the field, an embodiment of the 'conjunction of disposition and position' (Wacquant, 2014: 5) and can be understood as the subjective centre of a web of mutually constituting relations between agency, structure, and the field. This concept encouraged relational theory which reconciled the 'either/or' and transcended dichotomies of determinism and rational decision-making (Maton, 2012). It asks the researcher to consider the field and its relations as one.

As a register of experience, habitus stretches beyond the senses (Fraser, 2021) and is a dynamic principle of practice, in that it is perpetually developing and ongoing. Unlike static and consequential habits, habitus does not have a material existence.

To have habitus means to *interpret* it, *act* in it, *aspire* to be in it and of it, and *invest* in it (Wacquant, 2014: 9). It consists of three components: *cognitive* (relating to classification and categorisation), *conative* (embodied, mobile and physical), and *affective* (emotional, sensorial and evocative) (Wacquant, 2014). Actions are not predetermined, they are interrelated with the past and present, with individuality, community, and culture, informing and embodied by actors. It is structured by one's past and present circumstances, developing from *internal* 'impulses' that push towards self-investment and external social forces offering investment that generate perceptions, appreciations, and *practices* (Bourdieu, 1999: 512) – social orchestration without a conductor (Bourdieu, 1977: 72). As the context in which the field is understood, internalised, and practised, habitus enables actors to navigate objective functions and subjective motivations, structuring a way of being and acting.

Understanding the sociogenesis of the dispositions that constitute the habitus should address social order and relationships (Bourdieu, 1999). As a 'transindividual' embodiment of the collective (Bourdieu, 1990a: 150), habitus is not formed or transmitted through language (Bourdieu, 1991), it is affective and affected, learned, trained, and dexterous (Wacquant, 2014). The effect is that individuals rarely possess a singular habitus or lifestyle, with primary and secondary habitus acquired over time and upon participating in multiple fields (Bourdieu, 2010). Wacquant (2014) and Singh (2022) demonstrate an academic and pugilistic habitus as sociologists and boxers/kickboxers. In a penal setting, individuals develop another habitus as staff or prisoner through a process of acclimatisation that Clemmer (1940) labelled *prisonisation*. Thus, Shammas (2018) advocates for re-framing 'rehabilitation' as 'rehabituation', a return or 'remaking' (p. 211) to a prior state of non-offending behaviour and habitus within the structures that fuelled the fire of offending. Whilst this maintains that a person's habitus can return to conditions they may have never known, they write that imprisonment must address the entrenched marginalisation and unsafe conditions prisoners experience inside and outside the prison. Warr (2018) contests the homogeneity of prisoners as a group, but *habitus* indicates that, through acclimatisation and adoption of social norms, actors generally conform to the 'homogeneity of habitus' (Bourdieu, 1977: 80). In prison, staff equally conform to 'general tendencies' (McKendy et al., 2021: 14). Like the way an orchestra learns to play a single piece, a social space establishes a broadly accepted and unquestioned way of life, which sets the boundaries of what is possible within the forces of that distinct field.

However, habitus is neither homogenous nor inevitable. It varies among individuals and the field based on their different histories, practices, and experiences (Hardy, 2012: 127). As Bourdieu (1994) explains, habitus is 'endlessly transformed' (p. 7) by changing capital, positions, and field structures. For example, different penal actors with different histories and capital 'accommodate, resist and subvert' (McNeill et al.,

2009: 436) transformations in the field at different paces and in various ways. Scholars have identified how parole staff and female prison staff engage in conduct that simultaneously embodies rehabilitative, punitive, and managerial approaches (Lynch, 2000). McNeill and others (2009) identified how pre-sentence reports are produced by two divergent fields of judges and social workers, mediating each other to address the ambiguous 'practical' terms of 'responsibility, character, attitudes, motivation to change and likely compliance with sanctions' (p. 428) of detained people. Thus, habitus is not universal but a subjective 'social orientation' towards the ways of the field (Bourdieu, 1984). It is an embodied process of and response to the field, a sense of the field that has become 'nature' and reveals or 'betrays' the production of practice (Bourdieu, 2004: 382). Theorising the translation of policy into practice as habitus provides a tool for thinking about how the aims of imprisonment are mediated into practice and outcomes.

Doxa

Doxa is intimately linked to field and habitus (Deer, 2012: 115) and refers to cognitive structures of being, a 'set of fundamental beliefs' (Bourdieu, 2000: 16) that produce discourse and thought. It is field-specific common sense, determining what is thinkable and unthinkable (Page, 2013: 154). Therefore, its application in the field is to make explicit the conflation between objective social structures and subjective mental predispositions that 'underpin the implicit logic' of practice in the field (Deer, 2012: 117). Doxa reveals the taken-for-granted beliefs and assumptions that shape practice.

Doxa is formed through pre-reflexive intuitive knowledge shaped by experience and inherited pre-dispositions. It is, by its existence, arbitrary and interest-serving, sustained only by its '*everyday acceptance'* (Frame, 2004: 556). Doxa requires that those subjected to it do not question nor recognise its legitimacy nor the legitimacy of those who exert it: 'What is essential goes without saying because it comes without saying' (Bourdieu, 1977: 165). When Bourdieu (1999) warns against researchers failing to question logic or 'simple ideas', he is referring to doxa. By not recognising its production, it is at the root and heart of the socially arbitrary nature of power relations (e.g. racial classifications and social values) that enables and reinforces its misrecognition and mutually reinforces the field and habitus (Deer, 2012). Therefore, it determines the stability of the objective social structures through which they are reproduced and reproduce themselves in perceptions and practices (Deer, 2012: 116). Doxa is the socially legitimised belief in what is normal and correct.

Habitus and doxa go hand-in-hand. Doxa is constructed and influenced by social conditioning, transcending immediate locality and mediated through time, people, and place. For example, habitus and doxa can be 'seen' in the practice of a man raising his hat to appear polite. Whilst habitus encompasses the learned behaviour,

doxa represents the 'unwitting' belief in a social norm from the Middle Ages when soldiers removed their helmets as a sign of peaceful intentions (Bourdieu, 1981: 305). Doxa is observed in the various rules and practices governing English habitus, such as queuing, table etiquette, or acceptable conversation topics (Fox, 2014). Relatedly, Singh (2022) identified how racial doxa, the unconscious conditioning of colonial racial thinking about superiority/inferiority, barbarism, and civilisation affects relations in a boxing gym (p. 3). However, doxa is not, as Bourdieu (1993) initially thought, 'cynical mystification' and blind belief in everything which depends on the existence of the field. Rather, agents in the field take the doxic illusion because they are invested in the field. We want to be polite, we want to be seen to be following the rules, and we willingly suspend disbelief beyond critical lucidity by playing and investing in the game. If habitus is the embodiment of social relations, then doxa is knowledge.

Doxa is embedded in the field while helping to define and characterise it (Deer, 2012). It is the production of discourse and the way people think (or not) that provides one of the conditions of the production of practice (Bourdieu, 1993). Bourdieu (2004) cites the example of a peasant girl who speaks the language of urban fashion well because she hears it well and hears it well because the 'structure' of her cultural language predisposes her to it. Developed through social conditioning, doxa reproduces itself by framing the conditions of its conditioning. Doxa is *logic* as it presents itself, it is dynamic, open to rejection and challenge, disruption and transformation as the field and its actors struggle and evolve according to internal and external forces. These forces, such as crises, can overhaul or rupture doxa, leading to critical consciousness or *heterodoxy* (Bourdieu, 1977: 164), the questioning of the natural order or previously accepted social norms. Habitus and doxa can, therefore, be 'eroded, countered or even dismantled by exposure to novel external forces' (Wacquant 2016: pp. 66), such as different habitus, values, or needs.

In the context of prisons, the carceral habitus is shaped and influenced by doxa. The perceived need for public protection from 'dangerous criminals' establishes hierarchies informing attitudes and practices that perpetuate penal structures. For example, depriving prisoners of their identity by avoiding the use of first names in custody (Schlosser, 2013), the rhetoric of rehabilitation that protects the status quo, and the idea that prison can be a place of care and support whilst inhibiting reintegration upon release (Fernandes et al., 2018) are all evidence of symbolic violence and power perpetuated by doxa, the mental structure of the field. By *othering* prisoners, individualising their behaviour, and imposing a particular vision about who is in prison and why, the field and its inherent inequalities can be maintained. Doxa gives imprisonment a certain logic and order that shapes what actors may or may not do, replacing physical force with symbolic power and implicit social habits, mechanisms, differentiation, and assumptions (Deer, 2012: 116).

Conceptualising field logic and ideologies as doxa uncovers the unconscious ties between relations in the field. However, few criminological studies have put doxa to use as a tool for deconstructing the dominant penal point of view. This thesis is rooted in challenging the particular vision of contemporary imprisonment as it presents itself.

Hysteresis

Aligned with phenomenological thought, Bourdieu (1977) views the field as a dynamic space where social transformation and disruption can occur, impacting the collective beliefs (doxa) and embodied dispositions (habitus) of individuals within the field. Bourdieu terms this phenomenon, *hysteresis*. It is often associated with crises, but it can manifest in various contexts of social change, whether temporarily or enduringly, such as the effects of colonialism (Bourdieu and Sayad, 2015), training in disciplines like boxing (Singh, 2022), or during a pandemic. As Bourdieu (2000) identified, hysteresis in one field can act as a catalyst in another. This concept reinforces the relational nature of the field and reveals its producing elements.

Understanding hysteresis and its impact on habitus provides valuable insights into the transformative processes that occur during periods of social upheaval. Social norms are disrupted and structures are redefined. This systemic change can create feelings of a mismatch between previously coordinated and interrelated elements within the field. By introducing new dynamics and challenges to the known social order (Hardy, 2012: 128), individuals experience this change at a personal level, perceiving shifts in time, risks, and opportunities as their habitus responds to and 'integrates' with the new field structures over time (Bourdieu, 2000: 160). Each instance of hysteresis represents a 'combination of successes and failures' (Hardy, 2012: 139) revealing what comes and goes 'without saying'. By studying hysteresis and its relationship to habitus and doxa, we gain a deeper understanding of how crises and social changes shape the dynamics of a field. As such, examining how Clarendon prison responded to the COVID-19 pandemic sheds light on the interplay between habitus and the structural transformations that occur in the field, including shifts in power relations, normative frameworks, and social dynamics.

Hysteresis provides another thinking tool for examining social effects on practices. Bourdieu (2003) identified how war and revolutions profoundly transform society, simplifying the structure of the social order by aligning mental and social structures towards an objective. The COVID-19 pandemic offered an opportunity to reshape the penal field. Graham (2020) identified that the COVID-19 pandemic could cause profound changes in fields, reshaping social structures, norms, and regularities. She proposed that sudden changes in practices and outcomes, such as suspension of social services, working from home, and/or mass unemployment, may transform the way people live their lives. Indeed, the pandemic response required Clarendon to prioritise a new aim of imprisonment: the preservation of life. At least semantically,

all decisions and practices were meant to align with a common goal of preventing staff and prisoner deaths. Applying hysteresis to the pandemic context in prisons reveals its 'multi-level, multi-temporal dynamics' (Strand and Lizardo, 2016: 169) and it invites questions of what happened, how, and why.

Hysteresis has been explored in various fields, but its application to the study of imprisonment has received limited attention within social science research. In other disciplines, such as primary education health interventions, scholars have examined the resistance of bodies within the context of hysteresis (Hanckel et al., 2021), highlighting the importance of considering both agency and structure in understanding behavioural outcomes. As a tool, hysteresis underscores the dynamic nature of the field, highlighting how social transformations and disruptions can reshape the structures, strategies, and practices. Despite its relevance, the application of hysteresis within prison research remains understudied as a means of evaluating change and its effects. Looking ahead, uncertainties arising from climate migration, social inequality, macroeconomic shifts, and political competition between state and non-state actors make it challenging to predict the future social effects on the delivery and experience of imprisonment. Investigations of hysteresis provide an opportunity to think about and analyse changes in the field, revealing insights into its resilience, adaptability, and potential for reform. By incorporating hysteresis into this criminological analysis, the thesis speaks to questions posed by Graham (2020) regarding how the pandemic re-reshaped prison's social structures. Chapter 8 aims to provide a critical analysis of how changing social contexts shape practices, experiences, and outcomes to consider what impact, if any, the pandemic had on the lived experience and outcomes of imprisonment in Clarendon.

A Critical Criminology of Imprisonment: Putting Bourdieu to Work

Deploying Bourdieu's concepts of the field, habitus, doxa, and hysteresis in practical terms means being preoccupied with the cyclical nature of imprisonment: how the symbolic, the empirical, and the theoretical are all one (Grenfell, 2009). It seeks to overcome the dualism between objectivism and subjectivism. Through a phenomenologically-informed ethnography, this analysis applies Bourdieu's concepts as instruments and theoretical tools where appropriate for identifying, understanding, and deconstructing the production of practice in a prison. However, a Bourdieusian approach has limitations.

Scholars have critiqued Bourdieu's approach, arguing that his theory of practice relapsed into objectivism, reductionism and determinism (Alexander, 1995; Giddens, 1984; Jenkins, 1982, 1992/2013; King, 2000), everything he was trying to control against. Jenkins (1992/2013) and King (2000) argue that habitus achieved the

opposite of its intention. Rather than explaining social reproduction by connecting the objectivity of structure and the subjectivity of agency (Lamaison and Bourdieu, 1986), it reinforced the dualism that Bourdieu was trying to resolve. Alexander (1995) explains that the characterisation of habitus produces a causal/empirical determinism that reduces behaviour to structural forces. Collectively, they argued that habitus, as conceptualised by Bourdieu, is a mechanical imposition of social structure onto individual practices which does not address the court of opinion and feelings, in other words, subjectivity. According to King (2000), Bourdieu's habitus frames individuals as mathematical equations that leave 'no room for error', a 'parody' of the actual process by which social relations are sustained, such as conscious infringements, mistakes, and misjudgements that may intersubjectively affect actions, rather than the 'rules' of social conditioning and reproduction (p. 429-430). Whilst such critiques overlook the dynamic and interdependent relations of social forces as Bourdieu (1977) put forth and have been duly dismissed by other scholars (Faber, 2017), these criticisms highlight that habitus should not be considered a perfect explanation of relations but an indication of and challenge to the complex ways in which individuals are affected by external conditions. As Jenkins (1992/2013) acknowledges, Bourdieu's work reveals the cultural struggles and inter-relatedness of patterns in society. It represents *a* truth, rather than *the* truth, that translates experience and relationships into theory whilst privileging the determinate social context.

Bourdieu's critical approach is not all-encompassing. Field theory sought to challenge doxic assumptions and limitations of theory, but some scholars have proposed that it overlooks reflexivity within agency and other forms of knowledge production. Reflexivity asks that a person recognise their past and their present, conscious of various forces conditioning their mode of thought and action which 'every thinker must bear against himself or herself in order to have any chance of being rational' (Bourdieu, 1990b: 33). It is a form of self-disclosure (Pillow, 2003). However, Sweet (2020) argues that Bourdieu disregards one's ability to 'represent another' (Pillow, 2003: 176) and reflexivity is missing from the conceptualisation of agency and habitus. In *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) quote two women who seemingly marched in support of several men who raped a woman. The authors conclude that women participate and 'collude' (p. 172) in their own oppression and domination. It was evidence of a 'gendered habitus' that explained 'how women… actively defend or justify forms of aggression which victimise them' (p. 172). The authors neglected the development of alternative paradigms in which most women empathise and support survivors of abuse. A separate feminist march in support of the victim was not mentioned by the authors (Sweet, 2020). Equally, Bourdieu and Wacquant's evidence of patriarchal reproduction, interpreted as women's complicity in their domination, was a protest that exposed the intersectionality of ethnic oppression with victim blaming (Chancer,

1987). According to Sweet (2020), marchers were opposed to the framing of 'Portuguese men' as backward and violent, they were not supporting rape but defending their community and its public othering. Sweet (2020) writes that Bourdieu (and Wacquant) ignore new sites and resistant forms of knowledge production. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) suggested that women were not reflexive and did not grant them epistemic authority, resulting in misreading the story. This reinforces the need to challenge what is *true* and to mobilise different knowledge and approaches, including lived experience, to generate more robust theories of social spaces and action.

Field theory may be blind to the reflexivity of others, but it promotes proximity to the research site and a critique of the researcher's assumptions. It is an invitation to investigate the social constitution of the person (Wacquant, 2004, 2015). As Jenkins (1992/2013) wrote, Bourdieu's weaknesses are his strengths. The world is complicated, confused, and uncertain, it 'runs counter to the usual idea of intellectual rigour.' (Bourdieu et al., 1991: 259) Field theory provides one imperfect way of trying to make sense of it.

This thesis takes the 'official' aims of imprisonment as a starting point, a means of orientating the research towards the expectations of the field, and explores their delivery in practice. This study thematically analyses ethnographic data to conceptualise the field as a socially constituted space. It is according to this critical 'prism', that the research embraces the embodied and the objectified aspects of the field. Until recently, sensory knowledge of imprisonment has been biased towards the visual, overlooking the repertoire of meanings and understandings associated with the affective atmosphere of being in prison. Herrity et al. (2021) have challenged the way prison researchers engage with and interpret their subjects, asking researchers to take a 'sensory turn' (Liebling, 2021: xviii) and theorise embodied knowledge. By reflecting on the 'essential' components of *cognitive-cum-emotive* (Bourdieu, 2003b: 32), this prison research takes the fundamental beliefs that structure behaviour, the taken-for-granted practices, the sights, the sounds, the feelings, and the different human experiences of imprisonment as its objects of study. By addressing the people in prison, their practices and outcomes before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, this thesis questions simple ideas about the production of imprisonment.

It situates Clarendon as a sub-field of the wider penal field. As a local adult male prison in the England and Wales prison service, it receives prisoners on remand or waiting to be sentenced from courts in the south of England. It is one of 122 prisons that accumulatively detain over 85,000 prisoners and one of over 30 that receive over 60,000 new prisoners each year directly from the courts (Ministry of Justice, 2023a). As such, it overlaps with the wider legal, social, and economic fields that determine who is imprisoned, who works in prison, and the finances provided to

deliver imprisonment. Demonstrating the overlapping nature of the fields, Ismail (2020) identified how the neoliberal philosophy and macroeconomic policy of austerity obstructed prisoners' access to healthcare, exacerbated health issues, and increased levels of violence. Fitzgibbon (2007) observed how institutional racism and discriminatory risk management practices in policing, probation, and social work increase the proportion of black people in prison. Latham and Williams (2021) have identified how the Mental Health Act 1983 (amended in 2007) provided legal justification for the detention of 'mentally disordered offenders' and how, under section 41, prison may be used as a 'place of safety', 'necessary for the protection of the public from serious harm' (p. 72). Subsequently, there has been an increasing number of people with mental illness being imprisoned. This thesis contributes to this scholarship by presenting prison as a defined social space, with its own rules and regularities, but which cannot be disassociated from its wider social context. Prisons represent and reflect social structures, with their walls porous and unable to protect against external trends.

In summary, a field theory approach provides a way of thinking about the people and the social relations that produce imprisonment. Although some scholars have argued that Bourdieu's theory of practice is deterministic and reductionist, they highlight the complexity of field relations. Field theory is an imperfect guide for exploring the myriad of ways that Clarendon is socially and physically structured to paradoxically produce the aims of imprisonment. Practices are analysed at the micro-level to examine their symbolic meaning, including the entry process, living conditions, and use of violence, identifying how they relate to the broader aims of imprisonment. This will inform an understanding of how the symbolic interactions of imprisonment are 'encoded' in the sensory elements of the prison experience (Warr, 2021) and contribute to the emerging scholarship on the affective relations of prison life.

Conclusion

This chapter situates the study within a theoretical framework. It explains what field theory is, defines its key concepts, and how it will guide the empirical dimensions of this study. Furthermore, it contributes to understanding how a Bourdieusian approach is applied to prison research as a way of thinking about imprisonment. Bourdieu's work, like so many approaches before and after, is imperfect but it offers a guide for developing a deeper understanding of how experience and outcomes of a field interact. It emphasises the need to ask questions about the way imprisonment is and why, challenging fundamental beliefs and the taken-for-granted practices of actors and researchers.

The next chapter sets out the research design and practice for a more holistic approach to analysing imprisonment. It describes the research questions and aims, site and sample, explains the datum-theory relationship, and some of the ethical considerations negotiated during the study.

4. Keys, Teas, and Please: Research Design & Practice

'How does one know that one has the right question? One does not. It is only in the process of enquiry that one will find out.' (Mohr, 1969: 4)

Little could have prepared me for what was to come during fieldwork. In the edited book of Rice and Maltz (2018) *Doing Ethnography in Criminology*, many scholars wrote about the need to 'embrace openness' (Ferrell, 2018: 148), of 'unexpected insights' (DiPietro, 2018: 122), and that ethnographic research takes 'unexpected turns… in unexpected ways' (Bucerius, 2018: 40). They highlighted the unpredictability of the field and how to be prepared for doing research in the penal setting. There was no mention of how to prepare for a pandemic. This chapter details the messy research journey of conducting social research in a prison before and during a pandemic.

This chapter provides a roadmap of the research design, practice, and experience. It articulates the primary and secondary research questions, describes the aims, and explains the approach of the study. It introduces the research site, discusses access, and reflects on the various methodological and ethical considerations that arose during this study.

Research Question(s) and Aims

The dual position of being partially sponsored and employed by HMPPS and concurrently a researcher is a thread that runs through this study and is critical to understanding its conception, design, and outcomes. Influenced by the positivistic view of HMPPS that 'prison works' or *should* work, the research focus was initially developed *with* HMPPS senior management to consider a perceived discordance between policy and practice, security and 'rehabilitation', that was affecting local and national outcomes. Senior leaders of the organisation wanted to understand why *some* adult male prisons experience high levels of violence, self-harm, and death, and what they could do about it. The primary research question reflects the shared interests of key stakeholders and myself:

> *How are security, safety, and rehabilitation operationalised in contemporary imprisonment?*

The research was initially designed as a comparative ethnographic study in two similar (in demographic, purpose, and performance) but geographically separate adult male prisons as a means of identifying the strange and the familiar. Based on observational fieldnotes and interviews, the findings were intended to enable comparison, identifying similarities and differences between what and how

imprisonment was constructed. However, the research adapted to the pandemic circumstances.

The pandemic reduced data collection to a single-site case study. The study lost its theoretical springboard for comparison and reflection but gained depth and context. Commencing in January 2020, 11 weeks and approximately 200 hours of fieldwork were conducted until all prisons across England and Wales were essentially locked down, confining prisoners to their cells and restricting who could work in prisons to reduce the introduction of COVID-19. Research was suspended, but six months later, I returned in September for three weeks to conduct 28 semi-structured interviews with (15) staff and (13) prisoners. This singular focus provided a more critical understanding of Clarendon. As Crewe (2018) explained, ethnography enabled him 'to get to know the prison, not just as a system of social action, but in more depth and more nuance, as a site of human life, struggle and survival' (p. 88). By extending my focus to the internal configuration of one prison, I was able to fully attend to its richness and local dynamics, to the people that produce imprisonment.

The focus of the study equally evolved with time. The pandemic response and my journey as a scholar challenged all preconceptions about the meaning of imprisonment and the interaction of its official aims. The original thesis title: *Balancing Security and Rehabilitation in a Prison Environment: Theory and Practice*, indicates how the formation of the study was imbued with a particular bias, a position and 'common sense' 'doxosophy' (Bourdieu, 1998) or ideology shaped by my employer and employment. It suggested that 'security' and 'rehabilitation' are separate and objective entities, as are theory and practice, with neat independent meanings and applications. Health was a footnote. Reading and fieldwork experience developed my understanding of the reductionist and deterministic duality of these concepts and how the original study failed to consider the spatiotemporal nature and social relations of the field and the multi-faceted meanings and effects of the stated aims of imprisonment on outcomes. I evolved as a scholar to question 'simple ideas'.

The study developed to reflect the complexity of 'contemporary' imprisonment. By appreciating the structural time scales and historical production of the actors and their field, the following aims indicate my research journey and the development of the study:

- To capture and highlight the day-to-day relationship between how the stated aims of imprisonment are interpreted and practised through the lens of health;

- To understand how prison policy is mediated into practice;

- To consider implications for future research, practice, and development.

These aims reflect the original research question and the evolution of the study through time and fieldwork. This research did not approach the field as a 'contemporary' phenomenon but as a product of social production over time and across space, overlapping with other fields and phenomena, such as infectious disease epidemics and mental health issues.

The pandemic is central to the research because it occurred at the time of data collection and re-configured how the prison was practised and experienced like no other previous phenomena in the recent history of imprisonment. The explicit aim of imprisonment became health security, with the traditional conceptions of security and safety all understood and practised through the lens of health to 'preserve the life and health of those working and living in prison' (HMPPS, 2021: 3). It was 'the biggest challenge faced by Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service in recent times' (HMPPS, 2021: 3) and in partnership with Public Health England (PHE) – now the UK Health Security Agency – prisons introduced measures to protect the most vulnerable and limit the introduction and transmission of infection within prisons (HMPPS, 2021; SAGE, 2021). Aspects of imprisonment ceased or changed in an instant, including the suspension of and then severe restrictions on social visits, education, workshops, exercise, inter-prison transfers, court trials, hospital appointments, staff training, and general social mixing of people in prison. It brought into focus the dynamism and overlapping nature of imprisonment with other fields, as external health trends seemingly shaped its delivery, experience, and purpose. These environmental and experiential issues are reflected in the secondary research questions of the study:

(a) How is security implemented and maintained in contemporary imprisonment?

(b) How do staff and prisoners interpret and negotiate the interplay between security, safety, and rehabilitation in contemporary imprisonment?

(c) How is imprisonment affected by a pandemic?

These research questions contribute to understanding and interpreting the dominant themes of how imprisonment is operationalised (practised) and produced. As discussed in the literature review, a significant body of criminological research addresses the macro aims of imprisonment and critiques their conceptualisation and delivery. However, few recent studies have deconstructed the relationship between the macro, meso, and micro elements of imprisonment, drawing out the empirical links from the ground: the how of the how. This study contributes to a criminological understanding of how imprisonment is and how it functions at present by deconstructing what happened before and during a pandemic. It analyses the production of practice and explores the relationship between policy and people to recommend areas for development.

Ontology and Epistemology

This ethnography is grounded in the subjectivist and social relational epistemological and ontological perspectives of the world we know and study. The study approaches prison as a social and relational space: conditional upon and constituted by the people that produce it and give it meaning, a human struggle between structural and individual forces. Mohr (1969) explains the importance of this in criminological studies as 'we do not study pure events per se but events which have been defined for us. Human events that over the centuries have received a multitude of human meanings' (p. 6). The production of imprisonment as punishment and control, what gives it meaning, is constituted through social relations as staff and prisoners, conditioned by history, 'actively engage' in producing its legitimacy (Bosworth and Carrabine, 2001: 502). Conceptualising the prison as an embodied collective, subject to internal and external forces, necessitates a relational approach.

To accurately represent the adult male prison of study within its wider context, this research takes a phenomenologically-informed field theory approach. Phenomenology attempts to incorporate embodied experience into interpretations of how we know, where the lived body is a lived centre of experience (Behnke, 2011). It suggests that embodied knowledge represents a major means of engaging with our world (Merleau-Ponty, 1945), and it is only possible to understand the experience of a phenomenon – in this case, the production of imprisonment – by taking subjective experience or 'embodied knowledge' as the starting point (Honer and Heztler, 2015). As Ferrell (2018) states, 'the foundation for ethnography must be phenomenological (and) begin with the thing itself' (p. 148), where the views and voices of the field are integral to the line of enquiry. Such criminological dimensions, it is argued, can only ever be understood through immersion, experience, and situated meaning (Fader, 2018). Phenomenology is the starting point of this study, a way of connecting people and places. It is in these small, everyday interactions that understanding of wider social structures becomes clear (Simmel, 1907).

This social ontological approach will not provide an 'objective truth' but a social interpretation. Analysis and theory offer 'possible' causes of phenomena 'in an open-ended fashion' (Seawright & Gerring, 2008: 302) by bringing new ideas or conceptions to light. However, this case study aims to illuminate the field, its manifestations and influences – the macro, meso, and the micro – to refer back to something larger than the case itself. As Gerring (2007) stated, 'no case study research should be allowed to conclude without at least a nod to how one's case might be situated in a broader universe of cases' (p. 85). In this study, the *broader universe* refers to the system of imprisonment. Through Bourdieu's field theory, this research offers 'insight, plausibility and texture' (Laws, 2018: 49) that can bring the penal system into focus. It is a relational approach to understanding how the official aims of imprisonment are put into practice.

Why Choose Field Theory?

Bourdieu (1977, 1989, 1990b) developed a relational approach to practice, a field theory that offers key advantages over alternative theoretical frameworks. This section explains the approach.

A Critical and Reflexive Ethnography

As a self-defined *constructivist structuralist* following phenomenological tradition, Bourdieu (1977) believed that ethnography was the most appropriate method to analyse the field in practice. In the *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Bourdieu (1977) proposed that ethnography enables researchers to capture the practical knowledge, underlying social structures, and embodied dispositions that individuals possess, which shape their behaviours and choices. In *The Weight of the World: Social Suffering in Contemporary Society*, a critical ethnographic method assisted Bourdieu (1999) in documenting the lived experiences of socially marginalised individuals and understanding the mechanisms that produce and perpetuate their suffering. Thomas (1993) explains:

> *'Critical ethnography is a way of applying a subversive worldview to the conventional logic of cultural inquiry. It does not stand in opposition to conventional ethnography. Rather, it offers a more direct style of thinking about the relationships among knowledge, society and political action.'* (p. vii)

A critical ethnographic field theory approach enables micro-level actions and perspectives to be contextualised within the 'larger conditions of possibility' (Sallaz, 2018: 490). In a prison context, this requires criminological researchers to 'bring the state back' into micro-level analyses (Shammas and Sandberg, 2016: 202) and consider how what happens at a subjective level is affected by wider social structures.

Ethnography is a necessary method to comprehend the different producing elements of imprisonment. Ethnographic prison studies have revealed the dynamic web of relations and forces that produce imprisonment via in-depth analysis of features that make up the individual(s), their practice, and their field (Bennett, 2012; Crewe, 2007, 2009; Gooch, 2013; Herrity, 2019). However, these scholars emphasised that more ethnographies are needed to find 'detail, texture and nuance' within the big picture, re-attaching people into the narratives of structure and system (Jewkes, 2015: xi). As Crewe (2018) wrote, ethnographers get 'under the skin' of imprisonment to represent its various layers (p. 84). This study contributes to ethnographic scholarship that situates the prison and its experience within its wider social structures with a more recent critical account addressing the practice of imprisonment's aims.

Furthermore, field theory facilitates ethnographic reflexivity. It warns against thoughtlessness and assumptions that the researcher 'has nothing to do' with the field they study (Lamaison and Bourdieu, 1986: 111). Researchers, like the object of study, are bound to and in the field, endowed with preconceived meanings and ideas. According to Bourdieu (1975), achieving 'ethical neutrality' is a 'false consciousness' because researchers are made by 'the game' and liable to its 'insidious influence' (p. 41), encumbered by a past and present position. The researcher cannot escape the forces of the field. Therefore, the researcher must avoid *unthoughtful* descriptive-normative accounts that reproduce official visions by questioning dispositions and discourse. By exposing the researcher's consciousness and positionality, by analysing their 'biographical peculiarities' (Bourdieu, 2003a: 282) – their relationship with the field, their narratives of experience, and, what social psychologists Greenwald and Banaji (2017) term, 'unconscious bias' – it offers the researcher a chance to 'get a grip of those dispositions' (Bourdieu, 1980: 253) and reconcile the research with themselves. To avoid falling into 'doxosophy' (Bourdieu, 1998) and reproducing official and 'common sense' narratives, I had to deconstruct my 'knowledge' as an 'insider' and a human with preconceived ideas about imprisonment. A critical ethnography provides a social analysis that looks beyond orthodoxic classifications of the immediate field and beyond the *gaze* of observations. In this way, field theory facilitates analytical depth.

A Structured Method

To move beyond a 'sociology *in the* aegis of the category' to a 'sociology *of the* category' (Shammas, 2018: 208), Bourdieu conceptualised theory through structured empirical fieldwork. He believed that the researcher and method, the context, the social structures, and the object of study were interdependent and could not be 'disassociated' (Bourdieu et al., 1991: 2). Therefore, ethnography is an epistemological issue, a rigorous in-depth approach for understanding the social conditions of lived experience and its physical, affective, and psychological embodiment (Bourdieu, 2003b). It is a way of attending to the circumstances of practice on a case-by-case basis according to its social conditions and configured features.

This 'direct style' of inquiry requires addressing the multifaceted aspects of the field through various methods. The lived experiences of the field, the 'problems at work' (Bourdieu, 2003b: 16), are affected by the context of the field with its related conditioning, meanings, and structures. Thus, capturing the field requires mobilising 'all the techniques that are relevant and practically useable, given the definition of the object and the practical conditions of data collection' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 227). Researchers must not privilege what actors say any more than what they do as the elements of the field are mutually reinforcing. Ethnographic methods, such

as observation, interviews, and field-specific document analysis 'compensate' for weaknesses in each method, collectively and 'continually' performing 'reciprocal' checks on interpretations and results (Bourdieu, 2003b). This approach advances the understanding of field relations through participation, dialogue, observation, and critical distance. By drawing on numerous methods, ethnography protects against arbitrary findings, such as survey results, that fail to represent the social and physical conditions of the field.

Field theory provides a structured approach to data collection. To mitigate the inherent inequality in the researcher/participant power dynamics, Bourdieu (1999) states that participants should be afforded trust and anonymity to protect them from harm and prevent identification. Ideally, the researcher is familiar and socially proximate to participants. This was difficult to achieve given my employment status based at HMPPS Headquarters in London. I was an insider-at-a-distance, unfamiliar with *their* prison but familiar with *a* prison. I spent many hours in the field to develop a sense of familiarity and social proximity with participants during the initial period of fieldwork but this was largely undone due to research suspension. Being open and approachable, assuring anonymity, identifying neutral and familiar locations for interviews, and promoting their point of view (*their* prison, not *the* prison) was valuable to (re-)building trust. As Bourdieu (1999) explained, researchers must adopt a perspective 'as close as possible' to actors whilst retaining objective focus, a process called *participant objectification* (p. 2). By transparently distinguishing between my employment and my researcher status, promoting their lived experience above my personal account, and taking a semi-structured approach, I sought to mitigate the unequal power dynamic with participants. This approach promoted understanding, explanation, and critical thought, rather than unquestioned logic.

During the analytical process, Bourdieusian tools provided a bridge between theory and data, enabling the categorisation and indexing of ethnographic data. The notion of the field is a 'conceptual shorthand' and a reminder to resist substantialism, binaries, reductionism, and determinism (Bourdieu, 1980). Researchers must think relationally and critically about their practical choices, interpretations, and descriptions. The concepts of *habitus, doxa,* and *hysteresis,* among others, are tools for work, instruments to code, theorise, challenge, and orient results towards (de)construction, rather than repetition. By using these tools to conduct and analyse ethnographic data, this thesis reveals how actors interpreted and experienced the actions, behaviours, and outcomes of their field. For example, a violent incident could be subjectively interpreted by staff and prisoners as a product and outcome of inexperienced staff, unwell prisoners, a broken system, or any combination of these and other factors. Through observations, interviews, and document analysis, violence can be theorised as an embodied response to doxic beliefs and social structures, a manifestation of inequality, a struggle for capital (resources that enable influence), and social conditioning.

In summary, field theory provides a structured and reflexive way to conceptualise rich ethnographic data and the relations between actors, the field, and wider social structures across time, place, and method to identify, establish, and validate themes and contradictions. It enables a 'critical discourse' (Bourdieu, 1977: 169) that links the field of opinion with the fundamental beliefs of unquestioned logic, experiences, and outcomes to reveal the 'real' foundations of their practice.

Field Access

Conducting prison research is difficult (Herrity, 2019; Warr, 2018). It requires patience, time and careful negotiation of bureaucratic processes to gain access to a prison. Prison researchers must work with various stakeholders and navigate institutional and university approval processes before they can commence a study. This process began early in the first year of my PhD programme and did not conclude until I left the field almost two years later. This section explains why the site was selected and how access to and within the field was repeatedly negotiated.

Selecting Clarendon Prison

Based in the south of England, Clarendon is one of 29 local ('reception') adult male prisons, with a defined purpose to receive and process those sentenced to custody by the courts. Local prisons hold those committed by the court until such time that they are (re-)categorised and transferred to another prison based on their security risks, such as their risk of escape, harm to the public, ongoing criminality, and risk of violent behaviour (HMPPS, 2020a). Local prisons hold more than 30% of the total prison population at any one time (Ministry of Justice, 2023a) and Clarendon has capacity for around 700 male prisoners either on remand, charged, sentenced, or awaiting sentence, representing an average-sized prison consistently at full capacity. Whilst the average time served by prisoners in Clarendon was 57 days compared to the national average of 87 days (Ministry of Justice, 2019a), these prisons hold a unique place in the prison system as every non-category A ('high-risk') male prisoner commences their imprisonment in a local prison. They are the first, and frequently the last, impression of the custodial estate for many men.

The prison was selected as a case study for its place in the wider system. In their annual report for 2017-8, the Inspectorate highlighted that high levels of violence, self-harm, and death were identified in most adult male prisons in England and Wales, but local prisons, those with the 'numerical bulk of prisoners', raised the most concerns (HMIP, 2018a: 7). Nearly two-thirds of male local prisons were rated as of 'concern' or 'serious concern' by HMPPS at the onset of fieldwork (Ministry of Justice, 2020b). At the time of site selection, national rates of self-harm, assaults and deaths were at or close to record highs in the prison system (Ministry of Justice, 2024; PRT, 2021) and as of May 2019, 62% (n=72) of prisons were overcrowded

beyond the Prison Service's measure of what is considered the decent and safe standard of occupancy (Ministry of Justice, 2023a). In 2018, Phil Copple, the Director General of the Prison Service described 'chronic problems' with prison living conditions across the estate (House of Commons Justice Committee, 2018a) and prisoners frequently received less than two hours a day out of their cell (PRT, 2021). HMP Clarendon failed three of HM Inspectorate of Prison's four tests for a healthy prison. Like many adult male prisons, it had experienced a 'significant deterioration' in safety, rehabilitation, and release planning in the years preceding this study with high rates of violence, self-harm, use of force, drug use, staff sickness, and overcrowding (HMIP, 2020). Clarendon was 'symptomatic of shortcomings evident across the prison estate' (House of Commons Justice Committee, 2018b). Its study was chosen to analyse themes that speak to the wider system of what is happening, how, and why in other prisons.

Pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of participants. Following consideration of precedents set by other primary research studies, such as Wacquant in a Los Angeles County Jail (2002), Gooch (2013) in a Youth Offending Institute, and Herrity (2019) in HMP Midtown, Clarendon and its participants are provided with pseudonyms to protect against identification, a condition of access. Anonymity, optional participation, and freedom to withdraw were emphasised throughout the study to promote trust with participants where they felt they could speak more freely, without fear of reprisal. All names have been changed in the transcripts and thesis, and some identifiable information has been altered to avoid identification. Other scholars have named their study sites, such as Crewe in HMP Wellingborough (2009/2012), Morris and Morris in HMP Pentonville (2013), and Clancy and Maguire in HMP Parc (2017). For Crewe (2009/2012), Wellingborough represented a 'typical prison', with no obvious quirks or unusual characteristics. However, most scholars acknowledge the unique 'social anatomy' and culture of their case study site and the limited generalisability beyond their establishments. Nevertheless, pseudonyms promote transferable learning and minimise reader bias (stereotyping and pre-conceived ideas) towards the findings. Anonymising the prison breaks down barriers to seeing and responding to dominant themes in research and relevance beyond the case study.

The pandemic reinforced similarities between prisons across the system. Indicating how a prison is part of and conditioned by a wider system (Page, 2013), HMPPS (2021) responded to the pandemic by introducing a National Framework that centrally governed how prisons could function and how local policies were applied. Clarendon transformed from an *outlier* (Sim, 2019) with site-specific "challenges" shared by some prisons, to a '*typically' 'extreme'* case (Seawright & Gerring (2008) – a reflection of the local and national issues facing prisons across England and Wales at the time of the study. Clarendon may have a unique 'social anatomy' but its production and outcomes are symptomatic of the wider prison system.

Perseverance and Insurance: Accessing the Field

Conducting prison research requires sensitivity and persistence. Researchers must demonstrate their ability to conduct research safely and ethically in prison, showing, for example, consideration of how to access and recruit participants (Moore and Wahidin, 2016; Lafferty, 2022). Access is dependent on gatekeepers, such as the 'much feared and maligned' (Warr, 2021b: xv) Ministry of Justice National Research Committee, regional prison psychology, University ethics committee, and prison senior management. With the development of participant information sheets and posters, consent forms, draft interview schedules, a data privacy notice, and a fieldwork plan detailing safety procedures during data collection (attached as appendices), I worked with supervisors at the University of Nottingham and stakeholders at HMPPS to design a study that respects the boundaries and integrity of participants to minimise the risk of harm to participants and myself.

In October 2019, I received ethics approval from the University, followed by research approval from HMPPS and Clarendon in December 2019. After presentations to staff about the aims and method of the research, data collection commenced in early January 2020, but it was suspended in mid-March 2020 after 20 days and around 200 hours of fieldwork due to the pandemic where, upon an email from the University on March 13th, all face-to-face research activity ceased indefinitely. Due to the developing nature of the pandemic, there was no timeline for re-entry into the field.

With all face-to-face research in prisons across England and Wales paused unless critical to the pandemic response, my focus turned to preventing outbreaks of COVID-19 in prison and probation settings. During the week, I advised policymakers and conducted health research that enhanced understanding and identification of the virus, using novel methods, such as Wastewater monitoring (Hassard et al., 2022; Jobling et al., 2024), mathematical modelling of infections and interventions (Bays et al., 2021; McCarthy et al., 2022), Indoor Air Quality (O'Mara et al., 2024), and clinical testing (Plugge et al., 2022). As understanding developed of how people were infected in enclosed settings, such as cruise ships (Mizumoto et al., 2020) and care homes (Rios et al., 2020), this information, alongside a reduction in community infections from people interacting outside during warmer weather, provided an opportunity to consider the re-commencement of fieldwork in the middle of 2020. To do so, re-entry required renegotiation of access to the field when assessed by the university, UoN insurers, National Research Committee, and Clarendon's Governor as safe to do so.

In the summer of 2020, I re-commenced the approvals process. I worked with stakeholders, such as the prison Governor and the National Research Committee to agree the research could re-commence. Consultation included the development of a COVID-19-specific fieldwork plan and risk assessment (attached as an appendix)

explaining why the research should re-commence based on academic contribution, personal qualification, time pressure, and how the risks would be mitigated. Considering the challenge this would have posed for an external researcher with limited access to the decision-making bodies, it provides further evidence of my privileged status as an insider partially sponsored and working for HMPPS. This privilege did not extend to the university approvals process and I am indebted to my supervisors for their persistence in pursuing and advocating for approval.

In late August 2020, the relevant parties approved a conditional three-week period to complete fieldwork. Conditions included the prison not experiencing an outbreak of COVID-19, clinical testing each day before entry, location restrictions on where I could go, and wearing a face mask at all times on public transport. Upon agreement, interviews commenced six months after the suspension. In discussion with stakeholders listed above, this study may represent one of the few pieces of ethnographic research conducted in a prison during the first year of the pandemic, offering a novel contribution to the experience and practice of a prison facing a unique health crisis.

Within the field, access was again influenced by my insider status. In consultation with the prison, it was quickly agreed with the Governing Governor and the security department that *drawing* keys would limit the burden on staff and enable me to move freely within the field without restrictions. By attending a security induction on the first day of fieldwork and accessing keys thereafter to open gates and doors, I was able to walk through literal and symbolic barriers in the prison to access areas and people that would otherwise have been restricted or unavailable to me if I was reliant on staff escorts (minders) to move in and around the prison.

To minimise the influence I had on staff and prisoners, this required awareness of how holding keys communicated a status of authority. The possession of keys is associated with power and control in the prison setting. Keys, the sound of their jangling and symbolic articulation of deprivation and control, are a key component of power maintenance in prison (Herrity, 2019). They amplify an inherent asymmetry in relationships with prisoners as key holders, including researchers, visually and symbolically set the rules, assign the objectives of interaction, and occupy a higher place in the social hierarchy. Whilst research participants guard and control access and knowledge, prisoners may have little agency to refuse due to their incarceration and boredom (Moser et al., 2004). To mitigate the unequal relationship and harms of participation, researchers must establish the ethical rules of engagement: informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, and independence. We have to justify who we are, what we are doing, and what 'power' we have (Liebling, 1999a; Moser et al., 2004). Irrespective of a researcher's intentions to be *nobody*, one does not choose how they are seen by others, and by navigating security restrictions to access the prison, researchers with keys are *somebody*.

Mitigating this power dynamic with staff and prisoners took time, trust, and transparency. Warr (2008) explains that trust is an 'impossibility' when someone holds dominion over another (p. 23) so I was careful to differentiate myself from those with status who could bring power 'to bear' upon prisoner or staff member. I deliberately dressed to not 'look' like a staff member. To differentiate myself from senior managers and visitors, I followed Gooch's (2013) example with a smart-casual dress code. This occasionally drew comments from friendly senior managers about whether I had "*dressed up*" or "*dressed down*" for the occasion of fieldwork (Fieldnotes, 07/01/2020), but over time, it seemed to facilitate a sense of familiarity and openness with staff and prisoners. Minimising my influence required equal openness about my role and status as a postgraduate student in Clarendon. In every introduction and information sheet, I explained what I was doing in the prison and invited questions. Within a handful of visits the Gate staff recognised me as I picked up my keys, prisoners stopped calling me "Guv", and staff stopped offering to make me a cup of tea. By sheer intensity of fieldwork, unhindered movement, honesty, and exposure, I developed relationships and built trust with participants.

Loitering with Consent and Intent: Data Collection

Conducting an ethnography requires studying the field as it is found and experienced by subjects, observing and talking with them, and participating where appropriate. This section details how ethnographic methods were put into practice.

Informed Consent

In a prison context, obtaining informed consent is important to mitigate the power differentials between the researcher and the participants (Murphy and Dingwall, 2007). Considering power dynamics and the high turnover of staff and prisoners in Clarendon, consent was an ongoing process. The process began a month before fieldwork and finished when data collection concluded. Introductions started in December 2019 as I presented the study, its aims, and its method to the Clarendon Senior Management Team. It continued in January 2020 as I introduced myself and the study to participants like Jimmy as he prepared for release and Jermaine as he wandered around the segregation exercise yard. This pursuit concluded in October 2020 as I explained the consent forms to potential interview participants. Throughout fieldwork, I employed reminders of the research, such as posters, information sheets, introductions at staff meetings, carrying a pen and paper during data collection, and having regular conversations on the wings with participants to check consent and ensure they knew they were being observed and for what reason. I explained how the data was being handled and the rights of participants, highlighting that prisoners and staff could ask me to leave or not record data at any

time without adverse consequences. As an insider, obtaining consent required careful consideration.

Participants seemed less likely to challenge or reject my presence in a given situation, highlighting why it was important to conduct my own risk assessments during fieldwork. During fieldwork, I was asked to leave a space on just two occasions – both times from the Security department to enable *sensitive* information to be shared. In these situations, staff apologised and, in one case (04/02/2020), the security department later briefed me on what had been discussed. These occurrences reinforced my status as a researcher and the limited trust I experienced, but the apology and rarity of these occasions indicate the privileged treatment of *insiders*. As Bennett (2012/2016) found during his *insider* research, insiders are considered less of a risk to prison security and reputation and provided fewer barriers or restrictions on where we go and what we see than *outsiders*. For example, I was permitted to review prisoners' case notes and some of the Annex A justifications (written responses) provided by staff after using force. These provided important context to the mental construction of prisoners and force by staff, but as this access was provided by staff, it highlights how *insiders* must decide for themselves when to leave a situation or not record information based on whether it was safe and/or appropriate.

This process did not always go smoothly. I learned to consider the social context of the field and minimise my effect on participants to reduce harm and build relationships. When my presence and note-taking at social visits (11/02/2020) seemed to be distracting prisoners and their families, I hastily withdrew from the session:

> *I questioned staff freely on what they were doing and why, ignorantly positioning myself at the centre of the room near the staff desk (so I could interact with staff without obstruction) but on a few occasions I was politely questioned about my purpose and role by suspicious visitors and prisoners, including awkward eye contact as I made notes of the experience. It took me some time to realise that I may be seen as something other than a researcher because of this and I decided to leave before the session ends, realising that perhaps it would have been better to leave the notepad out of sight…*
> (Fieldnotes, 11/02/2020)

I failed to consider the perspective of the visitors. Staff knew I was there to observe the visits process and their practice, but I did not consider that someone – anyone – observing social visits, who is neither visiting a prisoner nor wearing a uniform would be viewed with suspicion. It was a lesson learned in positioning, communication, and status. I learned to act ethically as I became more attuned to the field – the sounds, the body language, and the subtle nuances of being in Clarendon. Herrity (2019) highlighted that attuning to the daily life of a prison also involved 'attunement'

to its actors and a 'sensitivity' to their changeable microclimate (p. 12). I entered social visits as an ignorant *insider*, thinking my presence was inconsequential. I left more aware of the value of sensory knowledge; of sense-making to understand and reflect on the field and my positionality. This example indicates how I was becoming more attuned to the field as I reacted to the changing experience around me and because of me. By respecting the autonomy of those in the field and acknowledging that circumstances and consent change, I negotiated access and consent hour-by-hour, space-by-space. Subsequently, staff and prisoners were consistently welcoming and interested in the research, often offering immediate feedback and comments on what they perceived to work or not work in practice.

However, my research status proved confusing to some staff. I found early on that making a cup of tea was an endearing quality with participants, but as my insider status became clearer, some staff felt uncomfortable with receiving a cup of tea from a more "*senior*" member of staff in their organisation's hierarchy. Throughout fieldwork, I was perceived as a *colleague* ("*one of us*"), a "*senior*", a *counsellor* or *confidante* for frustrated staff, an *expert* asked to advise on security and COVID-19 policies and practices, a *mentee* where some experienced staff adopted a mentoring role towards me, an *auditor* measuring the performance of the prison, and, finally, a *researcher*. Communication about my purpose and reason for being in their prison was always overt and frequently reinforced with participants, however, it appeared manufactured and incomplete to some staff. Bennett (2012) explained that insiders take on various identities in the eyes of participants which often represent and reassert the organisational hierarchy. Indicative of the abnormal presence of insider researchers, on more than one occasion, staff seemed frustrated by my reluctance to 'return the ball' (Liebling, 1999a: 156) in policy discussions. Fieldnotes below indicate that remaining a researcher in the field was not always straightforward.

> *At the SMT [Senior Management Team meeting] before Christmas, members of the SMT regularly made direct references to my HMPPS work, asked for my 'professional' input or sought eye contact for affirmation during the meeting. I tried my best to avert the attention, provided an ambiguous response or smiled without further contribution when looked upon for support or input.* (Fieldnotes, 03/01/2020)

On this occasion, the Deputy Governor cited the value of having an HQ employee, with a "*link to the centre*" available in the prison conducting research. However, the Governing Governor helpfully established boundaries and said this may only be utilised when not conducting research in the prison. It was tricky and often uncomfortable to navigate these situations, but other scholars have noted that this is typical and general of ethnographies (Van Maanen, 2011). Relationships and rapport are *crucial* to the ethnographic process; ethnographers get close to the field

and, therefore, have a serious responsibility to consider the needs of participants (Madden, 2022), but have little control over how they are seen by those studied in the field. Liebling's (1999a) Home Office-funded research in prisons identified that insiders experience unique pressures and expectations that outsiders (those with no perceived connection to the field) do not. Nevertheless, such instances decreased over time, perhaps indicating the increased acceptability of my position as a researcher, rather than a colleague or expert, but it took time, rapport, informed consent, and reinforcing the research purpose to navigate issues of positionality.

As with access and consent, confidentiality and anonymity were regularly negotiated and reinforced. During interviews, some participants tested and validated the rules of engagement before articulating any perceived sensitive information. Laura, a psychologist, stated, "*I think certainly, one establishment in our cluster, [place name] which I know you won't mention in the write-up, really struggled with it and so there's been a lot of relationship repairing.*" This evidenced the difference between informed consent and trust where participants demonstrated that they understood the information and consent forms but required affirmation or validation throughout participation. With this provided, participants were honest and open, and on just one occasion a participant (Joel, a prisoner) asked to end the interview after 13 minutes because he felt uncomfortable discussing his coping strategies during the pandemic.

>*Joel: With the COVID thing there's no jail, no nothing, it's hard at the moment.*

>*OOM: How have you managed to cope?*

>*Joel: I don't, I talk, I talk, that's how I cope. Is that it? I don't want to do this.*

The interview promptly concluded to respect the wishes of the participant but was indicative of Liebling's (1999a) finding that interviews are 'emotionally turbulent' (p. 150), and, like informed consent, dynamic.

Observing with All Five Senses

For over a century, ethnographies have been the 'hallmark' of studies into culture but are still critiqued as an 'indulgent' and 'anecdotal' method, lacking scientific rigour (Kawulich, 2005; Maruna, 2018). However, its intimacy, attention, and proximity to the full senses of the world provide deeper knowledge and evidence about how a field is constructed, compensating for weaknesses in other methods (Bourdieu, 2003b). Observation and participation are critical to this process.

There is a structure to achieve this 'elegant knowledge' (Ferrell, 2018: 150). Fader (2018) presents nine components that must be present in an ethnography, including immersion, thick description, context, reflexivity, and transgression. It requires all five senses and 'active looking' to experience the field as it is understood and constructed by participants. In this study of Clarendon, it was used to contextualise

the data and produce thick description of the environment as a means of contextualising and legitimising the findings, to reveal the dispositions of participants, their ways of being in the field, their thoughts, problems, shared positions, and (un)conscious ideas. Whilst 'observation' infers a bias towards visual data collection, 'gazing from afar' (Bourdieu, 2003a: 282), it is the process of learning through exposure and engagement with the daily activities of the setting: its sights, sounds, feelings, and smells. However, there is no single way of conducting observation.

On a continuum ranging from 'complete participant' to 'complete observer' (Kawulich, 2005: 6), fieldwork involved different roles and levels of interaction with the field. Sometimes the position I took was conscious and in my control, other times it was imposed and unknown to myself, the participants, or both of us. For instance, I was a conscious 'complete participant' in use of force training to learn how staff are taught to control and restrain prisoners. Other times, I was a 'participating observer' as a conspicuous researcher during social visits, or a 'complete observer' during adjudications, watching proceedings as they unfolded. Occasionally, my position was less obvious. In conversation with a prisoner across metal bars in segregation, the participant and I were unaware that senior managers were *using* me to occupy the prisoner whilst they organised an intervention behind the scenes to *restrain* him. The experience of fieldwork emphasised the multiple ways a researcher can affect the field and what data is being collected, as well as the lack of control a researcher has in the field. Where possible, I was conscious of my position to limit influencing the field and tried to ensure that everyone knew who I was and for what purpose I was in their prison.

Echoing the complexity of human experience, observations moved beyond what is seen. Fieldwork addressed the full spectrum of 'sensory knowledge' in the construction of prison life (Schmidt and Jefferson, 2021: 86). Taking inspiration from Herrity (2019), this meant appreciating the holistic nature of imprisonment, its atmosphere, sounds, and smells. Herrity (2019) highlighted that the senses lend 'texture and accuracy to spatial and temporal dimensions of power and order' in prison (p. 21), from the metallic greys of razor wire to the sound of keys jangling, gates clanging, and the smell of drugs. In prison, each sense is a powerful communicator of the prison's power and intent. Continuing the emergence of sensory criminology, this thesis provides a sociology of the senses to examine some of the ways imprisonment is produced in practice.

This began by shadowing prison staff. To control for what psychologists call 'unconscious bias' and what Crewe (2014) termed, *blind* spots, I began observations by shadowing different staff in the prison. The purpose of shadowing was to suspend what I thought was happening in the prison by avoiding 'highlights' (Laws, 2018: 49), which may be events unrepresentative of the day-to-day rhythms

of imprisonment. Shadowing enabled me to experience the 'feel' of the prison (Gooch, 2019: 83). To familiarise myself with the field and familiarise participants with me, data collection began in January 2020 by shadowing the Duty Governor, a senior operational manager responsible for running the prison for the day. The Duty Governor is required to *do the rounds* (visit each area of the prison) and, as was the case at Clarendon, tends to be an experienced and trusted member of the prison. The individual in question, Harry, had spent most of his career working in the Prison Service and provided helpful insight into Clarendon's culture:

> *"I have really enjoyed my [number of] years because you never know what you're coming into. I just always try to keep a smile... the trick is to let managers manage... it's a shithole but it's our shithole".* (Fieldnotes, 06/01/2020)

Having this prior knowledge of how prison is structured helped me to learn more about the prison; its function, its design, its people, its past, and its present conditions. I met more staff and prisoners from shadowing and speaking to Harry for a day than I may have achieved in weeks and months trying to *go it alone*.

In contrast to aimless wandering, shadowing – or to 'loiter with intent' (Gilliat-Ray, 2011: 472) – different people and different areas in Clarendon provided a holistic perspective to data collection in all areas of the prison. For each day (at least nine hours) of the first three weeks (6 days), I shadowed and informally interviewed (Fielding and Thomas, 2001) a different member of staff: Harry and Mary, senior managers; Jake, 'Oscar 1' (the leading prison officer of the day); Bernie, 'Oscar 2' (the second prison officer-in-command of the day); and supervising officers for two wings. After three weeks, the purposive approach to observing different roles and responsibilities shifted to observing practice in specific areas. To avoid my preconceived ideas about where and when 'security' and 'rehabilitation' *occurred* in a prison, I spent time (at least two days) in each of the following areas: reception, where prisoners arrive and depart each day; healthcare; segregation; *Cador*, a pseudonym given to a dedicated lower security area of the prison; the security department; Offender Management Unit; family services; and the mental health team, engaging in more detailed conversations with participants. This served four primary purposes: (1) familiarisation with the prison and its design; (2) introductions to staff and prisoners; (3) observing the prison culture, its day-to-day rhythm, and key personalities through their interactions and actions; and, (4) identifying what Duneier (2002) calls 'the middle ground' (p. 1572), to distinguish between what is atypical practice and what is a theme or trend of practice. This exercise led to a diverse number of experiences and places, including adjudications (internal court-like proceedings), ACCT (Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork) reviews – what the Ministry of Justice (2019b) describes as a care planning process for prisoners identified as being at risk of self-inflicted death or self-harm – social visits,

and Use of Force training. I conducted fieldwork in parts of Clarendon that contributed to the whole experience, observing staff and prisoners wearing many 'different hats' in situ (Laws, 2018: 51). Continuing this analogy of hats, shadowing provided an opportunity to see when and where these hats were worn, and how they changed over time and place.

I was aware that this proximity to management could create blurred boundaries and put into question my independence as a researcher. To mitigate this, I overtly discussed the research aims and my positionality with staff and prisoners I encountered, similar to the introductions conducted at the beginning of each day. Within a couple of weeks, it was gratifying that many staff and prisoners I came into contact with knew of me and the research, often seeking me out to discuss their experiences, and generally accepting of my presence and curiosity.

Interviews

Six months after observations had ceased due to the pandemic, fieldwork re-commenced with ethnographically-informed interviews. This presented a logistical and methodological challenge re-entering the field after a forced hiatus and making sense of the changes in the field over time, such as the turnover of staff. It also provided an opportunity to explore the effect of the pandemic and its implications on the production of imprisonment. Using fieldwork data from before the pandemic as a baseline to initially make sense of what I was seeing and hearing, semi-structured interview schedules were updated in the intervening period to reflect and explore how the pandemic may alter participants' experience and understanding of imprisonment. The suspension facilitated an additional temporal dimension to data collection and analysis that would not have been possible without the suspension.

The interviews aimed to empower and capture the voices of the participants. The interview questions were developed according to *Socratic* enquiry – an informed line of open-ended questioning for understanding first-hand beliefs and experiences from the abstract and the concrete (Carey and Mullan, 2004). Whilst established in psychotherapy, Socratic questioning is transferable into social studies as a means of participant-led induction – the *what*, *why,* and *how* questions. Overholser (1987) explains that 'the Socratic method of interviewing encourages the client to contemplate, evaluate, and synthesise diverse sources of information, most of which are already available to the client' (p. 258). Whilst interviewing can involve incomplete memory reconstruction and subjective reinterpretations of behaviour (Copes and Hochstetler, 2013), the interviews should make sense for the participant. By drawing on their knowledge, the interview guides for staff and prisoners were developed to empower and elucidate insights and awareness of an interviewee's first-hand experience and practice.

With a semi-structured interview schedule designed to be intentionally broad, none of the 28 interviews are the same. The interviews ranged from between 15 and 90 minutes in duration, averaging around an hour but varying by the length of responses, disruptions, questions asked, and general openness of participants to discuss their experiences. Interview schedules are provided as an appendix to this thesis. The schedule followed four broad categories: their personal biography, their feelings in the setting, their relationships and personal experiences, and their interpretation of the purpose of imprisonment. All interviews commenced with a similar introduction acknowledging the pandemic: *"What has it been like in here for the last six months?"* Then, questions explored initial insights from observations, such as asking security department staff, *"How do you feel about the perception that 'security says No'?"* or senior management, *"How do you know if security is successful?"* Prisoners were asked to define what it means and feels like to be incarcerated, asking them to consider what imprisonment should be like, how it has changed during the pandemic, and why. To address the potential for different perspectives based on their positionality, interview guides moved between concrete challenges of delivery to more abstract ideas of what their role in the prison is, why, and where they fit into the stated aims of imprisonment. The interviews generally concluded by asking for their questions, feedback, and perceptions on the study and its focus. This open-ended approach provided participants with space to make sense of their experience and to develop what Anderson and Goolishian (1992) call, their 'first-person narrative' (p. 37). The narratives illuminated situated meaning, the values and motivations of participants, and provided a reference point for data triangulation to make sense of what is happening in the field and why against the observations and perspectives of other participants.

Interview participants were selected based on their role and experience. Recruiting *knowledgeable* participants is challenging in a prison environment and I had to adapt to ever-changing situations. To protect participants and myself, any immunocompromised, infected, or isolated prisoners and staff were ineligible for interviews due to safety risks. I interviewed staff I had met during fieldwork and utilised a form of purposive network sampling for approaching hard-to-reach prisoners. This was useful for recruitment in a prison where knowledge and experience can be 'hidden' from plain sight (DiPietro, 2018), and participants are not routinely accessible due to issues of availability, inter-prison transfers, court attendance, social visits, and other events of the day. Time does not stop for prison research. Upon providing my interview 'conditions' for participants (minimum of one month in Clarendon) to prisoners and staff who acted as 'knowledge brokers' (Hoare et al., 2013: 424), I was directed towards possible participants. This presented a risk of 'selection bias' where chosen participants may provide more 'favourable' responses. This non-representative approach is 'always' an issue in prison research (Maruna and Mann, 2019) and could lead to incomplete knowledge and coverage of

the study's focus, rendering the findings insignificant and unrepresentative. However, the sampling strategy had to remain flexible and adaptable in a prison during a pandemic where circumstances can change in an instant. Upon brief introductions about the study, not every referral was progressed due to concerns about selection bias (I regret not recording further information about this), but participants were recruited who could contribute to the study and reflect the variety of roles, perspectives, and depth of experiences in the prison. Informed consent was checked through initial conversations with participants, aided by information sheets and consent forms. This sampling strategy focussed on recruiting participants who were *crucial* elements of the field (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992); those personas that, if you were to do a 'random' sample, would 'mutilate' one's understanding of the field. It captured a diversity of voices in the prison.

Using the knowledge and network of the field, the sample is a diverse and intersectional group of perspectives and experiences. *Table One* indicates that participants differed based on status (operational, non-operational staff, or prisoner) and role, length of service or experience of custody, age, gender, ethnicity, and across specific features and areas of the establishment, such as reception, segregation ('care and separation unit'), and healthcare. Reflecting the different knowledge and experience of people based on their status and perspective, each participant provided a unique and knowledgeable vantage point. Their interpretations of the field enabled a *generic comprehension* of who they are and how they are, grasping the social conditions and mechanisms of which they are the product (Bourdieu, 1999: 613). These interviews made sense of the field.

However, the sample was largely unrepresentative of the wider prison population. It lacks voices of many minority groups, such as the elderly, non-English speakers, women, and non-white ethnicities, and did not ask questions about age, sexuality, disability, gender, race or ethnicity, which are groups and voices regularly underrepresented in prison research (Gavin, 2019; Gordon et al., 2017). This is a limitation of the study but the sample represents the people in Clarendon, which disproportionately imprisons more males unsentenced, white, British, under the age of 40, and without a religion than the national prison population (HMIP, 2022a). This is reflected in the prisoner interview sample, where just four of the 13 participants were not white-British and no one was aged over 50 or female. Clarendon staff were more representative of the national workforce where operational staff were predominantly white-British and male and non-operational staff were predominantly female (HMPPS, 2023c). As such, the case study does not overtly discuss issues of gender and race due to the explicit whiteness of Clarendon and the absence of these issues in the data. It may not, therefore, reflect conditions and findings in other custodial settings, such as Immigration Removal Centres, Youth offender institutions, open prisons holding older prisoners, or Women's prisons.

Participants often altered schedules to accommodate the interviews but on one occasion an approach led to a refusal to participate by a sceptical senior leader.

Staff interviewed: 15

Operational staff interviewed: 8

Age	Ethnicity	Gender (M/F)	Role/area	Pseudonym
30-39	White-British	M	Officer	Andy
30-39	White-British	M	Senior Manager	Billy
30-39	White-British	M	Custodial Manager	Chris
40-49	White-British	M	Officer	Craig
20-29	White-British	M	Supervising Officer	Simon
40-49	White-British	M	Senior Manager	Edmond
30-39	White-British	M	Custodial Manager	Patrick
30-39	White-British	F	Senior Manager	Sally

Non-operational staff interviewed: 7

Age	Ethnicity	Gender (M/F)	Role/area	Pseudonym
20-29	White-British	F	Education	Ellie
40-49	White-British	F	Activities	June
40-49	White-British	F	Psychology	Laura
40-49	White-British	F	Third sector	Kat
30-39	White-British	F	Resettlement	Elaine
30-39	White-British	F	Mental Health Team	Ria
30-39	White-British	F	Substance misuse	Nicola

Prisoners interviewed: 13

Age	Ethnicity	Time spent at HMP Clarendon	Pseudonym
40-49	White-British	3 months	Terry
31-40	White-British	4 months	Thompson
30-39	Black-British	>6 months	Phil
20-29	White-British	1 year	Thomas
20-29	White-British	1 year	Felix
20-29	White-British	2 months	Benny
20-29	White-other	1 month	Jerry
40-49	White-British	2 months	Joel
20-29	White-other	3 months	Vlad
30-39	Black-other	5 months	Mr Adah
20-29	Asian-other	3 months	Mo
30-39	White-British	9 months	Luke
20-29	White-British	1 month	Jim

Table One. Interview participants by role, ethnicity, age and pseudonym. For anonymity, all participants in the senior management team are provided with the same role description.

Interviews were conducted in a room determined by staff for privacy, safety, and COVID-19 risk assessments to facilitate social distancing. An alarm bell was also within reaching distance for personal safety when conducting prisoner interviews. Interviewees were anonymised with pseudonyms to protect their identity, and interviews were recorded with prison and participants' consent using a dictaphone and transcribed digitally. The interviews complemented 'countless hours' of informal dialogues and observation (Gooch, 2019: 84) to enable thematic analysis. The interviews became a check against the balance of the observations, the basis on which to explore how the field was constructed.

Making Fieldnotes

During fieldwork, a journal was maintained to record and reflect on the observational data. Whilst there is no common structure or guide that defines the content of a fieldwork journal, the approach is considered context-dependent and it is an important means of documenting contextual information (Phillippi and Lauderdale, 2018). During fieldwork, notes were taken using a pen and an A5 pad of paper to record conversations, reflections, and observations in shorthand during or as soon as possible after the interaction. In total, nearly 140 double-sided A5 pages of scribblings were taken and written up digitally into over 110 pages of A4 fieldnotes in an encrypted file that captured most of what I experienced and thought within 24 hours of completing each fieldwork session. In one example, I noted down: *'Punitive reception staff. Escort staff (Geoamey – a privately contracted company) hanging about reception, sounds of the radio, prisoner spent 5 hours in escort van, said "longest day of my life."'* (Fieldnotes, 28/01/2020) This note illustrated the people (reception, escort staff, and prisoner), the place (reception), what was happening, and the comment of a prisoner present, enabling me to extrapolate into more detailed notes later:

> *Many agree with Watford, that prison shouldn't be so easy and comfortable, and that they shouldn't have parole. Geoamey staff, nearby, smile and nod in agreement at the comments. However, it is difficult to agree when prisoners, only metres away, are saying, "I spent five hours in an escort van when HMP Clarendon was in lockdown. We went [place name], then [place name] and back, it was the longest day in my life." The prisoner went on to wait a few more hours to be processed at reception.*

In other notes, I wrote: *'PM [afternoon], legal visitor [has] no photo ID: [reception ask] "can she ring her family and get them to describe her?"'* (Fieldnotes, 18/02/2020). This illustrated the time the interaction occurred, the issue presenting itself (a visitor has no identification), the question from a staff member (can they describe her?) and was followed up with quotes from participants relating to the interaction: *"No. No photo ID, No entry" (cue exasperation from all sides but with a look of disbelief from Patrick: "If I don't laugh, I'll cry")*. This intermediary measure of turning 'jotted notes'

into 'full fieldnotes' (Emerson et al., 2001: 356), acted as a trigger to mentally reconstruct the observed scene and expand on the notes to develop richer descriptive prose. Whether notes were taken during the incident or afterwards was largely dependent on the level of interaction ('complete participant' or 'complete observer') and an assessment of the possible impact of taking notes. When conspicuous note-taking was assessed as having a possible effect on participant behaviour, for example, ACCT reviews, social visits, or healthcare incidents, 'mental notes' (Lofland and Lofland, 1995) were made to be written up afterwards. Fieldnotes are rarely, if ever, able to reflect everything that happened, however, these notes often amounted to multiple pages each day and were a rich source of data that enabled comparison and validation with other data sources.

A fieldwork journal provides a confessional and impressionist approach to this thesis (Atkinson, 2014). Recording fieldnotes was a cognitive-cum-emotive coping mechanism (Bourdieu (2003b). It captured the lived experience of being a researcher and participant in Clarendon, it was used to reflect on gaps in knowledge, like how ethics committees and insurers work, and to consider areas of interest, such as staff identity and values through the use of violence. This thesis foregrounds analysis with first-hand descriptions and where quotes from fieldwork, rather than interviews, are provided, 'Fieldnotes' with the date are indicated for transparency. These vignettes and quotes account for the researcher's subjectivity and enable 'vivid recall' (Atkinson, 2014: 34) to present the data as experienced within symbolic and thematic units. The fieldwork journal became the punctuation that structured the sentence and the conjunctive that linked the clauses between observation and interviews.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was employed to make sense of how imprisonment is produced at Clarendon. With fieldnotes and transcribed interview data, the analysis focussed on identifying common themes across the dataset. An iterative approach to theory formulation and analysis without employing pre-determined codes facilitated a more sensitive approach to understanding the field where ideas could be tested and data triangulated against other sources to determine dominant themes. The aim was to enable the data 'to speak for itself' (Glaser, 1992: 123), and to discover the social relations within the field as they emerged in the themes, in contrast to Strauss and Corbin's (1998) more deductive approach to coding, where researchers 'select, separate and sort data to begin an analytic accounting of them' (Charmaz, 2006: 45). The analysis was as much a process of learning and making (many) mistakes, as it was a process of discovery and development. It followed Braun and Clarke's (2021) method of thematic analysis to identify and develop patterns in the data. This process of (1) familiarisation; (2) coding; (3) initial theme generation; (4) theme

development and review; (5) refining, defining, and naming themes; and (6) writing up, facilitated systematic engagement with the data. The chosen method is underpinned by aspects from Grounded Theory, Phenomenology, and discourse analysis to follow a reliable, tried, and tested procedure that generates theory 'from the frequent, dominant or significant themes inherent in raw data' (Thomas, 2003: 2). Theory developed from defining, categorising, and refining field data.

This process relies on interpretation and triangulation. Coding involves categorising and summarising data. To code inductively may be considered 'part work' and 'part play' because 'we play with the ideas we gain from the data. We become involved with our data and learn from them... we make discoveries and gain a deeper understanding of the empirical world' (Charmaz, 2006: 70). Codes and themes were frequently changed and re-categorised. Yet, this process cannot claim to be purely inductive or neutral due to my prior knowledge of the field and literature. My focus was on *emergent* and *anticipated* themes (Ziebland and McPherson, 2006), direct and indirect abstractions of what I assumed describes the environment and concepts under study. These assumptions were 'checked' by comparing and analysing different sources to validate and 'check' inferences (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1997: 230). This process takes bearings and intersections from the different data sources to compare and contrast what people say, see, and do to provide more comprehensive empirical insights into the phenomenon under study. In practice, this involved grouping text from interviews, fieldnotes, and policy documents into themes in NVivo 12. Key text was categorised into initial codes that were developed according to the broad concepts of the research: the pandemic experience; health and support services; prison culture and function; and violence and use of force. Upon considering overlapping coding and uncoded text, themes were revised and refined, searching for subtopics, contradictions and new insights (Thomas, 2003: 4-6) based on the research question. This minimised potential bias towards one medium or key data over another to identify dominant and consistent themes in the production of imprisonment. As such, many of the themes addressed in this thesis span fieldwork before the pandemic and interviews during the pandemic. Only the final findings chapter focuses solely on the pandemic.

One of the primary questions asked of the data throughout the process was: does this intend to contribute to security, safety, rehabilitation or more than one aim of imprisonment? In one example, notes from an interaction with a senior manager from January 7th, 2020 were coded under *prison culture and function*, before being recorded as security and then developed into sub-themes of conflict, punitive orientation and control after further analysis. These codes were then triangulated against fieldnotes from use of force training, official staff justifications (Annex A's), interviews, and other interactions with prisoners and staff, such as Chris, a custodial manager, who said that the use of force gave staff confidence, *"a grip over an officer's ability to control an incident"* but that the prison now reviews 10% of all

spontaneous incidents, all planned incidents, and all uses of a baton, *"creating an air of suspicion, there is a constant concern by staff, they are constantly scared of suspension or dismissal as they feel these reviews are conducted unfairly and uninformed."* (Fieldnotes, 13/01/2020) In a separate staff meeting on the same day with the Prison Group Director for the region, the Governor explained, *"Use of force is now too much for the dynamic risk assessment of staff, guiding holds are escalating and there's so many mixed messages in policy, instructions, and training"*. Upon review of Prison Service Instruction 1600 (Use of force policy) and the related amendments in 2015, staff are advised:

> *Staff arriving at an incident must not automatically draw their baton but must make an individual dynamic risk assessment, and consider the likely impact of drawing the baton; it must only be drawn if it is justified in the situation.* (HMPPS, 2015: 8)

Collectively, this analysis of data before and during the pandemic informed the development of key themes in Chapter 7, such as the doxa of using force, the double-game strategy of penal policy, and the embodied practice of control. The themes that evolved with the data represent a distinct pattern to understand and explain how the aims of imprisonment were operationalised in HMP Clarendon.

As suggested, the analytical process was not sequential. It was a back-and-forth method of looking for something 'telling' and 'meaningful' (van Maanen, 1997) to illuminate trends and links between codes (Joffe, 2012). Themes were initially identified through analytical reflections in fieldnotes – reviewing and annotating them after each day. During the six-month suspension, initial codes and themes were developed and revised ahead of conducting the interviews. Fieldwork observations, such as the demographic of prisoners, their health needs, the demands on healthcare providers, and the limits on access, informed the interview guides to explore emerging theory with participants, stimulating interview questions such as, 'When does a *prisoner* become a *patient*?' The responses were then checked against observations about why care was, at times, delayed, why some prisoners seemed so comfortable in prison, and why there were so many mentally and physically unwell people in custody, forming the basis of Chapter 6. This process takes effort and time, and the themes of this research developed during and after data collection to achieve theoretical saturation.

The final themes aimed to consolidate and represent the pattern of experience regarding the production of imprisonment. Informed by extant theory, these findings represent the breadth and overlap of consistent key terms provided by the data and integrated with existing theory and knowledge. This 'grounding' of the data in the wider literature maintained the micro, meso, and macro connection between case study and field to ensure relevance to 'something bigger'. These themes form the basis of the chapters to follow.

Limitations

There are three core identified limitations of this research which impact the findings and relate to the method, the researcher, and the theoretical framework. These are each in addition to the development of the study over time as it was affected by external conditions, such as the pandemic, and researcher subjectivity, ie. personal and professional growth and development. The process was messy and, like field theory, imperfect, but the journey was transformative.

The study's findings are influenced by the researcher's subjectivity and close engagement with the field. Whilst this research is rooted in the phenomenological orientation of criminology and rejects the notion of 'objective truth', there is an inextricable link between the researcher and the subject matter, emphasising the impact of personal attributes on interpretations and findings (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Ethnography is grounded in the circumstances of the field; what the ethnographer pays attention to and is situated within (Ferrell, 2018). Researchers cannot dissociate themselves from their social context. As an insider researcher immersed in the prison environment of England and Wales for more than six years during this study, the study cannot feign objectivity. It reflects a personal journey of interdependency. However, the findings are contingent on what the data allows rather than what the researcher might prefer (Ziebland and McPherson, 2006). Numerous aspects of interest, such as prisoners' material and symbolic sleeping conditions, were left unexplored due to insufficient empirical support. This underscores that there is more to uncover about imprisonment, reflecting the myriad layers and relationships within the prison's social structure. In essence, this research serves as a 'pause' in the continuous process of theory generation (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 40) and contributes to a deeper and more critical understanding of the challenges inherent in contemporary imprisonment and the potential for shaping a safer and more secure custodial environment.

Achieving sufficient critical distance and being a 'professional alien' (Fox, 2014: 135) is easier said than done. I commenced this study as a 'doxosopher' (Bourdieu, 1998), an 'expert-on-opinion-who-claims-to-be-a-scholar' (Bourdieu, 1999: 629) or state 'researcher' unaware of asking state questions rather than my own. This continued during fieldwork. Initially, I found familiarity everywhere, from the entry process and noise of the radios to the abbreviations of language, terminology, and prison timetable – the prison may differ, but some aspects of imprisonment are universal. I used terms like 'risk', 'rehabilitation', and 'security' without a second thought and it was hard to control for ethnographic blindness or 'dazzle' (Fox, 2014: 17) in the field. It took a concerted effort to see, hear, and record Clarendon as a unique social space with its depth and nuance. I made fieldnotes from a stance of 'everything is important', but it was not until I left the prison and had a critical distance away from the wider service that I came to understand some of the ways

the prison was produced and how I influenced data collection and interpretation. Like Crewe (2018) and Bourdieu (2003b), away from the confusion and familiarity, I could see and understand what I had experienced. However, this required systematic data collection and analysis.

Through rigorous adherence to ethnographic principles and the utilisation of field theory, this research takes a reflexive and transparent approach, highlighting and mitigating the significance of researcher subjectivity. Ethnographers cannot 'walk a mile in another's shoes' (Maruna, 2018: v) nor is the researcher as knowledgeable and situated as those we seek to understand (Wacquant, 2015). Actors, their actions, and practice are complex, as are experience and emotion. An ethnographer, limited by time, distance, and experience, can never possess the emotional knowledge of the field. Most ethnographers return home at the end of each day while the prisoner is trapped (Warr, 2021a). For the thousands of imprisoned people, these spaces are their dwellings and, for some, their homes (Herrity and Warr, 2023). By acknowledging my ignorance, "I don't know what that means" and "Can you explain why you're doing that?" became mantras during fieldwork, reminding me that 'I don't know shit' (Ferrell, 2018: 148) about their prison. The distinction between the researcher's voice and participants' voices ("I", "my" and "their") upholds validity and rigour, enabling the audience to form judgments based on their experiences and see the role of the researcher in the datum-theory relationship. It invites researchers across disciplines to become more active members in humanising the study of imprisonment, which starts with acknowledging our role in constructing and interpreting the area of interest.

The pandemic provided a novel limitation to the research. Whilst I was fortunate to return to the field in 2020, the suspension, safety protocols, sampling strategy, and physical limits on movement and time within the prison affected the replicability of the research findings. The conditions of this research cannot be repeated. The original research design involved more time in the field, a rare comparative ethnography across two prisons, and sustaining relationships with participants. The pandemic altered the research approach, with a greater emphasis on interviews, although constrained by limited participant access and availability, and an increased focus on health than originally intended. Still, it provides a unique temporal comparison of imprisonment before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is both a strength and a weakness of this research that few first-hand ethnographic contributions to penal knowledge exist from within prison during this time.

Another significant limitation is the theoretical framework. As acknowledged already, Bourdieu's field theory is imperfect. Whilst aiming to address dichotomies of structure and agency, consciousness and unconsciousness, Bourdieu's work has internal contradictions and inconsistencies. Jenkins (1992/2013) wrote that Bourdieu's theory of practice does not resolve the differences between determinism

and voluntarism. Rather, Bourdieu leans more towards structure as he substitutes 'real' for 'objective', where an invisible world of patterns and forces exists beyond our immediate knowledge or awareness. Whilst his approach is critiqued as reductionist and deterministic (Giddens, 1984; Jenkins, 1992/2013) Bourdieu's work offers a hopeful and critical approach to understanding the social spaces and people we interact with, a means of explaining what is happening and why. Alternative approaches to the datum-theory relationship, such as a Foucauldian (1979) reading of policy and practice through *governmentality* or *panopticism,* or Crewe's (2011) conceptualisation of prison experience according to '*depth'*, '*weight*', and '*tightness'*, would probably have brought about different results, no less wrong or right, but again privileging structure or agency. As Schlosser (2013) explained, field theory is less constrained by the 'quarantine' of Foucault's disciplinary society. Field theory logic, such as doxa, can be rejected and challenged, undergoing 'context-specific erosion' (Singh, 2022:15). Whilst Bourdieu's field theory is open to subjective changes, it is more open to structural social norms than Crewe's (2011) focus on the pains of imprisonment. Spatial metaphors of 'depth' are useful in understanding subjective experiences of imprisonment and relationships with power, however, it is complex to extrapolate out into macro-social structures. Crewe (2021) is the first to acknowledge that it is a bottom-up approach privileging an individual's assessment of their carceral environment. It requires prisoners enmeshed in the everyday flow of events to feel and conceive abnormality when the prison is concerned with normality and doxic assumptions. In other words, the actor cannot consider the totality of systems beyond their self-evident experience or the preconditions that 'lived' experience takes for granted. This approach does not address structural relationships between policy and practice, between social strategies, individual intentions, and conditioning. Alternative approaches to field theory have their uses, but for a more relational approach to explore the operationalisation of imprisonment's aims and to 'question simple ideas' (Bourdieu's, 1989: 24), Bourdieu's framework remains a uniquely critical approach to analysing practices and connecting them to something bigger.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this ethnographic study follows a social relational approach to understanding how the official aims of imprisonment: security, safety, and rehabilitation are operationalised in contemporary imprisonment. It developed from a positivistic interpretation of prison issues into a phenomenologically-informed conceptualisation that exposes the development of the researcher and some of the complex social relations between the field and its actors that produce prison outcomes. This necessitated a critical ethnographic approach that addresses the

everyday interactions and experiences of the field to deconstruct their relationship within the wider social structures. By analysing how actors actively construct their reality, this thesis reveals how the field is produced and maintained.

The research adapted to the 'unexpected turns' of its circumstances. A comparative analysis developed into a single-site case study conducted over two periods of data collection, six months apart because of the COVID-19 pandemic. During fieldwork, ethical issues of positionality, access, and consent were navigated to collect a diverse range of observations and participant perspectives on what is happening in their prison and why. The data was coded and analysed thematically during and after fieldwork to capture and highlight the day-to-day production of imprisonment in Clarendon, a local adult male prison.

5. Welcome to Clarendon: Follow the Rules and Regularities

"Prisons are a moving, living organism and changes skins and gets damp in places and rots" (Thompson, prisoner)

Getting to know the production of imprisonment means getting to know what the prison is and how it 'works' in practice. This first findings chapter provides a phenomenologically-informed account of the field, its processes of punishment and control that are 'encoded' (Herrity et al., 2021: xxiii) in the prison structure. Moran and Jewkes (2015) have challenged penal scholars to address *why* prisons are as they are and interrogate the *intentions* behind the design of those spaces. By anchoring this research in a Bourdieusian framework and accounting for the material affective relations of imprisonment, it furthers our understanding of the prison as an exclusionary place by identifying its punitive practices and unconscious production of imprisonment as a physical and social space.

To understand the causes of field outcomes, we need to make the 'operations of power' audible (Herrity et al., 2021: xxiii). As the approaches of carceral geography and sensory penalities propose, by capturing the 'fuller contexts' of how prison is embodied, manifested, and experienced, 'we move closer to the way the world *is* experienced… [to] understand both their composition and impact.' (p. xxiii) To paraphrase Thompson, this chapter speaks to Clarendon as a "*living organism*" and contributes to a developing body of criminological literature that explores the lived experience of carceral spaces. It establishes the 'routinised relations' (Fraser, 2021) between actors, their experiences, and their locality, arguing that it is physically and socially designed and strategically structured around control, communicated in the walls, the neglected infrastructure, the entry process, and the daily timetable. It begins by detailing the journey into prison.

Locating Clarendon Prison

Located in an affluent urban area of England, Clarendon prison has sat atop a hill on a vast concrete site for over a hundred years. Flanked on three sides by expensive properties, it is a male prison of a Victorian radial design that can receive, transfer, and resettle around 700 adult prisoners. Whilst the surrounding area looks new, manicured, and green, the prison offers a tired and grey juxtaposition:

> *Upon arriving at the prison, I observe an old Victorian establishment in every sense of the statement – picture tired access gates, fading paint on the walls and floor, potholes, old signage, damaged brickwork, slow technology, and old lockers.* (Fieldnotes, 17/12/2019)

The only signal I am at Clarendon prison is a small sign by the vehicle security barrier, complemented by a faded Union Jack flag drooping on a pole, a police notice about reporting suspicious activity, and a plethora of CCTV cameras. There is, however, no mistaking where I am with the overt surveillance cameras fixed on the entrance to the site and the immediate requirement to identify yourself to reception with your purpose for being on the site:

> *Turn left if you're staff, turn right if you're a visitor or delivering something, CCTV in operation, Emergency Vehicles ONLY, a Rainbow, a welcome sign, and a lot more to confuse the uninitiated* (Fieldnotes, 17/12/2019).

The prison requires immediate self-examination and confronting your identity. Whether staff, visitor, prisoner, or researcher, everyone is told to identify themselves as they move between the social worlds of inside and outside prison, initiating an internal process of *prisonisation* (Clemmer, 1940), acclimatisation to the processes of the prison. The prison penetrates each person and their sense of self (Moran, 2013) as everyone within its range must open themselves up to scrutiny of how they present themselves to others.

As I enter the grounds past a vehicle security barrier and look beyond the signs, I am confronted by an imposing brick wall. At 5.2 metres high, scarred by time and pollution, with dirt marking the brickwork, it is another image of control and an essential feature of imprisonment (Goffman, 1961). The wall is visually and physically impenetrable; from the ground, it is impossible to see inside, and vice versa. Moran (2013) explains that prison architecture communicates a message of power and punishment to prisoners and society at large, and as a gym may display muscular physiques outside the premises, or a supermarket may show food, the prison wall seemingly *sells* the purpose of Clarendon: security and control '–what it [prison] is about' (King, 1985: 187). This impression is reinforced as I enter the prison.

Prison Entry: The Conditioning Gaze

Staff and Official Visitors

To enter the site, every staff member and visitor – official (work-related) and social (to see imprisoned friend or family) – must walk along the outer perimeter wall, past a building for social visitors to wait, and then past the solid wood Gate for prison vehicles. The Gate is still impenetrable to the eye; as high as the wall and a few metres in width, it is another visual indicator that one is crossing a physical and metaphorical boundary. It communicates 'exclusion', an imposing prison/non-prison binary that again asks the person to categorise themselves, highlighting the role of the prison in keeping prisoners in and unwelcome visitors out (Turner, 2016). The main 'Gate' or entrance is decidedly smaller and through a door no more than two

metres high and one metre wide. A liminal transition occurs between social worlds and social rules by moving from outside to inside the prison. A 'nowhere land' (Moran, 2013: 10) is entered as the person suspends their social identity. Staff and visitors enter the prison and become conditioned, *prisonised*, to comply with the ways of the prison.

Everything feels big and imposing until you reach the small door where staff and official visitors enter. You are greeted by a small, dark, and cold room, large enough for five people to stand and with the only natural light provided by the entrance door that is left open most of the time. In the middle of the room is a knee-high table, oversized for the space. To the right are a couple of cushioned chairs and lockers for surrendering 'security risks', small personal belongings, a phone, a smartwatch, and a wallet at most. The space, like the surrendering of belongings, is a transitional marker that indicates the boundaries of the prison field (Moran, 2014). It is a waiting area that does not feel like a place for loitering. The walls are peppered with signs and posters, again reminding you of where you are, what you are not allowed to bring in, the law and punishment for bringing in such illicit items, and reminders to make your identification visible at all times. Many of the posters and signs displaying prison rules, priorities, or offering support services, such as housing or legal support, are fading in colour and appear more than a few years old. Some still hold the branding of NOMS (National Offender Management Service) and the Home Office, both artefacts of restructures and precursors to the current HM Prison and Probation Service. For someone new to the prison it might feel overwhelming and confusing with the amount of information on display, but the staff and regular visitors to the prison seem to pay little attention as they walk past, either oblivious or undeterred by the threats of prosecution and offers of support that surround them as they enter the prison. To the left of the room is a window, the other side of which sits the Gate staff – they are in charge of this liminal space: the first and last line of 'security' in prison.

The Gate staff decide who should or should not be in prison. They are drawn from a small group of Operational Support Grade staff and rotate between the gate and the CCTV room, responsible for the flow control of the prison. They are often overlooked in criminological studies of prison staff as they are on the periphery of prison delivery and prisoner contact, but number over 5,000 across prisons in England and Wales (HMPPS, 2023c). They initiate the liminal process of entry (and exit) into the prison. Gate staff are the gatekeepers of a prison space.

For staff familiar to Gate staff, access to the prison is granted with a smile, nod, the occasional "'Morning 'Guv', 'Sir' or 'Miss'" for senior managers and a symbolic display of ID – more to show you have it than to be examined (Fieldnotes, 03/03/2020). Staff then pass through electronic doors remotely controlled by Gate

staff into a smaller area to collect their keys, and after navigating one final electronic door, they are on their way.

For staff not trusted or familiar, including researchers and visitors, access can be more restrictive. A smile only gets you a warmer welcome in prison. You must have your ID examined and certified by handing it through the reinforced steel 'bomb' box and, if you do not have access to keys, your name is checked against a visitors' sheet. Access to keys indicates a person's status as trusted or untrusted. Depending on the status of the person, Gate staff may provide a visitor badge and lanyard "*to be worn at all times*", and inform you of what you are not allowed to bring into the prison: "*Do you have any of these items?*" (pointing to an A4 page with pictures of illegal items on the glass between us such as electronic devices, including mobile phones, deodorant, or scissors) "*Would you like to leave anything in the lockers?*" and then tell you to "*take a seat*" and wait for an escort into the prison (Fieldnotes, 17/12/2019). For the unfamiliar staff member, Gate staff will warily observe them collecting keys, clipping them to a chain attached at the hip, and when satisfied, reluctantly provide access into the prison. This process of 'quasi-institutionalisation' (Moran, 2013: 15), the security checks, providing identification, surrendering personal belongings, and slow electric whirring of the sliding security doors as they creep open are 'markers of entry' into a carceral space (p. 15) that introduces the unfamiliar individual to the pervasive control of the prison over the person. During the pandemic, floor markings indicated where to stand, signs told you when and how to wash your hands and what to wear, and antibacterial gel dispensers and boxes of face masks reinforced the message, indicating the liminality of entry and how the prison controls and modifies behaviour within.

With staff turnover and by only conducting fieldwork two days a week, it took several weeks to become familiar with the Gate staff and experience the trusted smile and nod entry process that differentiated Clarendon employees from outsiders. This was a personal experience, one of little significance to others as entry often occurred after the rush hour of prison staff arriving around 08:00, but it empowered me to feel less conspicuous – less of an outsider sticking out – and more confident in the ethnographic process of familiarisation, immersion, and presence as a researcher. This sense of familiarity with the Gate staff provided a progress report of my time and experience in the field.

This distinction between insider and outsider was reinforced throughout fieldwork. As suggested by the signs upon arrival to Clarendon and the visibility of identification "*at all times*", access into prison is dependent on status. The example below demonstrates the uncompromising 'markers of entry' and impenetrability of prison for outsiders, where access is granted to trusted insiders with a nod but is more restrictive for outsiders:

> *Patrick is asked by Gate staff whether a legal visitor can enter the prison without photo ID. The rules are simple and whilst Patrick is patient, the "inexperienced" (his word) Gate staff seem perplexed by the situation, returning to Patrick on the phone with, "If she rings home and her family describe what she looks like is that ok?" "No", "what if…" "No. No photo ID, No entry."* (Fieldnotes, 18/02/2020)

Patrick, a security manager in the prison, did not succumb to trust-based access for outsiders and whilst displaying incredulity at the question by the "*inexperienced*" Gate staff, reinforced the impenetrability of the prison gates by rejecting access to the legal visitor. The same sense of impenetrability was experienced when re-entering the prison after the six-month fieldwork suspension:

> *The Gate were confused upon my arrival, telling me that they didn't know I was coming ("We don't have a visitor's pass for you"). After explaining that I was on the [key system] and checking in with the Governor's office, they subtly but warily observed me collect my keys. I was allowed back into the prison, but not without tangible fear being exuded from the Gate staff.* (Fieldnotes, 25/09/2020)

As I waited for the audible click of the final remotely controlled security door to indicate it was unlocked, I felt the gaze of the Gate staff through their looking glass. I felt judged for subverting their familiarity test, compromising prison security. I had gone full circle: from an untrusted outsider to a trusted insider and back to an untrusted outsider. No nods, no smiles, no symbolic identification checks, only a visitor badge "*to be worn at all times*". Moran (2013) and Comfort (2003) have cited international examples where the liminal process may be weakened or altered due to personal relationships and staff discretion, but Clarendon's rules were uncompromising for outsiders. They were their rules of the field.

Prisoner Journey

For prisoners, the entry process is equally liminal, a transition from citizen to prisoner, from street to prison (Gooch, 2013). Whether held on remand or sentenced, a prisoner's movement is circumscribed from the point of detainment. Commencing in the back of a van, a prisoner sees little of the prison perimeter as they are transported through the imposing wooden gate into a *sterile area,* where no prisoners are allowed at any other time. Observing this process, I saw that the van was then searched before the prisoner was escorted out of the van. Their first *sterile* impression is likely to be of surveillance cameras, concrete, steel gates, razor wire, metal fencing, and bars. Much like the surrounding prison wall may *sell* the purpose of imprisonment, the internal landscape communicates *control,* of the physical and the senses.

With the van behind them, the prisoner sees concrete steps to their right, leading to the main prison wings, to their left imposing metal fencing and gates topped with razor wire that they were driven through, and in front of them, more concrete steps through a steel gate, topped by more razor wire leading to the reception. It is a grey and austere landscape. The prisoner is escorted up a handful of steps into reception, where they can expect more searches, more concrete and, as observed below, more grey surroundings:

> *A prisoner is welcomed by a metal detector banked by a large wooden desk in an austere room with cream walls. Behind the desk where staff collect the belongings of the prisoner, there are two A4 posters. One says, "change" in size 30 font, followed by smaller (size 12 font?) even more meaningless (dis)empowering philosophical text about the meaning of change beneath. The other is a "Not sure why you've been recalled?" offering potential explanations in small bullet points beneath. Neither are inspiring or particularly welcoming. There is one fake plant in the corner of the space, but this is hidden behind a large black bin.* (Fieldnotes, 20/01/2019)

The initial impression is harsh and uncaring. The newly incarcerated person is immediately confronted with narratives to 'change' their identity. Their social identity is mortified and stripped away (Goffman, 1961) or, in the case of 'recalled' prisoners where the Probation Service has concluded that they can't or won't be 'supervised' or managed in the wider community, their identity as a 'risk' to be controlled in prison is reinforced. In a separate English male prison, Jewkes (2012) described entry into prison as a dehumanising and depersonalising process. In Clarendon's reception, it felt like humanity had already been lost.

The adult male prisoner is then 'processed' upon entry. In reception, I observed prisoners being searched two or three times during the arrival process, with staff utilising a new X-ray scanner, strip ('full') searches, and 'pat-downs' (a body search but with clothes on):

> *Back in reception, the overriding theme was the amount of searching. All prisoners, regardless of who you were and where you were going/coming from, were getting strip searched and X-ray scanned. According to staff, this "kept the prison safe". It was a "security measure" for new prisoners bringing in "risks" and "threats" into the prison from court or transfer but it seemed unnecessary for the prisoner on temporary leave who was already being trusted to return at the end of the day…* (Fieldnotes, 27/01/2020)

Staff believed searching all prisoners was necessary to "*keep the prison safe*". As part of a £100 million security investment programme to introduce 'airport-style security' into prisons (Ministry of Justice, 2022), Clarendon received an X-ray body scanner to identify 'concealed' items on prisoners and prevent escape. According to policy, searching procedures are 'key' to maintaining a 'secure and stable

environment' (HMPPS, 2023b: 7). Searching was supposed to be based on a 'local risk assessment' (p. 18), 'empowering' the discretion of staff to 'identify and manage their security risks' (p. 7). However, staff repeated policy principles as justification for searching prisoners. Prisoners and their bodies were all "*risks*" and "*threats*" to 'security, order and control' (p. 55) that must be 'managed' and 'mitigated'. It was their role as staff to maintain a 'secure and stable environment', suggesting that policy empowered their pervasive and consistent practice of searching all prisoners. The prisoner's identity was entwined with notions of risk and used by the prison as a 'central facet of prisoner management', of *disciplinary capital* (Warr, 2018: 35). The X-ray machine did not replace other searching procedures; it contributed to an accumulation of physical controls, representing an 'extension of institutional power' (Tschanz, 2023: 259). Searching was 'embedded' in the carceral logic (Tschanz, 2023: 241) of what prison is and what it is for. Representative of official discourse, searching was 'fundamental' to prison security (Bennett, 2023a), pervasive and seemingly indispensable.

The scanner was situated to the right of the reception desk in a large open-plan space and used liberally. Its computer monitor displayed the scans just a few metres away and was angled slightly so that the screen was in full view of all the waiting prisoners and staff in the area. As Patrick, a custodial manager, explained:

> "*Today we've scanned about, think we've scanned just over 40 people today, so they've never been scanned before, I'm happy to show them the picture of the scan to show them they've got nothing there or they have got something there, so they all understand what the machine is capable of.*"

Staff said that "*the weird alien-looking thing in reception*" was a "*powerful*" and "*eye-opening*" (Chris, custodial manager) "*security tool*" (Patrick, custodial manager) to "*see what is really happening*" (Supervising officer, Fieldnotes, 27/01/2020) within prisoners. Dale, a prisoner officer, suggested that the X-ray machine has "*taken away their cover. It's like lifting the lid on them*" (Fieldnotes 27/01/2020). Prisoners had to be "*shown*" what was inside them with their bodies objectified and coerced by "*the machine*" into obedience, communicating the inherent and routine impenetrability and control of the prison to waiting prisoners and observers. This idea of the scanner – a similar archway to the metal detector – conveying *power* as an apparatus to *gaze* or "*lift the lid*" on prisoners reinforced a sense of powerlessness, their loss of bodily autonomy, privacy, and trust. It was "*eye-opening*".

Some prisoners considered the process invasive. A prisoner was told to pass through the archway and asked, "*Do I have a choice?*" An officer replied, "*Not really*" (Fieldnotes, 27/01/2020) The question indicates how some prisoners may consider the experience of being searched an intrusive, degrading, and routine abuse in prisons (Warr, 2023). The policy stated that prisons do not need to obtain the

prisoner's consent (HMPPS, 2020c), but prisoners appeared tense and frustrated as they surrendered their bodies to being searched. A prisoner explained that "*it's not nice treating everyone the same*", suggesting that he felt he had lost his individuality and privacy. The unwanted touch and gaze of these searching practices, of prison power, evoked feelings of control (Daems, 2023; Warr, 2023). They represented a state monopoly over a prisoner's body, communicating and reproducing the social hierarchy of the prison, the status of a prisoner, what they represent, and what they have lost.

The indication that prisoners do "*not really*" have a choice about searches reinforces the hierarchy of imprisonment. The absence of autonomy and consent demonstrates how prison staff monopolise power and how technologies impact and embody power relations within a hierarchically organised body (Tanner and Meyer, 2015). To staff, searches formed a 'necessary and effective' exercise of state power (Bennett, 2023a: 35). It represented the unquestioned and 'never-ending preoccupation' with security, order, and control (Daems, 2023: 2). Although staff implied a delegation of security, safety, and surveillance responsibilities to the machine, a "*tool*" to "*take away their cover*", the grey, metallic X-ray machine symbolically communicated the prison's hierarchy, the power of staff over prisoners to 'penetrate' and 'violate' their sense of self (Goffman, 1961: 29). The X-ray machine was imbued with power by prison staff. Tschanz (2023) described the BOSS chair, a seated body scanner used in England and Wales prisons since 2007 before the introduction of X-ray machines, as a 'daily reminder of who the real boss is in prison' (Tschanz, 2016: 457). The X-ray machine, like the BOSS chair, reminds prisoners of their status and powerlessness. However, prisoners were not without power.

In reception and on the wings, prisoners threatened to break the X-ray machine. Staff explained that there was "*a hit*" on the machine worth over £10,000 for prisoners who succeeded. On one occasion, a prisoner tried in vain to break the machine, arguing that "*no way should that be allowed, it's an invasion of privacy, you got no right*". The reception staff laughed, saying he was not "*the first or the last*" to try (Fieldnotes, 28/01/2020). In other prisons, prisoners attempted less violent means to assert their power. In 2023, a prisoner formally complained that they had been scanned upon entry as standard. Appealing to the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman about their treatment, the prisoner argued that searching practices in reception were against the national policy framework, stating it should only be 'part of an identified threat response'. As a result of this investigation, HM Prison and Probation Service accepted X-ray usage as the norm was not reasonable (InsideTime, 2023, online). This reveals that complaints are another significant mechanism for resisting the controlling structures of imprisonment. Banwell-Moore and Tomczak (2023) identified that a fair complaints process can stimulate prisoner voice, agency, and rights protection, improving wellbeing and safety. However, many staff in Clarendon saw prisoner resistance to being X-rayed as proof of success.

Dale, a prison officer, explained, "*If they didn't want to break it, it wouldn't be working*" (Fieldnotes 27/01/2020) Watford, another officer, said that "*it's more proof how good it is at stopping drugs coming in. It has really disrupted their routes into the prison*" (Fieldnotes 28/01/2020). Although there was no evidence to suggest that the X-ray machine was reducing drugs or increasing safety in the prison or nationally (The Telegraph, 2024, September), resistance seemed to reinforce their subjugation, evidencing a need to enforce more control on prisoners. Thus, body scanners and technology continue to reproduce and represent the wider prison experience; it was "*proof*" it is "*working*".

This was reinforced throughout the entry process. Aside from a small room at the back of reception for strip searches, there is no privacy. The 'holding cells' and healthcare screening room to the left of the reception desk are largely visible with large glass windows built into the doors. Prisoners are visible at all times. Prisoners are also provided transparent plastic bin bags to carry their belongings from reception to their new cells. Via the *gaze* of the X-ray scanner and reception process, the prison reinforced control over prisoners, the feeling that they cannot hide and that their bodies have 'become public property' (Wahidin and Tate, 2005: 60). Bin bags imply that their personal belongings, indicators of their social status, are worthless in custody.

The prisoner loses control of their privacy, body, and identity upon entry into prison. If the prisoner does not already have one, they are given a unique prison identifier (number) and then screened and risk assessed for health and behavioural issues, such as self-harm, medication requirements, and risk to others. Reception staff informed me that prisoners' social identity, their sense of self, "*is lost the moment they commit the crime*" (Fieldnotes, 27/01/2020). Their belongings are 'bagged and tagged' to make sure everything they own is recorded and searched for *illicit* items (contraband), their bodies are strip-searched, and they pass through the X-ray machine to identify any concealed items. When the process is complete, prisoners remove their personal clothing, put on *standard-issue* prisoner uniform – grey jumper and grey tracksuit bottoms – and are handed a 'bed pack' consisting of a single blue water-repellant and fire-resistant pillow, a couple of bed sheets, a towel and, irrespective of the season, a single blanket. The pillow foam is so dense and heavy that I am surprised they aren't considered a weapon for the harm they inflict on prisoners. One prisoner explains that the pillows cause neck pain and most people "*have to*" buy new pillows on 'canteen' (the prison shop) but "*they're just as shit*" (Fieldnotes, 27/01/2020). The bed packs represent another symbolic form of 'mundane' violence (Jefferson, 2005: 489) experienced by prisoners, harmed by their material conditions. Any sense of 'home' or comfort is destroyed by spartan conditions (Herrity and Warr, 2023). The generic colours, the reproduced materials, the searching process, and the assumed homogenous sleeping needs of 'prisoners' de-individualise the person, reinforcing their new collective identity. These mediate

the punishment of imprisonment and reinforce the divide and hierarchy between staff and prisoners. In contrast to the empowering effects of clothing outside the prison walls, prison-issued garments were disempowering and conditioned prisoners (Irwin and Owen, 2013). In Clarendon, clothing and bedding (re-)define prisoners' identity and restrict their individuality, representing a 'visible embodiment of punishment' (Ash, 2010: 155). They become a 'prisoner'.

Except for a few orders calmly spoken by staff, the process is generally conducted quietly and compliantly, reflecting prisoners' sense of powerlessness in the entry process. As Jo, a prisoner and *reception listener* (support worker for new prisoners) explained during observations, it is *"dehumanising… prisoners aren't being treated like humans."* Jo told me to look at prisoners' faces in reception to understand how it feels to be processed: *'I noticed dejected, solemn looks. In contrast to the rest of the prison, reception is quiet and controlled'* (Fieldnotes, 27/01/2020)*.* The sensorial landscape of Clarendon's reception provided a source of knowledge for understanding the relations of power (Lefebvre, 2013). Assaulted by the unwanted touch and the loss of privacy, some prisoners may have experienced a sense of shame and humiliation (Tschanz, 2023). The dejected looks indicated a quiet submission to its processes. Prisoners looked and sounded like they were deprived of their autonomy and humanity.

The absence of noise in Clarendon's reception reinforced a prevailing sense of control by staff. The assertiveness of orders by staff, *"Stand here", "Hands out", "Sign here", "Turn around"*, the quiet compliance of prisoners, and the absence of chatter or noise during and between interactions introduced and reinforced the control and hierarchy of imprisonment. Simon, a supervising officer, explained that the reception process was intentionally "*calm*" and "*controlling*":

> *"It's easier but different here [working in reception], there is less of them [prisoners] so it's easier to control but we have to be more formal, more by the book. There's lots of paperwork, you can't make mistakes so we only have experienced staff down here. It means it tends to be better run than the wings, quieter. We keep things calm, controlled, ticking along."* (Fieldnotes, 27/01/2020)

By controlling the atmosphere, Simon suggests that staff were working "*by the book*". Indicative of how staff have limited agency (Tomczak, 2018), a sense of calmness was integral to their control and their obedience to orders, to the processes of imprisonment. The reception atmosphere and its comparison with management and noise of the wings established a relationship between place and sound. It was interconnected with interpretations of the stated aims of imprisonment. Security and control were associated with quiet and calm sounds. Herrity (2019) explains that penal power is communicated through sound and the reception process was similarly connected with wider mechanics of coercion and

prisonisation. Like in Clarendon, HMP Midtown's reception was an 'oasis of calm' (p. 19), with prisoners succumbing to the 'rhythmic rituals of admission' (p. 136) that conditioned the prisoners into accepting and acclimatising to the control of imprisonment. The experience of prison reception consisted not only of its physical dimensions, or of the procedures which shape and reinforce its purpose, but 'of the ideas which lend these spaces meaning' (p. 27). Staff seemed to execute control because they believed it was expected of them, and prisoners submissively complied. Prison life is constructed around the problem of order (Sparks et al. 1996) and the experience of Clarendon's reception communicates some of how the prison is constructed to impose control over the prisoner.

This process stripped prisoners of their identity and health. Before the pandemic, Steven and Elton explained that being imprisoned induced mental health and wellbeing issues:

> "It's awful, it's like I've abandoned everyone. Obviously, you don't get a chance to sort things out before you're arrested but it's left me and my family in a difficult situation. It's why so many people hurt themselves when they come in. You feel useless, like you've let everyone down." (Steven, Fieldnotes 27/01/2020)

> "This is why so many lads self-harm and commit suicide. They can't cope, it's brutal when you arrive. It's a proper shock and you feel like life is over. It's true! How can they hope to be better when they can't deal with the present." (Elton, Fieldnotes, 21/01/2020)

The separation from family, the tight conditions, and the isolation seemed to cause feelings of stress and powerlessness. Imprisonment deprived Steven of a sense of security as he and many of his peers experienced a form of 'entry shock' (Gibbs, 1982; Jewkes, 2012). They had been forcibly removed from familiar surroundings and thrust into a 'discordant limbo' (Gibbs, 1982: 35) where personal control is immediately removed. As Elton identified, arrival was a time of acute stress and frequently the onset of self-destructive behaviour, with an increased risk of self-harm and suicide (Jewkes, 2012; Liebling, 1999b; Ministry of Justice, 2015). In one day, three new prisoners were escorted to hospital because of self-harm injuries (Fieldnotes 27/01/2020). Prisoners said they felt "*useless*" and hopeless. This shock was exacerbated during the pandemic when all prisoners were required to 'reverse cohort' (isolate) for 14 days upon arrival. During interviews, participants said that their health and wellbeing deteriorated:

> "Someone came into the prison, they put him on the 14-day isolation and they stuck him in a cell on C wing, and this was when, do you remember when it was really hot? They put him in a cell on C wing, up on the 4s, the windows didn't work so they were shut and he was stuck in that cell for days and he didn't have no TV, no kettle, phone, he was just on 14-day lockdown and he

was losing the plot. I think he ended up cutting his own throat or something like that." (Felix, prisoner)

"We had to go through this quarantine, with that quarantine, the cells are so small and claustrophobic. With me having bipolar and ADHD, it made it very stressful for me, I felt very claustrophobic, I felt I couldn't breathe properly and I felt, you know, it made my mental health issues explode basically! I was all over the place 'cause of that quarantine." (Mo, prisoner)

Prisoners generally considered the 'control measure' of 'reverse cohorting' or "*quarantine*" for 14 days in isolation as harmful to their mental health and wellbeing. Whilst the majority of prisoners felt that the restrictions were necessary (HMIP, 2022a), the isolation exacerbated their health issues. Upon arrival, 25% of new prisoners self-reported that they felt suicidal and almost 50% experienced health problems as mental health issues among prisoners deteriorated during the pandemic (HMIP, 2022a). The entry process is a physically and psychologically liminal phase as the prisoner surrenders their name, time, body, and health to the prison. The ritual, or 'punishment process', socially constructs the prisoner, creating a mental state distinct from their social identity and separate from their identity materials (Maruna, 2011: 3). Their social 'self' is 'mortified' (Goffman, 1961: 38) as their new prisoner identity is reinforced by the 'ritual' process (Maruna, 2011). These findings speak to how prisons can condition those within the field through a process of *prisonisation.*

Through the process of waiting, searches, generic bedding, and exposure to the hierarchical prison environment, the reception process is inextricably bound up with the processes of punishment, security, and control. It reinforces social separation and a sense of exclusion from their past self and wider society (Gooch, 2013; Maruna, 2011). The real and symbolic touches of entry 'shout at you that you are now a prisoner, nothing but a prisoner' (Warr, 2023: 16). This process asserts the primacy of control, containment, and subjugation in the prison experience.

"Rotting away": The Physical Site

Once 'processing' is complete, the prisoner is then moved to a dedicated induction wing, or in Clarendon's case, a *landing* (level) of a wing, imaginatively named 'first night accommodation'. During the pandemic, this became the Reverse Cohorting Unit where prisoners were isolated in their cells for 14 days upon arrival. Before and during the pandemic, it was unclear what is *dedicated* or *enhanced* about it:

I can't quite work out what distinguishes it from the rest of the prison as it's a landing on a wing… Instead of introducing new prisoners slowly to Clarendon, it's more like a baptism of fire. Prisoners are immediately exposed to the sights, sounds, and smells of the prison: the metal doors clanging, the

shouting of staff and prisoners, the alarms, the radios, and the smell of bleach and food as it resonates from the wing kitchen. In theory and in policy, I'm told new prisoners are meant to receive more attention from staff for their vulnerability (they are more likely to attempt self-harm and/or suicide upon entry) but I'm not sure who is meant to be supervising them as staff are dealing with hundreds of other prisoners and duties simultaneously. (Fieldnotes, 20/01/2020)

The early custody policy states that prisoners *must* be allocated 'dedicated' accommodation 'suitable for new prisoners' (NOMS, 2015: 9), offered 'access to a bath or shower before they are locked up for the first night', a hot meal and drink, a *reception pack* with tea, milk, sugar, and sweets and, if experiencing *urgent issues*, provided 'one-to-one interactive support' (p. 10). It is unclear what is meant by *suitable*, *issues*, and *support*. Although the policy was past its 'expiry date', it was unclear whether Clarendon adhered to the policy before the pandemic. With a high turnover of inexperienced staff who are neither trained for nor dedicated to the area – any prison officer could be selected to work in reception or the first night's area – and an overcrowded prison receiving a vulnerable population with complex needs, Clarendon faced procedural and structural limitations on its capacity to follow the policy. During the pandemic, Clarendon implemented public health advice to 'reverse cohort' (isolate) prisoners upon arrival for 14 days (O'Moore, 2020, April). Suddenly, those limitations were legitimised as the 'reverse cohorting unit', and the liminal entry process for new prisoners was extended to two weeks. Once more, there was no special treatment. Food was served in their cells and sporadic welfare checks took place at a distance via a closed door with staff wearing fluid-resistant face masks as an extra precaution against infection. When welfare checks were complete, a time often determined by new arrivals from the courts rather than their 'safety and wellbeing' (p. 4), they were moved onto 'normal location'.

Clarendon's six-acre concrete site is split into two distinct sections, which staff label the 'Mains' and 'Cador', to accommodate the diverse prisoner demographic and its responsibilities to *receive* and *resettle* prisoners. However, the experience of imprisonment between the two sections was similar, affected by the 'relatively bounded' (Page, 2013: 153) social and physical structures of the field. The Mains include wings A, B, C, and D, holding accumulatively around 500 adult men, whilst Cador is a separate residential area for lower (escape) risk prisoners that can hold over 150 prisoners across two buildings or 'units'. Separated by two electronic steel doors, operated centrally by Operational Support Grade staff in the Mains, Cador has a distinct purpose to *help prisoners reintegrate back into wider society* and to promote *purposeful* activity through training, employment, or education (HMIP, 2020). It is meant to prepare prisoners for release, but the social and physical fabric bears a striking resemblance to the Mains, demonstrating a disparity between rhetoric and reality.

Prisoners in Cador are provided with their own room/cell key but still spend most of their time indoors and in their cells. On one Cador spur before pandemic restrictions were enforced, ten prisoners said that they spent on average more than 23 hours a day indoors each week due to staff absences and overcrowding. Their cells were their dining room, bedroom, sitting room, toilet, kitchen, and classroom (Herrity and Warr, 2023). Prisoners said, *"We do everything on here"*, *"our whole lives are in this [space]"* because *"there's always staff shortages"*, *"You never see the same (staff) faces. You wouldn't believe we are on here for good behaviour",* and generally agreed *"It's [Cador] no different to the Mains"* (Fieldnotes 10/02/2020), and *"Cador ain't much better [than the mains], everyone is sharing cells, sharing everything you know, you're living and shitting on top of each other."* (Jimmy, Fieldnotes 27/01/2020) Officers in Cador agreed, *"That sounds about right"* (Fieldnotes, 10/02/2020). The social environment between Cador and the Mains was analogous, separate in name only.

Throughout both units of Cador, the buildings are ageing and temporary, with mould, damaged brickwork, exposed wiring, and faulty windows. CCTV surveillance is everywhere, and Cador remains encased by the same double 'skin' perimeter fence topped with razor wire as the Mains. The cells are small, old, and dark 'non-spaces' (Jewkes, 2018), a blank and temporary canvas with the paintwork cracking and peeling off. Many of the prisoners make curtains from bed sheets and T-shirts to cover broken windows and further restrict the limited daylight. Like the entry process, their cells communicate anonymity and depersonalisation. Herrity and Warr (2023) found that prisoners try to make a home by making do, manipulating their *sensescape* to personalise their spaces, but prisoners in Clarendon seemed to only focus on making them habitable. Prisoners in Clarendon said they frequently moved cells and spent on average fewer than 60 days in Clarendon (Ministry of Justice, 2019a) so it wasn't *"long enough to do anything about it."* (Prisoner, fieldnotes, 10/02/2020) With a local function serving the courts and one of 32 Victorian prisons still in operation that holds around one-quarter of the total male prison population (Moran et al., 2022), Cador and the Mains of Clarendon are areas restricted of space, light, and time, 'imprisoning psychologically as well as physically' (Moran and Jewkes, 2015: s3.1). Whilst the large windows and natural light of Nordic prisons convey a sense of stability, ease, and relaxation (Moran et al., 2016), the UK prison environment is 'designed' to be hard, a metaphor for the loss of public empathy (Moran et al., 2016: 118). The prison conditions threaten any semblance of comfort and home (Herrity and Warr, 2023). The fabric reflects the performance of Clarendon as a punitive place of control.

The oppressiveness of Clarendon is reinforced by the air. During fieldwork, stale air could not escape, and fresh air could not penetrate the reinforced concrete of imprisonment:

The ceilings are low, cannot be more than 8 feet high, the windows are old and either don't close or won't open, and there doesn't seem to be any source of fresh air or circulation in the corridors. Rather, the air feels stale and sweaty, old. The prisoners don't seem to notice but it feels a relief when I pass an open window or leave an area with cells – each 'spur' or corridor with cells is separated by a solid door that seems to keep the air out or in, depending on your perspective. (Fieldnotes, 10/02/2020)

The air, like me, felt trapped, inducing anxiety and a craving for clean air, outside air. The prisoners seemed desensitised, deprived, *prisonised* to and by the sensory onslaught of the prison atmosphere (Herrity and Warr, 2023). In Cador and across Clarendon, the air communicated a sense of punishment. It was 'more than just air but constitutive of the material affective relations' (Adey, 2013: 293), representative of the power and control of the prison; it flowed through its experience. Beyond the harms of inadequate ventilation on health and wellbeing (Jewkes and Johnston, 2012), the lack of air circulation and low ceilings ensured an odour of imprisonment – a subtle scent of bleach mixed with sweat and feet – to weigh heavy in the air. The shared air and dulled sensory experience of Clarendon reinforced the depersonalisation of imprisonment, a collective punishment.

The austere resources and punitive atmosphere are reflected in a derelict corner of the site. Only a few metres from Cador is the old Gate. Built in the nineteenth century, the original entrance was decommissioned more than 20 years ago, replaced by the imposing structure described at the beginning of this chapter. Yet here it still stood. Whilst accompanying Officer William on a *perimeter check* – assessing the physical security of the prison fences and checking for any illegal items that may have been thrown over – I am introduced to a large wooden hut that masquerades as a scrap heap. Ducking my head to go through the small entrance door, Officer William informs me that Clarendon received enough money for a new Gate but not enough to remove the old one. It has fallen into a derelict state with a substantial water leak from an internal toilet that has been blocked off by bits of old wood, steel, metal, cardboard, bricks, and rubbish. As we leave, Officer William jokes, "*It's not far different from the rest of the prison*" (Fieldnotes, 11/02/2020), implying that the old Gate is a remnant of neglect, representative of how the rest of the prison, prisoners included, are treated. Jimmy, a Cador prisoner explained:

"you have to look at that dump out the window every day, it's just rotting away like most of us (Jimmy laughs)" (Fieldnotes, 27/01/2020)

The old Gate symbolised how many imprisoned people may feel forgotten about in prison. Jimmy expressed that his experience of imprisonment felt like "*rotting*", forgotten by time and wider society – 'cavemen in the era of speed-of-light technology' (Jewkes and Johnston, 2009). The old Gate communicated social sentiments as its condition was 'critically related to the philosophy of the institution,

or maybe even of the entire criminal justice system' (Wener, 2012: 7) where prison environments are part of a punitive agenda to reflect what and who prisoners are. This is reinforced by following how money is spent in Clarendon. The prison had received the new X-ray machine as part of the £100 million security investment programme, but it had not been able to address its precarious infrastructure and living conditions. Emphasising how prisons are porous, economic strategies and the material features of prisons mobilise and represent social values, expectations, and practices to control prisoners (Moran and Jewkes, 2015). Prisons enact ideas pre-defined outside their walls, artefacts of past political choices (Rutherford, 1984). In Clarendon, the lack of resources, the physical design, and the austere conditions indicate prisoners' wider social experience of neglect. It highlights the arbitrary framing of 'contemporary' in the research question.

Rather than a social phenomenon produced by present-day ('contemporary') interactions, the material conditions of Clarendon suggested that they are, in part, a product of the past. Over 150 years old, the decaying old Gate remained a symbolic representation of strategic intentions about what prison is and who it is for. Sally and Harry, two senior managers, explained that the operationalisation of imprisonment lies in the whole structure and history of the field:

> *"I think that the culture of a prison officer and the uniform and the status is much more aligned to policing than it is to nursing. I think on the whole, public perception about the role of prisons is about incarceration… but I don't think the public is asking us to run a hospital, I think they are asking us to run an old-fashioned prison. I think it's societal, it goes quite a long way… a Conservative government is asking us to run traditional incarcerating – what we are being asked to run is aimed at prisoners 100 years ago and isn't designed around mental health… all the narrative at the moment is about building more prison places"* (Sally)

> *"The place is falling apart, to be honest, it's beyond its sell-by date. Look at that in the corner (points to scrapheap outside), that's depressing, that's what staff used to come through back in the day. Now it just sits there like a remnant to history, to how this prison is decaying from the inside out."* (Harry, Fieldnotes, 06/01/2020)

Hidden away in the corner of a vast concrete site, the old Gate reveals how social values and economic strategies shape the field. Prison practice possesses a whole history of dispositions and structures that communicate to staff what actions they should be taking and shaping how prisoners see themselves. The old Gate symbolised the structural neglect and social marginalisation of those in prison: "*decaying from the inside out*."

There are only superficial differences between Cador and the Mains. Upon entry into Cador through two steel doors remotely controlled by Gate staff, there is a small

pond with a bank of flowers and plants on one side, albeit no seats, an astroturf sports area behind one of the Units, and slightly fewer mounds of litter. An experienced member of staff informed me that the pond used to house fish until a prisoner dumped washing powder in the pond and killed all life within. That was, apparently, years ago and although prisoners on Cador said they missed the fish, it remains lifeless (Fieldnotes, 10/02/2020). Now it is home to a couple of ducks who seem to spend much of their time waddling around the large concrete area in front of the pond, oblivious to where they are and what is occurring around them. The pond seems a poignant 'embellishment' (Jewkes and Young, 2021: 182), serving no function other than to say that a pond exists. An experienced senior manager explained that it was introduced to demonstrate the prison was "*humane*" and "*decent*". Without fish, it reinforces what it is not, symbolically communicating a dichotomous relationship between absence and presence. It was full of life, a brief form of contact with nature and a connection to the outside world in an otherwise austere prison environment. The pond's demise and withdrawal of life represents another way that the field socialises a prisoner to feel excluded, forgotten, and "*rotting away*". It reinforces a prisoner's shrunken social status (Jewkes and Young, 2021). The pond, like the X-ray machine and the old Gate, reproduced the production of imprisonment as a field, a relational social space uniquely configured yet conditioned by and organised within broader social structures.

Regulated by the Regime

The social experience of Clarendon resembles the physical infrastructure. Time is the *essence* of imprisonment (Gooch, 2013), organising what happens when and the regimented timetable is another important *prisonisation* process, in which prisoners learn to adopt the customs and culture of the prison to *fit in*. This was reinforced by prisoners at Clarendon before and during the pandemic:

> "*What are we all trying to achieve? I'm not sure, and I don't think anyone else is… look at the regime, that's not how you treat people, how they rehabilitate, we need support, need to learn to be independent but the prison takes that away. It's easier to go with it than fight against it. We get told how to live our lives in here and then get released. That's just stupid.*" (Elton, Fieldnotes, 21/01/2020)

> "*It's difficult to see yourself as a father when you're in here. The prison tells you where to go, what to do, when you can see your family. All these things. We don't have a choice and that makes it hard to be something different.*" (Sean, Fieldnotes, 03/03/2020)

> "*It's been quite a rocky road but now I know the rules and the regulations, what's going on, I think the sentence is going to get more easier, but at the*

start, I didn't have a clue about anything because obviously it was my first sentence and I'd never been to prison before. Now I think it's getting easier for myself." (Mo)

Prisoners suggested that the prison regime (timetable), *"the rules and the regulations"* shaped their experience of the field. Although it took time to familiarise themselves with the rules and timetable, initially making it hard to fit in, prisoners explained that the regime ensured their subordination, providing a sense of *"ease"* and comfort. By assimilating into the culture, the regime removes prisoners' independence, tells them *"how to live"*, controls their bodies, and shapes how they see themselves: 'Movements of the body summon up feelings which, in unquantifiable ways, unfold in action' (Adey, 2008: 440). This process of *prisonisation* was dislocated from their experiences and needs outside the prison walls as prisoners embodied the flow control of the prison regime, *"we need support, need to learn to be independent but the prison takes that away".* The structures of a field produce a 'regulated and regular' way of being, a habitus (Bourdieu, 1977), and the predictability of prison life provides a subjective assurance in the prison (Giddens, 1984; Herrity, 2019). It was the steady rhythm of imprisonment, the absence of *"choice"*, and the monotonous predictability to which prisoners became socialised and banged their drums.

The timings reflected and reinforced the dynamic nature of imprisonment. The timetable below is an example of the pre-pandemic and pandemic prison 'regime' that Clarendon operated during fieldwork. All parts of the regime were subject to change, which occurred frequently due to incidents and staff absences. Timings were considered more *aims* and estimates, rather than fixed commitments. Only Monday to Friday is represented in the timetable to reflect when fieldwork was conducted. Data collection was not conducted during 'Night-state' and weekends – when prisoners are locked up with a *skeleton* (minimal) group of prison staff – due to health and safety concerns with a reduced staff workforce. However, it can be assumed that prisoners spend more time in their cells during these periods.

During the pandemic, prisoners spent most of their time in their cells. Prison regimes were determined by a *COVID-19 National Framework* (HMPPS, 2020b) that described five 'stages':

Stage 5 – Complete Lockdown

Stage 4 – Lockdown

Stage 3 – Restrict

Stage 2 – Reduce

Stage 1 – Prepare

The stages were determined by COVID-19 cases in the prison and the wider community. Aside from 'prepare' (no known infections nationally), all regime stages required restrictions, such as social distancing and 'compartmentalisation' (social mixing in small groups). Participants explained that the differences in Clarendon's regime before and during the pandemic did not substantially differ:

> *"There is no variation, so in terms of the rehabilitative stuff, it's probably quite damaging because there is nothing different, the regime is the same. There is no real difference between the weekend and the weekdays anymore... the regime that has been delivered for the bulk of our men (during the pandemic) doesn't feel that different from what they got anyway."* (Billy, senior manager)

	Pre-pandemic	**Pandemic** (time in-cell increased if 'in outbreak')
08:00-08:30	In-person staff *morning meeting.* Prison managers review previous day and plan for the day ahead	Virtual staff *morning meeting.* Prison managers review previous day and plan for the day ahead
08:00-09:00	Serving breakfast 'packs' through cell door. 'Domestics' and roll-call.	Serving breakfast 'packs' through cell door and roll-call
09:00-09:30	Movements	'Domestics' in small groups on the wing (most 'off-wing' activity suspended)
09:30-11:30	Provision of education, workshops, and gym	
11:30-12:00	Movements	
12:00-13:30	Serving of lunch, including roll-call	Serving of lunch through cell door, including roll-call
13:30-14:00	Movements	'Domestics' in small groups on the wing (most 'off-wing' activity suspended)
14:00-16:30	Provision of education, workshops, visits, and gym	
16:30-17:00	Movements	
17:00-18:30	'Domestics' including serving of dinner, time out of cell, and roll-call	'Domestics' in small groups, including serving of dinner through cell door, and roll-call
19:00-06:00	Night-state (wing staff handover 06:00-08:00)	Night-state (wing staff handover 06:00-08:00)

HMP Clarendon's daily timetable pre and during pandemic [Monday to Friday]

> *"the regime hasn't changed much, there aren't many differences between the stages or what came before, every day we've got cases… but prisoners are understanding. In a lot of ways, it has simplified our jobs. They know what they're getting. It isn't much, but it's consistent, predictable."* (Senior manager, Fieldnotes, 25/09/2020)

The regime was "*consistent*" as most prisoners were locked up for the whole day, with no more than 30 minutes for a shower, exercise, or phone calls. However, '*Domestics*' or *time out of cell* could not be guaranteed daily. These terms refer to opportunities in which prisoners are 'unlocked' and may make phone calls (during fieldwork, Clarendon commenced the roll-out of in-cell telephony), wash, socialise with peers, or reach out to prison staff via *applications* ('apps') or more informal means. If a prison was experiencing an 'outbreak' of multiple COVID-19 cases, public health practice was to implement a 'lockdown' to isolate known infected prisoners and protect possible infected prisoners from mixing with others (O'Moore, 2020, April). The experience and outcomes of the pandemic are discussed later in this thesis, but participants indicated that "*the regime is the same*." As Clarendon experienced multiple outbreaks during the pandemic, prisoners spent most of the time between June 2020 and the end of the *National Framework* in 2022 in their cells (IMB, 2023). Before and during the pandemic, isolation was a social norm.

'*Domestics*' and *time out of cell* should not be confused with time outside. During fieldwork, it was rare to see prisoners outside, unless they were moving between buildings. With prisoners allowed no more than one hour outside each day, on average a prisoner spends more than 95% of their time indoors. The deprivation of time outside is another way that Clarendon conditions prisoners. From inside Clarendon's walls, the regime and isolation communicated a similar message of power and punishment as the walls did to those outside the prison. Prisoners could not escape the reminders of where they were. The regime, like the physical fabric, controlled prisoners and disconnected them from the world outside (Moran and Turner, 2019). To mitigate the time spent indoors, prisoners are provided free Vitamin D supplements (InsideTime, 2020, online), but as Moran and Turner (2019) have identified, there is no substitute for access and experience of the health-enabling effects of nature and open air.

Movements refer to the time in which prisoners move from their wings to their relevant destination for the morning or afternoon. This was often staggered to ease congestion as each prisoner was searched coming off and on the wing; for example, those moving to education would move first, then workshops, gym, and then visits. The timings and structure of the regime should not be considered universally applicable – many prisoners had jobs, such as cleaners and (kitchen) servery workers that affected their regime – but it remains the *key feature* of prison life (Gooch, 2013). The regime is structured so that prisoners must ensure that they are

in 'the right place at the right time undertaking the right activities', (p. 82) otherwise they risk being viewed as non-compliant and uncooperative, attracting disciplinary sanctions. *Movements* always ended with a 'roll-call' – at least three times a day – where the number of prisoners was counted and checked against expectations. These events were sacrosanct in Clarendon and took precedence over all activities. On more than one occasion during fieldwork (I counted three requirements to "re-do the roll" in the space of two days in January 2020), all activities ceased, including staff lunch, until the roll was correct. This could take multiple efforts to get right. The regime can be considered a means of organising and structuring the prison.

Prison food and mealtimes are another key part of prison life and another means of *prisonising* and controlling prisoners. The 'breakfast packs' consisted of a cereal pot, tea bag, sachet of coffee, and a sachet of sugar. For lunch, prisoners were provided with a sandwich, a sweet treat, and a piece of fruit. For dinner, there was a hot meal 'to meet cultural, nutritional and diversity needs' (NOMS, 2010: 1). These meals were all at set intervals. Prisoners were provided with a minimum of three meals per day, but they suggested that the provision did not meet their needs:

> "*[we need] more veg, more greens and stuff like that*" (Jerry)

> "*The food they give us is not healthy at all… the prison don't support us with the healthy lifestyle*" (Mo)

> "*[it's] a disgrace. You wouldn't feed that to your dog! We are the lowest of the low in here and they remind us every day.*" (Niall, Fieldnotes, 02/03/2020)

> "*a lot of the prisoners can't stand the food here.*" (Patrick, custodial manager, Fieldnotes, 24/02/2020)

Prisoners described putting on weight and feeling "*sedated*" from the unhealthy and 'sparse' (Gooch, 2013: 98) food. They felt deprived of a healthy diet that meets their needs. Prisoners have some agency to purchase 'canteen' items, such as food and drinks, once a week – finances and behaviour permitting, from prison-controlled accounts – however, quality and quantity are controlled by the prison to "*keep a record*" of what prisoners have in their possession and what products are circulating in the prison economy (Patrick, custodial manager, Fieldnotes, 24/02/2020). The imposition of security was inserted into every aspect of imprisonment in Clarendon, and the 'luxury' of healthy eating was beyond the reach of most prisoners. Food reminded prisoners of their status and limited agency. According to Niall, it reminded prisoners that they were below a dog in the social hierarchy. It felt like Clarendon was punishing them with another form of 'mundane' violence (Jefferson, 2005: 489) where their lived body was a lived centre of punishment. McKeithen (2022) suggests that dietary choice is deliberately limited or removed altogether as a punitive and controlling response to imprisonment. In his study of American prison food policy, McKeithen (2022) argues that food cannot be divorced from questions of carceral

power, where the cheap and tasteless prison food and sustenance is a 'fundamental force' of 'control' (p. 77). At Clarendon, food and mealtimes reflected how the field subordinates and controls prisoners. The timetable structures the experience of imprisonment, *prisonising* prisoners to adopt the rules and hierarchy that produce and re-produce Clarendon as a field.

Conclusion

This chapter introduces Clarendon as a field with thick description. It provides an overview of how the case study site is configured and structured around compliance and *prisonisation*, perpetuated by the physical design, the neglected infrastructure, the liminal entry process, search procedures, and the daily timetable. These structures provide a field of possible forces (Bourdieu, 1993), informing and shaping the actors experiences within the field.

This chapter reinforces prison as a field. By conceiving Clarendon as a relational space, a *"moving, living organism",* shaped by physical and social structures, it is identified as a 'semi-autonomous' social universe (Shammas and Sandberg, 2016: 196). With its own rules and regularities, the prison is a particular social structure that represents values and practices to control actors, part of a wider punitive agenda to reflect what and who prisoners are. What happens in prison and why occurs not by accident, but by design. It is a porous space infused with social expectations (Ellis, 2021) and materially expresses the goals of a criminal justice system (Jewkes, 2018; Moran and Turner, 2019). A phenomenological approach indicates the relations between people and place, accounting for how the 'aggregate of interactions' (Bourdieu, 1975: 19) are experienced, and how they are mutually produced in a specific social space not 'contemporaneously' but over time.

The idea of prisonisation is not novel, but the findings highlight the various ways that the prison entry process (re-)produces mental states. It identifies the symbolic role of technology, searching practices, clothing, and food that ritualise citizens into prisoners. These ritual humiliations ensure that people lose their identity materials upon incarceration (Maruna, 2011) and become *prisonised*. The next chapter explores how prisoners and staff embody and cognitively construct Clarendon as a multifaceted but paradoxical place of safety.

6. "Turning chaotic criminals into good prisoners": The Paradox of Safety

'The body believes in what it plays at... it does not represent what it performs, it does not memorise the past, it enacts the past' (Bourdieu, 1990a: 73)

According to the official aims of imprisonment, prisons are meant to reduce reoffending (Ministry of Justice, 2021). However, nearly every interviewed member of Clarendon staff suggested the rehabilitative ideal was fanciful, *"We're not reducing reoffending are we? Population keeps going up... they see it as part of life."* (Patrick, Custodial Manager) *"Prisoners just feel safer rather than rehabilitated."* (Billy, senior manager) Clarendon was generally not considered a place conducive to change but a place of stability and control away from social marginalisation. In the senior management team's end-of-quarter priorities meeting, their ambition for Clarendon was to make it a *"meaningful step"* (Fieldnotes, 17/12/2019) on the carceral ladder, *"turning people from chaotic criminals to good prisoners"* (Edmond, senior manager). This chapter deconstructs how Clarendon produced *"good prisoners"* rather than rehabilitated citizens and the paradoxical effects on prison safety.

The previous chapter highlighted how the 'outer' structure and strategy of Clarendon mediated the experience and production of imprisonment. However, its focus on the formation of the field only partially addresses the relational effects of the field. This chapter takes a phenomenologically-informed approach to foreground the embodied meanings and experiences of imprisonment, rendering them tangible and real. It provides a sociology of flesh and blood (Wacquant, 2015) by revisiting the lived experience of *prisonisation* and exploring how prisoners and staff interpret, construct, and practise imprisonment. Serres (2008) explains that we know the world first, not *a priori*; not from some system of logical reasoning but through sensory interactions with the environment and others. The body and its register of sensations are crucial to exploring the relations between actions and structure. Therefore, the meanings, actions, and outcomes of actors, their habitus and doxa, enable scrutiny and interrogation of how the field operates. This relational engagement, the doxic beliefs and habitus that structure imprisonment, form the focus of the following findings.

This analysis is exploratory for two reasons. The first is that the affective and embodied relations of the penal field remain an emerging subject of analysis. Scholars have identified how prison staff embody penal power (Liebling, 2011), but only a handful of studies have examined the embodied effects of incarceration on the body, such as speech and clothing (Halushka, 2016), self-harm and violence (Caputo-Levine, 2013; Chamberlen, 2017), tattoos (Morris and Rothman 1995), dental health (Moran, 2012) and ageing (Wahidin, 2002; Wahidin and Tate, 2005). Secondly, the actors and their field are dynamic and constantly evolving. What is

found in Clarendon prison may not be true of every prison, but this chapter contributes to penal scholarship by theorising what the meanings and interpretations of imprisonment tell us about its experience and reproduction. This criminological research gives voice to subjugated knowledge and examines the assumptions that underpin and then affect what happens in prison. It speaks to the commonalities of experience and themes identified before and during the pandemic, but the pandemic is only highlighted where it had a specific effect on the findings. It begins by exploring how some prisoners embody their social inequality and develop an infra-conscious sensibility to Clarendon.

Prisoners are Em-Prisoned by Their Habitus

Throughout fieldwork, health and safety were central themes of the experience and delivery of imprisonment in Clarendon. On average, Clarendon's prisoner population had 1,000 healthcare appointments a month (IMB, 2022). A total of 80% of prisoners self-reported a history of self-harm, suicidal ideation and/or attempts to self-inflict death upon arrival (IMB, 2020). This section explores the shared social experience among many of the prison population. It highlights that prison outcomes are a product of social marginalisation within, beyond, and before imprisonment and theorises that prisoners develop a *trans*-carceral habitus (Quinn, 2023), an embodied (em-prisoned) response to conditions of social inequality that, *inter alia,* constructs and re-produces prison as a paradox of safety.

Within custody, many prisoners embodied their social marginalisation. This was epitomised in Clarendon when observing two 'Reception assessments', which assess a new prisoner's risk of self-harm and/or harm to others for management purposes:

> *In the afternoon, Bernie [Custodial Manager] was required to do two Reception assessments for a life-sentenced prisoner (Mick), and, separately, a prisoner (Tony) convicted of possessing indecent images. She explains "We have no idea who's arriving one day to the next, so this gives us an idea what we're up against."…*

> *Mick has been in and out of Clarendon for years. The staff know him well and he knows the prison and its processes in detail. He speaks with kindness, honesty, and patience towards the staff, and is very chatty. He has been incarcerated following a short trial at a not-so-local court and is being held for using a section 5 (non-lethal) firearm on two police officers, criminal damage (peeing in a police van), theft from several well-known retail and food outlets, and assaults. He was homeless at the time and said he was taking "a lot" of drugs. The prisoner also arrived in Clarendon with an escape marker (warning) for avoiding detainment by running in the sea. In his own words, he is*

"clucking" – withdrawing from heroin and crystal meth – which motivates a visit from a nurse to understand his detox needs before entering the general population on the wings.

Mick is a self-harmer and previously attempted to hang himself in 2018. He suffers from depression and anxiety and makes an earnest request for Bernie to disregard his arson history and house him in a cell sharing with another person, "Please! I know I don't deserve it, my record ain't great but I need it, please, I'm begging you." Bernie obliges on the consideration that this will be reviewed if anything untoward happens, but Mick's glee and gratitude cannot be hidden as he thanks Bernie for her care, "I've changed, you'll see".

*Note (21/01/20). I arrive the following day to find out that Mick had not lasted the night and had been moved to a single cell following self-harming and flooding his cell and the landing of his wing. He is quickly put on basic in a single cell and held behind his door for much of the day, with water to his cell turned off to limit the damage.

Tony, on the other hand, is a physically impaired prisoner who is quiet, wary, and respectful. Tony avoids eye contact, speaks in single sentences and only briefly shows emotion when asked if he is religious: "I know why you're asking that, I ain't no preacher or extremist. I steer clear of people like that, I can't stand people who force their ideology onto others." He is in prison for possession of indecent images and has no known history of mental health issues, no known history of self-harm, or suicide attempts but a few periods of being homeless and, like Mick, he is unemployed. He says he likes to be alone and he exudes an aroma that suggests he avoids human interaction where possible. His clothes are well-worn and stained, and his body odour engulfs the room in stale sweat and onions. No one else seems to notice, but it takes a lot of self-determination to keep a straight face. Whilst respectful, Tony fidgets in his seat and regularly looks at the clock. He asks, "Are we nearly done?" "Do I have to answer that?" after every couple of questions. Tony has already been told that he is to be housed in a single cell on a vulnerable persons wing due to his offence "for your own protection" from the general population (he is on Rule 45 – segregation), but he seems more than happy doing so; it was Tony's first and last smile during the assessment. They shared similar social circumstances (unemployed, no families, homeless), but whilst Mick was relaxed and open, Tony seemed anxious, yet at ease in his isolation and unfazed by the prison. Unlike Mick, he never seemed to get distracted by the noise of the radios. He just wanted to be alone. (Fieldnotes, 20/01/2020, ellipsis indicates removed text for brevity)

The assessments indicate that Mick and Tony both experienced social deprivation before their imprisonment. They are individuals with a shared history of

homelessness and unemployment. Whilst Tony asks more questions of staff than Mick, they both seem familiar with Clarendon and the structure of imprisonment. In their own ways, Mick and Tony represent their experience and knowledge of the field, their habitus.

Mick appears at ease in the prison environment, immediately acclimatised to its rules and procedures. Outside the prison, his life sounds chaotic, involving violence, taking "*a lot*" of drugs, and being homeless. Within custody, he may not be the picture of quiet compliance upon entry described in the previous chapter, but he is experiencing a similar process of *prisonisation* during the reception process. He asks Bernie to disregard his arson history for a more favourable living situation and displays happiness and joy at feeling heard. Rather than having a deterrent effect on his criminal behaviour, prison appears to act as a 'stabilising and restorative force' (Wacquant, 2002: 388); it provides a sense of health security – protection from external harm (Aldis, 2008) – and support for Mick. Psychotic disorders are ten times more prevalent among prisoners than the general population (House of Commons Health & Social Care Committee, 2018) and, like many of his peers, Mick openly discusses his mental health issues, eager for support. His familiarity with prison staff and acknowledgement of his undeserving "*record*" indicates that he understands and negotiates the rules of the game, actively "*begging*" to share a cell. Mick is self-critical and states that he "*don't deserve it*". This narrative suggests that his self-image is infused with 'rehabilitative' discourse and ideas that govern his behaviour. He perceives himself as fragile and needs to repent his past behaviour to demonstrate his progress, his "*change*" of behaviour. Warr (2020) describes this as a form of 'self-flagellation', where prisoners overtly introduce themselves regarding their risk identities, 'it is what is expected of them to show that they are being 'rehabilitated'' (p. 36). Mick interprets imprisonment as an opportunity to address his self-image and, in doing so, reproduces his social marginalisation and stigma. He "*needs it*".

Tony is less familiar towards staff but reveals his social conditioning. His contentment with segregation suggests he does not have the same dependency on the prison and interpersonal interactions as Mick, but his brief smile indicates that he welcomes its isolation. Tony seems to treat the assessment as a test and an invasion of his privacy and isolation. He "*knows*" that the prison is looking for people with extremist ideologies, he challenges the continual questioning, and he indicates a knowledge of field-specific terminology like (prison) "*Rule 45*". Combined with his apparent impatience and uncomfortable physical appearance, Tony seems to possess a cultural understanding of the risks and regularities associated with imprisonment. He "*knows*" what is happening, which produces an introverted attitude marked by social segregation and repression. His behaviour is bound up with a whole cultural context of meanings, interpretations, and experiences. The different conditions of their existence may produce different individual responses

from Mick and Tony, a different habitus (Bourdieu, 1984), but they are socialised by their shared marginalisation.

The limits of their habitus are structured and reinforced by their social conditions (Bourdieu, 1977). Before and during the pandemic, similar life stories were reproduced with people released, taking drugs, and being returned to custody within a few days:

> *"A geezer who left [place name] prison was telling me, 'I've got nowhere to go!' This is on his release date... He's down the block saying, 'I've got nowhere to go' and that. I'm saying, 'Go to your sisters.' He walked out of prison, met a kiddy outside, got spiced out of his head, got found the next day in the train station, still asleep with his bags and that, got picked up and straight back into the prison the next day – he didn't have anywhere to go!"* (Jim, prisoner)

> *"I came in here on the ninth of July, after getting released on the eighth,... Now, I'll be real with you, I'm addicted to spice. I come out of jail, my area is [place], now [place] is number one for county lines in the whole of England... I'm saying to Probation, I don't want to go back to my area. I don't want to be around this... Right now, I'm getting released next Friday. If I didn't have my uncle's house to go to, I would be No Fixed Abode. My Probation knows that, [resettlement service] know that, have they done anything about it? No... If you don't meet them needs, they're going to self-medicate from drugs, go down the route of homelessness 'cause they've not had a roof over their head."* (Vlad, prisoner)

> *"Society can't handle us so we end up in prison, then look at what happens. It doesn't take a university degree to realise why prison doesn't work, it's not set up for us, we can't cope with it. We take drugs, we fight, they can't cope with us, so they try and control us. We get released, ignored, no support, come back. It's got worse out there since COVID, there's nothing."* (Fitz, prisoner, fieldnotes, 02/03/2020)

> *"That's why you get a lot of people on recalls and that now, they've got nowhere to live and stability on the road. The help is not out there, it's not out there, I've been asking for years... I haven't been expecting things for years but it's only since being put back out and being set back up in the same environment and that, that's always teared me off and I've thought, fuck it, just carry on doing what I'm doing. It's a two-way thing, I want help just as much, but it's just not there, it's hard to get."* (Joel, prisoner)

These prisoners told familiar stories of themselves and their peers having "*nowhere to go*" upon release. All but two interviewed prisoners had been recalled to custody at one time. They represented just some of the circa 15% of prisoners recalled to

custody in Clarendon and nationally regularly (HMIP, 2022a, b). They pointed to their unresolved drug misuse, homelessness, and mental health issues as key factors affecting their behaviour. In Clarendon, more than 25% of prisoners self-reported housing and financial worries and substance misuse issues upon arrival, and 72% had mental health problems (HMIP, 2022a). Drug use and criminal behaviour had become a form of "*coping*" with inadequate support in custody and the community: "*We get released, ignored, no support, come back*."

Individual reasons for taking drugs are unclear and often multifaceted (Crewe, 2005), but a phenomenological consideration of their behaviour highlights the relationship between complex personal and social histories. Jim's story of a recently released person misusing a psychoactive substance called 'spice' and being homeless suggests that the unnamed prisoner internalised how society has disregarded them and the devalued image they and others have of themselves. "*Society can't handle us*" so these individuals stained the image they have of themselves, conditioned to believe they are not 'good enough' and think "*fuck it*", embodying the identity conferred on to them by wider society as they "*fight*", "*commit crime*", and "*take drugs*". As Halsey et al. (2017) identified, 'fuck it' moments signify the loss of practical and emotional capacity to continue to desist from crime, rather than the 'will' to reoffend (p. 1052). Joel, like Vlad and others, did not want to return to criminal behaviour but there was "*no support*", so he just carried on "*doing what I'm doing*." This highlights how crime is rarely down to individual 'will' alone (Halsey et al., 2017: 1056). It was an ill-preferred response to a sense of hopelessness. It is part of a relational process.

The belief that prison is the 'fallback' position for these prisoners reveals how the social stigma they experience inside and outside the prison is 'inscribed' in their minds and on their bodies (Wahidin, 2002). They mentally constructed the prison as a place of stability, a place to go when they "*didn't have anywhere to go".* They experienced a 'social death' (Price, 2015), where they felt ignored and helpless to resolve the social conditions that shaped their criminal behaviour. Through discourses of vilification and *otherness* and an absence of support and housing, society communicates and disqualifies undesirable people from fully participating in society (Wacquant, 2007). Therefore, imprisonment frequently emerged as the only 'device' capable of ending their isolation (Halsey et al., 2017), it was better than being "*out there*" – a feeling exacerbated during the pandemic. Their experience in preparation for and upon release points to how many prisoners are socially marginalised with a diminished civic, moral, and legal status in the eyes of society and law (Warr, 2021). These prisoners were socialised to enact their stigma.

This cohort of prisoners in Clarendon were acting the only way they knew how, em-prisoned by broader forms of social inequality and control. Mick's sense of being undeserving of sharing a cell and subsequent self-harm and destruction of his

shared cell so soon after his wishes are granted, Tony's self-segregation and unkempt appearance, and the prevalence of homelessness, drug use, and self-harm among the prison population indicate how some prisoners 'internalise their stigma' (Moran, 2012: 568) and bear the hidden injuries of inequality before, during, and after imprisonment. These behaviours can be theorised as a trans-carceral habitus (Quinn, 2023), the enduring embodiment of social inequality that reflects the social marginalisation they and many other prisoners experienced outside the prison. During fieldwork, three prisoners were found unconscious in their cells by staff following an alleged drug overdose and there were close to 100 self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners in Clarendon each month (IMB, 2021), representing the wider prevalence of social harm on the bodies of prisoners. Like Bourdieu's (2004) em-peasanted peasant, 'lumbered' with the intrinsically disadvantaged and ill-adapted techniques of the body, the behaviour of Mick and many of his peers can be conceptualised as regulated improvisation (Bourdieu, 1977), a structured and socialised response to their conditions. Their body was a memory (Bourdieu, 1977) of the structural violence they experienced. The prison and wider society had neglected their needs and situated them in neglected prison cells. A phenomenological interpretation theorises that they embodied their social undesirability. Self-harming and drug use were some of the ways that these prisoners communicated and enacted their inequality.

These unequal social conditions persist and indicate the structural violence experienced by many people who are imprisoned across England and Wales. Nationally, 15% of prisoners are homeless at the start of their custodial sentence (Williams et al., 2012) with 25% of adult males in local prisons experiencing 'housing worries' (HMIP, 2023), 68% are unemployed (Hopkins, 2012), and 64% use Class A drugs (Light et al., 2013). Upon release, more than 65% of men required support with finding accommodation (HMIP, 2023) and just 42% were released to settled accommodation (Williams et al., 2012). Imprisonment was not the start or end of their behaviour but part of a cycle of stigma (Maruna, 2011) and a pendulum of neglect that starts swinging long before they enter the prison walls and continues upon release (Warburton and Stahl, 2021). Thinking about prisoners' behaviour as a trans-carceral habitus indicates the structural violence they experience that reinforces the constitution of many prisoners. It reveals the relations between and within fields, such as prisons and health, challenging the official discourse that criminal behaviour is 'rational' and that 'you rehabilitate yourself' (Meisenhelder, 1977). The official discourse removes prisoners from their social contexts. Rather, Heney (2020) highlighted how agency is messy and uncertain, reflecting the social forces of history on the body as prisoners' em-prisoned actions brought the past 'back to life' (Bourdieu, 1990a). Their self-harm was an embodied, relational, and repeated act. Theorising the experience of social inequality as a *trans*-carceral habitus within Clarendon indicates the impact of social conditioning on behavioural

outcomes and the socio-developmental context of crime. In the following two sections, the chapter explores the infra-conscious sensibility of prisoners to their conditions and how staff respond to this apparent crisis of harm.

Imprisonment as an Infra-Conscious "Circle" of Dependency

In response to the embodiment of inequality, prisoners described Clarendon as a multifaceted place of safety, where many accepted their learned helplessness and developed an infra-conscious *doxic* reliance on the prison. Marginalised by society, some prisoners developed a schema of perception, a way of thinking about the prison environment, that was attuned to their social experience (Fraser and Matthews, 2021). However, this mental construction of prison being in their best interests suggests that prison operates as a paradox of safety, undermining their reintegration upon release.

During fieldwork, some prisoners were observed frequently laughing with staff, occasionally crying, and one prisoner even asked to hug a familiar staff member upon returning to Clarendon after time outside the prison walls. Rather than a place where prisoners feel unsafe and neglected, some prisoners described feelings of stability being in prison. It is acknowledged that this could be an artefact of the sampling strategy, and only one-quarter of prisoners said they were able to lead a 'healthy lifestyle' in prison; however, more than 50% of prisoners self-reported that they had been supported with some of their needs, such as education, training, finances, or substance misuse, in Clarendon (HMIP, 2022a). Complimentary narratives about Clarendon were not anomalies. In a discussion with Jimmy, a prisoner in reception awaiting imminent release, he expressed his gratitude to the prison for opening his first bank account and said that coming to prison did not concern him:

> *The first discharge of the day is a Scouser prisoner called Jimmy, who, at the age of 27, seems adept at prison processes. We are in a room with a CM [Custodial Manager] and SO [Supervising Officer] just off reception, but the door is open and Jimmy provides a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. He even knows some of the officers by their names as he has a laugh with the CM counting out his discharge grant (£46) on the desk about what he is going to spend the money on. In contrast with the prisoners upon arrival, the staff are surprisingly informal and friendly towards Jimmy. They ask about his various girlfriends, what his plans are once he leaves, and what he is looking forward to… he explains how helpful the prison has been during his imprisonment, helping him sign up for benefits and open his first-ever bank account – which, he caveats, he won't be using because it provides a paper trail. "It's my first one, would you believe it? 27! I'm part of the system (he laughs). I won't use it*

as it's obviously a paper trail, something for them to track, to follow me, but it's nice to have, anyway"…

I ask Jimmy how Clarendon compares to other prisons. "It's easy, I have friends in most prisons… it just becomes part of your life. I've known so many friends and family in prison… I smile coming in and laugh coming in, so it's alright." Why? "There's less to worry about [in prison]. I know what to expect with prison. Out there, it's harder." His smile dims a little as he seems to reflect on his experience outside prison, so I decide it's not the time to probe further, but he is soon bouncing back up and excited to tell everyone and anyone about his girlfriends. Before he is released, Jimmy shares a few handshakes with some of the staff he has come to know and he is wished an earnest "Good luck". "You know me," he laughs, "I make my own luck" and with that, Jimmy is off to find a sofa to sleep on nearby. (Fieldnotes, 27/01/2020).

Jimmy was jovial with the reception staff, sharing jokes and knowing some staff by name. It seemed, as with many of his peers, that Clarendon felt familiar to Jimmy. He had developed a sense of identity and belonging from prison being "*part of your life*" that provides a support system, including friendships and access to services, such as banking and welfare. This familiarity with and attachment to the prison was echoed by most other prisoners:

"being off the drugs, having stability and three meals a day and shit like that, it's like a health farm, it gives you your mojo back 'cause you're in here, that's why half of us are in jail… If I weren't in prison over the years, I'd be dead now. These little breaks of coming away, having these times away, is what has probably kept me alive." (Joel)

"When you're out of jail and you figure out, you know what, jail ain't too bad. Even when your body tells you you want to get out of jail and don't want to come back. I'm one of them people, when you're out I spend all my time wanting to come out, and I spend all my time out of jail wanting to get back in… When I think about it, it's a pretty sad life, then I think to myself, I can't stop doing it… I feel more comfortable in here than I do out there 'cause everyone in here, 9 times out of 10 are exactly the same as me. Whereas out there, they're all like, 'woah!' don't want to be near you." (Luke)

"I got released from prison and there was nothing, no one would help me. Probation didn't want to know, council didn't want to know, not at all. I had no mental health support for a year in the community, and then I went downhill. I was phoning them up asking for help because I was suicidal but, yeah, nobody wanted to help… I find it easier living in prison than I do outside because everything's here. The week I came back to prison I had mental health support, I had people come to my door." (Terry)

"I see those boys [other prisoners] as family and I don't have much family on road… I got no Mum, I ain't got no Dad, you know what I mean, me and my brother not talking, it's peak bruv so I see these as, the people on the wing, if they've got big sentences and trying to be your friend, take that mate, 'cause if you've got no mates and you're a loner, bruv, your mental health is going drop, it's going to get worse." (Jerry)

All four prisoners self-reported experiencing health and substance misuse issues, but it was only in prison that they felt that they received support and a sense of safety. They saw Clarendon as an access point to support services and a place that meets their basic needs with stability, friendships, and family. By describing their ease and shared sense of safety and security with being imprisoned, these prisoners reinforced their trans-carceral habitus, unable to "*stop*" returning to prison as a result of social neglect. They believed it was "*easier living in prison*" than outside and viewed imprisonment as 'in their own best interests' (Schlosser, 2013: 34). These prisoners had become invested in the prison, em-prisoned physically and psychologically by its apparent protection. These comments can be theorised as an *infra*conscious sensibility to the prison, what Fraser (2015, 2021) describes as a scheme of perception and response that flows from an attuned response by people to harm, such as gangs on their streets. Some prisoners formed a doxic sensibility to need custody, believing in its offer of protection from external social harms and developing a trans-carceral habitus and identity attuned to their environment. They identified with their place of residence, reflecting 'the closure of one's lived experience' (Wacquant, 2007: 271). Their social marginalisation and neglect were imprinted on the body and minds of these prisoners.

Prisoners' carceral habitus and doxa had an enduring dialectal effect on them by harming their reintegration into wider society. This lived experience of imprisonment was described by one prisoner as an "*ongoing circle*":

"You come into jail and I've left here over the years now, you're left homeless… If you're being put on the streets, you're going back to your old ways, you're going to go back to your old mates' houses and hang round their houses, where they're all users, all drugs, out doing whatever. So then you fall back into that… It's the same all the time, just an ongoing circle, continuous, continuous." (Joel)

"The day you're released, it flips around; you've got society against you, the community against you, and that's a big problem you're not going to fix … There's no housing, there's no jobs for cons, it's so hard to get jobs so people just commit crime again." (Terry)

"I've been in and out of custody for 10 years. You putting me in prison quite clearly hasn't worked. 'Cause I'm still here, I'm still doing what I'm doing, yeah. That's not helping me... Why has it ended up at 18 years old with me

coming to prison? From 13 to 18 I didn't have any support, literally, I was going from my brother being a heroin addict, I was being kicked out of schools and that…" (Jim)

These comments suggest that many prisoners see themselves as a product of their environment that enacts 'violence' upon prisoners. As Luke explained, he *"can't stop doing it"*. Conditioned and em-prisoned by a sense of helplessness, many prisoners returned to custody upon release. Similar to Warburton and Stahl's (2021) *pendulum* of neglect but not to be mistaken with (although not dissimilar from) the cycle of reoffending (Appleby et al., 2015), the conceptual *"circle"* or *"flip"* suggests prisoners' needs are not met in the wider community, so they return to prison which fails to address the social determinants of crime, such as substance misuse, employment, or housing. However, statements that the prison *"hasn't worked"* and was not *"helping"* prisoners perpetuated the doxic belief that a prison is or could be a place of rehabilitation that can *"work"*. This 'rehabilitation doxa' (Fernandes et al., 2018) of prison as a place of support reproduces a broader punitive system that devolves wider society of the need to address social inequality. If prison is considered a place of safety and support by prisoners, then it perpetuates its paradoxical existence and purpose of incarcerating and 'supporting' those neglected or deprived by wider society without addressing the structural causes of their inequality. Their doxa and habitus, their ways of thinking and acting, were mutually reinforcing.

Nearly every interviewed prisoner suggested that imprisonment conditioned them in some way, learning to rely on its offer of support. Two prisoners, Vlad and Thompson, who self-reported frequenting Clarendon *"more than most"*, summarised the harmful effect of this *prisonisation* upon release:

> *"I used to use jail to escape from reality. So much stress going on in the out, so many things I've got to deal with! Thinking fuck this, I'm going to jail! 'Cause I know that if I'm behind the door and I need something, I press the bell and the Guvs will come to that door. That's bad. What button do I need to press on the out to meet my needs? I don't!"* (Vlad)

> *"(I'm) Not a frequent flyer, but over the last five years I've become a bit more dependent on the system, unfortunately, I've been coming here for a bit more of an extended stay… First, you hate these walls, then you learn to rely on them, in the end, you need them.*" (Thompson)

Together, they emphasised the temporal embodiment and mental construction of an *infra*-conscious identity that enables them to navigate the rules of the penal field and, simultaneously, constrains their ability to identify, think, and act as something other than a person em-prisoned by their social inequality. Clarendon was an *"escape"* from external suffering that reinforced learned helplessness as prisoners felt they were unable to adapt their behaviour upon release. The *"button"*, a

reference to the "cell bell" or alarm that prisoners can press if in need of support and to which a prison officer is mandated to respond as soon as possible, indicates their embodied attachment to the prison that perpetuates their trans-carceral habitus as these prisoners internalised their social inequality and helplessness. With limited 'free time' – not in their cells, education, employment, or training doing 'purposeful activity' – to resolve their issues before the pandemic and isolated in their cells for at least 23 hours a day during the pandemic, many prisoners were unable to resist the forces of *prisonisation,* reinforcing what Crewe et al. (2023) have described as an infantilising relationship between prisoners and staff. Similar to how a parent dictates the meal times, bedtime, activities, food, and clothing of their child, prisoners are told what to do and when to do it. The "*button*" is a material manifestation of prisoners' powerlessness inside and outside the prison. It sustained the identity of prisoners and the hierarchy of imprisonment with its presence. It reinforced the production of imprisonment every time it was pressed. By acknowledging their dependency on the "*button*" for accessing support and questioning its existence outside the prison, the prisoners describe what Bottoms (1999) termed the 'safety paradox'. The button reveals their attachment to Clarendon as a place of support, perpetuating a sense of neglect, isolation, and helplessness in the wider community, their embodied habitus, and the social structures that shaped it. Like the bell of HMP Midtown that sounded at set points every day or the jangling of keys that controls prisoners' movements (Herrity, 2019), these symbols of social and practical order constrain autonomy and reinforce prisoners' identity. As will be elaborated on later, the pandemic response exacerbated prisoners' sensibility to their prison.

The prison turned people "*from chaotic criminals to good prisoners*" by removing their autonomy and ensuring dependency on staff. However, by imposing power over prisoners, the structure of Clarendon produced a conditioned attachment that harmed life chances outside of custody. Edmond, a senior manager, explained that:

> *"turning chaotic criminals into good prisoners is something we do really well and is a bit of a problem, because once they become a good prisoner, that's when they are at risk of getting stuck in the system and never returning to being a full member of the community… [it] is a double-edged sword because then, the challenge of turning those good prisoners into good citizens is another huge step."*

Imprisonment was mentally constructed as a criminogenic process, a "*double-edged*" sword that perpetuates and increases the chances of criminality. Many prisoners were *prisonised* into "*good prisoners*" who conceived Clarendon as a multifaceted place of safety and stability. However, "*turning*" prisoners into "*good citizens*" was a "*problem*" because prisoners get "*stuck in the system*". They are coerced into dependency. Scholars have noted the deprivation of autonomy among

prisoners in custody, the dependency on prison staff, and the effects on their habitus. Sykes (1958) identified how profoundly painful the experience of imprisonment was, rendering the prisoner 'weak, helpless, [taking on a] dependent status of childhood' (p. 77) which they cannot escape (Warr, 2021: 27). The prison structure prisonises prisoners and reinforces their social marginalisation and attachment to it. Scholars have advocated for a more strengths-based approach to imprisonment, where approaches to imprisonment increase a sense of agency and autonomy among prisoners (Butler and Drake, 2007). Maruna and LeBel (2003) symbolically phrase this as turning a criminal into a 'giver rather than a consumer of help'. This strengths-based approach could, in Edmond's parlance, bridge the "*huge step*" between prisoners and citizens, but it disregards the effects of inequalities outside of prison.

Framing the relationship between prisoners and their environment as an *infra-*conscious sensibility, and an embodied attachment, reinforces the relations between people and place, practice and structure. It reveals the affective relations of imprisonment and how places are tied to subjective experiences, a sensorium of meaning. Em-prisoned by social marginalisation and deprivation, many prisoners develop a doxic attachment to the institution, bound to and constrained by its physical and mental structure as they embody the 'baggage' of custody upon release, inhibiting employability and relationships with family and friends outside of the prison (Caputo-Levine, 2013). Imprisonment can, therefore, be interpreted as layered and 'multi-sensual', the product of structures and experiences that paradoxically harm prisoners. Imprisonment can be both a place of care and support that harms em-prisoned people in custody and upon release (Fernandes et al., 2018). The following sections explore the effect of prisoners' habitus and doxa on the experience of staff and the production of their practice in Clarendon.

"They don't belong here": The Security Disposition of Prison Staff

Prisoners' needs put significant pressure on prison resources, producing what many staff felt was a "*health crisis*" (Andy, prison officer), a "*safety crisis*" (Edmond, senior manager), and "*a pandemic of drug addiction*" (Sally, senior manager) distinguishable from the co-occurring COVID-19 pandemic. Healthcare and substance misuse support caseloads were consistently full but almost 70% of prisoners reported not receiving help with their health issues in Clarendon (HMIP, 2022a; IMB, 2021). Rather than adapt to the circumstances, most prison staff questioned who "belongs" in prison. Conditioned by the structure of imprisonment, staff generally developed a field-specific habitus and doxa, a way of working and thinking about imprisonment oriented towards a narrow definition of security and public protection. Aside from some people in roles dedicated to health and care, this

security disposition, a 'worst-case mentality' (McKendy et al., 2021), reinforced the doxa and structure of the field, a place for controlling rather than supporting prisoners.

The Culture of Risk Assessments

Staff practice was shaped by a doxic 'worst-case' view that prison security was the primary aim of imprisonment. During interviews, all operational and non-operational staff said that Clarendon was intended as a place of "*security… it's what we do, the industry we work in*" (Simon, supervising officer). There was no single definition of security, nor "*a one-size-fits-all approach*" (Patrick, custodial manager, Fieldnotes, 18/02/2020), but staff generally associated it with maintaining control and keeping prisoners in custody:

> "*[We] protect the public. It always was and always is. Obviously, we try to guide them away from bad habits but we can only do so much. We try to protect against the worst things happening, like an escape, murder, violence, that sort of thing.*" (William, prison officer, Fieldnotes, 10/02/2020)

> "*Security and safety come first, so sometimes you do have to assess somebody with officers in full kit, which is really not therapeutic but, you know, it's prison and the Governor will have the final say… we serve the courts, so that is a purpose. Ultimately it's a punishment, isn't it?*" (Ria, mental health practitioner)

> "*Her Majesty's Prison Service serves the public by keeping in custody those committed by the courts… the punishment of imprisonment is the loss of liberty and we might not like to talk about it much but that is a fundamental of what we do and so it does start with security… we measure it [success] I guess in fundamentally basic ways, like no escapes.*" (Edmond, senior manager)

> "*Prison is a game of poker, but we can never lose. Even if they think they've got one over on us, we will make sure they don't. You can't beat the system, you can't beat security, it's like taxes.*" (Oscar 1, Fieldnotes, 28/01/2020)

In every interview with staff in Clarendon, they said that the "*fundamental*" purpose of Clarendon was "*security… about how do we protect the public.*" (Edmond, senior manager) 'Security' was a narrow term applied to containing prisoners who were conceived as *the* security risk, not *at* risk. Staff conceived their role as ensuring that prisoners "*can't beat the system*", "*like taxes*" the prison "*can never lose*". They must prevent escapes and ongoing criminality. As the Ministry of Justice's (2021) 10-year prison strategy set out, 'Our prisons and prison regime must protect the public: this means holding prisoners securely' (p. 5). Prison was not designed to protect prisoners and address their social insecurity but to protect the system and its reputation.

In Clarendon, most staff believed that the structure of imprisonment revolved around control. It was their *duty* to "*control*" (Bernie, custodial manager, Fieldnotes, 20/01/2020) and "*hold*" prisoners (Billy, senior manager):

> "*It's everything. From the locks on the doors to making sure we're allowing the right kind of people in and out of the door, you know, it's what we do, the industry that we work in… the biggest umbrella that covers the most parts of the jail out of all the different departments.*" (Simon, supervising officer)

> "*We have security as a bit of a stand-alone entity that feeds into everything else, but then everything else doesn't always then feed back into security… it can be the be-all and end-all of everything.*" (Laura, psychologist)

> "*If we saw ourselves as a rehab centre, we would attract very different people. But that requires such a massive cultural shift away from the old prison service, the POA [Prison Officers Association – trade Union], the uniform, the branding of it would all have to be different… fundamentally, we are still archaic prisons… every day is about bed management to try and serve the courts.*" (Sally, senior manager)

Security was "*the biggest umbrella*" of imprisonment. This fundamental "*cultural*" belief in security as the "*be-all and end-all*" demonstrates the doxic acceptance that "*it's prison*", the *raison d'être* where public protection, such as maintaining space ("*bed management*") for new prisoners, self-evidently "*comes first*" in their mindset and practice. Staff in Clarendon suggested it affected the way they think, operate, dress, see themselves, and even "*attract*" and recruit new staff. Conditioned by the narrow definition of security and the field structure, staff habitus was generally oriented by a 'security first' belief (Warr, 2018) and what McKendy et al. (2021) called the 'worst-case mentality', a focus on what could or is going wrong, such as corruption, escape, and violence, which remained largely unquestioned and accepted for its self-evidence: "*It's everything.*"

Most Clarendon staff predominantly thought about their practice in terms of what could go wrong. They interpreted their roles as "*risk professionals*", primarily delivering the stated aim of security and public protection through acts and assessments of prevention:

> "*It's more about public protection now, it's more punitive. POMs [Prison/ Probation Offender Managers] err on the side of caution, they have a reluctance to release prisoners and prefer to take a backseat so they aren't responsible for anything if it goes wrong.*" Paul says this is best epitomised in the use of recall by probation officers, who would rather "*disproportionately*" send people back to prison, rather than challenge their behaviour and risk managing them in the community. I ask how this occurred and Paul explains that probation officers have developed into "*risk professionals… you have to*

be in prison with who we're dealing with, we all are. It's just the atmosphere."
(Conversation with Paul, probation, Fieldnotes, 17/02/2020)

"You go onto the wings sometimes and everyone wants mental health. It's like the Walking Dead sometimes, sort of being grabbed… All we're doing is putting out fires, doing risk assessments, ACCTs and risk assessments, risk assessments and risk assessments. Not really focussing on the stuff that could make a difference, more of a difference… every part of every day is a risk assessment… it's almost second nature in this environment to be risk assessing all the time." (Ria, mental health practitioner)

"The operational reality is all about balancing more than one risk, that old saying, 'No battle plan survives contact with the enemy.' Well, we are in permanent contact with the enemy. So we are always interpreting the battle plan and applying it – balancing risks." (Edmond, senior manager)

These staff suggested that risk assessments were central to their practice of imprisonment. By de-individualising "*who[m] we're dealing with*" and experiencing an "*atmosphere*" of insecurity and "*caution*" over prisoners in custody and upon release, prisoners were wrapped in a discourse of risk (Drake, 2012). This indicates how the punitive structures are deeply embedded in the field, affecting the attitudes and practices of staff. Like the air of punishment, the inadequate ventilation that was 'constitutive of the material affective relations' (Adey, 2013: 293) of imprisonment, the air or "*atmosphere*" of insecurity weighed on the culture of Clarendon.

Risk assessments were "*second nature*" for many Clarendon staff. There were dissenting voices, people who were predominantly in caring roles, such as education or mental health, that pushed back against the 'common sense' of security; however, most people succumbed to the forces of the field, to "*risk assessing all the time.*" Paul suggested that those under supervision in the community are "*disproportionately*" recalled back to prison as part of a system-wide punitive shift towards control that extends beyond the prison field. The prisoner upon release is less an ex-prisoner 'returned to freedom than a quasi-inmate waiting to be sent back behind bars' (Wacquant, 2009: 145). The former imprisoned person is maintained in a cycle of stigma and recidivism (Maruna, 2011), struggling to break free from the widening 'penal net' or "*umbrella*" (Wacquant, 2009). The penal field, of which the prison is a sub-field, maintains its punitive effects on those caught in its net (McNeill et al., 2017, 2023). The effects of this social conditioning re-produce what this thesis has conceptualised as the *trans-carceral habitus*. In prison, many staff perpetuated the stigmatisation and structural injuries of the prisoner with a hyper-vigilant and distrustful state, a common sense "reality" or *doxic* (pre-)occupation with threats and risks to prison security. Risk assessments were a manifestation of the 'worst-case' mindset and normalised the assent of security and mechanisms of control over "*the enemy*".

The case of Charlie is an example of the normalised assent of security and its effect on the experience of imprisonment. Charlie, a 22-year-old prisoner, had been banned from education due to violence and had a history of self-harm and attempts at self-inflicted death. Operational staff were required to conduct an ACCT (Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork) review for those 'at risk' of self-harm or suicide:

> *Charlie has been in and out of prison for a few years and in Clarendon for around three months. A cell search by officers found ligatures in his room, and staff describe him as extremely "volatile" and "unstable", throwing urine and hot water at the staff without apparent provocation. Subsequently, Charlie has been banned from education, not able to exercise or vape, not allowed hot water or a kettle, and his shoes were taken away "for his safety".*

> *In the review, staff question his mental health, asking how he is and if he has had thoughts of harming himself. Charlie says "I'm alright, sort of… Everything's gone to shit, life is shit" – he is desperate to return to the main wings and leave healthcare, something Aaron [custodial manager] and Lucy [nurse] refuse on the grounds that he requires further observation and "looking after" that is only possible in healthcare. But throughout the meeting, it appears that Charlie is amenable to further questioning and exploration. He wants to share more about his mental health issues, suicidal thoughts, and situation outside the prison but wants his audience to care and show interest in him. On two occasions he tries to explain his behaviour: "I've got nothing to go back to…" but he is interrupted both times as Lucy and Aaron don't seem to notice and don't follow up with questions beyond those written on the review paperwork, "When was the last time you thought about harming yourself?" Charlie seems to retreat inwards with every question, replying to most questions he is asked with the proverbial, "Shit" or "Dunno"… At the end, Charlie asks "Is there nothing I can say to get me back (to the general population)?", "No," replies Aaron…*

> *I chat with Charlie afterwards at his cell door, asking what he thinks of the ACCT (self-harm) review process. He is frustrated but friendly: "It's not great, it's not really a process for us (prisoners), it's for them so they look like they're doing something." Charlie draws similarities to the rest of the prison experience: "It doesn't feel like they actually care what we think. You saw what happened, they're like robots sometimes, just doing as they're told… they can't even be bothered to turn off their radios." Charlie described feeling disempowered by the prison, like he has lost control, and that's "the worst thing… when you want to feel better but no one wants to help you."* (Fieldnotes, 27/01/2020)

Charlie, like so many prisoners in Clarendon and across the estate, had acute needs, requiring immediate care to prevent further harm, but rather than addressing the causes of his life being "*shit*", the staff addressed Charlie as the risk to be controlled, to be observed and "*looked after*". To manage his needs, Charlie resided in healthcare – against his will – to manage the risk to himself and others. However, Charlie felt that he had lost agency and control over his health and wellbeing. The review felt infantilising and disempowering; it wasn't considered a process "*for us*". The radio noise provided a sensorial communication of his experience. The constant chatter of the staff radios on every hip provided an affective backdrop for Charlie's ACCT review. It signalled a lack of attention to his needs. Prisoners interpreted radio noise as disrespectful because staff lost their attention (Herrity, 2019). In Clarendon, it was a disruptive hum that communicated the 'worst-case' doxa of staff and betrayed the purpose of the 'care in custody' review.

This example of an ACCT review, an almost daily occurrence according to participants, indicates how prison staff prioritised security and public protection over prisoners' health and care. Staff are required to develop an initial action plan, conduct another interview, attend a multidisciplinary case review within the first 24 hours, and then follow up with regular reviews until the ACCT can be closed. Clarendon had around 30 ACCTs open at any one time (IMB, 2021). I observed four ACCT reviews during fieldwork; they occurred wherever the prisoner resided, such as healthcare or segregation, and were always accompanied by the sounds of radios and staff passing in and out of the rooms. In a question-and-answer format, led by a custodial manager accompanied by five other staff, including a psychologist and mental health practitioner, the assessments were never private. They conformed to the idea that staff saw themselves as 'risk professionals', with reviewers saying, "*We need to be confident you're not a risk to yourself.*" (unnamed nurse, Fieldnotes, 24/02/2020) In one instance, Jake, a custodial manager, explained to two substance misuse practitioners that an ACCT review aimed to understand a prisoner's history of self-harm, understand their level of risk, and verify:

> "*They [the process] are designed to assess their risk, that's our role. If he dies, that's on us, all of us, so first we understand if they are serious threats, have they hurt themselves before, then we manage them.*" (Fieldnotes, 14/01/2020)

The fear of a self-inflicted death loomed large on staff (Tomczak, 2018). Staff felt that health risks were an extension of their security role; it was "*our role*" to manage prisoners in distress. This was echoed by prisoners during the ACCT process who felt disempowered and unheard: "*You might want to include me if it's about me.*" (Nate, Fieldnotes, 04/02/2020) As Charlie explained, prisoners felt the process was to protect the control and order of the prison, rather than the health of prisoners. Indicative of the wider doxa and delivery of prison, the ACCT process was considered a security response rather than a medical approach to self-harm. As

such, many prisoners in Clarendon felt unable or unsupported to address their issues. Even when they felt motivated to change, prisoners like Charlie said, "*the worst thing (is)… when you want to feel better but no one wants to help you.*" They were disillusioned. This is one way the prison inhibits reinvention (Scott, 2011; Crewe and Ievins, 2020), further evidencing the contradiction between 'punitive and integrative missions' in prison (Comfort, 2008: 261). ACCT reviews evidenced a 'risk-crazed governance' that subverted the 'care' process and opposed the objectives of 'safety', 'security', and 'rehabilitation' – it was an 'imaginary penality' (Carlen, 2013a: 1). The reality did not meet the impossible objectives of imprisonment. In Clarendon and elsewhere, prisoners described a culture where distress was not met with compassion (Tomczak, 2018). They felt unsupported.

The "*operational reality*" of 'risk assessments', including ACCT reviews, disguised the subjective reinforcement of the field. Staff felt they "*have to*" be security-oriented because of "*who we're dealing with*". The embedded punitive structures and stereotypes about prisoners as "*the enemy*" reveal a semantic slide in the field. Whether risk assessed for release or threat of self-harm, prisoners are mentally constructed as 'risks' and subjective judgements are reconfigured into 'risk assessments', theoretical models of 'knowledge' that de-individualise the staff member and the prisoner. It is their role as "*risk professionals*" to "*balance risks*", "*manage them*" and avoid "*anything if it goes wrong.*" Within custody, the vulnerable prisoner is a "*serious threat*" to the staff and the prison, "*that's on us*". Risk assessments reinforce the "*fundamental*" belief that staff were meant to stay in control of prisoners. It organised their logic of, about, and in imprisonment, shaping practices and behaviour (Ricciardelli et al., 2015). This indicates how doxa regulates attitudes and behaviour without being the product of obedience to rules (Bourdieu, 1977). Most of the staff cohort in Clarendon legitimised and reinforced the security-oriented habitus and field structure with a 'worst-case' mindset, believing prison "*is*" security. There were no alternatives to their actions.

This cultural mindset supports extant literature that finds prison practice is oriented around a risk assessment/management/treatment nexus (Sim, 2012). Prisoners are 'ensnared' within ideations and notions of criminogenic risk (Warr, 2018: 39), framed as individualised subjects to be controlled (Garland, 2001; Hannah-Moffat, 2005). Through a process of socialisation, the prison setting alters how staff think, feel, and act in their workplace (McKendy et al., 2021). Staff embody this 'risk-conscious' approach to imprisonment as they translate prison policy and risk logic into practice (Crewe, 2009, 2012; Hjörne et al., 2010; Ricciardelli et al., 2015). Clarendon's occupational culture represents the institutionalised security mindset of the wider penal field, a 'new penology' (Feeley and Simon, 1994: 173) that undermines individuality, disregards social contexts and needs, and is aligned with the official ruling position and objectives. The following section explores how staff embodied a security disposition and responded to the trans-carceral habitus of prisoners.

"Patients don't belong here"

This doxic prioritisation of security was reinforced and legitimised by the majority of interview participants who believed that ill prisoners, characterised as 'patients', "*don't belong here*" (Nigel, offender manager, Fieldnotes, 17/02/2020). To the majority of interviewees, the trans-carceral habitus of many prisoners was at odds with the structure of imprisonment:

> "*We are told they're a prisoner, we have to deal with them as effectively as such. We are there to keep people safe from those individuals – they're in prison for a reason but… so many times we are receiving prisoners who should never have been given custodial sentences… we are, on a weekly basis, sectioning people that are on wings, to me there's something fundamentally wrong with that. How have we allowed them to stay within a prison setting on a general wing when they are so mentally unwell that they need hospital treatment? That is flawed, massively flawed.*" (Chris, custodial manager)

> "*We have been getting a lot of guys in that are not really well enough or fit enough for prison… From April to June there were six, [transferred] from prison to hospital. And then from July to September, third quarter of the year, we've had one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, eleven! In this last quarter gone by, if you consider three in the first part of the year.*" (Ria, a mental health practitioner)

> "*Prison is about security, public protection. It's not for us to fix them or provide them a home… we've moved on from corporal punishment but still need to address deterrence or the lack of prison effect on these men; we aren't carers, we're not trained to be or told to be.*" (Jake, custodial manager, Fieldnotes, 13/01/2020).

Clarendon prison was characterised by most staff as a place of "*security*". Before and during the pandemic, its purpose was considered to be public protection through punishment, deterrence, and control. However, most staff members acknowledged that their prison was holding "*a lot of guys*" not "*well enough*" for prison. Whilst demonstrating the overlapping nature of the prison field with health and court systems, the doxic duality between prisoners and the "*mentally unwell*", between prison and hospital, indicates an allodoxic consciousness of the demographic changes occurring in the field. *Allodoxa,* an extension of Bourdieu's doxa, refers to a learned and normative misrecognition that reinforces the discursive and representative aspects of the prevailing doxa (Bourdieu, 1991). In Clarendon, the belief among prison staff that patients "*should not be here*" and prison is not about "*fixing*" prisoners reproduces a doxic sense that their prison is a place of 'security' and 'risk' management rather than safety or support, protecting the public

from these *broken* men by controlling them, rather than addressing their needs. This reinforces the conceptualisation of prison as a paradox of safety.

Security, the potentiality for violence or escape, was frequently a priority consideration when determining which prisoners could access healthcare. Whilst Clarendon's healthcare unit was full for the duration of fieldwork, it held a diverse demographic of prisoners at risk of self-harm, self-inflicted death, concealing illicit items, assaulting staff, conducting dirty protests, and other "*security risks*". As such, staff frequently determined which prisoners were the lowest *risk* to 'safety' and 'security' when determining whom to move from healthcare:

> *It's a tense atmosphere. Healthcare staff are frustrated. They want to free up space for the "unwell" prisoner and others in need of care by moving prisoners who have or threatened to assault officers or other prisoners. Oscar 1 (orderly officer responsible for the daily management of the prison regime) refuses this on the grounds of "safety… that would be another security risk we have to deal with. They've assaulted staff, we need to think about what that means for our safety." The wheelchair users can't be moved due to limited accessible cells, and there's no space for vulnerable prisoners [those who have committed sexual offences] on the Mains, and that only leaves those at risk of self-harm or self-inflicted death.*

> *Healthcare staff are adamant that they must prioritise the most vulnerable prisoners, the ones that need the most support. A nurse explains, "This is what happens when you treat this place as another wing. We've got people here who should never be here."* (Fieldnotes, 28/01/2020)

In this example, the tension manifested itself between the aims of operational staff, such as prison officers, and the aims of healthcare staff, such as nurses. Healthcare staff sought to prioritise the needs of prisoners, whilst the 'security mindset' (King, 1985: 187) of operational staff prioritised prison safety and security. However, healthcare staff could not move a prisoner without the authority and permission of operational staff. This demonstrated the central positioning and power of operational staff in the field, possessing the most *disciplinary capital* (Warr, 2021), field-specific power, to determine what happens when and where in prison. Although there is a legal obligation to protect and address the health and wellbeing of prisoners, doxic beliefs about prison 'safety' and 'security' as the primary aims of imprisonment remained dominant. This was reinforced by the reputation of Clarendon's healthcare unit among prisoners and staff as *"another segregation"* (Officer Mik, Fieldnotes 28/01/2020), a place for controlling the risk of prisoners. The narrow priorities of prison security and a worst-case mindset subsumed the interests of the prisoner (Warr, 2019). Security culture was a barrier to healthy outcomes for prisoners.

The pandemic required Clarendon to reconsider who was held in healthcare, but this only temporarily disrupted the reputation of the unit as "*another segregation*". National policy required that Clarendon have a 'shielding unit' for prisoners at most risk of harm from COVID-19, an area with 'enhanced levels of biosecurity' (more isolation and dedicated staff) (O'Moore, 2020, April: 2). However, participants explained that healthcare remained constrained by the security-oriented structure of imprisonment:

> *"When it (the pandemic) started, for what felt like a long time, we were still another segregation. The shielding unit has helped and we aren't another 'segregation' anymore but my gosh, it's like trying to turn a ship." She seemed exasperated at the memory, "I shouldn't complain, it's small wins but I'm not holding my breath on it staying like this." How come? "For one, we still don't have the space to manage everyone like we should, lots of unwell people are still on the wings. But staff are already starting to question who is shielding. They are under pressure to find beds. You can see that it's already turning back. It's always an issue of security."* (Yasmin, mental health practitioner, Fieldnotes 01/10/2020)

> *"We are taking somebody and putting them in a healthcare room, and that's stopping somebody that is mentally ill or physically ill having that bed because now we know about the risk… we had [a prisoner] who, in my mind, was definitely a patient that was treated throughout his stay here as a prisoner due to his behaviour… the guy should be in hospital but was kept in prison because the wheels have come off the NHS and they couldn't cope, [but] we couldn't cope… because of the issues we have around healthcare and the limited space we've got, how do we square the circle? How do we get to the point where we can look after those individuals properly? That's probably one of our biggest failings."* (Chris, custodial manager)

The pandemic had temporarily disrupted the doxic reputation of healthcare, as the metaphorical prison "*ship*" was "*turning*", but it proved to be a structural fallacy. All beds and rooms were occupied by 'clinically vulnerable' prisoners at the highest risk of death from COVID-19. This represented a change from before the pandemic when healthcare was "*another segregation*"; however, access and provision remained unchanged. The structure and limited space of Clarendon meant that the security disposition soon reasserted itself. Staff felt they were unable to "*square the circle*", and it was necessary to use healthcare where they identified a security "*risk*": "*It's always an issue of security*." As I was leaving the prison a week after speaking with Yasmin, I observed a familiar scene where the orderly officer was trying to find bed space again. The custodial manager was on the phone with healthcare asking who was in there and "*Who can we move?*" (Fieldnotes, 08/10/2020) The ship was "*already turning back*" as operational staff maintained their *disciplinary capital* (Warr,

2021). During the pandemic, staff suggested that the conditions, culture, and practice of imprisonment regressed to the norm.

This 'normal' security disposition persisted in Clarendon even when staff were faced with critical health issues. When prisoners were required to attend hospital, staff had to conduct an 'Escort risk assessment' to determine their risk of escape (HMPPS, 2023d) and whether to use handcuffs. In Clarendon, '*cuffing* was the norm, not the exception:

> *Later on this morning, Mary conducted a risk assessment for whether a disabled prisoner needed to wear handcuffs on escort to the hospital. The prisoner was described by Mary as old and frail, barely able to walk, but Mary said, "Cuffing is not about need, it just is". I ask what she means, to which she responds, "We have to 'cuff them, they're prisoners, it's just the way it works." Mary explained that she felt she was being kind by not making the prisoner sleep in handcuffs. In the afternoon, a colleague risk-assessed the same prisoner again, determining that he posed little enough threat to not be handcuffed at all. Chatting with her colleague soon after in her office, Mary called him a "fluff bag" saying, "It's best not to overthink it. 'Cuff them all and you'll have no issues." The colleague said they "normally do" but was "feeling nice" and "any sign" of trouble, the handcuffs "will be back on."* (Fieldnotes, 07/01/2020)

> *[Upon concluding an interview] Healthcare were dealing with an ill prisoner and it looked like they were preparing him for hospital. It wasn't clear what was wrong, but Mr Adah turned to me and said, "You know they'll 'cuff him? He isn't even conscious. It's just like I was saying, there's no respect, no one cares. Cons are dying, they're killing themselves. There's no tenderness. If you're going out, everyone is 'cuffed, even if you don't know where you're going."* (Fieldnotes, 01/10/2020)

Prisoners were consistently handcuffed during hospital visits. The policy states that when determining whether handcuffing is 'necessary' (*the Graham Judgement, 2007*), the risk assessor 'must' consider: the medical condition of the prisoner, their risk of escape, and risk to the public. Each 'individual case' should be considered and handcuffing should be acknowledged as degrading (HMPPS, 2023d: 15). Irrespective of a prisoner's health condition or 'security (escape) risk', security beliefs transcended individual circumstances. Mary's fundamental doxic belief that security in prison is "*just the way it works*" and handcuffing "*is not about need, it just is*" was shared by most staff as they believed there was no alternative to their actions; it was part of how they spoke about, thought about, and operationalised imprisonment:

> "*In my mind, I'm a [prison senior manager] who started as a prison officer, so the people that I look after are prisoners so they're always a prisoner to me…*

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if I'm sending someone out of a prison to hospital for an appointment, well at that point, they are a prisoner to me and my prison staff take them and make sure that they are, there are mechanical restraints, handcuffs etc. are applied to mitigate the risk of them being outside the walls – that's simple for me, they are a prisoner on escort." (Edmond, senior manager)

According to operational staff, even in healthcare settings, prisoners were not patients. Staff felt they were "*asked to run traditional incarcerating*", to represent the social values and expectations to control prisoners, where the aim of 'security' was "*normally*" put before prisoners' health needs. Again, prisoners were mentally constructed as 'risks' and subjective judgements were reconfigured into 'risk assessments' that de-individualised the prisoner. "*Everyone is 'cuffed*'" to "*mitigate the risk*". In Clarendon, staff operationalised the essence of what they understood to be the purpose of imprisonment. A narrow definition of security based on the potentiality of escape impeded caring approaches to prisoners, reproducing a zero-sum approach to imprisonment (Ismail, 2021). This 'risk-crazed governance' (Carlen, 2013a) and "*simple*" logic or doxa shaped the experience of imprisonment.

By responding to health issues with a security disposition, Clarendon staff represented a systemic failure to address the social inequality of prisoners. Scholars have recognised that prisons are unsuitable environments for mentally ill men and women (Tomczak, 2022; Warburton and Stahl, 2021). Yet, there is no recognition of the role of health in the stated aims or delivery of imprisonment. Security is the 'core job of prisons… the basis of everything else prisons do' (Ministry of Justice, 2016: 27-28), which undercuts the perception of prisoners as patients and disregards the multidimensional and intersectional nature of security (Wacquant, 2009). "*Patients don't belong here*" as prisoners are punished twice, deprived of their liberty and their health (Ismail, 2021; O'Mara, 2022, February). This broader doxa of prison as a substitute or alternative to specialist health and social services reinforces and perpetuates the local "*crisis*" in prisons such as Clarendon, which fails to address the habitus of em-prisoned prisoners by prioritising and perpetuating prison 'security' as the primary aim of imprisonment. This 'imaginary penality' (Carlen, 2013a) indicates how prisons overstate their official objectives to 'rehabilitate' and support prisoners, yet revert to control. Prison staff represented the structure of the field by developing a mindset and disposition that reinforced and legitimised the production of imprisonment as a place for controlling prisoners rather than addressing their needs.

Conclusion

This chapter identifies how prisoners and staff interpret and embody their social roles and the field. A Bourdieusian interpretation highlights the inter-relationship

between complex personal and social histories, between people and place, structure and agency (Fraser, 2013; Shammas and Sandberg, 2016). For many prisoners, the embodied experience of social and health inequality that began before imprisonment is reinforced in custody and continues upon release. In response to their social deprivation, these prisoners developed a trans-carceral habitus (Quinn, 2023) and an infra-conscious attachment to prison as a paradoxical place of safety which harmed their reintegration upon release. Prisoners carried the hidden injuries of inequality and embodied their social stigma as they stained the image they have of themselves, conditioned to believe they are not 'good enough', and frequently 'reoffended'. During fieldwork, on average 42% of prisoners had reoffended (Ministry of Justice, 2023c), indicating that imprisonment is 'criminogenic and criminophagous' (Wacquant, 2009: 285). These findings reveal how 'rehabilitative' practices do not address the social forces of crime or the criminogenic effects of imprisonment, and indicate that a person cannot return to conditions they may have never known. As Carlen (2013b) highlighted, the majority of prisoners are so economically and/ or socially deprived that they have nothing to which they can be advantageously rehabilitated. Rather than 'rehabilitating' prisoners 'back' to competence (Mathiesen, 2006), 'habilitating' or 'habituating' may be a more appropriate ambition. The chapter contributes to alternative ways of theorising imprisonment and prisoners' behaviour inside and beyond the prison walls.

Prison practice was conditioned by the field as Clarendon staff developed a carceral habitus and doxa. Many staff were socialised by the field, configuring prisoners as a 'risk' to be controlled, a representation of their 'worst-case' mindset (McKendy et al., 2021). Rather than addressing the health needs of prisoners, staff generally questioned who "*belongs*" in prison and, allodoxically, reinforced the doxic view that a prison is a place of punishment and control. By responding to the needs of prisoners with a security disposition, Clarendon was a paradox of safety that perpetuated the structural violence and neglect of prisoners. The identification of a dominant security habitus and doxa among many Clarendon prison staff challenges Warr's (2018) argument that prison staff are not a homogenous collective. Although no one possesses the same habitus, the culture of risk assessments indicates how the prison field, like a magnetic field, draws actors towards a shared way of working and thinking that sustains its practices and structure. This supports extant findings that staff embody 'the power' to punish (Liebling, 2000, 2011), but critiques narratives that staff wield significant discretion in their role (Liebling and Price, 2001). Before and during the pandemic, staff sustained Clarendon's security culture by enacting their apparent "role" to protect the control and order of the prison.

This chapter offers a phenomenologically-informed critique of suggestions that prison is an opportunity to improve physical and mental health (Baybutt et al., 2014; Stürup-Toft et al., 2018; Wacquant, 2002). As Tomczak (2022) observed in the 'risky

remands' of mentally ill prisoners, prison is not a place of safety, and imprisoning them is not an acceptable practice as it exacerbates health issues. This conceptualisation can be expanded beyond the seriously mentally ill to many socially deprived prisoners. Rather than addressing their needs and facilitating reinvention, prisons over-claim their healing potential, limit change, and coerce prisoners into a manifest agency (Crewe and Ievins, 2020) of "*the walking dead*". Prisoners may interpret prison as a place of safety, attached to its protection from social marginalisation, but the structure and conditioning of imprisonment harms reintegration into wider society and perpetuates their em-prisoned habitus. In preparation for and upon release, some prisoners felt they had nowhere else to go and were isolated without support, so they thought "*fuck it*" and reoffended. These findings reaffirm how desistance is a fragile process (Halsey et al., 2017) and prisoners experience a social death (Price, 2015), with their identity and health stripped away and mortified. 'Fuck it' moments (Halsey et al., 2017) highlight the multifarious elements that shape individual outcomes.

Lastly, this chapter speaks to a question posed by Crewe (2008) who asked whether prison staff are confused about what the prison system is meant to achieve. Answering this is not straightforward. This chapter suggests that prison staff in Clarendon are aware of the changing demographic of prisoners, but prisoners are still configured as a 'risk' to be controlled as determined by the structure of the field. To prison staff, the embodiment and belief in prison 'security' is fundamental to how prison operates, providing its legitimacy. As such, most staff are not critical of the field and its structure, but of the external social forces establishing an apparent "*crisis*" in prisons. In the following chapters, the habitus and doxa of the field are deconstructed, examining how the security disposition is produced and maintained.

7. Use of Force: The Paradox of Security

"I think we are naive with use of force, we don't understand it and we don't understand it from a data perspective, we don't understand the detail behind it." (Billy, senior manager)

Clarendon was represented in the structure and minds of staff as a place of security; it was the *raison d'être,* the priority that shaped what *"prison is about"*. However, staff were confronted by *"chaotic criminals"* with complex histories of substance misuse, mental health issues, and violence in a prison with staff shortages and neglected infrastructure. The field re-produced an environment where *"staff were being assaulted by prisoners every day"* (Sally, senior manager). Assaults on staff each month were more than double other local adult male prisons, averaging more than 30 per 1,000 prisoners between 2020 and 2022, with 60 in July 2020. Prisoner-on-prisoner assaults were equally high during this period, averaging more than 28 assaults per month per 1,000 prisoners (IMB, 2021, 2022). Staff responded to this violence with the use of force[1]. This chapter deconstructs the pursuit and production of prison security, identifying that its practice perpetuates violence and re-produces insecurity, the conditions of its use.

Utilising the concepts of habitus and doxa, this chapter analyses the use of force as a case study of an action that represents and embodies the field before and during the pandemic, shaped by and shaping Clarendon's culture and practice. As illustrated thus far, prison is a field and social system configured by and configuring physical and social structures at a macro, meso, and micro level. Habitus, a way of being, and habitat, a place, are co-producing, as are the field and its actors. Therefore, the practice of imprisonment should be considered an embodiment of the field, a mirror of its production. Applying a Bourdieusian approach enables a deconstruction of practice, of the social construction of reality 'as it appears to intuition' (Bourdieu, 1999: 181). By examining the field in practice – the 'common sense' assumptions, the habits, and the effects of the prison – this case study links logic and practice (what participants believe, say, and do). This chapter challenges the meaning of prison security by analysing the practice of staff using force in Clarendon. First, it will define what use of force is, who uses it, and why it is of interest to understanding practice.

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[1] I use the term force, rather than physical violence to reflect, rather than reinforce, the language of the field and its participants.

Force as a Source of Knowledge and Power

What is the Use of Force?

Using force, or as Seymour (2003) describes it, 'legitimated use of violence' (p. 42), is how prison staff can 'legitimately' decide to physically intervene where there is a 'threat to security' (NOMS, 2005: 10). In prisons in England and Wales, use of force refers to the methods by which staff can 'cause pain' to gain compliance and maintain security (NOMS, 2005: 10), including the use of batons (metal sticks), PAVA spray (a synthetic pepper spray), or physical intervention, labelled *Control & Restraint* in adult prisons. Governed by a policy that states force is a 'last resort' to bring a prisoner 'under control' (p. 9), it can be used 'lawfully' where staff assess there is a 'risk' to life, limb, property, or 'good order of the establishment' (p. 5), and it is up to the member of staff to determine whether using force is 'reasonable, proportionate and necessary' (p. 5). How to define these concepts is left for the practitioner to decide. *Reasonableness* should be based on 'things such as the size, age and sex of both the prisoner and the member of staff concerned' (p. 5), *proportionality* 'between the means employed and the aim pursued' (p. 6), and *necessary* by 'the consequences of the prisoner not complying with his/her lawful instruction' (p. 5). In essence, the policy suggests using force is an individualised theoretical assessment and physical response to dynamic situations, a rational decision to physically intervene and control prisoners where there is a 'security' threat to the prison or a person. The policy disregards the wider social and relational dimensions that produce this practice.

Force should be considered a conditioned practice produced by the field. During interviews and fieldwork in Clarendon, multiple staff described knowing when to use force as a "*sense*" and embodied knowledge of the field:

> *[the previous Governor] didn't think we should use force but didn't understand we don't have a choice. It is what it is… Force isn't a success or a failure, it's just responding to the situation. You know when you need to use it, you sense it. That's why it's organised chaos, we are in control, but it can look from the outside that we aren't."* (Bernie, custodial manager, Fieldnotes, 20/01/2020)

> *"[Force] just gives us confidence to stay safe, to stay in control. You know when you need to use it and that you can use it when you need to."* (Simon, supervising officer, Fieldnotes, 13/01/2020)

According to Simon and Bernie, staff "*know*" and "*sense*" when they "*need*" to use force to "*stay in control*". Like when a motor driver knows when to brake or a boxer feels when to duck and weave, using force is considered a practical sense of the field. These cognitive narratives accord with the concept of *habitus,* where the use of force is 'second nature', a socially constituted system of cognitive and motivation structures (Bourdieu, 1977: 76), which again highlights the mutually reinforcing

relationship between the field and actions. Their body and their actions were a memory of their social conditions and expectations.

This practical sense of "*knowing*" was repeated during interviews and informal conversations during fieldwork. Staff suggested that they developed this "*feeling*" or "*jail craft*" through time and experience:

> *I ask what makes a good prison officer. Harry replies: "Experience. You learn so much over time. You can learn a lot in training, but nothing prepares you for the wings. Like I said, you learn to feel the prison, hear what's happening, sense what's needed."* (Fieldnotes, 06/01/2020)

> *"It's just a feeling, in that moment, knowing what you're meaning to be doing, it's jail craft."* (Stephen, prison officer, Fieldnotes 10/02/2020)

> *"We can teach people the theory, but the practice is different and you don't know, none of us know how we're going to react and of course, that reaction changes with time… they [officers] do a remarkable job, don't get me wrong, many of them, well, they either stay or go but the ones who stay, they are remarkable in the skillset that they learn and are able to learn in very difficult circumstances."* (Edmond, senior manager)

> *"It's what we do, the work we do, like knowing how to control a situation or when to use force, it's the work we do."* (William, prison officer, Fieldnotes 10/02/2020)

These descriptions of controlling a situation and using force as part of "*jail craft",* an embodied discourse and learned practice, reinforce the existence of a field-specific habitus or 'working personality' (Crawley, 2004a, b; Arnold, 2016). Demonstrating a link between structure ("*it's the work we do*", "*the theory*") and agency ("*it's what we do*", "*the practice*"), staff said that they learned to "*feel*" rather than 'rationalise' a response to the situation, a sense of knowing when to use force. By "*feeling*" what is happening in other parts of the prison, staff were able to extend their experience beyond their physical proximity, using their environment and their senses as a 'source of knowledge' to exercise their agency (Herrity, 2019: 26). This sense illuminates how staff engage sensually and physically with the social life of their prison and why Edmond and some scholars have referred to prison practice as highly skilled (Liebling, 2011; Liebling et al., 2011; Liebling and Price, 1999). Although the use of force may be thought of as a "*failure*" or an absence of de-escalation skills by some (Bosworth and Ashcroft, 2021), staff are generally considered 'specialists in mediation and arbitration' (Liebling, 2000: 347), able to use their skills and exercise their knowledge to stay in control. Sound and sensing their environment were central to how staff practised surveillance and security in custody. How staff experience, interpret, and make sense of their environment provides a bridge between structure and agency.

However, this sense of "*jail craft*" as a skill underplays the socially structured dimensions of prison practice. Staff described their practice as instinctive and reactive, a learned response to "*know*" or "*sense what's needed.*" It was 'natural', a regular and regulated behaviour without in any way being the product of obedience to rules (Bourdieu, 1977: 72), orchestrated without a conductor. Staff imbued their senses with meaning and, without strategic intention, reinforced the production of imprisonment by "*feeling*" and "*knowing*" when to use force. It was their "*work*" and their "*sense*" to provide control. It was self-evident. In this way, the senses unite the field, weighted with expectation and experience (Herrity, 2019). Therefore, it may be more apt to re-conceptualise staff as 'specialists of mediation', translating their structure into action, rather than staff using their agency and discretion as 'mediators and arbitrators' of peace. Staff were physically and psychologically 'attuned to the tense dynamics of prison life' (McElligott, 2007: 91). As Marquart (1986) explained, the use of physical coercion was highly structured and deeply entrenched in the prison subculture, a learned control mechanism for staff to exert their power over others and maintain control and order, the status and hierarchy of staff, and staff solidarity. Force can be interpreted as a way of working; like a politician becomes attuned to the political game (Page, 2013), force is an embodied response of and to the field – a structuring and structured practice of logic.

Why Look at the Use of Force in Clarendon?

Force is significant to the attainment of authority or disciplinary capital (Warr, 2018) and the experience of imprisonment. Many studies have looked at the symbolic control structure of prisons, such as disciplinary proceedings, including adjudications (Butler and Maruna, 2016); rewards (Liebling, 2008); food (Godderis, 2006); and other mechanisms where disciplinary power has moved 'backstage', concealing its exercise over prisoners (Crewe, 2007, 2009/2012; Garland, 1997). Few have examined and deconstructed how prison and its staff use physical coercion, its 'naked power' (Crewe, 2009/2012: 80), to identify how the field is constructed and maintained. Considering its prominence in practice, this has created an unbalanced picture of how the field operates and produces practice and outcomes.

Significantly, only operational staff have the authority to use physical force in prison, a power conferred by the state and its legal mechanisms. Bourdieu et al. (1994) explain that the state determines who can exercise force, with the military, police, and prison officers granted the 'powers of a constable' for this purpose. In England and Wales, legal provisions, such as the Criminal Law Act 1967, and the Criminal Justice Act 1991, along with Prison Rules and national policies, enable operational staff as the only group of people in prison to *legitimately* use 'any type of force' (NOMS, 2005: 17) if individuals deem it 'reasonable' and 'justified'. Consequently, within a prison already emblematic of state control and dominance (Warr, 2018: 9),

the field revolves around operational staff who engender the prison's disciplinary interests and those of the state. This monopoly over the legitimate use of force situates operational staff at the heart of the prison field, characterised by control and coercion. As Hepburn (1985) observed, the authority of operational prison staff rests on the practice of physical force, positioning them with a 'legitimate right to be obeyed' within a security-oriented prison (p. 146). With this 'lawful' right to be obeyed and use force, operational staff are centrally positioned in the prison field. It is a 'manifestation' of the authority 'vested' in operational staff (Bosworth and Ashcroft, 2021: 69). Force is one way of displaying their power in the structure and practices of imprisonment.

This positioning has enabled operational staff to advance their interests nationally and protect their local disciplinary capital. Between 2018 and 2023 in England and Wales, the Prison Officers Association described prisons as 'inherently violent' (2022, January) amidst a national 'health and safety crisis' (2019, April), with 'members' required to:

> 'manage and supervise the most difficult and vulnerable people in our society and are required to deal with extreme levels of violence that often results in the use [of] control and restraint techniques to manage difficult and life-threatening situations.' (2018, February)

To manage these 'extreme levels of violence' produced, in part, by understaffing and 'dwindling' experience (2019, April), the Prison Officers Association consistently and often successfully advanced requests for PAVA spray and new handcuffs (2019, April; 2020, April), new laws for prosecuting prisoners (2021, December; 2022, January), greater resourcing and restrictions on prisoners (2023, July), renegotiating staff pensions and retirement ages (2018, December), and for restraint by the Prison Service on whether to conduct investigations into excessive use of force (2018, February), arguing that their 'health and safety is not for sale' (2018, December) as they 'work in the most hostile and violent workplace in western Europe without adequate protective mechanisms in place to reduce and negate risk' (2020, April). The Prison Reform Trust and the Equality and Human Rights Commission warned against the use of PAVA spray, revealing 'discriminatory' practices (Prison Reform Trust, 2023, November). Still, the General Secretary for the Prison Officers trade union wrote they would not be 'lectured' by those who do not 'live in the real world' or 'spend time walking in the shoes of a Prison Officer' (2019, April). The Prison Officers Association used the 'prison crisis' to advance their agenda. In a study of prison practice in the United States, Page (2013) identified that prison officer trade unions promote prison as hard work and violent, trading in its value to advance their agenda, in that the more violence occurs and the more officers 'have to' respond in the name of security and safety, the more they legitimise their behaviour, their importance to society, and their economic value. Thus, the local power of

operational staff is related to the goals of the field. The use of force is one way in which power and position are embodied and displayed by local and national actors.

Rather than a peripheral practice of imprisonment, force was central to its experience in Clarendon. Some prisoners felt that the use of force, like the structure and material design of imprisonment, was a judgement that mobilised and represented the broader values and practices to control prisoners:

> *"Deep down you will say I'm not here to judge you but they [operational staff] are here to judge you! They end up taking matters into their own hands, they judge you."* (Mr Adah)

> *"It [the use of force] shows that we're in control of what happens here, you will do as you're told or you will be made to do – that's what they're here for, isn't it? … They're here to make us do as we're told. I do like how prison officers get told that they, when they start the job, that they'll be helping to rehabilitate prisoners, giving them the chance to help them change their life. They just get stuck on the wing and told to bang everyone up. Not much rehabilitation working here, is there?"* (Felix)

These prisoners contextualised the use of force within the wider aims and practice of imprisonment. Mr Adah and Felix felt *"judged"* by prison staff that used force to *"show that we're in control"* and *"take matters into their own hands"*. Force communicated and represented the punitive social values and controlling culture of imprisonment. The prominence of force in prisoners' experience was evident before and during fieldwork. In the six months before fieldwork commenced, nearly 25% of prisoners had been physically restrained by staff in Clarendon compared with almost 15% nationally (HMIP, 2022a, b). On the second day of fieldwork in January, I recorded three general alarms requiring *"all available staff"* to respond and use force. This continued upon returning to the field during the pandemic, where in September four general alarms occurred over two days requiring staff to use force. In July 2020, staff used force on average three times a day, and this trend of use continued for months and years to come. Compared with a monthly average of 44 uses of force per 1,000 prisoners in 2019-20, Clarendon staff used force on average 55 times a month in 2020-21, and 52 times a month in 2021-22 (IMB, 2020, 2022). Statistically[2], the pandemic seemed to have little effect on the use of force, although prisoners spent more time *"banged up"* in their cells and less time interacting with staff, prompting the question, why?

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[2] Three interview participants suggested that Use of Force data is likely to be underreported due to incident reporting paperwork being incomplete, not processed, and/or staff not reporting incidents. This is supported by evidence from the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (2020). However, HMPPS do not publish Use of Force data so it is challenging to identify the true scale of staff violence in prisons.

Again, the prevalence of force is not unique to Clarendon. In 2020-21, Clarendon's comparator group of prisons (male locals) averaged 60 uses of force per month per 1,000 prisoners, and 50 for 2021-22 (IMB, 2022). Nationally, force had been used over 49,000 times in the 12 months to March 2020, 591 times per 1,000 prisoners (*The Guardian* 2021, January), and there were nearly 20,000 prisoner-on-prisoner assaults a year between 2016 and 2020, at 246 per 1,000 prisoners (Ministry of Justice, 2024), which, according to prison policy, would have required staff intervention. In 2019, the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) (2020) found that force is 'widespread' and 'excessive' (p. 59) in England and Wales' prisons. The CPT observed that force was frequently misused by prison officers, who inflicted 'unjustified violence' on prisoners using pre-emptive and 'preventive strikes' to coerce and control prisoners, promoting a 'climate of fear, where staff and inmates justifiably feel at risk of violence' (p. 6). In contrast with policy, the use of force was not observed as a 'last resort'. Whilst Crewe (2009/2012) previously argued that force and violence are not the 'most prominent characteristics' (p. 448) of imprisonment in England and Wales, and Arnold (2016) stated that officers tend to reject this mode of power, the present evidence suggests that force and violence are now more prevalent in prison practice. As Gooch (2013) identified, the threat or physical use 'of coercive force underpins and structures the very nature and texture of prison life' (p. 76). Historical data is limited but the available information suggests that the prevalence of force is not unique to Clarendon.

Use of Force as a Case Study

The following case study is one of numerous incidents where Clarendon staff responded to 'security threats' with force during fieldwork. It describes what happens to Kyle after being assaulted by another prisoner. Conscious of the possible implications of speaking with Kyle after what may have been a traumatic episode, I did not speak with him in the aftermath, and so the following account is devoid of his voice and experience. It privileges my subjectivity, what I saw, heard, and felt, by being in the *affective atmosphere* (Fraser, 2021) of imprisonment, where those present can spatially and emotionally share a subjective experience. It is incapable of communicating the depth of pain that Kyle may have felt, but it demonstrates that Clarendon is a place of conflict and suggests that force is worthy of exploration as a research object that unveils the workings of Bourdieu's (1987) *field* – a confrontation between 'social systems locked in asymmetrical relations of material and symbolic power' (Wacquant, 2004: 393). This section uses fieldnotes, interviews, and observational data to understand the production of force.

> *I'm standing on the centre with Bernie, watching movements before lunch when the general alarm sounds on the radio. "I had a feeling that was*

coming." (Bernie) There is a fight between prisoners on C wing but in the 10-20 seconds it takes to get there, it's over. The wing seems to be operating as if nothing happened. Prisoners are being served lunch in an orderly queue and chatting, there's no banging on the doors or raised voices.

There are a couple of officers blocking the entrance to the stairwell a few metres from the lunch queue and that's where Bernie finds a prisoner, Kyle, dazed, pale, crying on the staircase pinching his nose. He was (allegedly) assaulted by Neil, another prisoner and (I'm told by Bernie) a prominent Serious Organised Crime 'nominal'.

We are told by an officer that Neil has already been "banged up" in his cell after punching Kyle in the eye socket and nose, causing suspected fractures to both. Prison officers on the wing were quick to intervene (use force) and Kyle is now trying to block his nose as the blood streams out and mixes with the tears. An officer sits down next to him and calmly reassures him that he's ok, "he [Neil] will be punished" and someone from healthcare is on their way.

The officers aren't in a rush to move Kyle. They shield him from the view of other prisoners and stop anyone trying to walk up or down the stairwell. Bernie says that they will wait until he stops crying. No one explicitly says why, but it's evident from the body language and tone that they are trying to protect his dignity.

Kyle doesn't seem to be aware of anything going on around him. He seems shocked, trying to process what happened. It is quite a sight to see a strong, 5ft 11ish prisoner with tattoos crying. He must be around 100kg. I do not get a sight of Neil but I can only assume he took Kyle by surprise.

When Kyle is ready, he is 'escorted' by five/six staff back to his cell. I notice that these officers are decidedly bigger than the staff who were supporting Kyle on the stairwell; some are wearing gloves, which seem out of place, like they're preparing for something about to happen.

Led by a couple of officers at the back and a few trailing him, Kyle walks up the stairwell to the next landing and walks past Neil's cell. I follow but at a distance. Suddenly, Kyle regains his voice and his strength, he is resolute in his vengeance and attempts to hang around Neil's cell, banging on the door. He is furious but is pushed on by a couple of the escorting staff. Bernie and I take a few steps back to distance ourselves from the staff.

Ten metres on, Kyle has come fully back to life. His fury has reduced but he is now shouting at staff to stop pushing him. He is transformed from the person we saw on the stairwell. Kyle is determined to stay around Neil's cell and staff do not heed the warnings. Kyle attempts to push the most vocal and physical officer out of the way. The officer, more than a physical match for Kyle, raises

his voice and repeats the order less kindly, "Move along, move along!" until Kyle is angered beyond reason. Kyle tries to push the officer again, telling him to "leave me alone" and "I haven't done nothing wrong!" Kyle won't give up. The officer won't give Kyle space. Rather than giving him space, they seem to be closing in. The queuing prisoners are now watching from the landing below.

In the blink of an eye, the officer pushing Kyle is fighting him. He pulls Kyle's head down and as if on cue, staff jump on Kyle to restrain him. They wrestle for a few seconds before Kyle's legs give way. It takes six to bring Kyle down to the floor, which is no small achievement. It takes an officer on each limb and one on the back to take him to the floor.

Once on the ground, Kyle turns feeble again. He seems vulnerable. His muscles relax, his voice weakens… Kyle must have been as confused as I was about what had happened as his bloody face was being pushed into the ground… In this time, most prisoners had quietly gone back to their cells. It didn't seem that they wanted to watch what was happening. Slowly but surely, the officers put Kyle in handcuffs and move him back to his cell on the landing above. Kyle is calm, albeit tearing up again as he enters his cell. He is left with his head in his hands, blood still streaming, as the door is locked behind him.

Three hours later, I see Kyle in reception, about to go out to the hospital for treatment for his injuries. The damage to his eye socket seems substantial and he is barely conscious. The adrenaline had worn off and Kyle was feeling the full effects of the assault. This hulk of a man is still teary and feeling nauseous. He says "Hi" timidly, asks if I'm "the researcher" and nods. He was glad I had seen what happened earlier: "That's prison." (Fieldnotes, 20/01/2020, condensed for brevity)

This case study demonstrates that prisons are a 'violent world' (Gooch, 2013: 153), where prisoners and staff consistently experience actual or threatened physical altercations. A week after the incident with Kyle, I got the privileged opportunity to review some of the written justifications ("Annex A's") provided by operational staff involved in the use of force. Sitting with the responsible custodial manager, I read how staff legitimised their actions on Kyle:

The forms ask for who is involved, the 'events' leading up to the incident, type of force 'employed', and a statement by staff on what happened and why. I review a few of the completed forms (I am told by the CM that there are quite a few "outstanding", ie. incomplete), including a few from the incident a week or so ago. I quickly read more than ten 'justifications' as they aren't more than a few sentences long and they are all pretty much identical in format and content, following the template provided by the policy:

I [insert name], [insert role/job title], am C&R trained/did my refresher on [insert date]. I used force on prisoner [insert name or ID] because it was necessary, reasonable, and proportionate. I confirm that the details above are correct to the best of my knowledge.

I'm told that most of the forms are like this, "we receive hundreds like this", where the statements almost reflect policy principles word for word. Reading them, it feels like prison staff are playing at use of force, using the policy against itself to justify whatever they think is justifiable. I voice this and the CM agrees, "Everyone knows it or is wilfully blind to it but it's the way it works, the way it has always been." (Fieldnotes 28/01/2020)

It seemed, upon reading the Annex A 'justifications', that the use of force was self-legitimising in Clarendon. Reminiscent of how Mary described handcuffing prisoners and her doxic belief in security as "*is*" in prison and "*just the way it works*", staff rationalised that their use of force on Kyle was self-evident, common sense, and *natural*: it was necessary to use force because force was necessary, "*the way it works*". In the sections to follow, I analyse the modes of thought producing the use of force and argue that this case study is a self-perpetuating product of the field. In section one, I analyse the *intuitive* mental structures that produce the practice of force and how force is considered normal. Section two critically analyses these assumptions to describe force as a product of its own conditions, self-perpetuating a cycle of violence and control in prison.

'Arte et Labore': Deconstructing the Normality of Practice

By utilising field theory to deconstruct the use of force, staff actions can be understood as the product of taken-for-granted beliefs and assumptions that shape and legitimise practice. As a cornerstone of the field, doxa reveals the 'fundamental beliefs' (Bourdieu, 2000: 16) that produce discourse and thought, a cognitive structure or point of view that shapes and is shaped by social conditioning, presenting practice as nature, regularities as rules, and individual decision-making as universal. Deconstructing the doxic framework of how operational staff think about and interpret their use of force is key to understanding how practice is produced in Clarendon. This section explores how the *argot* – language, slang, or jargon of a sub-group – of policy and training produces a double-game strategy that empowers and constrains staff in their use of force by establishing an orthodoxic view of force as a universal and value-neutral practice. It commences by establishing how operational staff consider the use of force as "*normal*" and "*embedded*" in Clarendon's culture.

Force as "The norm"

The case study reflects the embodied and rationalised normality of violence and its presence in Clarendon. Its use by prisoners and staff seemed to be a central part of

the prison experience in Clarendon as indicated by Kyle's matter-of-fact statement, "*That's prison*", other prisoners continuing to queue for lunch accompanied by the mundane sounds of everyday chatter, and the decision to quickly use force in response to Kyle not obeying orders. Upon questioning why force was so prevalent in Clarendon before and during the pandemic, Sally, a senior manager, explained:

> "*Use of force is still a real problem… [it's] so embedded in the culture… [but] there's a permanent place for use of force, which is why we train staff to use it.*"

This cognitive narrative that force was "*embedded*" and "*permanent*" in the practice of Clarendon indicates how the majority of operational staff produced a doxic narrative of the use of force as normal. Three managers, Bernie, Billy, and Simon, echoed this belief:

> "*There was a friend of mine on Facebook from there who said she had 'the worst day ever.' I had to ask what happened and she said she had to use force (Bernie laughs). I explained that I once used force six times in a day here. She didn't believe me but I promised her… what's normal here isn't everywhere. There's not a great deal of rehabilitation here but it means we can stay in control.*" (Bernie, custodial manager, Fieldnotes, 20/01/2020)

> "*The culture in [Clarendon] is always 'Grrrr' and you put that into context with the lack of ability to communicate and de-escalate, and you almost get a perfect storm.*" (Billy, senior manager)

> "*Force is the first thing that they [officers] resort to… I suppose a lot of these people are violent when they come in and do you necessarily treat violence with violence? Does that work? I don't know, some of these guys in here that's the only language they understand.*" (Simon, supervising officer)

These quotes suggested that a "*normal*" culture of force existed in Clarendon, where using force was a prominent way of being, thinking, and communicating in the field. Together with the prevalence of assaults by prisoners, their trans-carceral habitus, understaffing, overcrowding, extended periods isolated in their cells, and neglected infrastructure, force was part of a "*perfect storm*" of violence. Billy's "*Grrrr*" reinforces Simon's point that force was understood as a substitute for verbal communication in Clarendon, it was a "*language*", a fundamental part of prison operations, where force is expressed in terms of being ordinary, routine, and habitual – "*the first thing that they [officers] resort to*". After one use of force incident, an officer explained: "*You have to show them (prisoners), professionally, that you're in charge. Prisoners like that only listen to us when we are on top of them*" (Fieldnotes, 04/02/2020). Almost eight months later, these narratives persisted, indicating that using force transcended a public health emergency.

During the pandemic, the views of operational staff on force seemed unaffected by the circulation of COVID-19. Using force remained 'common sense':

> *He [Dale] shouts to a colleague (Watford) to join us on the centre as we discuss how the use of force has apparently not changed during the pandemic: "Why would it? We are still dealing with violent prisoners." "They still have to come out for Domestics, yes it's for shorter but that doesn't change how we work with them. We've still got to protect ourselves when the time's right." "It [the shorter regime] just seems to have concentrated the chaos into a short period."* (Fieldnotes, 28/09/2020)

> *"At some point you're going to need to step in because of the nature of the people you're dealing with."* (Billy, senior manager)

> *"You're never going to stop drugs in prison, you're never going to stop violence"* (Simon, supervising officer)

Revealing the mental structures of using force and the common sense "*nature*" of their practice, these staff still blamed "*troublesome*" and "*violent prisoners*". Force was associated with delivering safety and security, and the conditions of imprisonment were unaffected by the pandemic, where "*you've got to use force when it's necessary*" and force "*couldn't be avoided*" (Fieldnotes, 09/09/2020). These doxic narratives demonstrate how many staff felt compromised by wider structures and limited to prevent safety and security issues from arising. This cohort stigmatised prisoners and legitimised their actions in trying to maintain control over "*the chaos*". Chris, a custodial manager, summarised the prevailing sense of normality among all operational staff who were interviewed in Clarendon:

> *"There is a real, you know, if anyone refuses [an order] bang, down to reception let's go so that's the acceptance of use of force or regular use of force, when it shouldn't be the norm but still we do it on lower levels [of security threats] but maybe that's developing an attitude towards staff where they are more readily using force than they were in previous years."*

To Chris, like his peers, their use of force was "*the norm*", and although he acknowledged that it "*shouldn't*" be a regular occurrence, he still legitimised its use "*on lower levels*" of security threats, mirroring the doxic view among all operational staff that there is a "*permanent place for use of force*". This was reflected in the local and national data where levels of violence and force remained consistently high between 2015 and 2022 (HMIP, 2022b; Ministry of Justice, 2024), although most prisoners were isolated in their cells for more than 23 hours a day. Aaron, a custodial manager, best articulates the relationship between the use of force and the practice of imprisonment in Clarendon:

> *"Use of force permeates this prison, it permeates every prison."* (Fieldnotes, 27/01/2020)

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Violence was normalised as part of a default 'worst-case' disposition among most operational staff in Clarendon, "*permeating*" their every practice and, according to Aaron, the practices of imprisonment more widely. This is supported by extant literature. Mckendy et al. (2021) identified this antagonistic and normalised culture of violence in their study of prison officers in Canada, Symkovych (2019) observed that force 'defines a prison' in Ukraine, central to staff securing prisoner compliance, and, more recently in England and Wales, the Prison Reform Trust (2023, November) raised concerns about the "normalised" use of PAVA spray in prisons. Based on available data since the national roll-out in 2019, the Prison Reform Trust highlighted the 'normal' discrimination by staff when they 'perceived a risk' of violence (p. 5) and their disproportionate use of synthetic pepper spray on Black prisoners. Whilst criminological research on this subject is minimal, this evidence on the use and perception of force by staff indicates a systemic issue of imprisonment. Imprisonment was established on the principles of force as prisons enact 'violence' upon the bodies of prisoners by holding them against their will and imposing draconian policing and control of prisoners (Rhodes, 2001). To understand what fuels this normality of force and why it persisted despite the pandemic, I attended one of Clarendon's annual use of force training sessions for operational staff and reviewed the national policy, identifying how the doxa of force was, in part, produced by the field.

The Double-Game Strategy

This section explores how the use of force is a product of a double-game strategy, the explicit and implicit communication of what is said or written and what is meant in training and policy. It is the 'appearance' of following the codified rules and responding to the essential part of what the rule is 'meant to guarantee' (Lamaison and Bourdieu, 1986: 113). Subsequently, the use of force is considered an "*inevitable*" and self-reinforcing action of its own conditions, where policy and law limit the possibilities of action and encourage its use.

Upon accepting an invitation from one of the training instructors in early March, I attended 'The Dojo', a martial arts-esque space in a gated ('restricted') area between Cador and the Mains to see what operational staff are taught in their mandatory annual use of force training sessions. One room was set up as a classroom to teach 'theory' in the morning and the other a room for 'physical exercises' in the afternoon with padded flooring and walls, 'Arte et Labore' (by Skill and Labour) emblazoned on one side, and a make-shift prisoner cell in the corner. Over a day, two instructors taught a class of ten trainees (nine prison officers and me) the "*legal justifications*" and "*reasons*" for using force and how to use two new use of force tools: PAVA (synthetic pepper) spray and SPEAR – an acronym for Spontaneous Protection Enabling Accelerated Response, a new "*technique*" for

control and restraint of prisoners. As the fieldnotes below suggest, the training seemed designed to legitimise and empower the trainees to use force:

The morning of theory starts with the trainees being taught the "lawful justifications" and "authority" by which they can legally use force (PSO 1600, common law, criminal law, Human Rights Act). A lot of legalese is used but the crux of the message is abundantly clear: 'Officers can use force if it's reasonable, proportionate, and necessary' During a break, the instructors tell me this section is set up for "buy-in", convincing staff of the training techniques and the legitimacy of its use: "We want them to use it, to have the confidence to use it." In a PowerPoint presentation, there are frequent references to policy (PSO 1600) as we are told:

> *the actions of the officer will not necessarily be wrong or unlawful, provided that they have acted reasonably and within the law. (p.6)*

> *it is recognised that a member of staff may at times have no other option than to use force. (p.7)*

> *Controlling a conflict that has escalated beyond verbal reasoning may entail using force. However, all staff must make their own decision about how to act in particular situations. (p.7)*

In the training and policy, there are frequent references othering the 'violent' prisoner (p. 8). The trainers portray us as the "good guys" vs. the "bad, nasty guys". We are told that force is there to "control" prisoners, suggesting that they are the risk rather than at risk. However, the whole thing is veiled in 'science' and neutrality as the instructors explain the training is "behaviourally-inspired and genetically-wired" (a catchphrase provided by the private company that developed SPEAR), even referencing academic studies from the 1950s (Hick's Law: the more stimuli or choices users face, the longer it takes them to make a decision) and using exclusionary language to try and validate their training: "It's our responsibility", "we decide when we need to use it", "it's to subdue the bad guys". Throughout, instructors use terms and phrases such as "limbic system", "DNA", "genetics", "cognitive and neuro-associations", "pre-contact cues", "visual", "auditory", and "tactile": "It's human behaviour, in our DNA, to respond or flinch, a reflex action, to threats, SPEAR teaches you to identify pre-contact cues, the clench of a fist, the change of stance, and to respond."…

After the theory, teaching moves on to body positioning in The Dojo, understanding physical cues from a potential attacker, how to destabilise a "bad guy" and how to use one's "caveman reflexes" to protect and counter an attack.

The instructors explain to the class that the training is a development from standard annual control & restraint training that is more focussed on reacting to a "situation that is occurring" and "putting hands" on prisoners. "This is about reacting earlier". The instructors tell us that SPEAR is about responding to a "threat" with a greater degree of confrontation due to "pre-contact cues" and "initiating" contact – "they won't expect it, so you gain the advantage." Everyone nods along. During a break, a few trainees tell me that it is already making them "feel more confident" about returning to the wings. (Fieldnotes, 09/03/2020, condensed for brevity)

Force is framed as *legitimate*, the action of "*good*" versus "*bad*", and *natural*, the product of 'science', as actors are caught within the rules of the game, both actual and essential. Operational staff are empowered to legitimately use force in response to "*threats*", yet constrained by their risk logic as force is the only 'logical' course of action to control prisoners. Thus, the use of force policy and training, like the searching policy, performs a double-game strategy that maintains the status quo of the field as a place of control and the social hierarchy with operational staff at the centre. This sense of encouragement was reflected in conversations with officers after training:

As we finish, I approach a couple of the officers I know who are chatting and they express their surprise in the tone of the training: "It's really good! I thought it would be more about when we can't use it and learning loads of rules and laws but it's not that at all." "Yeah, I thought it was quite good, I feel better about using it now," I ask why. "Any time something new is introduced, there's normally loads of rules but this almost felt like they were encouraging us to use it." "Yeah, I don't feel afraid to use it now. Like, we know when we're meant to use it but it's like it's just another thing we can use." (Fieldnotes, 09/03/2020)

The training facilitated confidence and a sense of empowerment as trainees learned to interpret force as legitimate and normal, a shared way of working that reduces the possibility of using other actions "*when we're meant to use it*". The use of force was both a single action among the illusion of many possibilities and a legitimate and "*inevitable*" response to a 'security threat'. Two managers explained that policy and law encourage and legitimise their use of force:

"It's common law, we're looking after them… situations where yeah, legally I can use force, [there are] thousands! I could use force every part of every shift" (Craig, custodial manager)

"The policy says, this human being that I'm dealing with, they've got a label 'prisoner' – that's a good starting label, isn't it, so you've got the label prisoner, that legitimises me in locking you up and using force on you if I have to and stuff like that, then you can apply all these other labels… Behind each

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of those labels, there's a whole set of policies and, therefore, people can hide behind all those policies and tell you that they have done things right." (Edmond, senior manager)

Policies and laws were interpreted as providing legitimacy and symbolic power to use force, structuring thought and behaviour. As Edmond suggested, they provide operational staff with an 'objective truth', a *"label… that legitimises me in locking you up"* and *"hides"* any conscious intention, turning decision-making into a theoretical model of rules and responsibilities that structures the practice of imprisonment and provides staff with the authority to impose control. Tomczak (2018: 117) similarly observed that prison policies have a strategic purpose to legitimise prison conditions and their problematic practices. In other words, the habitus of staff, the 'feel for the game', is authorised by policy.

Central to the development of this strategic purpose is the *otherness* of prisoners, which distinguishes the 'legitimate' actions of operational staff from the violence of prisoners, where the trainees are taught, *"Prisoners use violence, staff use force"*. This neutrality and otherness produce a socially recognised collective identity and habitus among operational staff where the use of force is both objective and subjective, 'beyond the reach of those it regulates and, paradoxically, of those who create it' (Schlosser, 2013: 38). Force is seen as something that occurs externally, a rule of prison *nature*, and internally, an action of individual obedience and responsibility to maintain control. Through the *argot* of policy and law, operational staff are recognised and validated as the 'ruling class' in prison, imbued with 'legitimate' capital to use force and thus maintain the social hierarchy among staff and prisoners. Equally, by establishing a theoretical 'model' of force for 'all' operational staff (*"we're looking after them"* and *"it's our responsibility"*) that protects the individual from scrutiny about their use of violence, no one can maintain nor challenge that use of force is *a priori* reserved for some. Bourdieu (1987, 1990a) calls this process a *chain of logical reasoning* or *legitimation*, where the privileged few are protected from their actions under the guise of the many through forms of cultural capital that recognise, validate, reinforce, and reproduce the social hierarchy. Not every operational staff member will use force, but as a group, their disciplinary capital is protected and reinforced by their 'legitimate' positioning within policy and practice as the consecrated harbingers of disciplinary power, responsible for prison 'security' and, therefore, *"using force on you if I have to"*.

Training and policy empower operational staff to use force, but it constrains them. The explicit narrative that legitimises force in training and policy constrains the practice of staff by implicitly limiting alternative possibilities of action. Force was taught as *"human behaviour"*, described in the policy as a physical response when staff *"have no other option"*, and as the fieldnotes explain, it is shrouded in neutral and universal *argot*, where *"we"* perform *"our responsibility"* to *"control"* prisoners

with "*behaviourally-inspired and genetically-wired*" techniques. Bourdieu (1983) describes this process as *scientificity*, the portrayal of actions being 'evidence-based' or empirical, generalisable, and without bias – mimicking science. Trainees were told force is "*in our DNA*" and part of their duty ("*responsibility*") as operational staff to "*control*" prisoners by "*initiating*" contact earlier. In other words, give in to your natural "*caveman*" urges and use force as the only logical course of action.

Their *natural* actions are then judged against their own interpretations, "*provided they have acted reasonably*". Those producing force and those assessing whether it is justifiable share a doxic security mindset and habitus that sustains its everyday acceptance. This is evidenced in Annex A 'justifications' where statements by operational staff explaining why they used force mirror the policy principles. As Craig, a custodial manager, puts it: "*If it's [force] justifiable, if anything's justifiable, it's justifiable*". Staff did not question their logic for using force. Marquart (1986) and Van Maanen (1978) similarly noted that, in almost every situation, post-factor explanations were manufactured by staff to legitimise their use of force; if they felt threatened, they could use force, if they were being assaulted, they can use force, and if a prisoner is not complying with orders, they can use force. The use of force training and policy can be interpreted as 'the source' by which actions are understood, framed, and determined as 'thinkable' or 'unthinkable' (Page, 2013: 154). The belief in force as inevitable, legitimate, and universal reveals how the prison field is constructed upon violence, symbolic and physical.

Representing the 'logical' constraints of using force, many operational staff in Clarendon repeatedly emphasised that they do not "*choose*" to use force:

> "*he has left us no other choice*" (Pink, officer, Fieldnotes 04/02/2020)

> "*It [force] is inevitable. I think that if the culture and the understanding of staff was better then our force would be much less. It is also our first port of call here: 'Pack your kit, you're moving.' 'No!' *Bang*, done. Rather than try to communicate with people.*" (Billy, senior manager)

> "*Force isn't a success or a failure, it's just responding to the situation.*" (Bernie, custodial manager, Fieldnotes, 20/01/2020)

> "*[Force] is just use of force... I don't choose to get involved, I just have to sometimes... it's always necessary, either responding to their cues or supporting someone else who has intervened.*" (Mik, prison officer, 28/01/2020)

With their agency shrouded by 'science' and doxa, staff felt that their use of force was a fundamental and "*inevitable*" part of their duty to maintain prison security, both by being encouraged and constrained to use force as the only legitimate course of action. By de-individualising staff through the *argot* of neutrality and universality, training and policy provide the language and framing for staff to devolve

themselves of individual responsibility for their "*necessary*" actions performed on behalf of the state. Bourdieu (1977) calls this the fallacy of the rule, which, like the risk assessment process detailed in the previous chapter, turns consciousness and ways of thinking into 'knowledge', agency and experience into implicit rules and regularities. These staff did not have another "*choice*"; it was "*necessary*" to respond with force. The *responsibilisation* strategy of imprisonment framed prisoner behaviour as 'rational' and agentic (for example see Bosworth, 2016), whilst policy and law 'governing' operational practice enable these staff to produce and be produced by the local rules and norms of their field, concealing the alternative possibilities of action. Collectively, they frame how force is understood, embodied, and structured, providing the language, tools, and experiences of force. As Bourdieu (1993) wrote of art, 'belief in the value of the work… is part of the full reality of the work of art' (p. 36) – like art, the constitution of force is linked to its institution. It reproduces an unquestioned acceptability and necessity to control other humans. Drake (2012) identified this relationship in the production of prison security ideology more broadly, where security is considered absolute and fundamental in prison environments, unquestionable, benign, and seemingly rational. The belief in force and the conditions of its use should be considered self-perpetuating, a manifestation of a field in which its structure and functioning, its design and implementation as a place of control, are concentrated.

Theorising the use of force as a representation of staff habitus and doxa indicates how its practice is a product of wider field relations. This finding contrasts with extant literature on prison practice. Twining and Miers (1982) stated that prison instructions are 'open textured' and promote discretion (p. 213). Liebling (2000) and Blasko (2013) equally suggested that discretion was central to prison work, with personal relationships critical to understanding the dynamics of imprisonment. Crewe (2007) and Bennett (2012) stated that because of 'managerialism' prison officers now predominantly implement, rather than embody, penal power, practising a form of 'constrained individualism' (p. 295). These conclusions overlook the relations between policies and practice, between fields and actors. Theorising this *"normal"* belief in force as doxic reveals how the 'decision' to use force is, *inter alia*, a product of the penal field and its policies, a double-game strategy that empowers and constrains the actions of actors. The habitus of operational staff is oriented towards 'security' and control, with the use of force representing the relational structure of the field and its doxa. Force represented the brutalising and institutionalising prison environment that the majority of prison staff were 'powerless to prevent' (Warr, 2008: 22). As such, my initial interpretation during fieldwork that prison staff were 'playing' at force like a game, was wrong. Force was part of *the* game, a self-legitimising and self-evident product of its own conditions that is "*embedded*" in Clarendon's operational culture because it is the culture, "*the way it works*". As Maruna (2023) explained, violence in prisons is endemic because prisons

are a form of violence. Unlike assumptions that staff choose to follow policy 'by the book' or not (Liebling, 2011) or that policy regulates staff actions (Bennett, 2023a), these findings suggest staff are co-authors and publishers of the book, critical to its construction, development, and delivery along with other contributors, such as the public and politicians. In the following section, I explore the outcome of this double strategy, identifying how the security doxa is a fallacy that perpetuates insecurity.

The (Para)Doxa of Prison Security

With the use of force, operational staff were meant to maintain security and 'prevent harm' (NOMS, 2005: 9). However, they were a cause of insecurity among many prisoners, perpetuating violence and producing another paradox of imprisonment.

All but three interviewed prisoners had stories of "*excessive use of force*" and described a "*very violent environment*" (Felix) in Clarendon. Before and during the pandemic, the majority of prisoners suggested that staff practice was predicated on the use of force as a means of violently enforcing control:

> "*It's too easy for them to just get hands-on. I watch it happen and I think there's just no need for it. Half the time you just think why? Why?*" (Felix)

> "*Escalating is like the word of the day. Whereas they're meant to de-escalate situations, they're not de-escalating situations, they're just making matters worse. If I'm being honest with you, it's like they all want a black eye to get six months off work.*" (Phil)

> "*I've been involved in violence with the staff and it's not nice! It's like the Guvs are like a Gang. You punch one and another punches you back. They fold you up, they hurt you. You might not feel it that day but the next day you're going to know, you'll hurt. That's what happened to me, I got in headlocks and everything by Guvs in this jail. Some of the force they do use is way too much, like I do feel like they use their force like Police sometimes.*" (Jerry)

> "*Sometimes [staff force is] excessive, too much, excessive, 100%… We're in here to get punished, we're not in here to get hurt. If I was to push you, that's assault. But if a Guv was to push us, we can't claim assault. Like yesterday, a prisoner was kicking off, smashing his whole cell up, the SO [supervising officer] come in there with 7, 8 man and started bending him up. If he was to just leave him alone, what's a man's natural thing to do after they're angry? They'll calm down, just give him 5 minutes… But na, they had to go in there, be big man, do you know what I mean? That just winds up the prisoners.*" (Vlad)

> "*For some of them, it's like a steroid… sometimes, they provoke it to stir things up. There's an officer here, every time he works, you hear the bell go off. Every time he's on shift, somebody has to get bent over*" (Mr Adah)

These lived experiences of prisoners suggest that operational staff ("*Guvs*") in Clarendon use force "*too much*", embodying their doxic legitimacy "*like a steroid*" imbued by their 'legal powers' to use force. Many prisoners felt that staff over-asserted their authority but they did not challenge the ability of staff to use their authority. As Phil stated, staff are "*meant to de-escalate*" but took it too far. Similar to Crewe and Ievins' (2020) findings that some prisoners place themselves on the same moral plane as the institution, these prisoners in Clarendon were disappointed that the staff did not live up to their moral standards. The focus on "*excessive*" use of force indicates that prisoners were equally subject to the doxa of control. They supported the punitive actions of staff, but only insofar as immoral or inappropriate behaviour was punished proportionately. Crewe et al. (2015) explained that prisoners' sentiments about the illegitimacy of staff overusing their power were exacerbated by the belief that such acts were done in the name of the state. As suggested in the previous chapter, many prisoners embraced the punitive social norms of imprisonment, but these orientations were challenged by overtly punitive practices. This was reflected in how some prisoners in Clarendon felt that they were imprisoned as punishment, not to "*get hurt*". Like Wolff and Shi's study (2009), these prisoners felt most unsafe when staff used force.

Many prisoners felt that force re-produced a sense of insecurity. Only five of the 13 prisoners interviewed for this study said they felt safe in Clarendon – with those who did feel safe induced by fewer interactions with staff and prisoners during the pandemic. This accords with HMIP (2022a) survey results that 50% of prisoners felt unsafe and 45% said they had experienced bullying and/ or victimisation from Clarendon staff. Many prisoners felt at risk of harm from "*a Gang.*" They described getting "*hurt*" and "*assaulted*" by staff, rather than protected from harm. Combined with the broader conditions of imprisonment described in previous chapters, such as the entry process and searching procedures, force did not provide a sense of safety and security; rather, it facilitated insecurity and feelings of retribution among prisoners. The use of force made "*matters worse.*"

Many prisoners suggested that the use of force was not consequence-free. They felt that the use of force produced a cycle of insecurity by provoking a violent reaction where prisoners felt they needed to "*attack back*". Mr Adah and Xavier explained this paradox of prison 'security' below:

> *"They [staff] don't resolve it, they let it escalate and that causes all this self-harm, violation, cutting themselves, and when you do that they still come and pounce you.... And now, that inmate will keep anger in them, and even though they come out through that process, they will repeat the same cycle again. Instead of that cycle being resolved in the first place through mental health, doctors, psychiatrists, prison officers, the moment you come back to*

the wing, give it a week, it's back again through the same process. The same cycle" (Mr Adah)

'[After an incident with staff, being restrained and escorted to segregation] the prisoner told Oscar 1, "I just want to be respected, to be heard and listened to. She wouldn't listen, wouldn't let me speak. I wouldn't go in my cell until someone explained why I can't move wings. She tried to push me inside so I pushed her back and then she jumped me." Xavier was upset at being restrained and close to tears as his voice broke. He told Oscar 1 that he "can't deal" with people being "aggressive" to him, it "makes" him "trigger".' (Fieldnotes, 14/01/2020)

These prisoners said that force was an "*escalation*" that "*triggered*" a cycle of harm. Mirroring the safety paradox discussed in the previous chapter, force perpetuated the "*process*". Force was considered a paradox, a "*violation*" depriving them of security. It induced feelings and actions of retribution and retaliation, of "*anger*" and "*aggression*" towards operational staff using force, like how Clarendon shields some prisoners from social marginalisation but deprives them of the skills and relationships to reintegrate upon release from prison. Force reproduced the conditions of its use in Clarendon.

Like staff, violence was considered a mode of adaption among these prisoners. They stated that violence should be met with violence to protect a prisoner's respect and status. Below, prisoners described violence as a "*defence mode*", an embodied reaction to stimuli:

"I was brought up since I was 7 years old around violence. I can remember violence for as long as I can remember it and I've seen some nasty shit, so when it goes off in here, it's all I know. It's defence mode, punch them up… You get treated like an animal, I act like an animal. So you don't put a wild dog in a cage and expect it to change overnight, be tamed and that, sit down when you get told to and that, the dog won't do that, it'll bite you and that's how I see it. Some of these boys are like wild dogs, you need to help us, not just keep us locked away. It ain't going to help no-one, when they open the door, [we] just go mad." (Jerry)

"You see, in here, you've got to be somebody, you've got to fight for respect. Guvs have the law behind them, it means they can do whatever they want, we've got our reputations. If someone attacks you or disrespects you, Con or Guv, you got to hold your own. Punch them, shit, do whatever. Whatever it takes." (Shane, Fieldnotes, 21/01/2020)

"In all fairness, I'd love to knock them out half the time 'cause now, if I went out, if I got six of my mates in here and went and smacked up one of the screws, that would be frowned upon. Now when there's six of them smacking

up one of us, it's called, 'force'. So, I'm one of them people that believe there's a mutual respect so I don't agree with it and I do agree with the fact that when they attack us – which is, whether you call it force or not, it is an attack – that we're well within our rights to attack back. They use weapons, they don't want to be on the receiving end of one of our weapons. Going to be a lot different to a little bit of metal." (Luke)

These prisoners responded to feelings of insecurity and disrespect by protecting themselves, feeling justified in hurting others as a way of 'reasserting one's dignity and identity' (Young, 2003: 408). These narratives accord with Anderson's (1999) analysis of violence as functionality on the streets where, 'respect on the street may be viewed as a form of social capital that is very valuable, especially when other forms of capital have been denied or are unavailable' (p. 66). In prison, men who are in some way socially marginalised or structurally restricted in their social capital utilise aggression as an alternative means of obtaining status and respect (Butler and Maruna, 2009). This 'circle of retaliation' (Maruna, 2023) was echoed in soundscapes of incidents where prisoners fought with staff. In one incident where a prisoner, Jermaine, was causing 'destruction to property' in segregation, his peers shouted violent encouragement and retribution as operational staff in riot gear prepared to physically intervene:

90 minutes after the destruction began, staff "engaged" Jermaine. It was a battle-like atmosphere as other prisoners in segregation, now aware of the evolving situation, were banging their doors rhythmically, smashing the observation panels in their cell doors, and yelling support for Jermaine, "They're coming for you!", "Protect yourself". "Get it on camera!" It was a soundscape of injustice as Jermaine's peers projected their own frustrations onto him, "Hurt 'em!", "Fuck 'em up!" (Fieldnotes, 04/02/2020)

In this incident, Jermaine explained that "*you learn to fight screws (staff)*" when confronted with force, and the violent encouragement from his peers reinforced a belief that conflict was a key component of their imprisoned experience. Similar to the doxic views of staff that prisoners only listen when staff use force, Jermaine believed that "*violence speaks louder than words*" in Clarendon as he expressed his frustration towards staff behaviour by destroying the segregation exercise yard. Central to this learned response is the carceral habitus, as these prisoners internalised their conditions and believed that "*violence was the way of Clarendon*" (Thompson, prisoner), the only 'objective' choice they faced.

As Jermaine and Thompson suggested, violence was part of their conditioned trans-carceral habitus. Violence was a way of being and communicating in the field, shaped by their embodied social inequality and conditioned by the climate of violence and neglect in Clarendon. Violence was such an inherent part of some

prisoners' habitus, ingrained in its apparent doxic legitimacy, that Thompson expressed surprise when he was negatively sanctioned for it:

> *"I was never really a fighter and never have been really, but more and more violence coming my way and that's how I deal with them. This is honestly true, [I] went to one prison, they were like, "We're calling the police." I said, "What do you mean calling the police?" "We're sending this to outside police, you've hit a man with something, defending yourself or not." I said, "You've got cameras of them coming, steel toe caps, three of them in gloves in the morning in my cell. It's going to the police?" I actually sat there and felt naive for being shocked that in society, they're going to send an assault because that's how I was bred here."* (Thompson)

This idea that Thompson was "*bred*" to be violent reinforces how violence was part of his habitus. In the absence of material capital, such as money, he learned and adapted to the conditions of the field, where respect and violence were 'legitimate' capital, as role-modelled by the violent operational staff. It was incumbent upon prisoners like Thompson to respond to disrespect to navigate the prison field (Caputo-Levine, 2013). Therefore, their carceral habitus was tuned towards the field, where physical violence, including the use of force, was considered an affront to their habitus, a challenge to their sense of self:

> *"I've seen prison officers get shitted up because of their demeanour, how they come across to people. If you come across too arrogant and thinking you're big man, I have seen people shitted on, I mean they're shitting in a tub, they're pouring boiling hot water, pissing in it and letting it ferment for 2-3 weeks. They get some spice head, give them some spice to throw all that shit over the Guv, just because that Guv thought he was big man. So it's a two-way thing, like the staff have to give us respect to get respect back. But it's the same way, we have to give staff respect to get respect back. That make sense? If there's no respect there, it'll all go tits up, it's all about respect in prison."* (Vlad)

This conception of respect as capital or currency being traded between prisoners and staff indicates how violence between staff and prisoners seemed to exist in a reciprocal and dialectal relationship, reproducing one another. The majority of prisoners who engaged in this study did not interpret force as a security intervention that resolved violence and protected them but as a technique of power that perpetuated violence, inducing feelings of disrespect, retribution, and further violence. Jim, a prisoner, succinctly summarised this relationship, where:

> *"How you react causes other people to act and same, how they act, cause how you react, yeah. Actions cause reactions, reactions cause actions."*

Habitus is cause and effect. Between 2018 and 2022, the use of force in Clarendon had no effect in reducing prisoner violence (IMB, 2020, 2022). Prison violence is an 'interactive trap' (Neuber, 2011), where its structure, habitus, and doxa reproduce the conditions of its production and perpetuate the opposite of its official aims. 'There is no way out of it' (Bourdieu, 1990b: 155) for prisoners who, like staff, behave according to how they are shaped by the field and their habitus, still embodying their social inequality and neglect.

The belief among many operational staff, prison policy, and training that force provides safety and security can be interpreted as *allodoxic*, the *misrecognition* of security. The objective *"inevitability"* and *"necessity"* to use violence to *"treat"* violence is, according to prisoners, another fallacy that perpetuates rather than resolves conflict. In a field defined by violence, its imposition structures the experience of imprisonment, beliefs, and practices about how prison should function. For staff and prisoners in Clarendon, violence was about power. Sykes (1958) and Sparks et al. (1996) observed that prisons generate conflict and conflict promotes violence. However, Sykes (1958) believed that force was a rational form of 'exercising control' (p. 49), highly disruptive to a complex institution and ineffective in securing obedience. Whilst there is evidence to support the latter, contributing to the wider literature on the deprivations of imprisonment, Sykes, like others since (Bosworth and Ashcroft, 2021), overlooked the cognitive structures of force as a self-reinforcing practice of imprisonment. Prison is not 'disrupted' by force, it is force; the *"normal"* functioning of a field designed, embodied, and practised through control. The use of force is a misunderstood framework for practising and embodying the aims of imprisonment.

Conclusion

This chapter explores how the operational staff that *"run the prison"* practice imprisonment. It theorises that using force represents their disciplinary capital (Warr, 2018); their symbolic authority as the 'ruling class' in prison is legitimised by their legal 'right' to use force. The use of force is one way in which power and position are embodied and displayed by local and national actors. It was *"normal"* and *"inevitable"*, a doxic representation of field structure, habitus, and their fundamental beliefs. Deconstructing the production of imprisonment indicates that staff can be conceptualised as 'specialists of mediation', translating their structure into action. Using force was a structuring and structured practice of logic.

This chapter suggests that the use of force is a dominant and front-of-stage prison practice. These findings contribute to the extant literature, conceiving force as a product of its own conditions and prison as a paradox of security. By critiquing the common-sense structures of the field and the embodied practice of imprisonment,

force can be understood as self-perpetuating a cycle of violence, depriving prisoners of security, whilst empowering and legitimising the natural response of force, where operational staff and prisoners do not feel they have a choice. The mental structures of force and violence as normal and inevitable are complementary and interrelated; together they reinforce each other and the conditions of their reproduction. Force exists under the collective and unquestioned belief in its necessity and neutrality, a fundamental practice of the symbolic power and structure of imprisonment. This offers a critique of research that proposes officers are purely agentic and rational actors (Bosworth and Ashcroft, 2021), tend to reject this mode of power and the use of force (Arnold, 2016), or that its practice is a 'backstage' mode of power (Crewe, 2007, 2009; Garland, 1997). Whilst its production is concealed in training and policy, deconstructing the use of force reveals how staff embody a narrow definition of security and perpetuate the conditions for its production.

In the final findings chapter, I analyse how Clarendon responded to the COVID-19 pandemic. So far, the findings have addressed the commonalities of experiences and practices shared across time, indicating that the pandemic did not significantly affect the field. The following chapter explores why and in what ways the pandemic affected Clarendon.

8. Unmasking the Pandemic Response in Prison: The Paradox of Health

'The incarcerated know very well the risk they run. But they cannot run from the risk.'
(Farmer, 2005: 129)

Structural and physical violence produced and perpetuated imprisonment in Clarendon. The embodied practice of the field, reinforced by doxic acceptance of its purpose, produced paradoxical outcomes to its official intentions. However, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the field experienced an overt shift in intentions. Based on a 'changing balance of risk', HM Prison and Probation Service (2021) shifted the primary aim of imprisonment from public protection and security to 'preservation of life', defined as 'preventing (COVID-19 associated) infections, minimising deaths, and hospitalisations'. Rhetorically, protecting the 'health' of staff and prisoners was now the priority of imprisonment. Nevertheless, the pandemic response only temporarily disrupted the field as the prison perpetuated inequalities and exacerbated harmful outcomes for prisoners. This chapter deconstructs how Clarendon responded to the pandemic, providing a novel first-hand account of how imprisonment was operationalised.

This chapter examines the social effects of the pandemic, considering how it may have transformed the field to align with its new objective. Bourdieu's concept of *hysteresis* provides a tool for thinking about disruptions between the elements of the field. It is an opportunity to see change in action and to think critically about what happens and why. This speaks to questions posed by Graham (2020), who asked how *hysteresis* was experienced during the pandemic, how changes were resisted or adapted in different settings, and who 'loses' from these disruptions. It finds that those imprisoned 'lost', deprived of their liberty and their health by the punitive structures of imprisonment.

It commences by providing a background to the pandemic. Between the onset of the pandemic and the suspension of fieldwork in March until re-entering Clarendon six months later, national policymakers ruled that operationalisation and decision-making of the entire prison system, including Clarendon, would be 'centrally coordinated and overseen' by Headquarters, with each prison retaining 'some autonomy' for 'daily operational decisions' (HMPPS, 2020b: 5). Like the section of the literature review that grounded the present construction of imprisonment within recent developments, the following section details some of the macro events that shaped meso and micro imprisonment in the intervening period between data collection. This context is primarily informed by public health literature, policy documents, and official statistics.

Background to COVID-19

"When the 26th of March, D-Day, when everybody just pulled out of prison, all of [the] education team, library team, advice and guidance, resettlement team [were] all just gone!" (June, activities)

In December 2019, the World Health Organisation received a public bulletin on a cluster of pneumonia cases from the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission (World Health Organisation, 2022). On January 20th, 2020 an 80-year-old male boarded the *Diamond Princess* cruise ship in Yokohama, Japan. Three days later the same male developed a fever, disembarked on the 25th, and on February 1st, was confirmed positive for the disease, COVID-19. All 3,711 passengers and crew were quarantined from February 5th, (Xu et al., 2020). By February 20th, the World Health Organisation announced that half the known cases of the virus outside China were on the *Diamond Princess* (Baraniuk, 2020). Back in Wuhan, China, on February 29th, half the reported cases of COVID-19 were in Wuhan's prison system (Barnert et al., 2020). It was a sign of what was developing around the world and indicative of the risk to those living and working in prisons where, by design, large groups of people mix frequently and in close contact. By the end of March 2020, ten prisoners had died of COVID-19 and at least five prison outbreaks were being declared daily by public health specialists in England and Wales (SAGE, 2021). If left unmitigated, initial modelling indicated that up to 2700 prisoners across England and Wales could die from COVID-19 (Bays et al., 2021). Fatalities did not reach these levels but the pandemic and its response disproportionality affected prisoners.

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in April, HMPPS primarily pursued two policies of decarceration and control to 'preserve life'. With prison overcrowding well-established as increasing the risk of infectious disease infections (Bays et al., 2021; SAGE, 2021), the Government attempted an 'End of Custody Temporary Release scheme' to minimise the number of people living in prison. It was intended to 'protect the NHS' and 'benefit brave prison staff' but 'Offenders can be recalled at the first sign of concern' (Ministry of Justice, 2020 April). The release scheme was a means of public protection, rather than protecting prisoners from harm. As the press release stated, 'Public protection is paramount'. The scheme was open to 'low-risk offenders' within weeks of their release if they had not been convicted of violent or sexual offences and if they were not a 'national security concern'. It was halted by the Government after four months, with 316 'low-risk offenders' (HMPPS, 2021) released from more than 4,000 eligible people (House of Commons Justice Committee, 2020). In August 2020, Secretary of State for Justice at the time, Robert Buckland hailed this as a success in 'thwarting' the virus and keeping it 'under control':

> *"This has been an unprecedented situation but thanks to the hard work and dedication of our staff we have stopped coronavirus taking hold in prisons,*

which means we can now pause the early release scheme." (Ministry of Justice, 2020 August)

In contradiction to this narrative of success, the release scheme had no noticeable effect on 'controlling' the virus or reducing overcrowding. Local prisons, including Clarendon, remained around 50% overcrowded in 2020 (IMB, 2021). Nationally, the prison population remained above capacity (Ministry of Justice, 2023a). Concurrently, positive rates of COVID-19 infection in prisons were consistently triple the rates identified in the wider community and 79% (102) of prisons had outbreaks of over 50 confirmed cases between September 2020 and February 2021 (SAGE, 2021). During this time, over 116 prisoners and staff died from COVID-19. With prisons overcrowded and no mitigations to reduce the population, HMPPS resorted to controlling the risk of infection within prisons.

Operations were centrally managed as HMPPS mandated that prisons follow a 'COVID-19 National Framework for prison regimes and services'. Clarendon, like other prisons across England and Wales, prioritised a 'safe environment' for staff and prisoners (HMPPS, 2021). It intended to provide a regime that maintained a 'strong focus on safety and wellbeing' whilst responding to 'risks' (p. 5). Unable or unwilling to mitigate the intramural environmental risks of overcrowding, insufficient sanitation, and ventilation, prisons 'controlled' the people in prison. 'Control' measures isolated newly incarcerated people coming into prison, known infected people, and those people designated as 'vulnerable' and at the highest known risk of death due to pre-existing health conditions and age (SAGE, 2021). Similar to national measures of 'social distancing' and 'lockdown' in the wider community, prisons tried to limit physical interaction. Clarendon restricted access to predominantly operational staff delivering what was described as *essential* services and focused on the provision of beds, showers, and food. Staff training ceased, social contact was limited, and most prisoners were contained in their cells, provided only with a TV and in-cell 'distraction' packs. Most prisoners spent at least 23 hours a day isolated in their cells, with fewer opportunities for social interaction (Schliehe et al., 2022; User Voice, 2022, June). Further 'control' measures replaced in-person meetings with virtual alternatives or were suspended altogether as Clarendon stopped social visits and their prisoner 'council', limited inter-prison transfers, and intra-prison social mixing, such as education and exercise. The macro narrative of control shifted from physical security to health security, whilst micro practices reproduced the same physical restrictions on prisoners.

As Farmer (2005) predicted, prisons had little 'control' over the disease. In Clarendon, there were six reported outbreaks and three confirmed prisoner deaths caused by COVID-19 (IMB, 2021, 2022). Nationally, there were over 49,000 known positive cases of infections among prisoners across 130 settings with over 300 confirmed deaths between March 2020 and February 2023, when the Ministry of

Justice ceased collection of COVID-19-related data (HMPPS, 2023a). Yet, upon easing restrictions in 2022, HMPPS (2022) declared that their measures 'controlled the spread' and 'managed the risk.' (p. 4) This chapter provides a critical analysis of the pandemic response.

"A Christmassy feel": The Pandemic Hysteresis Effect

In September, six months after data collection was suspended, I returned to conclude fieldwork in Clarendon. I had to come to terms with various changes in the field. As a local adult male prison, Clarendon had experienced significant workforce and prisoner turnover. In the 12 months to March 2021, over 10% of prison officers nationally left their role and average work days lost to sickness were more than 14 (HMPPS, 2023c). In Clarendon, the rate of resignations and sickness was higher. More than 50 staff were sick or isolating when I returned (IMB, 2021). Among Clarendon's prison population, there were more than 550 new 'receptions' (arrivals) and departures, including releases and transfers, between April and September 2020 (Ministry of Justice, 2023d). Faced with fewer familiar faces, I had to rebuild relationships and adapt to new circumstances and protocols. It was deemed unsafe to conduct observations on the wings so I predominantly relied upon staff and prisoner interviews to understand their pandemic experience. This chapter draws from these interviews, interspersed with ethnographic fieldnotes from spaces where it was safer to observe and have more informal interactions.

This first section explores how the people in Clarendon adapted to the pandemic during the first six months after the introduction of 'control measures' in March 2020. I asked interview participants to recount their experience during the intervening period. These retrospective accounts are subject to memory reconstruction and interpretation bias (Copes and Hochstetler, 2013), but the thematic representations of their experiences reveal that staff and prisoners generally felt a more supportive prison environment initially developed. The fears of the pandemic temporarily disrupted the doxic social hierarchy. However, a 'semantic slide' in penal policy (Wacquant, 2009), a linguistic change in the 'balance of risk' from prisoners to COVID-19, maintained the security orientation of the field and legitimised the continuation of restrictive practices. The entrenched field structure, habitus, and doxa remained largely unaffected by the pandemic.

The Supportive Sound of Applause

> *They [staff] told me about their fears of working in the prison during the pandemic, the worry of bringing home the virus to their families or into the prison. Some told me of the emotional toll of the hours they had worked, crying on the way home from exhaustion or just numb to all the issues at home or work. Even the senior manager who refused to participate in an*

interview said I could quote her saying that it had been "the hardest but most rewarding period" of her career as "everyone, prisoners and staff, came together, everyone anxious, scared, worried, but working together to support each other." The pandemic had touched every part of their lives… From the illiterate prisoner who suffers from mental health issues and just wants to be able to read to his daughter, to the 42-year-old man who has spent more time in prison than the wider community in his life, the pandemic had caused an "air" of stress and worry. Everyone said they worried at some point about COVID-19, either to themselves or others. (Fieldnotes, 30/09/2020)

Minus the face masks and daily lateral flow testing for COVID-19, I noticed only minor changes upon returning to Clarendon in September 2020. The prison regime and design had been re-configured: areas, like the 'first night accommodation' had been renamed to reflect the new 'compartmentalisation' policy (O'Moore, 2020, April), there was a new 'orderly' office next to the Governor's for 'on duty' managers to work closer together, there were fewer staff, and everyone seemed a bit more jaded and fatigued. The prison still felt busy and it sounded much the same as before, but I had not experienced the previous six months and soon learned that the lived experience of the pandemic in Clarendon had profound effects on participants. Staff and prisoners "*came together*" to attune their habitus to the new risks and conditions of the pandemic, contributing to a more mutually supportive and health-focused environment at the onset of the pandemic. During interviews, most prison staff and prisoners explained that this change was induced by a shared "*air*" of stress and worry for their health, their families, and those they came into contact with:

> "*They were scared! 'cause they're seeing all this stuff on the news and they're worried about their families and they're worried about themselves and actually, they were more worried about us I think than they were about themselves – and their families obviously.*" (June, activities)

> "*There has been a lot of worry, watching TV and stuff. You know, with all the infections outside you worry if it comes in here…if it comes in here it's going to go through like nobody's business… it's stressful and I worry*" (Terry, prisoner)

> "*I'm worried about losing my family members and I'm worried about not seeing my son and I'm worried about not doing what's right for my family when they've done nothing but right by me for my whole life. That's what's kicked me up the ass, they've been there for me for 28 years. They're getting old now, it's time I start being there for them but I can't be there if I'm stuck in here.*" (Jim, prisoner)

> "*I thought this is going to be hell, hell to staff, hell to live in, but I think everybody's pretty scared, we didn't know what's going on out there, all*

you've got is the BCC [BBC] and they're pretty doomsday with their approach on it, and [you're] worried for your loved ones." (Thompson, prisoner)

The lived experience of the pandemic was *"scary"*, *"stressful"*, and *"worrying"* for everyone as staff shared an experience of social deprivation with prisoners and a loss of social contact because of pandemic restrictions in custody and the wider community. No one could escape the physical and emotional effects of the disease and the public health response. The *"air"* or *"atmosphere"* of insecurity that existed before the pandemic persisted, but the risk logic had seemingly shifted from physical violence and reoffending to the risk of infection and illness. Participants still felt unsafe but for different reasons. To cope, they had to redefine the rules of the field and their doxic interpretation of it.

COVID-19 introduced a new dynamic that seemed to disrupt the 'worst-case' culture as they were confronted with a new 'risk' they had not encountered before. There was no learned 'memory', no expectations or presuppositions on how to act or what to think. Reflecting on the initial months of the pandemic, most prisoners and staff suggested that the security disposition of operational staff was initially reshaped by the pandemic. In response to the shared fear, isolation, sickness, and increasing healthcare demand, the pandemic re-socialised how prisoners and staff interacted as operational staff adopted a more collaborative and health-focused approach to imprisonment aligned with the newly-established aim to 'preserve life':

> *"It was nice to see, everyone pulled together, I think certainly in the initial three months everybody worked in tandem so sickness went down massively which was surprising I thought it would just be driven up by COVID but it wasn't, I think everybody decided we were all in trouble together"* (Chris, custodial manager)

> *"What has been amazing is seeing staff, managers and prisoners all responding to the same threat. The threat was no longer violent prisoners on staff or heavy-handed staff on prisoners, the threat was COVID for everybody and in some ways, that really highlighted what humans have in common and removed some of those titles; whether you're a prisoner or whether you're staff."* (Sally, senior manager)

> *"That initial period, everyone was working together, prisoners and staff alike were really working together to support each other. I think there was that fear factor."* (June, activities)

> *"[there is] improved levels of communication between staff and prisoners and more cohesive relationship or because prisoners, at the end of the day, like consistency… this has kind of forced people to communicate better with the prisoners, build better rapports with the prisoners 'cause if we didn't this wouldn't have worked."* (Simon, supervising officer)

These participants believed that "*initially*" most staff worked more collaboratively with prisoners, communicating better, minimising the *othering* of prisoners, and highlighting a shared lived experience where "*we were all in trouble together*". They indicated that operational staff were less preoccupied with their 'worst-case' mentality and less focussed on 'security procedures', such as cell searches and body searches. Relatedly, staff used force fewer times in May and June 2020 compared with the monthly average before the pandemic, although this persisted (IMB, 2022). Prisoners were "*no longer*" "*the threat*". This shift in risk discourse disrupted the accepted social norms of imprisonment and seemingly made staff and prisoners more aware of their conditions. What had previously occurred 'without saying' was now leading to consciousness or *heterodoxy* (Bourdieu, 1977). Like in times of War (Bourdieu, 2003b), the "*fear factor*" seemingly changed how people were acting and thinking in prison and aligned with a new priority of the field to provide a 'safe environment' from the disease (HMPPS, 2021). As Wacquant (2016) explained, habitus and doxa can be 'eroded, countered or even dismantled by exposure to novel external forces' (p. 66). The risk of and response to COVID-19 established a new dynamic of what is possible.

The majority of prisoners emphasised this more supportive relationship with operational staff. The social climate felt more "*brotherly*", mutually supportive, and equal at the beginning of the pandemic:

> *"You see a difference in the Guvs... I had a meltdown and they [officers] stopped treating me like I was a prisoner, they took me out, they gave me a coffee, they sat me down and spoke to me and that sort of, it can happen."* (Benny, prisoner)

> *"It was a bit more brotherly... They've seen me cry, fail and it's very hard then to play that kind of gangster game of them and us."* (Thompson, prisoner)

> *"It's been a bit of an emotional rollercoaster but we've all been in it together. Guvs, Cons, you can't change it, so we've made it work. Many of the lads understand what's going on and they've done well to keep rates low. It's been shit but they've looked out for us."* (Niall, prisoner, Fieldnotes, 25/09/2020)

> *"With coronavirus, it's harder to get out and get things sorted, like clothing parcels, get applications sorted... I think they've done well to restrict coronavirus coming in and that... they're decent people and that's what I've started [to see] – it used to be me and them. Now we're fucking human beings."* (Jim, prisoner)

These prisoners said they saw "*a difference*" in staff practices. The shared experience of the pandemic broke down barriers and doxic social norms between prisoners and operational staff during the initial months of the pandemic. Prisoners legitimised their "*shit*" conditions, humanised staff, and felt their engagement was

more compassionate and personal. Although violence towards staff continued and reached record highs in July (IMB, 2021), "*Them and us*" or "*me and them*" became "*we*" for many prisoners and staff. The conventional prison social structures and priorities were temporarily suspended. This 'convergence' of lived experience (Wainwright et al., 2023) developed a more mutually supportive and reciprocal relationship between prisoners and staff where "*we've all been in it together*".

Upon returning to Clarendon in September, a hierarchy between staff and prisoners still seemed apparent but many prisoners and staff suggested that "[in] *that initial period, everyone was working together*". Trusted prisoners labelled "*red bands*" supported prison staff by distributing 'in-cell distraction packs' and resources, including activities such as crosswords and reading materials, and organised competitions and games among prisoners to combat boredom and anxiety. In the pandemic spirit of community, operational staff displayed their gratitude for prisoners' support:

> "*You had all those operational staff in the middle of the prison clapping my three prisoners! Thanking them for what they were doing and the support they were giving them! They gave them a massive round of applause you know, so it was really special.*" (June, activities)

> "*There was this moment, can't really remember when, time's a blur at the moment, but staff actually applauded us! I'm not shitting you. I reckon everyone heard it. It was so loud, bouncing off the walls and it was incredible. Honestly, I've never seen anything like it. Probably never will but I'll remember it. They were thanking us for helping out.*" (Niall, prisoner, Fieldnotes, 29/09/2020)

The punitive sounds of imprisonment before the pandemic had, for a moment, been replaced by gracious applause. In contrast with the quiet submission of reception or the incessant ringing of "cell bells" that reproduced control and compliance, the staff applause symbolised a transformation, indicating a more equal relationship between prisoners and staff. The sound reverberated around Clarendon in their minds and social structure, it "*bounced off the walls*". The applause was a display of *hysteresis*, an auditory indication of a disruption to the social norms.

Forged by a shared experience and vulnerability, Andy, a prison officer, recounted how it felt like COVID-19 transformed the field, re-shaping its rules and regularities:

> "*It gave us a kind of, all in it together kind of mentality and it felt good… It had a bit of Christmassy feel to it and at Christmas time everyone bonds together in prison a little bit.*"

Prisoners and staff initially "*bonded*" over their collective experience, both at risk of COVID-19 and the associated consequences of physical and psychological harm. The pandemic seemingly changed how many people experienced their lives and

adapted to their circumstances, producing what Andy describes as a *"Christmassy feel"*. This 'collective spirit' accords with research outside of Clarendon. Schliehe et al. (2022), Maycock (2021) and Wainwright et al. (2023) identified a similar phenomenon among prisoners and staff in England and Scotland at the start of the pandemic. Wainwright et al. (2023) noted that staff and prisoners were more compassionate and tolerant towards each other. This indicates how the pandemic disrupted the field. Andy's comparison with Christmas highlights the porosity of the field.

The pandemic, like Christmas, revealed how prisons may experience *hysteresis* annually, a transformation from the social norms of control and hierarchy. This had been inferred by senior management before commencing fieldwork in Clarendon. I had proposed to commence fieldwork around Christmas time in 2019, but when discussing time off from work with three operational senior leaders, they recommended a delay. Their reasons highlighted the shared isolation and heightened emotions associated with the holiday season:

> *A discussion about the start date was revealing about the prison culture. I had noticed in the literature an absence of scholarship analysing prison practice during the holiday season. I had raised this last week with a former prison Governor in HMPPS HQ, wondering whether it would be possible to commence data collection next week. They dismissed it immediately, "That's not a good time to start research," I felt ignorant for asking why, "because it's not appropriate, it's not the time to be asking questions. Everyone is missing family, staff and prisoners, they won't want a researcher there. It's their time." This was echoed in Clarendon as a couple of senior managers suggested I wait until the new year "You'll get a better response after Christmas, everyone won't be on edge." "Yeah, it's a very emotional time in prison. No one wants to be here so they sort of come together. It's different, but it's not the time for a researcher." "Anyway, there's not many people here anyway. It's very quiet, subdued, emotional. Skeleton staffing, not much time out of cell, not much to see or do."* (Fieldnotes 17/12/2019)

Representative of the lived pandemic experience in prison, these staff suggested that the Christmas period was a time when prisoners and staff shared a sense of missing family, a 'common pain' (O'Donnell and Jewkes, 2011: 215) of deprivation of liberty. The social construct of Christmas, of time with family and friends, demonstrated how cultural ideas flowed between people in prison and outside its walls. Prisoners are reminded of their deprivation of liberty at Christmas and so a climate of goodwill is generated in prison by a shared experience between staff and prisoners during a highly emotive time (O'Donnell and Jewkes, 2011; Marquart and Roebuck, 1987). To mitigate this isolation, prisons put up decorations and Christmas trees, organise festive contests, and provide festive food for those who are required to live and work

in custody during the holiday period (Marquart and Roebuck, 1987). Christmas is an example of how people 'bring cultures' into prison (Crewe, 2009/2012) and it highlights how prisons are porous, structured by social forces.

Reminiscent of Christmas, prisoners and staff shared a sense of social deprivation during the pandemic. Restrictions on social contact and separation from family and friends induced a "*bonding*" of lived experience. There were no festivities or decorations, but participants did describe a transformative sense of community:

> *"So it's been a, I don't know, can't say it's been a good thing but in a way, there's something good out of it, like people are behaving better in some way. Being a bit more humble, a bit like we are outside, we can't just do this or do that and they are kind of getting that… So I think, overall, can't say COVID is a good thing 'cause it's killed loads of people but I feel, my personal opinion, it's done some people some good in a way, it's made people realise we can't take everything for granted."* (Craig, custodial manager)

Most interview participants suggested that the shared social deprivation and fear of COVID-19 established a new social dynamic, the conditions of *hysteresis*. Evidencing how disruption or crises in one field (health) can transform the prison field, these participants implied that staff adapted their habitus to the new health-focused field structure in response to the pandemic. However, the "*Christmassy*" conditions of *hysteresis* were a short-lived fallacy.

The Christmas Fallacy

> *In the new 'Orderly office' next to the Governors – designed to improve communication between senior and middle managers 'on duty' – short plastic screens have been erected between each desk to 'prevent' direct exposure to bodily fluids and reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. The screens are redundant as staff walk around and stand as they speak to each other without masks. Two CMs [custodial managers] seem confused as to who I am until I lower my mask. They smile, "Welcome back stranger!" and want "all the gossip from HQ". After a brief catch-up we return to the subject of Clarendon, where they say that "nothing has changed… we're just more jaded and cynical." They explain that the pandemic has had "its advantages and disadvantages": closer communication between HQ, the prison SMT [senior management] and staff, but at a cost of long hours, loss of time out of cell, loss of conversation between staff and with prisoners: "no-one really knows what's going on on the wings, we just focus on delivering a regime nowadays." I ask what they mean in terms of the aims of imprisonment, and the two agree that whilst security has always been the primary aim, "it's less of a 'thing' now" "It's just about delivering a regime, not trying to do anything more" "I suppose it's the way that we look at it that has changed, beforehand*

it was because of x, y, or z, now it's the same culture, the same, delivery, but we just don't say it's because of x, y, or z, it's to "keep prisoners alive" if you know what I mean" Before long, the phones were ringing again, officers were popping in and out of the office, asking questions about the regime, what spaces there are available, who is moving where, who is "trouble" and the plans for the day (ACCTs, adjudications, reception assessments). (Fieldnotes, 25/09/2020)

The shared pandemic experience disrupted the perception of hierarchical social norms. However, six months after the introduction of pandemic 'control measures', the "*Christmassy*" conditions were receding and revealed the objective intentions of the pandemic response. As the custodial managers in the fieldnotes above explain, "*the way that we look at it has changed*" but "*it's the same culture, the same delivery*". The "*removal of titles*" and blurring of boundaries 'between superordinates and subordinates' (Marquart and Roebuck, 1987: 450) did not transform or disrupt the structure of imprisonment, it temporarily betrayed the default structure, dispositions, and doxa of Clarendon.

To preserve life and 'maintain stability (order and control)' (HMPPS, 2020b: 12, brackets in original), prisons maintained strict controls on prisoners. Based on 'control measures', such as 'compartmentalisation' (O'Moore, 2020, April), separating prisoners from others, most prisoners were confined to a cell of approximately 5.5m^2 (HMIP, 2017) consisting of a single bed, table, and television for at least 23 hours a day. Prisoners were keen to share their experiences:

> "*Imagine your bathroom, put a mattress in your bathroom, that's what a cell's like and now lock, get your mum to lock that door from the outside and not let you out for 30 hours, imagine! Picture it! That's a prison cell. It's shit and the only thing you've got is a shitty TV.*" (Vlad, prisoner)

Vlad explains that prisoners were isolated in their cells with "*a shitty TV*" and reliant on staff for their basic needs. Before the pandemic, prisoners were dependent on staff for 'almost everything that is vital to their existence' (Jewkes, 2018: 320). They received a minimum of one and a half hours out of their cell for showers, telephone calls and socialising, 30 minutes of exercise on the 'yard', plus time out of cell for education, employment and workshop activity (IMB, 2020). During the pandemic, as detailed in 'The regime' section of Chapter 5, all 'time out of cell' was suspended apart from short periods of 'Domestics' to wash. Revealing the fallacy of "*Christmas*" during the pandemic, a shared sense of community and equality was betrayed by the controlling conditions of prisoners, restricted to their cells. This fallacy was produced and legitimised, *inter alia*, by policy discourse reconfiguring the 'balance of risk' within custody.

During the pandemic, the COVID-19 National Framework for operating in prisons (HMPPS, 2021) and prison regime management policies (HMPPS, 2020b) legitimised

'control' measures to restrict prisoners and protect the status quo based on 'public health advice' (HMPPS, 2021: 1). In familiar security-oriented *argot*, COVID-19 was framed as a biosecurity 'threat' to staff, prisoners, and the public:

> 'Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) developed a close working relationship with Public Health England (PHE) to develop a strategy to counter the threat. PHE forecasting concluded there was a credible risk of staff and prisoners becoming infected in high numbers.' (HMPPS, 2020b: 3)

The pandemic response seemed like a military operation to 'counter the threat' rather than a public health intervention as prisons were required to 'preserve life' through 'effective infection control measures' (p. 12). The 'balance of risk' shifted from prisoners to COVID-19, but, as the term suggests, prisoners remained a risk. The national policies gave the appearance of 'protecting the wellbeing of staff, prisoners, and children in custody' (HMPPS, 2021: 3) by introducing COVID-19 public health 'controls', such as 'population management strategies' (O'Moore, 2020, April), but reinforced a narrowly defined interpretation of 'security' and control by using 'security' terminology of 'threats' and 'risks'. Each prison had to 're-work' its regime to be 'COVID-secure' and prisoners had to isolate 'for their own protection' (HMPPS, 2020b: 3). This change in discourse can be interpreted as a 'semantic slide' (Wacquant, 2009), a linguistic shift or reframing, like *National Offender Management Service* to *HM Prison and Probation Service, violence* to *the use of force,* or *isolation* to '*compartmentalisation*' and '*cohorting*'. Policy stated that prisoners and staff were to be protected, but communicated the essential requirement to stay in 'control' and 'maintain stability' of prisoners (HMPPS, 2020b: 12), which the policies were meant to guarantee "*if you know what I mean*". Similar to the use of force policy, the past was always present as HMPPS' pandemic response policies communicated a double-game strategy, constraining staff to control prisoners and empowering them to deliver 'security'.

Legitimised by national policy, operational staff interpreted their role during the pandemic as delivering 'security' and control. The Government press release for the 'End of Custody Temporary Release scheme' stated that 'public protection is paramount'. Staff were 'brave', prisoners remained 'security concerns', and the pandemic was 'unprecedented' (Ministry of Justice, 2020 April). As Dale and Watford explained in the previous chapter and custodial managers above revealed, the practice of imprisonment had not changed, just the narrative. A doxic definition of 'security' and 'public protection' remained the primary aim of imprisonment:

> "*From the operational side, it was command-led, it was about maintaining security, stability, and safety of the establishment.*" (June, activities)

> "*The principles are the same, what we are trying to do is manage to keep a COVID-secure prison whilst doing as much as we can. The priority hasn't changed really, I guess that's always been and will be for the foreseeable*

future, will be where we put our energy… people in custody are assumed to be a prisoner unless there is a clinical intervention that makes them temporarily a patient, but essentially they're prisoners." (Sally, senior manager)

"COVID is part of security and keeping everybody safe, and that's hugely impacted the rehabilitation." (Ria, mental health practitioner)

"With COVID we're not doing things like searching, we've tried to get a workaround like that with, rather than doing rub-down searches and stuff with staff, we use a passive dog, and search them with the passive dog, which is working. We did 285 people the other morning with one dog. It was hectic, didn't really slow anything down, the movement kept going through, it's just a juggling game" (Patrick, custodial manager)

Staff felt their role in maintaining control, "*the priority*", had not changed. The people in custody were still "*prisoners*" and, without questioning their role, staff still used force and found "*workarounds*" to continue searching prisoners, retaining a 'core component' of prison security that is 'fundamental' to imprisonment (Bennett, 2023a). Relationships had seemingly improved with prisoners, but staff still did not question the security imperative of their role. Like Bennett (2023a), they maintained their doxic construction of the field and mediated these ideas in practice. The increasing use of force and searching practices during the pandemic reveals how the meaning of security remained unquestioned as staff re-produced penal policy and generally disregarded the relational elements of health and wellbeing, such as autonomy and social interaction. Policy "*principles*" reinforced this 'objective truth' in their roles and responsibilities but "*juggled*" with the name of it.

The "*Christmassy feel*" and national policy legitimised the unchanged structural conditions of imprisonment. It enabled the prison to do the same thing differently, and these structures were revealed as staff interpreted the pandemic threat as receding. Around the time of returning to Clarendon in September 2020, the apparent "*bonds*" between operational staff and prisoners were breaking as staff reinforced their unequal relationship and displayed their 'natural' security-oriented habitus in practice:

"There has been a backing off… lots of understanding, lots of helpful stuff at the beginning and it has tailed off. We had quite a stark impact on violence and self-harm, and it dropped off dramatically… there was all the talk initially about the 'new normal' and things won't be the same when we go back, we acknowledge that things are different now but then very rapidly in the last six weeks, it's felt like, no nothing is different and everything is coming back as it was" (Billy, Senior manager)

"They (operational staff) just started to get difficult, they just wanted to reassert that level of authority – they felt, this is my perception, they started to

feel that the prisoners were being given too much responsibility… They were saying 'security, safety, stability' – there were none, it was just excuses being used. It was ego: 'I'm more important than you are because I've got a set of keys and you're a prisoner'. Yeah, the fact that you've spent the last 8 weeks basically really helping us out of a hole, that's all done now." (June, activities)

"Basically, you [now] come out of your cell, you get shouted at to go out on the yard, when you come in you get shouted at to go in the showers, and you get shouted at to go in your cell when you come out of the showers." (Felix, prisoner)

"The main thing [now] is to get you behind that door, that's it. They put more effort in getting you behind that door than they do in getting you out the door. When it comes to getting you in there, they'll kick off, have a go, threaten you with being on basic, take something away like a child for you being late behind your door. Now, if you press your cell bell 'cause they're late for getting you out of that door – 'why have you pushed that cell bell? It ain't an emergency?' Not being funny, you wouldn't know that until you come out here. It's one of them ones." (Luke, prisoner)

After the initial feeling of hysteresis, staff re-asserted their disciplinary capital, using their keys, the othering of prisoners, and the 'security mindset' to maintain the status quo. As operational staff interpreted the pandemic threat as receding, the social norms were revealed and reasserted. Unlike the narratives of transformation or 'reworking' proposed by Maycock (2021), Schliehe et al. (2022), and Wainwright et al. (2023), the pandemic had not disrupted the fundamental structures of imprisonment or changed how Clarendon was practised, only "*the way we look at it*". The "*cell bell*" remained an indication of prisoners' helplessness and powerlessness, revealing how prisoners were still infantilised by staff and attached to the prison as a source of support:

"You really rely on the officers then, you really, people see them for the first time as human beings that they need – I need you in my life, you've got the key, you feed me, you help me through this time." (Thompson, prisoner)

The pandemic conditions temporarily disrupted how participants interpreted their experience of Clarendon, but the bell and keys remained a material manifestation of the power relations and social hierarchy of imprisonment. The sound of applause had quickly returned to a soundscape of control and coercion.

Upon returning to the field in September 2020, I was able to follow the safety protocol by listening to what was happening on the wings around me from the centre of the *Mains*. The wings generally sounded chaotic. On two separate afternoons, I heard observational panels being smashed, cell doors banging, prisoners and staff shouting, and alarms ringing continuously as staff moved back

and forth between wings to 'resolve' conflicts (Fieldnotes, 28/09/2020 & 01/10/2020). The sound signalled the hostile 'mood', the change of feeling from a supportive environment to the pre-pandemic conditions of insecurity. A year later, User Voice (2022, June) survey results indicated that over half of their prisoner respondents (n=1421) believed staff-prisoner relationships deteriorated during the pandemic. Like the Christmas decorations failing to disguise the prison conditions, the "*brotherly*" pandemic spirit could not mask or reconfigure the structural norms. Clarendon could not 'outrun' its objective intention (Bourdieu, 1977).

A phenomenologically-informed interpretation of the pandemic response suggests that the staff were still governed by past conditions of their production. Conditions in Clarendon felt like "*everything is coming back as it was*" before the pandemic as staff shouted at prisoners, used force, and generally still mediated the disciplinary interests of the state as the 'harbingers' of disciplinary power (Warr, 2018). In policy and practice, *hysteresis*, what Billy calls "*the new normal*", "*tailed off*" because the physical and mental conditions in which the field was constituted had not changed. Habitus embodies structure, of which it is a product, the enduring outcome of 'present and past' positions (Bourdieu, 1977, 82). It can be eroded or adapted but it is resilient to sudden alterations. Shammas and Sandberg (2016) contend that this is why the process of 'rehabilitation' faces a challenge of 'statistical improbability' (p. 205). Many prisoners cannot simply reformulate their trans-carceral habitus due to a change in environment. Neither can staff in response to a pandemic. Nationally, the carceral logic remained impenetrable (Maruna et al., 2022). User Voice (2022, June) identified that only one in five prisoners felt that their prison was 'less violent' during the pandemic. Prisoners and staff still reproduced the cycle of violence. Transforming the field required reconfiguring the people and the place, expanding the field limits set by the historical and social conditions of its production to reconfigure what prison is, who is imprisoned, and how staff think, feel, and act. Clarendon resisted change.

The Double Punishment of 'Control' Measures

This section explores some of the effects of Clarendon's pandemic response on the lived experience of prisoners, identifying how the disposition and doxa of security and *control* perpetuated their social inequality and marginalisation. It finds that isolation had deleterious effects on prisoners' social relationships, health, and wellbeing as they were 'punished twice for the crime of social inequality' (O'Mara, 2022, February).

"A long time in four walls": How Isolation Widened Inequality

Isolation *em*-prisoned prisoners by perpetuating their trans-carceral habitus. All prisoners in Clarendon explained that their pandemic experience was "*shit*", with

64% spending less than an hour outside of their cell daily from April 2020 to May 2021 (IMB, 2021). To maintain social ties and alleviate the pains of isolation for prisoners, prisons provided in-cell telephones, £5 weekly phone credit, introduced 'purple visits' (video calls with family and friends), and 'distraction packs' of in-cell activities. Some staff maintained that prisoners had received more support during the pandemic than before:

> *"We had just brought in in-cell telephones… we've been able to run a number of really innovative things in-cell for prisoners so although they've spent a lot of time in their cells, they've been able to access much more than they would previously have done and maybe more than some of them were accessing when they were unlocked."* (Sally, senior manager)

> *"All the time we've not been doing groups, we've got huge amounts of contact with the guys, in the sense that they're sending us back the packs, we're giving them new packs, issuing certificates, things like that"* (Nicola, Substance Misuse service)

These staff suggested that "*innovative*" in-cell telephones and distractions "*packs*" enabled "*huge amounts of contact*". These narratives reveal the doxic structure of imprisonment where the apparent improvement in contact indicates how prisoners received limited support before the pandemic. However, the majority of prisoners and staff suggested that the provision of in-cell 'distraction packs' and telephones during the pandemic was insufficient to meet prisoners' needs and had little effect on addressing their social inequality:

> *"You've got these silly in-cell packs for you to do, don't get me wrong, some people might want to do them for £5 but it's nothing… something my nine-year-old daughter can do."* (Phil, prisoner)

> *"It's a long time, 23 hours a day in a cell! So a lot of people are struggling with the time behind the door 'cause there's no activities on, no education… They give you an activity pack with crosswords but the traveller boys can't read or write so it's hard work for some people… it's a long time in four walls… if I leave here tomorrow I'm probably worse off 'cause my homes and everything been took whilst I've been in here."* (Thomas, prisoner)

> *"There were in-cell telephones which weren't as successful as we'd hope they'd be – it's difficult in mental health to do something over the telephone, it's difficult to do something in mental health with a mask on your face so initially it was very difficult. It took a while to get the phones in as well and when they were in, 'cause these guys are behind their doors up to 23 hours a day, and it's a remand prison so they're in, they're out and they're moved around, they'd smash the phones, smash the sockets."* (Ria, mental health practitioner)

"We weren't on the wings, but I was trying to make contact with the men in their cells on their cell phones (laughs) which was quite hit and miss – very quickly we realised that was hit and miss – it either rang and rang… or they're not there or the phone isn't actually ringing." (Kat, Third sector)

Sally asserted that prisoners accessed "*much more*" support during the pandemic, but most prisoners and staff suggested the reality was much less. In-cell and video calls were generally considered an inadequate replacement for in-person contact by most staff and prisoners due to lack of access and roll-out issues. Edge (2021) identified that the trading of in-cell phones and pin credit, damage to equipment, and prisoner resistance limited the scope of available support. By August 2022, 24 prisons had still not installed in-cell telephones (Davies, 2023) and resources could not cover all prisoners across the estate. Video calls were available to all prisoners by 2021 but rationed to one 30-minute call a month, and generally, compensation did not 'reach the majority of families' due to constraints outside the prison walls (Suhomlinova et al., 2022). Many prisoners already marginalised and stigmatised in the wider community may have felt "*more comfortable*" in Clarendon, as suggested in Chapter 6, but "*worse off*" outside of it as "*hit and miss*" control measures limited the spread of COVID-19 at a 'great (social) cost' to prisoners and their families (Brennan, 2020: 1). Like the phantom phone that was not "*actually ringing*", the in-cell provision offered false equivalence to in-person learning or social visits and exacerbated prisoners' deprivation. Prison isolation widened social inequality.

Representing the paradoxical nature of imprisonment, participants said that the increased isolation affected prisoners' education, preparation for release, and support systems. Prisoners felt more insecure, like they were being "*set up to fail*":

"I want to do Maths, I want to do English, I want to do reading, even stuff like that, I want to be able to do it. When I get out of here, I want to be able to read my daughter a bedtime story. When she goes to school and comes home with homework I want to be able to help her do it with the homework. I don't know how to do none of that, do you know what I mean? … I'm trying to do it now but all the COVID is messing things up." (Jerry)

"It's [prison] hurt me in many ways. I've lost my missus, my family over it all, it hasn't helped me in the slightest, it's made my mental health a lot worse. So for me, personally, it's a very unhealthy experience… I haven't spoken to my missus now for – well my ex-missus now – 'cause I always phone her and make sure the kids are alright. I haven't spoken to her for about a week and a half now. I've got emails saying she's been hospital and everything, and the emails took a week to come in, that's a week she thinks I don't care." (Benny)

"I got out on the 23rd April this year, I was released to a hostel and didn't speak to anyone 'til a week before. I'd been in two and a half years, do you know what I mean? A week before I had hostel staff and probation staff sit

down with me, they go through my licence conditions, which I didn't agree with, I couldn't do anything about it 'cause I was out in a week! So obviously I've come out in a week and they've said, 'Right, you've broken your licence conditions' and BAM! Recalled within two weeks. It's like they set you up to fail." (Jim)

"COVID put their paroles on hold, things like that so they've had to end up sat in here for three/four months waiting for, not an oral hearing, but like a video conference just so they can try and get their parole. It's affected people like that a lot… a few of the lads that have come in here, they've been recalled [for] the fact they've not social distanced. But they've gone to meet their partners and because they've been seen leaving the APs [Approved Premises] and getting in their partner's cars, whatever, they've then been re-arrested and breached for recall." (Luke)

The restrictions affected prisoners' hopes of reintegration upon release. As Benny stated, prison "*hurt me in many ways.*" With in-person interactions, such as education and visits suspended, and virtual alternatives considered insufficient, some prisoners lost contact with their families, whilst others were recalled to prison after inadequate support. Their experience was compounded by the suspension of the prison 'council', as the forum for communicating prisoners' collective concerns to senior management was suspended for six months. The 'control' measures meant that prisoners effectively lost their voices inside and outside their prison:

"What we've seen over lockdown is things like care proceedings, child protection timelines, all the statutory stuff which is just rolling, and what you've got is people in here who feel more and more kind of out of the loop and disadvantaged and without a voice in some of that statutory, real hard-nosed machinery of local authorities." (Kat, Third sector)

When prisoners were isolated, life outside Clarendon kept "*rolling*". The "*unhealthy experience*" of imprisonment during the pandemic intensified the harms of imprisonment as prisoners lived through over 18 months of isolation and "*disadvantage*", with less access to healthcare, exercise, education, vocational training, work, resettlement support, parole, family support, and social contact compared to 2019 (HMIP, 2022a). The pandemic response increased the sense of distance between prisoners and everyone else, further 'withering social ties' (Wacquant, 2009: 278) and maintaining prisoners' social marginalisation. Prisoners remained "*out of the loop*".

When some pandemic restrictions eased in July 2020, the measures still exacerbated the harms of imprisonment. The symbolic and physical distance was reinforced when visits recommenced with mandatory public health measures, such as wearing masks and social distancing:

"One of the prisoners was really animated about what a horrific experience it was for him and his visitors to come in and have to sit further apart and wear face masks." (Billy, senior manager)

"You've got visits where people want to see their partners or their kids and you've got to sit a distance apart and then, say now, if someone was deaf and had a visit, they can't communicate with that person because that person has to wear a face mask." (Luke, prisoner)

"Visits have been very weird since they've started. Very weird, a few children have come but they're further away than this [two metres] and 'Oh don't touch daddy, sit on the chair!' [it's] heart-breaking, absolutely heartbreaking… people are choosing not to have distanced visits… The cost of booking, cost of travelling and then to come and have a quite strange visit with a mask, visitors wear a mask, all very strange isn't it." (Kat, Third sector)

"With the introduction of visits – ok you can see your children but they have to stay away from you and actually when they do see their children, the child doesn't recognise them because they haven't seen them for such a long time. A lot of them have found that difficult and don't want visits" (Ria, mental health practitioner)

"visits just feels like it's control – obviously that's what prison is – but it just feels like too much. Too much control for what, I just don't understand it really." (Felix, prisoner)

The pandemic experience felt "*controlling*" and made social contact between some prisoners and their families more "*difficult*". Before the pandemic, social visits were 'the highlight' of many prisoners' time in prison (Dixey and Woodall, 2012), important for maintaining family ties and wellbeing (Codd, 2008; Woodall et al., 2009). However, public health measures during visits reminded prisoners of their lack of autonomy and their vulnerability, as well as the distance from and vulnerability of their families. The masks were introduced as a symbol of care, to protect against infection, but these 'boundary products' (Fox, 2011) reasserted their oppression, a visual and symbolic indicator of their prisoner status, the control of the prison, and the pandemic context. The mask was rich with meaning and it carried power and value as a 'thing' that communicated a loss of safety, security, and control (Lupton et al. (2021). It was a precaution that failed to mask their social situation. For prisoners, the face mask was as restrictive as their solitary confinement, engendering their wider experience of imprisonment.

In Clarendon and across the country, the pandemic response increased the pains of imprisonment as prisoners were reminded of their social marginalisation. As Wainwright et al. (2023) stated, the overarching narrative throughout interviews was one of 'you tried your best but we still suffered enormously' (p. 9). In 2022, fewer

than 10% of Clarendon's prison population reported having an in-person or a virtual (online video) social visit (HMIP, 2022a), whilst contact with legal professionals decreased by over 33% in 2022 compared with 2019 (HMIP, 2022a). Less social contact with people outside the prison had a deleterious effect on their support needs. Between 2019 to 2022, more prisoners in Clarendon needed help finding accommodation, support for substance misuse problems, and social care support (HMIP, 2022a). Almost 50% of prisoners needed help getting back in touch with family and friends, and said that their general experience in Clarendon during the pandemic made them more likely to re-offend in the future (HMIP, 2022a). These findings were broadly representative of the national picture (HMIP, 2023) as the pandemic response 'ruptured relationships and (social) connections' between families (Minson and Flynn, 2021: 321). According to User Voice (2022, June), almost 80% of prisoners had not received a visit in over six months by the middle of 2021, producing a greater sense of isolation, separation, and feelings of despair. Two-thirds of their survey sample said that their mental wellbeing had "*never been worse*". Suhomlinova et al. (2022) identified that the restrictions created a 'ticking time bomb' of harm (p. 295), with self-harm and deaths increasing. Prisoners felt that the measures aimed at keeping them safe were another punishment, exacerbating the pains of imprisonment. Their long-term solitary confinement (Maruna et al., 2022: 60) was another 'double-edged sword' (Wacquant, 2009) that reinforced prisoners' deprivation and exacerbated their inequality. The pandemic response reproduced the criminogenic effects of imprisonment by harming their ability to reintegrate outside the prison walls.

"They fear getting ill in prison": The Health Outcomes of Isolation

The harmful effects of isolation were exacerbated by limited access to healthcare support. Due to the increased demand and limited access to treatment, support for prisoners was limited by the wider structures of staff absences, overcrowding, demand, and time:

> "*So yeah, COVID coming in March came with its challenges: staff sickness, restricted services, pregnant staff having to isolate, education we lost, groups we lost, workshops we lost, the prisoners became locked behind their doors for up to 23 hours a day… we're running on less than four staff at the moment plus an agency chap at the weekend. It's really tough and that's reflective of our waiting lists… the waiting list is growing.*" (Ria, mental health practitioner)

During the pandemic, prisoners waited weeks for access to services. At its onset, there were "*so many vacancies*" (Noah, nurse, Fieldnotes 28/01/2020) in all clinical disciplines and, like prison staffing generally, recruitment and retention remained a 'constant challenge' (IMB, 2021: 23). In February 2023, fewer than 46% of posts were filled in Clarendon. Clinics and appointments were regularly cancelled due to

staff shortages, which caused delays in access to care (HMIP, 2022a; IMB, 2022). The delays reinforced prisoners' embodied marginalisation:

> *"It's quite a lot of time to sit in your cell and just think, it does get too much. I ended up self-harming… It's not good for mental health at the moment, at all. I've seen people that have never struggled with mental health when they've come in and they're, they've been on the edge after just a few months… Everything's got worse and slower… you might be waiting a week before you see a mental health nurse for an assessment."* (Felix)

> *"I've asked for mental health when I was on C wing and that was about 4 weeks ago, that's, I've still not been seen by mental health and I'm waiting on a meds review… It's not (equivalent to community care), nowhere, nowhere near. Nowhere near! I put in a healthcare app for my chest when I first come to prison, when I was in HMP [name], that was at the start of August, and I still haven't heard… I've got severe chest pains, it's just shit…"* (Benny)

> *"It's just poor, half the people don't get their medication, it's a shambles, half the medication is missing, they don't know where it is. 10 o'clock every night, there's a problem with someone's night medication. There's always a problem with the healthcare, a big problem."* (Phil)

> *"I've seen people totally normal and this lockdown has come in and, 23 hours a day, they're losing the plot – their behaviour is deteriorating, the only way to get out is to go the block, see a governor and get your point across sometimes. People will get on the netting to play up and go down the block to see a governor every day to get your point across but it's like falling on deaf ears mate, talking to a brick wall."* (Thomas)

Representative of one-third of their peers in Clarendon and more than 50% of prisoners across the estate (HMIP, 2022a), most participants did not feel safe or protected from COVID-19. Many were afraid of being ill, "*You ask any prisoner and they say, they fear getting ill in prison."* (Terry, prisoner) Waiting times for mental health referrals and urgent psychiatric appointments doubled (IMB, 2022). More than 60% said it was not 'easy' to see a Nurse or Doctor (HMIP, 2022a), and healthcare complaints to the Independent Monitoring Board increased by over 43% compared with 2019 (IMB, 2022). Overall, more than 90% of prisoners said their health had deteriorated or not improved (HMIP, 2022a). Prisoners were aware of the risk of being imprisoned but could do little to protect themselves as the system that claimed to protect their health, harmed them. Like their social identity, many prisoners' health and wellbeing were stripped away, *mortified*, by incarceration.

Participants said that prisoners' health outcomes might have been better if they were homeless than imprisoned. During the pandemic, care in Clarendon was considered "*nowhere near*" equivalent to care outside prison:

"we're not looking after people properly from a health point of view… you put them onto an RCU (Reverse Cohorting Unit) for 14 days and ye, there could be a massive long-term effect of this could be huge for people, and then the people we release as well… Were we letting them out at the right time with the services? I suspect not. If you were homeless, I suspect you would have had half a chance because you were put into a hotel, but ye, it's gone massively backwards [here]." (Chris, custodial manager)

"Our healthcare is understaffed, we don't have enough nurses, we don't have enough GP cover, we don't have enough, we don't have a psychology service, we don't have a pharmacist, our medication is problematic in terms of supply, our mental health provision is less than it needs to be and the demand is certainly outstripping supply… I think the provision should reflect what happens in the community and I think at the moment it doesn't." (Edmond, senior manager)

"Like the RCU, 14 days! I think most of us realise we couldn't do it. That's awful, mental torture. They're here for punishment but na, I wouldn't come back from that, there's nothing like that in the community… I suppose that's the issue, that nothing much has changed. We are expected to work with prisoners that are more ill, more violent, with the same resources. It doesn't add up. But when they come onto the mains, people are a bit nicer to each other, a bit more understanding initially at least." (Sammy, supervising officer, Fieldnotes 25/09/2020)

With demand outstripping supply, these staff said that Clarendon's healthcare provision had deteriorated during the pandemic. The structure of imprisonment did not "*add up*" to the needs of prisoners, and prisoners' health deteriorated. Between 2019 and 2022, mental health problems increased from around two-thirds to three-quarters of the prison population (HMIP, 2022a), and there were 14 non-COVID-related prisoner deaths between May 2020 to 2023, of which three were confirmed as self-inflicted (IMB 2021, 2022, 2023), compared with none in the 12 months to April 2020 (IMB, 2020). The experience in Clarendon was symptomatic of systemic issues. Wainwright et al. (2023) identified that prison healthcare was a 'poor relation' to healthcare in the community, with no extra resources or staffing producing a 'universal trauma' and worsening the needs of prisoners. Suhomlinova et al. (2022) noted that prisoners' pains were 'significantly exacerbated' by reduced access to healthcare (p. 294). User Voice (2022, June) identified that prisoners felt ignored by healthcare and 69% of those surveyed reported diminished access to healthcare, with almost half experiencing 'severe' depression. The delays or absence of support suggests that prisoners' fears of getting ill were justified.

Across England and Wales, prisoners' health outcomes deteriorated during the pandemic. Annual self-harm incidents among adult males remained at record highs

between 2019 and 2021, and annual deaths increased by over 30% from 2019, with 391 deaths in 2021 (HMPPS, 2023e). Before the pandemic, prisoners were more likely to be hospitalised and/or die from self-inflicted or natural causes compared to their counterparts in the general population of similar ages (Fazel et al., 2005). Over the 12 months to February 2021, prisoners were at least three times more likely to become infected, be hospitalised, and die from COVID-19 than their counterparts outside prison (Braithwaite et al. 2021; McCarthy et al., 2022). Concurrently, prisoners were more likely to experience symptoms of moderate or severe anxiety, depression, or PTSD (User Voice, 2022, June). Most prisoners then had to wait for support with delays of four weeks for GP appointments and several weeks for a healthcare bed (Davies, 2023). Being imprisoned harmed prisoners, but unlike the hidden injuries of inequality before the pandemic, the pandemic revealed its punitive structures. Their body was a memory (Bourdieu, 1977) and their unequal health outcomes evidenced the structural violence they experienced.

Prisoners' health outcomes represented their social marginalisation as the national pandemic response represented and reinforced their stigmatisation. Whilst prisons were overcrowded and poorly ventilated, hotels were converted into homeless shelters to provide safe and clean spaces to isolate in the wider community (The Guardian, 2020 March). In Clarendon, most cells lacked basic furniture, were covered in graffiti, and many prisoners were unable to access a working telephone or a shower (IMB, 2022). In prisons nationally, diagnostic testing was only available for the first five symptomatic cases until late 2020 when it became more routine for staff and prisoners to test weekly to prevent the introduction of infection into and transmission within custody. This was at least six months later than the wider community (SAGE, 2021). Equally, vaccinations outside prisons were accessible for the homeless and most vulnerable from late 2020 whilst vaccinations in prisons were delayed and only available to some prisoners based on age from the end of January (SAGE, 2021). Prisons experienced social, behavioural, and logistical barriers to vaccinating prisoners, such as limited staff capacity and storage, concerns about wastage, and challenges identifying vulnerable prisoners (Ismail et al., 2022; SAGE, 2021). With no additional economic or social support, no prioritisation, and prisoner hesitancy, vaccination uptake rates were lower than in the wider community (Ismail et al., 2022; SAGE, 2021). As Wainwright et al. (2023) identified, there was a sense among prisoners and staff that prisons were a 'low priority' and 'not as important as other communities' (p. 10). The national pandemic response reinforced the punitive social agenda of imprisonment. With fewer protections and a higher-risk environment, at least 435 positive cases were identified and three deaths were confirmed among prisoners across the six known COVID-19 outbreaks in Clarendon between 2020-2022 (IMB 2021, 2022). Neglected and rejected, Schleihe et al. (2022) wrote that prisoners became 'biological sub-citizens' (p. 894). Like their 'social death' (Price, 2015) upon incarceration, prisoners were

excluded from their right to health before and during the pandemic. An 'already broken' and under-resourced system (User Voice, 2022, June: 11) exacerbated the existing health conditions of prisoners, left new conditions undiagnosed, and mental health needs increased.

Since research ethics approval from October 2019 to September 2023, over 1260 men died in prison (HMPPS, 2023e). Their environment and its response had a deleterious effect on prisoners, depriving them of their health, reinforcing social inequalities, and perpetuating the paradoxical outcomes of imprisonment with prisoners unhealthy, unsafe, and insecure. Rather than 'protecting the wellbeing' of prisoners (HMPPS, 2020b: 3) as the national COVID-19 policy proposed, the virus infected a large proportion of the prisoner population and increased social and health issues, including self-harm and deaths. The long-term social and health effects of COVID-19 are still emerging and will be shouldered by communities for years to come (Maruna et al., 2022; Patterson et al., 2021) as the pandemic response produced another paradox of health.

Conclusion

This chapter speaks to how changes were resisted and adapted to in the prison field during the pandemic (Graham, 2020). Hysteresis was a thinking tool for conceptualising and deconstructing possible changes in the field. It revealed how prisoners and staff temporarily experienced a "*Christmassy feel*" at the start of the pandemic, a 'collective spirit' (Wainwright et al., 2023) induced by a shared sense of isolation from wider society. Prisoners and staff supported each other, forging more equal and "*brotherly*" relationships. The findings indicate how prisons are porous, with disease, inequality, and culture passing easily through their bars and walls. However, security and control remained the default disposition in Clarendon.

As 'second nature', the worst-case mentality and security disposition of staff endured the pandemic, governed by the field and its past conditions. Staff practice remained guided by doxic ideas of 'risk', of prison as a place of control and prisoners as a risk to be controlled. COVID-19 was framed as a biosecurity risk and national policy legitimised restrictive conditions as many prisoners spent at least 23 hours in their cells. The 'semantic slide' of penal policy facilitated a double-game strategy, communicating the essential prioritisation of controlling prisoners by advocating for the 'control' of COVID-19. Participants explained that *"The principles are the same",* but "*it's the way that we look at it that has changed*". Applying hysteresis to the pandemic context reveals its 'multi-level, multi-temporal dynamics' (Strand and Lizardo, 2016: 169), identifying how the response reinforced the structures, habitus, and doxa of imprisonment. Prison 'security' remained the default

priority among operational staff, maintaining social norms and hierarchies that perpetuated social inequality and harmed prisoners in Clarendon.

This analysis provides a novel first-hand contribution to literature on the experience of imprisonment during the pandemic in what was a relatively sparsely documented criminological phenomenon. Em-prisoned by social inequality, prisoners had already 'lost' and the pandemic failed to 'disrupt' the structures of imprisonment. Measures to protect prisoners' health and wellbeing paradoxically deprived them of both their remaining liberty and health. In 2005, Farmer wrote that prisons are 'ill-prepared' and adapted to manage a 'health crisis.' (p. 184) Without heeding this warning, prisons failed to meet their ethical and legal obligation for prisoners to be entitled to and have access to the same level, range, and quality of healthcare as that provided to society at large, without discrimination (Till et al., 2014). Isolation perpetuated the trans-carceral habitus and infra-conscious sensibility of prisoners by exacerbating social marginalisation and a sense of distance from people outside of prison. Isolated in their cells without adequate support, many prisoners felt "*set up to fail*" upon release. This was compounded by limited access to healthcare and delays in diagnosis and treatment for various health needs that reinforced their embodied marginalisation. In summary, the 'collective spirit' culminated in 'collective hurt' (Wainwright et al., 2023: 11) as Clarendon was a paradox of health during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The effects of pandemic policy and structural issues, such as operational culture, overcrowding, neglected infrastructure, and understaffing, persisted into 2023. Recent HMIP (2023) findings from prisons across England and Wales, including Clarendon, indicate a systemic issue where many prisons continue to provide 'insufficient' time out of cell and 'purposeful activity', violence remains high, conditions remain 'poor', and there is minimal interaction between staff and prisoners. Many prisoners 'stayed stuck in their cells' (HMIP, 2023: 6) as staff sickness and retention worsened. Scholars have framed this as a 'crisis' (Annison and Guiney, 2023). Yet, in the face of a public health emergency, *hysteresis* was temporary: there were no sustained disruptions to the field. This chapter suggests this is because the field is the 'crisis'; the manifestation and embodiment of objective social intentions to be what it is, a 'cultural engine' (Wacquant, 2009: xviii) of deprivation and control, perpetuating social inequalities. Based on similar conclusions, Maruna et al. (2022) suggest that this paints a bleak future for the prison, 'a troubling trend for future outbreaks' (p. 103) and reimagining the role of imprisonment in society. However, this chapter should offer hope. Prisons are not fixed entities incapable of change and evolution, they are just difficult to shift against the tide of the punitive agenda. With imagination and putting prisoners at the heart of the intentions and aims of imprisonment, prisons could reverse the paradox.

9. Discussion & Conclusion: The 'merry-go-round'

Yesterday evening, I completed the final interview, returned my keys, and left HMP Clarendon for the last time in this study. I was surprised to feel sad. The participants welcomed me into their world and trusted me with their thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Participants had cried with me, laughed with me and, ultimately, trusted me. Before and during the pandemic, staff and prisoners made me feel welcome. I was fortunate to have had this fieldwork experience, to learn from them, about them, and with them. (Fieldnotes, 08/10/2020)

The final interview had concluded as prisoners were being locked up by wing staff after dinner. I hovered by the Orderly Office to say goodbye. Supervising officers, a custodial manager, and a duty governor were talking about "*never-ending*" safety and security issues in the prison. I waited for a natural break in the conversation and listened. There was a sense of déjà vu from the first senior management meeting I attended in December 2019. Conversations centred around staff absences, healthcare spaces, time out of cell, and violence. I felt like I had heard this conversation a hundred times in Clarendon. I thought back to the General Election in 2019 when Boris Johnson's Conservative Government pledged over £3 Billion to tackle crime and reduce reoffending, and the cynicism with which the commitments were greeted in Clarendon: "*We've heard it all before. Nothing changes.*" (Fieldnotes, 17/12/2019) From the exasperated tone of staff ten months later, they seemed well aware of the repetition and cycle of imprisonment. They still felt under pressure and preoccupied with responding to emergencies, but unlike last year, there was no pretence about trying to make Clarendon a "*meaningful step*" in the journey of imprisonment. Someone muffles "*How can it be so hard to run a prison?!*" from behind a mask. Those present seem to know what they are meant to be doing, but operationalising those intentions into practice proves an ongoing battle. It reveals how imprisonment is the product of a complex relationship between the mutually reinforcing elements of structure, habitus, and agency. Prisons were 'locked in inertia' (Garside, 2020: 12) by a 'perfect storm' where staff can only practise within the rules of the field and the rules guarantee that imprisonment is meant to be hard. This research theorises that the field reproduces itself.

From start to end of fieldwork, with a six-month hiatus in between, the field did not seem to have changed. Indeed, HMIP's (2023) findings three years later would still suggest that little has changed in the delivery and outcomes of imprisonment. All the while, the Minister for Justice has changed (at least) five times. Apart from demonstrating the length of time it has taken to conduct and write up this research, these findings suggest that it is necessary to consider the temporality of research relative to its subject (Fassin, 2017). Clarendon was now contending with a different sort of emergency to those described in the boardroom in late December 2019.

However, safety and security were still the priorities and "*rehabilitative*" activities remained unrealised "*luxuries*" before and during the pandemic. As Bourdieu (1977) wrote, 'objective intention always outruns conscious intentions' (p 79). No matter what plans staff in Clarendon sought to implement or what ambitions they held, they could not shift the outcomes of imprisonment. Many prisoners and staff were emprisoned by their social conditioning inside and outside the prison. The practice of imprisonment was constrained by the social forces of wider structures, such as political narratives, spending, and public attitudes, which shaped how prisoners were thought about and treated. At a micro-level, the bricks and mortar of Clarendon may differ from other prisons, the pond smaller and lifeless, the ceilings lower, and the spaces darker, the people may differ in their outlooks, their attributes, their histories and their values, they may have different experiences and different names, but at multiple levels of the field, prisons are structured by objective intentions. It suggests national and local policies matter and Clarendon could not resist the pull of punitive trends.

Indicative of the wider prison system, Clarendon seemed designed to protect and perpetuate its production and practice, protecting its raison d'être for imprisoning people and exacerbating social inequality. According to the aims of imprisonment as described by former Deputy Prime Minister and Justice Secretary, Dominic Raab in the Prison Strategy White paper, prisons are meant to:

> *keep people safe by taking dangerous criminals off our streets, but they can only bring down crime and keep the public safer in the longer-term if they properly reform and rehabilitate offenders.* (Ministry of Justice, 2021: 3)

Whilst the official aims of imprisonment are indicative rather than instrumental of prison practice, this rhetoric neglects the social-relational dimensions of imprisonment. Like many of his peers before and after his term in office, Raab perpetuated an ideologically reductionist and deterministic view of imprisonment as the solution to individual experiences of social inequality. Crime, according to official policy, was rational, prisoners were agentic individuals who chose to commit crime, and prisons were 'safe, secure and rehabilitative environments' (HMPPS, 2019, November: 9) protecting the public and *returning* 'offenders' to competence (Mathiesen, 2006). This thesis critiques the official aims of imprisonment and draws attention to the social factors producing its outcomes.

With an ethnographic approach, it represents Clarendon as a distinct field interrelated with wider society. Clarendon is conceptualised as a construct of social forces, a symbolic entity that shapes behaviours, experiences, and outcomes. Applying Bourdieu's field theory to fieldwork and interview data reveals some of the invisible processes that produce local dynamics and outcomes. Using his theoretical toolkit of *habitus, doxa*, and *hysteresis*, it finds that security, safety, and rehabilitation are paradoxically operationalised in Clarendon and deconstructs how and why this

occurs in contemporary imprisonment. The findings highlight that contemporary imprisonment is, in part, a product of historical production and wider social forces which produce the people and place of Clarendon, its structures and behaviours, and, often, the opposite outcomes of official intentions. As Bourdieu (1993) explained, 'contemporary' framing ignores the 'structural time-scales specific to each field' (p. 52). To analyse imprisonment in this sense would be to ignore history and, once more, it emphasises the development of this research over time and the importance of critical reflection throughout the design and analytical process.

Using field theory, this research theorises that prisoners are em-prisoned by their social structures inside and outside the prison walls. Shaped by the tides of wider social inequality, thematic analysis suggests that Clarendon holds a complex population with many acute and chronic issues. Marginalised by society, some of these prisoners develop a doxic attachment to the prison which, concurrently, *prisonises* imprisoned people and harms their ability to integrate into wider society. Prison perpetuates and exacerbates social inequality by representing the social values and community sentiment towards these men. The neglected infrastructure, understaffing, isolation, and overcrowding of Clarendon form part of this structural violence as it is experienced by staff and prisoners. Rather than address the trans-carceral habitus of many prisoners, security-oriented practices by staff, their doxa, and their prison conditions exist in a self-reinforcing and legitimising relationship by producing insecurity and violence. The belief of staff in their use of force as "*inevitable*" and "*necessary*" represents how the field is a paradox, a double-game strategy that appears to protect prisoners but guarantees their subordination. The pandemic response provides another example where prison did not 'keep people safe' and 'rehabilitate offenders'. Many prisoners experienced a double punishment, deprived of their liberty and their health, as narratives of 'protecting' prisoners and 'controlling' COVID-19 (HMPPS, 2020b, 2022) legitimised their punitive treatment and disguised their restrictive conditions. Punishment and control, rather than health, remained the core function of imprisonment. Before and during the pandemic, the default disposition of prison 'security' inhibited change in Clarendon. Shaped by the field and its past conditions, staff maintained their worst-case mentality and security habitus. In 2023, HMIP found that, across England and Wales, prisons, including Clarendon, continued to provide 'insufficient' time out of cell and 'purposeful activity', violence remained high, conditions remained 'poor', and there was minimal interaction between staff and prisoners. If there is a crisis of imprisonment, it has been normalised across England and Wales.

Leaving the field not only signalled the end of fieldwork but a significant milestone in a personal journey. Whilst ethnographers should not be sentimental (Crewe, 2018), scholars have suggested that it affects them at a human level, how they see themselves, and how others see them. Bennett (2012) and Copes (2018) acknowledged that ethnographic fieldwork changed them in many ways.

Researchers can become attached to their research community and reluctant to leave (Herrity, 2019) as we have learned from them and about them with our eyes, ears, hearts, and guts (Ferrell, 2018). Significantly, I learned self-critique. This is critical for insider researchers with prior knowledge and assumptions of the field. Insider researchers must re-learn the field and critique common-sense assumptions to avoid reproducing state narratives as a 'doxosopher' (Bourdieu, 1998). Throughout the ethnographic process, I learned to adapt my clothing, behaviour, speech patterns, and tea-making skills to control for ethnographic 'dazzle' (Fox, 2014: 17) and build relationships with participants. This meant ducking opportunities to 'return the ball' (Liebling, 1999a: 156) in policy discussions, avoiding eye contact, or leaving a space where necessary to mitigate my influence in the field. These and many more informal strategies enabled me to navigate ethical considerations but demonstrated the myriad of ways a researcher is present and open to the field emotionally and physically. As the fieldnotes above suggest, researchers share the field with participants, their thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Upon leaving the field, it felt like leaving the participants behind, although it reminded me of how hierarchies manifest in everyday interactions and the importance of considering what I can do daily to be more kind, fair, and compassionate. Upon concluding data collection, I had a better appreciation of the field and the people with whom I researched and worked, their issues and the relationships, as I commenced the next phase of research. The following section revisits the research questions and summarises the contributions to existing literature and knowledge.

The Prison Paradox: Core Findings and Contributions to Knowledge

Developed in response to concerns about prison outcomes in England and Wales, this study evolved within the context of wider social trends. Rather than conducting ethnographic research in two adult male prisons and how they responded comparatively to their 'crises', time and access constraints turned this research into an in-depth case study of one prison responding to their local issues. Specifically, it deconstructed *how security, safety, and rehabilitation are operationalised in contemporary imprisonment.* A six-month suspension between fieldwork and interviews provided critical distance to conduct initial analysis and see the field again. As Crewe (2018) experienced, illumination and understanding came more often after fieldwork when distance from the field had been established. Whilst returning to work full-time, the hiatus enabled me to commence the back-and-forth of thematic analysis and informed data collection upon returning to the field. Like Crewe, distance from Clarendon provided an appreciation of the place of health in imprisonment, the assumptions staff made about prisoners compared with patients, and the purpose of imprisonment in response to the pandemic. Whilst the distance

diminished personal relationships with those in the field, it guided what to look for, think about, and explore with interview participants. During analysis and write-up, this evolved into a Bourdieusian theorisation of how imprisonment produces paradoxical outcomes. This section summarises the findings and situates these within extant prison research to establish the study's contribution to theory, method, methodology, and policy.

Theoretical Contribution

This research highlights how a prison is a human social system, a complex place of complex people behaving in a variety of ways. It contributes to the existing evidence base about what happens between people in prisons and why. The findings speak directly to knowledge and academic discourse regarding the impact of macro strategic intentions on local practices (Crewe, 2009/2012; Garland, 1997; Sim, 2012; Sparks and Bottoms, 1996); to prison practices and culture (Bennett 2012; Crawley, 2004a; Crawley and Crawley, 2008/2012; Liebling et al, 2011; Warr, 2018); to the operational delivery of security (Arnold et al., 2012; Bennett, 2023a; Drake, 2012; Zedner, 2003); to the impacts of the pandemic in prison settings (Maycock, 2022; Suhomlinova et al., 2022; User Voice, 2022, June; Wainwright et al., 2023); to the experience of health and inequality among prisoners (Fazel et al., 2005, 2016; Sim, 2009; Tomczak, 2022; Woodall, 2010, 2020); and, the porosity of the penal field (Crewe, 2012, 2015; Ellis, 2021; Farmer, 2005). This research identifies Clarendon as a prison constructed upon structural and physical violence and insecurity. It adds to this research base by deconstructing how and why this has developed in a local adult male prison. With field theory, this thesis provides an alternative approach to theorising imprisonment.

It offers an insight into how prisoners experience imprisonment. Building on research by Clemmer (1940), prisoners in Clarendon experienced social conditioning through the liminal entry process, their experience of invasive technologies, structured daily timetables, and, *inter alia,* violence as a means of inducing compliance and control. Imprisonment restricted how many prisoners identify, think, and act as someone other than a prisoner. However, prisoners were shaped by social processes outside the prison walls, em-prisoned by their social marginalisation. The structure, habitus, and doxa of the penal field are shaped by social inequality outside the prison, of which prisoners may bear hidden injuries. This trans-carceral habitus (Caputo-Levin, 2013; Quinn, 2023) and infra-doxic sensibility (Fraser and Matthews, 2021) to the prison highlights the porosity of the field and supports the integrated model of imprisonment as advocated by some cultural theorists, such as Parterline and Petersen (1999) and De Viggiani (2006). Structural and cultural factors 'leak' through the prison's walls (Ellis, 2021). One way of theorising the production of imprisonment is to consider how internal and external conditions work together, mutually shaping what happens in custody. Similar to the

pendulum of neglect (Warburton and Stahl, 2021), prisoners are not 'made' in Clarendon. Many people swung between circumstances and experiences of social deprivation and inequality before, during, and after imprisonment. Rather than "harnessing" prisoners to find "new meaning" (Ministry of Justice, 2016), imprisonment was one moment in a life shaped by their social circumstances, an embellishment that represented how many people are excluded from society, forgotten and "*rotting away*" within broader social structures.

Prisoners subsequently experienced paradoxical conditions where Clarendon felt unsafe and insecure. For a cohort of prisoners, imprisonment was "*part of your life*", a support system for accessing basic services, such as housing, food, and healthcare. Concurrently, it was violent and controlling. In Clarendon, these prisoners were protected from social marginalisation and stigmatisation but socialised to embody this violent experience. They had developed an attachment to the prison institution, a conditioned sense of helplessness outside the prison walls, and a way of communicating and resolving 'disrespect' with physical conflict inside the prison. "*Violence*" was the way of Clarendon, where prisoners learned to "*fight*" staff and harm themselves. This experience harmed prisoners' safety inside the prison and reintegration outside the prison walls. Many people who experienced social and health issues felt anxious, insecure, distant from social relations, and caught in a cycle of dependency upon imprisonment that established a paradoxical and *trans-institutional* (Prins, 2011) existence. These findings indicate that the prison experience was 'criminogenic and criminophagous' (Wacquant, 2009: 285), re-producing a cycle of offending to justify its existence and growth. Prisoners and staff exist in an unequal power dynamic, representing wider social structures of stigmatisation, inadequate support, and inequality. Prisoners cannot escape the infantilising relationship with staff (Crewe et al., 2023; Warr, 2021) and are oppressed by the structure of imprisonment (Butler and Drake, 2007), which produces paradoxical outcomes (De Viggiani, 2006). In Clarendon, the experience of imprisonment harms em-prisoned people.

This research contributes to understanding how staff may be institutionalised by imprisonment. In Clarendon, many operational staff developed a security disposition and 'worst-case mentality', socialised by their environment, a culture of risk assessments, and what they perceived to be the priorities of imprisonment. Warr (2008, 2018) warned that prison staff, including psychologists and prison officers, are not a homogenous collective, however, this thesis theorises that the field, its uniforms, keys, regime, culture, policies, training, and practices produced a way of being in Clarendon, a carceral *habitus* among many of these staff oriented towards a narrow definition of prison security. Like a magnetic field, this prison field draws actors towards a shared way of working and constructs doxic narratives that sustain its practices and structure. Many staff felt that their fundamental responsibility and duty was to protect the public by controlling prisoners. Prisoners were *the* security

risk, rather than at risk, a logic that was central to the rationality and production of Clarendon. This unquestioned doxic logic legitimised and empowered staff to use force, which maintained their central position in the structure and delivery of imprisonment. Force was an important practice in 'securing order' (Gooch, 2013) and represented the staff's embodiment of the field, including its mental structures. It was a normal and universal practice of their power and security in Clarendon, rather than a 'backstage' and discretionary mode of power as proposed in the past by some scholars (Crewe, 2007, 2009/2012; Garland, 1997; Liebling, 2000). As such, the habitus and doxa of prison staff and the prominence of their use of force in the delivery and experience of imprisonment supports literature addressing their prisonisation (Arnold, 2005, 2008; Arnold et al., 2012; Crawley, 2004a, b; Liebling et al., 2011; McKendy et al., 2021), the pervasive risk logic of imprisonment (Garland, 2001; Ricciardelli et al., 2015; Sim, 2012; Warr, 2018), pains of imprisonment (Sykes, 1958), and how penal policies legitimise and empower staff and their problematic disposition (Tomczak, 2018). As Marquart (1986) and Van Maanen (1978) noted, in almost every situation, staff manufactured post-factor explanations to legitimise their use of force. Security and using force can be interpreted as 'the source' by which actions are understood, framed, and determined as 'thinkable' or 'unthinkable' (Page, 2013: 154). To staff, it was their only legitimate course of action in the circumstances they had constructed.

During the pandemic, the structure, habitus, and doxa of the field continued to produce a highly restrictive and harmful prison experience. A 'semantic slide' in national policy and local rhetoric disguised the sustained practices of doxic security that perpetuated social inequality and failed to protect the health and wellbeing of prisoners. Diseases like COVID-19 make a 'preferential option' for the most deprived (Farmer, 2005: 140), with prisoners at disproportionately higher risk of experiencing mental and physical health issues than the wider community due to their social marginalisation and prison conditions. The national response framed COVID-19 as a (bio)security risk, shifting the aims of imprisonment to the preservation of life, but, in doing so, maintained the narrow security disposition that did not reflect its multidimensional and interactional relationship with health. The pandemic initially facilitated a temporary Christmas-like fallacy between prisoners and staff, but the response reproduced the structure of imprisonment. 'Control' measures to protect the health and wellbeing of prisoners were a double-edged sword that deprived them of their social ties and their health. This contributes to the emerging literature on the experience of imprisonment during the pandemic in England and Wales. Prisoners' social ties withered and their health was mortified during 'lockdown under lockdown' (User Voice, 2022, June; Schliehe et al., 2022). Prisoners' pains were 'significantly exacerbated' by reduced access to healthcare (Suhomlinova et al., 2022: 294) and isolation from family and friends. However, this analysis provides a novel first-hand contribution to criminological literature on the pandemic prison

experience. In Bourdieusian terms, it theorises that the pandemic response reinforced prisoners' trans-carceral habitus and exacerbated their inequality. It harmed their ability to reintegrate outside the prison and perpetuated their dependency on the institution for support.

Contribution to Method and Methodology

This thesis contributes to ways of understanding, engaging with, and analysing imprisonment. As Page (2013) noted, something has been missing in criminological analysis, with a dearth of empirical links between macro and micro outcomes, structure and practice. Of the Bourdieusian prison studies, some have identified relationships between prison management and late modernity (Bennett, 2012), and occupational culture and economic structures (Page, 2013), but rarely how the aims of imprisonment and macro dynamics manifest locally in the lived experiences and outcomes of imprisonment. This thesis took a bottom-up field theory approach to analyse the stated aims of imprisonment within operational delivery. It speaks to prison ethnographies (Crewe, 2007, 2009, 2018; Fassin, 2017), field theory analyses (Caputo-Levine, 2013, 2015; Fraser, 2013; Quinn, 2023; Shammas and Sandberg, 2016), sensorial approaches (Herrity, 2019; Warr, 2021), and case studies (Bennett, 2012; Gooch, 2013; Woodall, 2010). It highlights how the prison field interacts with other social spaces, such as health and economics, whilst establishing how these fields manifest in local practices. By drawing attention to the context-specific habitus of prisoners and staff, the doxa guiding the field, and the structural dynamics conditioning its actors, this thesis contributes to understanding how and why prisons are in the present circumstances they are in.

It draws on Bourdieu's field theory to analyse imprisonment. Approaching prison practice as relational, not rational, this thesis provides a conceptual break from a substantialist mode of thought. The prison and the prisoner, it argues, cannot be isolated from their social context. Actors and their structure are linked in a mutually interdependent and reinforcing relationship. Clarendon is approached as a semi-autonomous social universe, overlapping with other fields to demonstrate how prison delivery and outcomes are an 'aggregate of interactions' (Bourdieu, 1975: 19). Conceptualising imprisonment as a field reveals how it represents social values and how prisoners are problematised. This field is then embodied in practice and constructed in theory according to the habitus and doxa of staff and prisoners.

The conceptualisation of habitus and doxa enhances our understanding of how the prison, its role, and its production affect lives. These terms provide a way of thinking and talking about what is happening in Clarendon. They draw attention to how people learn, adapt, and respond to their social environment – their subjective 'social orientation' towards and beliefs about the ways of the field (Bourdieu, 1984). In Chapters Six and Seven, this approach informed a way of analysing how staff were re-socialised by their 'culture of control' and roles as "*risk professionals*",

manifested and re-produced in their use of force as an *"inevitable"* and necessary practice. Chapter Eight explains how the pandemic response of isolation and restrictions was ineffective in protecting prisoners, but legitimised by a 'semantic slide' in policy rhetoric. These concepts provide a means of questioning simple ideas and seeing the invisible relations and processes that produce practice and outcomes.

Hysteresis provides another thinking tool to examine and explain change and social effects in prison settings. Hysteresis opens up a field of possibilities for questioning and evaluating what happens in a prison, why, and what for. It provides a framework for exploring how actors interpret and respond to strategies and changes, if at all. This is particularly relevant in a penal context where stakeholders refer to crises and emergencies to make sense of what is happening and to call for reform. In Clarendon, hysteresis revealed that practices during the pandemic resembled practices before the pandemic. This suggests that, in a crisis, prisons may regress/ resort to the security norm, to what they know. The findings critique whether COVID-19 was a crisis in prisons. After an initial disruption to social norms, where routine behaviours 'cease to operate' (Bourdieu, 1988: 783), the changes were a fallacy. COVID-19 was *always an issue of security*." As Maruna et al. (2022) identified more widely, prisons regressed to a state of pure punishment and social isolation. By speaking to Graham's (2020) theory of how hysteresis can explain the effects of the pandemic in different fields, this research provides a novel contribution to criminological methods by doing so in an adult male prison and its utility for thinking about what happens and why in custodial environments.

This research extends our understanding of the affective relations between people and place. Scholars have identified that the goals of a criminal justice system are materially expressed and experienced (Jewkes, 2018; Moran and Jewkes, 2015; Moran and Turner, 2019). Mapping the contours of a prison, its structure and rhythm, informs how stakeholders engage with imprisonment as a physical and social space. Field theory provides the tools to examine objective and subjective relations, and a sensorial approach connects the two by foregrounding physical and affective experiences. To depict the full spectrum of experience annunciates its value and its accuracy. Like the empty prison pond, bin bags for prisoners' belongings, and the fake plant hidden by the bin in the corner of reception, the symbolic power of carcerality – what is inherent in the prison environment – is revealed in Chapter Five. Processes of punishment are 'encoded' in the sensorial outputs within imprisonment (Herrity et al., 2021: xxiii). Scholars can explore 'common sense' assumptions about the prison field by examining how structures affect social dispositions, such as habitus and doxa. In turn, this approach can develop novel understandings of carceral spaces and critique their material design and affective conditions.

This thesis contributes to ways of conducting prison research by situating the researcher in the foreground of the field. People do not act in a 'hermetically sealed vacuum devoid of other actors' (Maruna and Farrall, 2004: 15) and their decisions in the field cannot be isolated from their social structures that give actions meaning and purpose. In other words, context is crucial to understanding the relations between individual actions and macro forces. Developing high-quality data is hard to achieve from a distance. As Treadwell (2018) wrote, penality and crime is a human behaviour that cannot be understood quantitatively. With immersion, context, critique, and grounded insights, ethnography exposes hidden voices and power relations. The researcher is 'entangled with their methods' (Holliday, 2007: 138) and ethnographers must be reflexive. By acknowledging that the interpretive process is value-laden, this study strived for nuance and empathy, to humanise the participants. The researcher should not hide behind the passive voice or 'objective' constructions of theory but demonstrate a presence and deep humility in the research process, maintaining an openness to different perspectives and unanticipated findings (Bucerius, 2018; Maruna, 2018). In doing so, it situates the knowledge in the field, elevates the voices of participants, and connects theory to practice, which mitigates subjective distortion and promotes transparency in ways surveys and other impersonal methods do not. Foregrounding the researcher enables the audience to see how the research was produced and how conclusions were derived.

Lastly, this study speaks to ethnographic research in other prison settings, such as Crewe (2009/2012) in Wellingborough, Gooch (2013) in a Youth Offending Institute, Morris and Morris in Pentonville (2013) and, among others, Herrity (2019) at HMP Midtown. Individually, these small-scale case studies may be critiqued as superficial and unrepresentative (Treadwell, 2018), but collectively, each case study contributes to a democracy of knowledge (Ferrell, 2018: 151). Together, these studies indicate how the macro social dynamics of imprisonment, the social trends, values, and policies, interact with local practice and outcomes. This case study of Clarendon highlights the interactional relationship between structure and agency.

Contribution to Policy Knowledge

This thesis contributes to penal policy knowledge by deconstructing the intentions and outcomes of imprisonment, the double-game strategy of policy, and how systemic issues manifest locally, materially, and socially. This research has highlighted that the official aims of imprisonment provide top-down and bottom-up management of the penal experience and outcomes. Whilst staff have an 'embarrassment of policies they should follow', they have limited agency (Tomczak, 2018: 114). National and local policies are important in shaping structures, discourses, attitudes, and practices.

Although paradoxical in their production, the prioritisation of security and public protection in official discourse transmutes and legitimises interests and subsequent actions and outcomes at a local level. In Clarendon, a security imperative structures its practice and experience. This offers a critique of assertions that the aims of imprisonment are too incoherent (Livingstone et al., 2008) or that prison staff are confused about what the prison system is meant to achieve (Crewe, 2008). Imprisonment is framed and understood in Clarendon as the solution to social problems: society needs to be protected from prisoners and prison is responsible for containing and civilising them, "*turning people from chaotic criminals to good prisoners*". Prisoners are risks to be controlled. This security ideology subjugates and marginalises other ideologies, such as welfarism (Drake, 2012). It is a 'fundamental' belief that prison security creates a 'safer and more rehabilitative milieu' (Bennett, 2023a: 31). However, prison security is not a *sine qua non* 'public good' (Zedner 2009). Its prioritisation and narrow definition as 'the bedrock' of imprisonment (Sturt and Gooch 2021: 9) perpetuates inequality and legitimises punitive practices under the guise of 'public protection'. In summary, there is a disparity between the stated aims of imprisonment and reality, between policy and practice, as they exist in a pernicious and paradoxical relationship.

The findings identify how many adult male prisoners are em-prisoned by their social context. In policy terms, the official 'rehabilitative' discourse neglects the social determinants of crime and devolves society of responsibility for addressing some of the factors em-prisoning people in their deprivation. The HMPPS (2019, May) 'rehabilitative culture' guidance claimed that prisons enable prisoners to change their attitudes, habits, and identities as if these 'rational' choices were independent of their social contexts. In Clarendon, many prisoners were em-prisoned in a cycle of neglect, developing a trans-carceral habitus before, during, and after imprisonment that embodied and reproduced their social and health issues, including homelessness, unemployment, and substance misuse. As such, this research supports literature situating prisoners and their 'criminal behaviour' within their wider social context (Maruna, 2000; Van Eijk, 2017; Wacquant, 2009; Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009) and critiques the rationalisation and individualisation of crime (Cullen and Gendreau, 2019; Hannah-Moffat, 2005, 2016; Ramsay et al., 2020). Risk assessments and 'rehabilitation' imply a return to a subjective state unaffected by social inequality which, as Carlen (2013b) and Van Eijk (2017) identify, discriminates against the poor, deprived, and marginalised. Reconfiguring 'rehabilitation' or 'rehabituation' (Shammas, 2018) to eliminate the prefix 're-' would signify how the social determinants of health and crime overlap and how the prison field is interrelated with poverty, policing, and social values. This thesis critiques the official approach to and definition of 'rehabilitation'. It reinforces that crime and desistance are part of a complex journey, a relational process of social forces, that imprisonment cannot address in isolation.

The research highlights how penal policies perform a double-game strategy. The use of force policy principles of 'reasonable, proportionate and necessary' (NOMS, 2005: 5) are supposed to guide staff on when they can 'lawfully' use force, however, they re-produce the conditions for its production. Training and policy re-produce force as staff are their own judge and jury. For many staff, using force wasn't a "*choice*", it was "*necessary*" and, subsequently, it was common. Their security habitus and doxa and the structure and aims of imprisonment exist in a perpetual cycle as they legitimise, empower, and constrain force and violence in prison. For example, the scientificity and legalese of training and policy shroud the range of possible behaviours in neutral and universal *argot*. In framing the use of force as "*in our DNA*" and part of staff duty, "*evidence-based*" training and policy can be interpreted as 'the source' by which actions are understood and determined as 'thinkable' or 'unthinkable' (Page, 2013: 154). As such, it is likely that post-incident investigations of force will not address the "*embedded*" causes of violence because they focus on individual decision-making, rather than questioning shared 'common-sense' assumptions among staff or resolving systemic issues of social conditioning, such as training and policy. The belief in force as inevitable, legitimate, and universal reveals how the prison field is constructed upon symbolic and physical violence.

The pandemic response in Clarendon further harmed prisoners. This thesis critically analyses the 'biosecurity' approach to preserve life and 'maintain stability (order and control)' (HMPPS, 2020b: 12). The 'balance of risk' rhetorically shifted from prisoners to COVID-19 as the 'semantic slide' reinforced security as the default disposition. Prisoners and staff temporarily experienced a "*Christmassy feel*", a 'collective spirit' (Wainwright et al., 2023) indicating that social norms can be disrupted. However, prison practice regressed to the norm. Prisoners were deprived of their liberty and health, with restrictions affecting access to healthcare and familial relationships. Isolation exacerbated health issues and withered social ties. These national restrictions and effects of isolation persisted into 2023, demonstrating that, even when confronted by a public health emergency, prisons generally disregard the interactional relationship between security and health, conforming to the carceral logic of control. This reveals that national strategies of control are embedded in the mental and social construction of the field and translated into local practice. The semantic slide (and recession) of imprisonment, from control to 'security' and 'public protection', violence to 'force', and the 'balance of risks' discourse shrinks the space of thought and possibility, disconnecting prison security from financial, housing, and health security. These seemingly 'harmless' rhetorical changes contribute to 'banalising' the punitive treatment and deepening social inequalities experienced by prisoners (Waquant, 2009: 284). In the context of COVID-19, the rhetorical changes were not harmless. Policy rhetoric disguised the punitive reality that prevented emergency releases, perpetuated isolation, delayed testing and vaccine access, and maintained prisoners' status as 'biological sub-citizens'

(Schleihe et al., 2022: 894). The pandemic experience in Clarendon was considered "*nowhere near*" equivalent to care outside prison.

In the likely event of future crises, epidemics, and infectious disease outbreaks in prisons, approaches to 'preserve life' are unlikely to protect most prisoners from harm. In Clarendon, there was no 'control' over the virus and interventions further isolated and marginalised prisoners. Extant research suggests that in its current form of insufficient sanitation, overcrowding, and poor ventilation (Farmer, 2005; Jewkes and Johnston, 2012; Kinner et al., 2020), prisons may never be able to 'control' respiratory diseases, such as COVID-19. Rather, practices and outcomes will regress to the norm and diminish prisoners' health. Without re-conceptualising security and challenging risk discourse, decarceration may be the only appropriate means of 'preserving life'.

Relatedly, the thesis contributes to policy knowledge about prison design and carceral space. In Chapter Five, the findings highlighted the various ways in which symbolic power is communicated through material and social conditions. For example, the "*unhealthy*" and basic prison food, the institutionalising regime, the invasive search processes, and, among many other things, the derelict old Gate, communicate social values and economic strategies that shape the field and symbolise the social marginalisation of em-prisoned people. The neglected and decaying physical infrastructure represents how society sees prisoners and influences how prisoners feel about themselves. The conditions of imprisonment remain critically related to the philosophy and consequences of imprisonment (Rutherford, 1984; Wener, 2012). Prison policymakers and designers should acknowledge that spatial structures have social effects, where people are physically and emotionally opened up to power (Adey, 2008: 440). International scholarship has identified that negative perceptions of one's prison environment affect behavioural outcomes and vice versa (Azemi, 2020; Moran et al., 2020). Forgotten buildings, daylight, better nutrition, and pond life should not be disregarded in the pursuit of penal expansion and new technologies. Rather, prison researchers and policymakers should interrogate the experiences and related meanings of imprisonment. This will enhance understanding of its lived experience, how to address the needs of prisoners and critique the design process. As Moran and Jewkes (2015) explain, even open, colourful, flexible carceral spaces are not always as 'liberating' as they may superficially appear to be (p. 178). Good intentions can still intensify power and control. By illuminating some of the dark and hidden spaces in Clarendon, this research draws attention to how punitive philosophies pervade the structures of imprisonment. It contributes to debates surrounding the penal estate, its funding, and development. Clarendon, as an old Victorian male prison that was frequently the first and last impression of the custodial estate for many men, seemed to communicate the intentions of imprisonment to prisoners, staff, and the wider public. Prisoners, like Clarendon itself, were excluded, forgotten, and "*rotting away*".

Implications and Future Directions

I wish there was more time in the field and more opportunities to ask questions. Why are local priorities (re)set quarterly? What impact does a Governor have on local practices? What does a future 'healthy' Clarendon look like to prisoners and staff? There's a lot more work to do. The last ten months and the changes along the way have placed health front and centre of the research and within prison security discourse. As Edmond said, health is a "large chunk" of delivering imprisonment but security and safety "have to" come first as they are the "explicit" aims of imprisonment. So if many staff and prisoners can appreciate that health is a thread that runs through every action in a prison, why is this not reflected in policy? (Fieldnotes, 08/10/2020)

This research was an exploratory case study and these fieldnotes indicate that there is more to understand about how and why imprisonment is produced the way that it is. It was an analysis of one prison at a particular time and cannot make general claims about its systemic findings, but it does have implications for prison policy and future research. Garland (2001) highlighted that criminologists are critiqued for not contributing practical knowledge for policymakers so this section notes some of the implications, opportunities, and areas for the development of imprisonment.

This case study speaks to the wider collection of prison research and Bourdieusian analyses, but there are knowledge gaps and opportunities regarding the conception, analysis, and communication of prison research. Knowledge gaps remain in the application of Bourdieu's key concepts, such as hysteresis, across all areas of criminal justice as a means of analysing organisational, national policy, and local changes in experience, practices, and outcomes. Deering (2016) provides a unique account of using hysteresis to analyse practices in probation. Equally, there is an emergence of studies examining the carceral habitus of prison staff (Haggerty and Bucerius, 2021; McKendy et al., 2021), but there is a dearth of literature examining the institutional and structural effects of imprisonment on the shared habitus and doxa of staff inside and outside the prison. Beyond Page's (2011) analysis of the Prison Officer Trade Union in America, there are few accounts of industrial relations in England and Wales (Black, 1995; Bennett and Wahidin, 2008), with gaps in recent knowledge regarding how operational staff collectively wield capital and influence in penal policy and practice.

This study in Clarendon has tried to take a more sensorial approach to scrutinising the physical and emotional landscape and soundscape of imprisonment, but there are more opportunities to experience and represent the field. As Herrity (2019) explains, there are new ways to see, hear, feel, and, ultimately, understand social circumstances through 'inter-related processes of sociality, sound (or senses) and space' (p. 222). Speaking to prison architecture, social design, policies, and procedures, this offers an opportunity to address what a healthy prison environment

sounds and feels like compared to a 'total' institution. How do sensorial experiences differ between prisons and groups of people? Such explorations could examine the experience of sleeping in prison, of new and different forms of resistance, such as 'potting' (assault by bodily fluids), or proximity to natural green spaces to amplify the practices of meaning-making and the effects on the lived experience and outcomes of imprisonment. By putting lived experience at the centre of the research process, researchers can contribute to developing more health-enabling prisons. Prisons can address and, where possible, regenerate indoor and outside spaces, reflecting what prisons could be, rather than what they are. Sensorial approaches to ethnography and prison research can revisit and challenge traditional perspectives and assumptions about crime and imprisonment.

A field theory approach challenges the contemporary discourse of imprisonment. It indicates that Clarendon's social and physical climate represents the systemic norm rather than an anomalous case study. It supports Wacquant's (2009) theory that the prison system is a 'cultural engine' (p. xviii) perpetuating deprivation and social inequalities. Some scholars describe this as prisons being in 'crisis' (Annison and Guiney, 2023), caught in a penal 'merry-go-round' (Scott, 2012) or a crisis-reform-crisis-reform loop (Ismail, 2021), as stakeholders react to immediate issues without addressing underlying systemic causes. However, the perceived penal 'crisis' should not be considered a unique or momentary phenomenon; this approach theorises it is an intellectual construct and an outcome of expectations confronting reality. Equally, portraying prisoners as inherently "*violent*," the "*enemy*," or "*bad guys*" is a perpetuated myth and self-fulfilling prophecy that sustains an 'ecosystem of pain' (Maruna, 2023). As the study of Clarendon reveals, such mental constructions produce a cycle of insecurity, reinforcing the violent actions of prisoners and staff. Imprisonment in England and Wales has long been entrenched in this spiral fallacy (Mathiesen, 2006), contributing to and amplifying social marginalisation, insecurity, and criminal behaviour by disregarding the discourse that supports imprisonment. The rhetorical 'crisis' may highlight some of the issues of contemporary imprisonment, but it disguises the need for a comprehensive, long-term approach to addressing crime and social inequality. It perpetuates the 'crisis-reform' loop. Combined with criminological literature in England and Wales, the collective evidence suggests that society should re-think who prisons are for, what they 'achieve', and what they should be. The current system, marked by an inability to ensure safety, security, and rehabilitation for a largely vulnerable population, underscores the urgency of exploring alternatives to imprisonment. Pursuing such alternatives, which do not exacerbate social determinants of health and crime, is essential to address social inequalities, prevent further harm, and preserve prison services for those most in need of custody.

There are further opportunities for criminological research to look forward and explore the future of imprisonment to inform policy. The absence of preparation for a

pandemic demonstrates one of the ways many prisons are unprepared for the uncertainties of the future. Despite the historical tendency of criminology to reflect on previous policies and their effects, exemplified by the examination of austerity (Gooch and Treadwell, 2020; Ismail, 2021; Laub, 2023) and neoliberalism (Chamberlen and Carvalho, 2019; Garland, 2001; Liebling and Crewe, 2013; Scott, 2012), there is a critical need for scholars to conduct prison research looking beyond the current 'crises' and outcomes. As identified in this thesis, prison practices often react to immediate issues, and there is a scarcity of opportunities for practitioners to think or plan ahead. In response to uncertainty, criminological concepts, theory, and descriptive analyses are essential for making sense of what is to come. Drawing on empirical evidence and theoretical insights, criminologists can contribute to policy development by addressing current challenges while anticipating and preventing emerging issues within the criminal justice system. Based on what we know now, criminological research can explore the likely effects of new technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence, or climate change on imprisonment, or the longer-term effects of pandemic restrictions on prisoner health, wellbeing, and crime. The 'evidence-based' policy movement provides a platform for scholars to push back against positivistic and individualising discourse promoted by other professions (Warr, 2018) and to emphasise the root causes of imprisonment. As integral contributors to the conversation, criminologists can play a vital role in actively shaping the future of penal policy by recognising that evidence does not 'speak for itself' in the complex landscape of criminal justice policymaking (Sampson et al., 2013). By being part of the conversation, criminologists can help shape the future of imprisonment.

Final Reflections and Thoughts

> *I learned a lot about the prison during fieldwork and I learned a lot about myself – my biases, my influence, my privilege, my sense of self. I embraced the idea of being 'a sponge', as a teacher once described me. I thought it was an insult, something passive and weak, but with the eyes of a researcher, I see it as a compliment which I believe it was intended. During fieldwork, I have tried to absorb the punches of unpredictability, refrain from judgment, take whatever comes my way, and enjoy the experience. A researcher may be the elephant in the room, but a courteous and self-aware researcher will be accepted and trusted in time. With time, participants will open up and the researcher will be able to ask questions, make sense of their surroundings, and be embraced in the prison as the norm to be trusted, rather than the exception to be feared.* (Fieldnotes, 08/10/2020)

This thesis adds depth to the existing literature on prisons as unsafe, insecure, and criminogenic social spaces, but these findings are not new. Garland (2001), Sim (2009), Drake (2012) and Fassin (2017) are just some of the researchers who have

identified the paradoxical nature of imprisonment before this case study. However, bringing contradictions to light does not resolve them (Bourdieu, 1999). This thesis offers a configuration of an English prison at present, a distinctive examination and understanding of Clarendon's practice, unveiling the manifestation of violence in the habitus and doxa of staff and prisoners. It explores the socialisation processes within the field, revealing how prisoners and staff are shaped by their conditions and how the field communicates society's punitive values and philosophy. Speaking to 'something bigger' (Gerring, 2007), it supports extant conclusions that prison practices resist change. Even amidst public health emergencies, its ways of working are barely touched by external transformations. Its 'refractory core' (Fassin, 2017: 328) still reproduces the everyday social inequalities and injustices it legitimises.

However, I acknowledge the incompleteness of this research journey. The tentacles of the punitive state extend beyond, within, and around the prison. In the three years to March 2020, more than 1.5 million people were 'dealt with' (charged, proceeded, and summoned to court) by the Criminal Justice System annually, whilst the proportion of people prosecuted and remanded into custody shows a steady increase from 2018-2022 (Ministry of Justice, 2023d). The number of people supervised annually by probation in the community has not fallen below 200,000 people since 2003 (Ministry of Justice, 2012, 2023d). Furthermore, these people may have different experiences based on their age and ethnicity within the system that warrant exploration (Warr, 2022). This analysis of prison delivery in Clarendon is just one example of the various ways in which society reproduces injustices and helps to legitimise itself as a retributive force. This thesis is one way of reading contemporary society.

This research journey positions me to explore and address penal issues more effectively than when I began this process as an HMPPS employee. This journey, akin to Hirschmann's (1991) three 'theses' of critical criminology – perversity, futility, and jeopardy of imprisonment – reflects a personal and professional transformation throughout the research. Ferrell (2018) noted that 'The more one comes to know about the subject, the more one knows there is to know about them' (p. 151). The experience challenged my self-perception within the criminal justice field, prompting critical reflection on my roles, contributions, and future aspirations. For more than three years I worked full-time on the pandemic response while studying, I thought my colleagues and I were protecting public health, but we never took a step back and critiqued what that meant, nor what was possible. This thesis underscores the importance of distance and academia in evaluating the sociological impact of government policy. As Bourdieu (1998) wrote, 'What the social world has done, it can, armed with this knowledge, undo.' (p. 629) Just because prison is, does not mean it always has to be. This is the beginning of a research journey filled with hope.

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Appendices

1. University Ethics Approval & Pandemic Re-Approval

University of Nottingham
UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA

Faculty of Social Sciences
School of Sociology & Social Policy
University of Nottingham
University Park
Nottingham
NG7 2RD

31st October 2019

Reference: 1920-008-PGT

Dear Oscar

Your application for ethical approval from the School of Sociology and Social Policy

On behalf of the Research Ethics Sub-Committee, I am pleased to confirm that your project "A critical ethnographic analysis of how security, safety and rehabilitation are operationalised in a prison in special measures" has been reviewed and approved and you are now welcome to begin your data collection.

If you propose to make any amendments to the approved project or supporting documentation, you must first send details of the amendment along with any supporting documents to the Research Ethics generic email address, LQ-ResearchethicSSP@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk for approval. Please do not use any unapproved or amended documents or procedures before these have been reviewed and approved by the Ethics Sub-Committee.

If you have any queries during your project, please contact the Research Ethics administration team or your academic supervisor.

Good luck with your project!

Kind regards

Dr Alison Mohr
Research Ethics Sub-Committee Officer

To: Melanie Jordan   Mon 21/09/2020 11:06

Hi Mel,

Thank you for the below.

I can confirm that I understand and will comply with the conditions outlined below.

Upon consultation with the prison, I will subsequently provide you with the dates and times of fieldwork once confirmed.

Thank you and best wishes,
Oscar

From: Melanie Jordan <mczmj3@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk>
Sent: 19 September 2020 12:25
To: Oscar O'Mara <lqxoo5@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk>
Subject: F2F Return

Hello Oscar,

Can you please confirm by email that you understand and will comply with these ethics approval conditions - below. Thank you.

Can you also please let Nicola and me know the dates of your fieldwork, and notify us when you leave the field each day as per previous arrangement, and if anything arises and/or you need to discuss anything please do not hesitate to contact us. Thank you.

Please see below for the outcome regarding your F2F fieldwork application to the REC:

I've now heard from the insurance team, FPVC, and HoS. We are pleased to support your application for return to F2F fieldwork, providing: you undertake all elements of your application regarding COVID-19 safety, there are no overnight stays, and you undertake interviews only (no observations) in just one pre-booked/arranged COVID-secure office/room.

Best wishes, Dr Mel Jordan - as REC Chair.

Dr M. Jordan, Assoc. Prof., School of SSP, University of Nottingham.

2. HMPPS National Research Committee Approval & pandemic Re-Approval

Ministry of Justice

HM Prison & Probation Service

Oscar O'Mara
SOCT,
HMPPS,
102 Petty France,
London

National Research Committee
Email: National.Research@Justice.gov.uk

09/12/2019

FINAL APPROVAL

Ref: 2019-346
Title: A critical ethnographic comparative analysis of how security, safety and rehabilitation are operationalised in contemporary imprisonment.

Dear Oscar,

The National Research Committee (NRC) is pleased to provide final approval for your research project. The terms and conditions below will continue to apply to your research project.

Please note that unless the project is commissioned by MoJ/HMPPS and signed off by Ministers, the decision to grant access to prison establishments, National Probation Service (NPS) divisions or Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) areas (and the offenders and practitioners within these establishments/divisions/areas) ultimately lies with the Governing Governor/Director of the establishment or the Deputy Director/Chief Executive of the NPS division/CRC area concerned. If establishments/NPS divisions/CRC areas are to be approached as part of the research, a copy of this letter must be attached to the request to prove that the NRC has approved the study in principle. The decision to grant access to existing data lies with the Information Asset Owners (IAOs) for each data source and the researchers should abide by the data sharing conditions stipulated by each IAO.

Please note that a MoJ/HMPPS policy lead may wish to contact you to discuss the findings of your research. If requested, your contact details will be passed on and the policy lead will contact you directly.

Please quote your NRC reference number in all future correspondence.

Yours sincerely,

Karen Morgan
National Research Committee

From: National Research <National.Research@justice.gov.uk>
Sent: 11 September 2020 15:57
To: O'Mara, Oscar <Oscar.OMara@justice.gov.uk>
Cc: Taylor, Annie [NOMS] <Annie.Taylor1@justice.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: Research re-commencement application

Dear Oscar,

The Committee approves your request to recommence data collection at HMP [redacted] on the following conditions:

- As you are using face-to-face methods, if the prison regime regresses to Stage 4 data collection should cease immediately. Please confirm this cessation with the NRC.
- To reduce the risk of transmission, you should not travel in to the prison if there is a spike in the infection rate in your local area.
- Please ensure you follow the establishment's safety and hygiene protocols.

I have copied in Annie Taylor, who is the research lead for HMP [redacted].

A reminder to please provide a research summary (template attached) once the project is complete.

Best of luck with your PhD.

Kind regards,
Lydia

Lydia Stubbs, on behalf of the NRC
Research Officer
Research & Evaluation | Prison & Probation Analytical Services
3rd Floor, 10 South Colonnade, Canary Wharf
London, E14 4PU
Follow us on Twitter @MoJGovUK

Ministry
of Justice

3. Fieldwork Poster

HM Prison & Probation Service / University of Nottingham (UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA)

HMP X is working with **Oscar O'Mara** and the **University of Nottingham** on a piece of research.

This study is exploring how security, safety and rehabilitation are put into practice, through observations and interviews.

Oscar will be with us until the middle of 2020 and everyone is invited to join in.

There is no obligation to take part. Those who do will not be identifiable within the research outputs.

Any questions, please ask a member of the Senior Management Team or Oscar.

4. Interview Consent Form

Name of Study: A critical ethnographic analysis of how security, safety and rehabilitation are operationalised in contemporary imprisonment.

Name of Researcher: Oscar O'Mara

Name of Participant:

Please read the below. Please feel free to ask questions.

By signing this form, I confirm that (please initial the appropriate boxes):	Initials
I am aware this study is conducted by Oscar O'Mara as part of his research at the University of Nottingham and that Oscar O'Mara has secured full vetting for this work.	
I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet, or it has been read to me. I have been able to ask questions about the study and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.	
I consent voluntarily to participate in this study and understand that I can refuse to answer questions and leave at any time, without having to give a reason.	
I understand that, should I wish to withdraw from participation in this study, I have **14 days** to make this clear to Oscar O'Mara in writing or in person. Oscar shall then delete the interview data. Following this 14-day period, Oscar shall use this information for analysis and you will be unable to withdraw your participation.	
Taking part in this study involves an interview that will be recorded using audio and written notes. The audio recording will be transcribed as text and the recording destroyed.	
Personal information collected about me that can identify me, such as my name or age, will not be shared beyond the study team.	
My anonymised words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages and other research outputs.	
I give permission for the de-identified (anonymised) data that I provide to be used for future research and learning.	
I am aged 18 or over and I agree to take part in the study.	
I understand the University of Nottingham will not accept any liability for loss of possessions and that I am responsible for my own health and safety during participation.	
I understand that if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in this research, I can do so by contacting Dr Alison Mohr, Research Ethics and Integrity Officer, University of Nottingham by telephone: 01158 46815 or in writing: School of Sociology and Social Policy, Law and Social Sciences Building, University Park, Nottingham, NG7 2RD	
If you experience discomfort or distress, the participation will cease immediately and you will be encouraged to seek support from a suitable service (e.g., the prison Listener scheme, or any member of prison staff for assistance, including healthcare).	

N.B. Please be aware that should you reveal intended harm to self/ others, participation in on-going illegal acts, or further offending for which you do not have a conviction, this information will be passed-on to the relevant authorities (e.g. prison health/ security).

2 copies: 1 for the participant, 1 for the project file

I agree to take part in the study

_____   _____   _____
Name of Participant   Signature   Date

5. Interview Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet for Interview/Ethnography:

A study of how security, safety and rehabilitation are put into practice in prison.

Oscar will also read this form out loud with prisoners, for additional clarity, and to allow potential participants to ask questions.

I would like to invite you to take part in this research. Before you decide, I would like you to understand why the research is being carried out and what your participation would involve. Please do ask for an explanation, if there is anything that is not clear.
(*N.B.* Oscar O'Mara has secured full vetting for this work at the prison)

Who am I? Oscar O'Mara is a PhD student at University of Nottingham and HMPPS employee. Oscar is conducting this study as part of his PhD and will only be here for this purpose.

What is the purpose of the study?
Oscar will be spending time in your prison to understand what security, safety and rehabilitation look like in practice. Oscar will be looking at how these are different or similar between people, the challenges to delivering security and rehabilitation in tandem, and what they mean to you.

Why have I been invited?
You are invited to take part because you are an important member of this prison and have a unique set of experiences. Your experiences, opinion, and involvement are very relevant for this research.

What will happen to me if I take part?
If you agree to take part, Oscar O'Mara will observe your interactions and relationships with others for the duration of the fieldwork/ interview you. Oscar will be observing and speaking with consenting staff and prisoners across this prison to understand the practice of security, safety and rehabilitation. There are no requirements of participating and participants will not be paid for participating in the study - You may withdraw your consent at any time and for as short or long a time as you please.

Do I have to take part?
No, it is voluntary and up to you. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this Participant Information Sheet to keep. There will be no changes to your prison experience or privileges.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?
I cannot promise the study will help you but the information and findings from this study will inform HMPPS practice and policymaking towards establishing and maintaining a safe, decent and secure environment. You will also contribute to the researcher's PhD, theory development in this area of criminology and prison research.

What if there is a problem?
If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should speak to the researcher who will do their best to answer your questions; the study supervisors contact details are given at the end of this Participant Information Sheet. If you remain unhappy and wish to complain formally, you can do this by contacting the Research Ethics Officer, contact details provided below.

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?
I will follow ethical and legal practice and all information about you will be handled in confidence.

If you join the study, the data collected for the study will be looked at by the primary researcher. They may also be looked at by authorised people to check that the study is being carried out correctly. All will have a duty of confidentiality to you as a research participant and we will do our best to meet this.

All information which is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept **strictly confidential**, stored in a secure and locked office, and on a password protected database. Any information about you which leaves the University will have your name and address removed (anonymised) and a unique code will be used so that you cannot be recognised from it. Anonymised data may also be stored in data archives for future researchers interested in this area.

No personal data (address, telephone number) will be kept after the end of the study. All research data from interviews and observations will be kept securely for 7 years. After this time your data will be disposed of securely. During this time all precautions will be taken by all those involved to maintain your confidentiality, only the researcher will have access to your personal data.

Although what you say in the interview is confidential, should you disclose anything to us which we feel puts you/ anyone at any risk, we may feel it necessary to report this to the appropriate persons.

General Data Protection Regulation (**GDPR**), the Data Protection Act 2018 and **Privacy Notice**: The University complies with GDPR and Data protection legislation that gives you control over your personal data. Personal data will be stored in-line with university regulations and it will not be shared or processed beyond the researcher. You will not be contacted after the research for any reasons that fall outside the remit of this study.

What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?
Your participation is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason, and without your legal rights or workplace rights/privileges being affected. If you withdraw from interview and wish to have your data removed, you have 14 days to inform the researcher. After this date, this information may still be used in analysis and dissemination. If you withdraw from observation, information collected so far cannot be erased and this information may still be used.

What will happen to the results of the research study?
Dissemination shall take place via PhD thesis, journal articles, conference presentations, and reports to funding and associated bodies from 2022. All published data will be anonymised. An executive summary will be available to participants when the research is finished. Participants wishing to be provided with an executive summary should provide the researcher with appropriate contact details.

Who is organising and funding the research?
This research is organised by Oscar O'Mara, is supported by the University of Nottingham, and is funded by Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service.

Who has reviewed the study?
This study has been reviewed and approved by University's School of Sociology and Social Policy Research Ethics Committee, as well as the HMPPS research committee.

Further information and contact details
Researcher: Oscar O'Mara
Supervisors: Dr Melanie Jordan
             Dr Nicola Carr
Research Ethics Officer: Dr Alison Mohr - 01158 468151

All can be contacted in writing via:
School of Sociology and Social Policy
Law and Social Science
University Park
Nottingham
NG7 2RD

6. Interview Schedule (Prison staff)

Pre-interview: **Introduce** research and verbal overview of participant information sheet.

Offer participant the opportunity to ask questions. If appropriate to continue, **read and sign consent form**

Remind participants of limits to confidentiality (intended harm/ongoing illegal acts) and possibility to stop participation at any time. Any final questions?

Commence interview.

1. **Role**/Position.

    What is your role/position in this prison? How long have you worked here?

2. **Feelings** in setting (Safety and security).

    Sa – How has it been working here over the last six months?

    Sa2 - Has this differed from previous experiences?

    Sa3 – How safe do you feel working in this prison?

    Sb – What does 'security' mean to you? How has this changed over time?

    Sc – What do you think security means to your peers? (Sc2 - and prisoners?)

    Se – How do you know if security is successful?

    Sf – Is there anything that you are particularly afraid of about working in this prison?

    Sg – What has been particularly challenging in the last six months?

    Sh – To what extent do you think this prison is a healthy environment for prisoners?

    Si – How can this prison be a healthier environment for prisoners?

3. **Purpose**/Role of the prison.

    Sa – What do you see as the main purpose/role of this prison?

    Sb – What do you feel as the most significant challenges the prison faces?

    Sc – How is the prison managing/addressing these challenges?

    Sd – What does rehabilitation mean to you?

    Se – How well does this prison do rehabilitation?

    (How has things changed in the last 6 months?)

4. **Relationships**.

Sa – How would you describe the relationship between security and rehabilitation in this prison?

Sb – What is the relationship like here between security and other aspects of imprisonment, such as safety and healthcare?

Sc – What do you feel are the priorities of this prison?

Sc2 – How has this changed since the pandemic?

5. **Experiences** – Most recent incident(s)

Sa – What happened during your/the most recent safety/security incident that required attention?

Sb – How has the prison addressed/managed the incident since?

Sd – What do you feel is the most difficult part of your role?

Se – How could your job be made easier? /How could the prison be supported to improve performance?

6. Purpose and **Perceptions** of this study

Sa - Why do you think this study is being conducted?

Sb - What are your thoughts on security in prison? – Any concerns?

7. Interview Schedule (Prisoners)

Pre-interview: **Introduce** research and verbally overview participant information sheet. Offer participant the opportunity to ask questions. If appropriate to continue, **read and sign consent form**

Remind participants of limits to confidentiality (intended harm/ ongoing illegal acts) and possibility to stop participation at any time. Any final questions?

Commence interview.

1. **Status**.

    How long have you been here? What other prisons have you resided in, if any?

2. **Feelings** in setting (Safety and security).

    Pa – How do you feel in this prison?

    Pa2 – How has this changed over the last six months?

    Pa2 – How safe do you feel in this prison?

    Pb – What is your biggest fear/ concern in this prison?

    Pc – What do you feel are the most significant challenges the prison faces?

    Pd – What do you feel are the priorities of this prison?

    Pe – To what extent do you feel this is a healthy place?

    Pe2 – How can this prison provide a healthier environment?

3. **Purpose**/ Role of prison staff.

    Pa – What are the prison staff like in this prison? (What is the relationship like?)

    Pb - What do you see as the main purpose/role of a prison officer?

    Pc – How well do you think staff fulfil their roles?

    Pd – What do you feel is the most difficult part of your role?

    Pe – How could the job of prison staff be made easier? / How could the prison be supported to improve performance?

    Pf – What are your views on the use of force by prison staff?

4. **Relationships**

    Pa – What does rehabilitation mean to you?

    Pb – How well does this prison do rehabilitation?

    Pc – What does 'security' mean to you?

(Pc2 – How do you feel about security in this prison?)

Pd – How would you describe the relationship between security and rehabilitation in this prison?

Pe – What is the relationship like here between security and other aspects of imprisonment, such as safety and healthcare?

5. **Experiences** – Most recent incident(s)

Pa – What happened during your/the most recent incident that required staff intervention?

Pb – How has the prison addressed/ managed the incident since?

6. Purpose and **Perceptions** of this study

Pa - Why do you think this study is being conducted?

Pb - What are your thoughts on security in this prison? – Any concerns?

8. COVID-19 Prison Approval & Fieldwork Risk Assessment

<div align="right">

Her Majesty's Prison
[redacted].

2nd September 2020

</div>

<div align="center">

Title: PhD study, how are security, safety & rehabilitation operationalised in contemporary imprisonment?

</div>

Dear Oscar O'Mara,

Ref: RESEARCH RE-COMMENCEMENT APPROVED

Further to discussions on re-commencing your research fieldwork at HMP [redacted] and reviewing your COVID-19 fieldwork risk assessment:

- I approve this study of the basis that approval may be withdrawn if I or Public Health colleagues deem it unsafe to continue. Approval is also dependent on strict adherence to national and local COVID-19 protocols at all times.

I and my senior leadership team will work with you to ensure the safety of yourself, staff and prisoners whilst you conduct your research. Ultimate responsibility for access to the site lies with me, and I will inform you verbally and in writing if I feel that conditions are not being met or it is unsafe to continue fieldwork at any time between the re-commencement and completion of your data collection.

Thank you and I look forward to hopefully seeing you soon.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

Governor [redacted]

COVID-19 Fieldwork Risk Assessment Form & Hazard checklist

School of Sociology and Social Policy

FIELDWORK RECORD

Name of Fieldworker:	Oscar O'Mara
Dates of Work Activity:	September – November 2020
Place where work to be carried out:	Prisons anonymised for protection of participants (Supervisors and HMPPS are aware)
Description of Work Activity:	A Prison ethnography, consisting of non-participant observation, document analysis and interviews with staff and prisoners during the day and night-time exploring prison practice in the areas of security, safety & rehablitation
Level of perceived risk i.e.: Low/ Medium/High	Low
Names of Supervisors/PI:	Dr Melanie Jordan Dr Nicola Carr

Contact details:

Name, address, mobile and telephone number of fieldworker while in the field	Name, address and telephone number of next of kin and/or emergency contacts	
Oscar O'Mara [redacted]	Tim/ Debby O'Mara [redacted]	Dr Melanie Jordan [redacted]

Arrangements agreed with supervisor/PI and HMPPS/ prison to mitigate risks

Oscar is familiar with the prison setting and has worked in this environment for several years, including 10 weeks in the fieldwork site between January-March. Oscar is familiar and trained in the security, safety and risk roles and responsibilities of visiting this secure HMPPS location and is cognisant of the risks of COVID-19 in closed settings as the Public Health Advisor for HMPPS. Oscar understands the vectors and methods of transmission, the protocols and guidance he is required to adhere by when visiting a prison, and the means by which he can mitigate the risk of infection importation into and between sites.

To avoid the risk of transmission and infection, Oscar shall focus on conducting interviews whilst in the field, to limit both contact with residents and staff, and to protect himself again transmission.

In consultation with the prison, the interviews (and any observations) shall be conducted in well-ventilated areas where social distancing can be maintained, hand hygiene practiced, and contact reduced. Oscar shall ensure that interviews are conducted in a COVID-safe environment, where consent forms are signed by the participant's own resources and no physical contact shall take place, ie. no handshakes or sharing equipment, such as stationary or recording equipment.

Oscar shall avoid data collection in any high contact areas where there are large groups of people mixing, such as wings during association, nor enclosed spaces with poor ventilation, such as staff common areas/ breakout spaces. This includes Oscar consulting with the prison in order to stagger his arrival time and exit at the prison to avoid mixing with large groups.

Oscar shall conduct NO fieldwork within the vicinity of the Reverse cohorting unit (for new prisoners), the protective isolation unit (for symptomatic prisoners), nor the shielding unit (for vulnerable prisoners) for the duration of fieldwork.

If Oscar feels unwell at any time or presents symptoms, has contact with a symptomatic case or confirmed positive case or has concerns about his ability to perform fieldwork safely for the protection of prisoners, staff and/or himself, Oscar must follow Public Health procedures and is NOT to conduct fieldwork under ANY circumstances.

Oscar shall access testing if symptomatic or has contact with a suspected or positive case. If national policy changes, Oscar shall utilize asymptomatic testing if available, to further mitigate the risk of transmission.

Oscar agrees to provide a daily update via digital means to his supervisors every evening on his health and safety. The communications must detail when Oscar will be next conducting fieldwork for the following week and to inform supervisors of any changes in circumstance, for example accommodation, mode of transport and location of fieldwork on site. This includes any period of time Oscar is not in the field due to annual leave, sickness or holiday.

Oscar shall travel to the fieldwork site via private transport wherever possible. If public transport is required, Oscar shall wear a face covering, practice hand hygiene and maintain social distancing at all times.

In consultation with the Prison and HMPPS, Oscar will reduce the risk of infection importation into the prison and into the community by adhering to social distancing guidelines and hand hygiene guidance. Oscar shall wash his hands on entry and exit of the establishment and wear a mask/ face covering and/or PPE if or when asked to do so by prison management or healthcare. For security reasons, HMPPS are not currently mandating face coverings, however, to mitigate the risk of infection, Oscar shall wear a face covering travelling to and from the establishment. Oscar is aware of the limitations provided by a face covering and/or PPE, and will follow all other public health guidelines in the field and wider community.

To reduce the risk of infection transmission, Oscar shall not travel to or from PHE areas of intervention for the duration of fieldwork and not travel outside of the country within 14 days of

conducting fieldwork. Equally, where possible, arrival times at the fieldwork site will be staggered to reduce the number of people in the same space at the same time.

With an appreciation for the methods of transmission (close physical contact, fomite transmission via surfaces, and aerosol transmission), Oscar shall also avoid shared communal facilities where possible, such as kitchens, toilet facilities on the wings, and exercise facilities to mitigate the risk of transmission in areas of high contact.

HMPPS and/or the individual prison will suspend fieldwork if it is unsafe or if they are located in an area with enhanced community restrictions (or lockdown). This means that Oscar shall check local guidance regularly as the situation may change and consent to fieldwork may be withdrawn by HMPPS and/or the prison at any time.

Due to constraints on technology in prisons, face-to-face interview will be conducted with due consideration for the points below:

- Avoid sharing of equipment and workstation. If unavoidable, they must be cleaned between users

- Implement minimum 2m distancing between workstations and one-way routes around the space as appropriate

- Where it is not possible to remain 2m apart, researcher and interviewee should work back-to-back or side-by-side, rather than face-to-face if possible

- Where maintaining the recommended 2m separation during passing is not possible, consider screens/barriers between desks, the removal of seats and communication between workers.

- Plan interviews to take into account the size of room necessary to facilitate social distancing

- Interviews should be held in well ventilated rooms or where possible, and still socially distancing, consider holding meetings outdoors

- Set up interview etiquette in advance, e.g. knock and announce before entering the room

- If possible, the first arrival should hold back the door while waiting for other attendees

- Hand sanitiser should be available in interview

- Researcher and interviewee to reciprocally assure whether the other has had contact with symptomatic or confirmed cases in the last 14 days or whether they are displaying symptoms.

Oscar shall follow the protocols in place at the research site regarding safety and security and he will remain responsible for his own safety and security during fieldwork, in order to adhere to the core principles of the ESRC, Public Health England and minimise risk and harm when conducting the data collection. If at any time Oscar feels under threat or feels unsafe, or if Oscar feels the safety of a participant is under threat, he has a duty to inform staff, prison senior management and supervisors immediately via verbal communication, be that a phone call, attending to staff directly or via the general alarm system.

If Oscar is subject to an emergency in the prison and is unable to inform the supervisors of his circumstances, for whatever reason, the Governor's secretary shall inform the supervisors, who will in turn inform the emergency contacts (parents/ partner). If Oscar is subject to an emergency external to the prison and is unable to inform the supervisors of his circumstances, for whatever reason, his partner or emergency contacts (parents) shall inform the supervisors, who will in turn inform the Governor's secretary. Oscar shall inform prison healthcare of any allergies/ health concerns at the beginning of fieldwork (Oscar currently has no allergies/ health concerns).

Please sign below to confirm that
  a) **you have read and discussed with your supervisor or PI and HMPPS as appropriate the attached COVID-19 check list and have and will take all necessary action as required**
  b) **you have read and will comply with the University's guidance Conducting Research which can be found on Workspace under Risk Assessment**

Signature of fieldworker	Oscar L O'Mara
Signatures of Supervisor(s) or PI	Dr M. Jordan DATE: 4.9.20 Dr Nicola Carr DATE: 04.09.20
Date:	04/09/2020

9. Resultant Publications & Conferences

During the period of study, I have published four peer-reviewed publications related to this thesis:

1. O'Mara, O. (2022, February 8). Structural Violence: Prison health is public health, and it needs fixing [Online]. The Sociological Review Magazine. https://doi.org/10.51428/tsr.rebf9627

    This paper received a publication award for 'Best PGR publication' in 2022 from the School of Sociology and Social Policy, University of Nottingham.

2. O'Mara, O. (2024) Potting, power and imprisonment: Understanding the use of shit as a form of resistance. *Incarceration*, *5*, 26326663241235493.

3. O'Mara, O. (2024) The prison security fallacy: How the everyday use of force produces unequal security. In 'Unequal Security: Welfare, Crime and Social Inequality'. Routledge. Book chapter. [In print]

    This paper received a publication award for 'Best PGR publication' in 2023 from the School of Sociology and Social Policy, University of Nottingham.

4. O'Mara, O. & Bonser, T. (2024) "You wake up sore, you wake up angry": A Commentary on Why Sleep Quality is Important in Institutional Settings. *Incarceration* [In print]

Conference Presentations

I have attended conferences and workshops, providing five presentations:

1. 'An prison ethnography of practice during the pandemic', COVID & Imprisonment: British Society of Criminology & Criminal Justice Research Centre Event, University of Nottingham. February 24th, 2022.

2. 'Health security or control? The experience of imprisonment during the pandemic' Penal-Welfare Workshop, University of Southern Denmark. September 8-9, 2022

3. 'Distance and proximity', Ethnographies of Crime & Control Symposium, University of Cambridge. September 19-20, 2022.

4. 'Light and circadian rhythm workshop: exploring opportunities for interventions to improve health, wellbeing and productivity', University of Manchester. March 9th, 2023.

5. 'The prison security fallacy: How using force produces unequal security', Politics of Insecurity, National Institute of Criminalistics and Criminology (INCC), Brussels, Belgium. March 21st, 2024.