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Encountering Death in the Prison; An Exploration of Irish Prison Staff Experiences, Emotions and Engagements With Support.

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Encountering Death in the Prison:

An Exploration of Irish Prison Staff Experiences, Emotions and Engagement with Support

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines prison staff experiences of the deaths of prisoners in custody. It explores staff accounts of their encounters with prisoner deaths, their emotional responses to these incidents and their engagement with support in the aftermath of their experiences. This thesis represents the first Irish research focused exclusively on prison staff encounters with prisoner deaths. In so doing, it illuminates Irish prison staff practices, sensibilities and traditions.

Despite increasing scholarship on the working lives and traditions of prison staff, and greater awareness arising from a small number of studies of staff experiences of prisoner suicide, there remains little research exploring prison staff encounters with prisoner deaths. This thesis seeks to address this gap by presenting an exploration of Irish prison staff experiences of prisoner deaths in custody. It also builds on existing research by offering the first account of prison staff encounters with prisoner deaths by examining causes of death in addition to that of suicide.

A qualitative research design is employed, consisting of in-depth semi-structured interviews with 17 serving and retired Irish prison staff who have experienced a death in custody. This thesis charts the chronology of participants' encounters with prisoner deaths, analysing their accounts of the emergency response to deaths in custody before moving to consider the immediate and long-term aftermath of these incidents in individual and institutional contexts. The thesis finds that the norms of solidarity and insularity, identified in the extant prison work literature as central tenets of the occupational culture of prison staff, direct staff responses and attitudes in these situations. The findings highlight participants' perceptions of blame and concerns about a risk of personal liability in shaping their perspectives on prisoner deaths, the prisoner population and the prison authorities. This thesis additionally contends that a death in custody calls upon staff to not only manage the incident, but also their own emotional reactions and vulnerabilities. Shared expectations regarding the management of emotional responses to prisoner deaths promote the necessity of concealing post-incident vulnerabilities inside the prison. The thesis argues that the implications of involvement with a death in custody can often find life beyond the boundaries of the prison walls.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis which I now submit for examination for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others, save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

This thesis was prepared according to the regulations for graduate study by research of the Dublin Institute of Technology and has not been submitted in whole or in part for another award in any other third level institution.

The work reported on in this thesis conforms to the principles and requirements of the DIT's guidelines for ethics in research.

DIT has permission to keep, lend or copy this thesis in whole or in part, on condition that any such use of the material of the thesis be duly acknowledged.

Signature _____ Date _____

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Focus and Rationale

Prisoner deaths in custody are among the most serious events to occur within the walls of a prison. The prison authorities have a duty of care to protect the life of all prisoners in their custody, which has been interpreted by courts in Ireland and Europe as placing a positive obligation upon the state to take reasonable steps to prevent prisoner deaths and facilitate robust investigations of any such incidents (Rogan, 2009; Martynowicz, 2011). Prison staff are central to the effective discharge of this duty, tasked with implementing prevention policies 'on the ground' in prisons, responding to deaths in custody when they occur and contributing to investigations of these deaths. For many years, a paucity of knowledge on prison staff experiences and perceptions of their roles in this context persisted, with limited insights on staff encounters with self-inflicted deaths found in broader studies of prison suicide (Liebling, 1992) and prison work (Crawley, 2004a), as well as in smaller studies focused on post-incident trauma (Borrill et al., 2004; Wright et al., 2006). While recent research by Ludlow et al. (2015) bridges some gaps in knowledge, examining staff experiences and views of deaths of prisoners aged 18-24 years in England and Wales, it maintains the exclusive focus on prison staff encounters with suicide seen in the earlier literature and offers limited consideration of the impact of self-inflicted deaths on staff. Accordingly, an incomplete picture exists regarding staff experiences and perceptions of prisoner deaths. This thesis seeks to broaden this scholarship by presenting, for the first time, an in-depth exploration of Irish prison staff accounts of dealing with

deaths in custody, focusing on all deaths, regardless of their nature or cause. In doing so, it sheds light on staff encounters with prisoner deaths from their involvement in the emergency response to a death in custody through to their emotional responses and engagement with support in the immediate and long-term aftermath of these incidents.

The impetus for this study also arose from work completed by the researcher in 2011. This earlier research (Barry, 2011) focused on the nature and investigation of deaths in custody in Irish prisons and examined a small sample of coronial inquest files in the Dublin City Coroner's Court. Among its findings, the study noted the enduring role of prison staff, particularly those in officer grades, in the response to and aftermath of the death of a prisoner. Prison officers were not only typically the first responders to a death in custody, but also remained connected to the incident in the months, and sometimes years, that followed due to delays in the coronial process. Additionally, a number of staff depositions contained within the inquest files included disclosures of shock and sadness following the prisoner's death, as well as complaints regarding deficiencies in post-incident support from the Irish Prison Service. These findings highlighted the necessity of an in-depth exploration of staff experiences of prisoner deaths in custody, which is amplified by the limited literature base as acknowledged above and later in this thesis. Moreover, the content of staff depositions suggested that such an inquiry should adopt an exploratory focus, encompassing both staff narratives of the operational responses to deaths as well as their emotional responses and engagement with support in the aftermath of these incidents.

Further rationale for the current study is found in the dearth of research on the working lives and traditions of Irish prison staff and prisoner deaths in custody respectively.

1.1.1 Absent Voices: Prison Staff in Irish Prison Literature

Although the institution of the prison and the prisoners who are held within its walls have been the focus of much research over the past century, the lives and experiences of those who work in prisons have received comparably limited academic attention thus far. Indeed, earlier research treated prison staff as 'merely shadowy figures' (Sparks et al., 1996, p. 60), 'invisible ghosts' (Liebling, 2000, p. 337) and 'one dimensional spectres' (Lerman and Page, 2012, p. 504). While the latter decades of the twentieth century saw the emergence of a small number of studies of prison work, academic interest in the working lives, sensibilities and traditions of prison staff has only begun to thrive since the early 2000s, with in-depth research by Crawley (2004a), Liebling et al. (2011) and Bennett (2016) forming the bedrock of this modern scholarship.

This growth in research activity has not been mirrored in Ireland however, and very little is currently known about those who elect to work in Irish prisons. Limited insights into staff practices are offered by descriptive (McGowan, 1980; O'Donnell, 1999) and autobiographical (Bray, 2008; Lonergan, 2010) accounts. Moreover, there are scant considerations of prison staff within the broader literature on Irish prisons. Few studies of prison life in Ireland have incorporated the views and experiences of prison staff; Quinlan (2011) interviewed a small cohort of staff for her research on women's prisons in Ireland, while a recent study of LGBT prisoners by Carr et al. (2016) briefly considers the experiences of LGBT staff. Fleeting references to officers and governors are also found in research by O'Mahony (1997), Kilcommins et al. (2004) and Rogan (2011). A largely incomplete picture of the working lives and traditions of Irish prison staff

therefore remains, providing further rationale for the current study. In exploring Irish prison staff experiences of prisoner deaths in custody, this thesis additionally illuminates in detail the practices, sensibilities and traditions of Irish prison staff, while also contributing to the flourishing international literature on prison work.

1.1.2 The Necessity of Research on Deaths in Custody

Research on prisoner deaths in custody has been described as among the 'most urgent' (Liebling and Ward, 1994, p. 1) issues in criminology. More recently, the Harris Review[1] (2015), an independent review of self-inflicted deaths of 18-24 year olds in National Offender Management Service custody in England and Wales, called for increased scholarly attention to deaths in custody. In Ireland, the most recent systemic examination of causes of prisoner deaths and relevant policies and practices reports on the years between 1990 and 1997 (National Steering Group on Deaths in Prisons, 1999). Since then, the dearth of research on deaths in custody in Ireland has been frequently underlined (Rogan, 2009; Barry, 2011; Inspector of Prisons, 2014a).

Critical analysis of prisoner deaths is particularly important in ensuring accountability within prison systems, offering information to those grieving the loss of loved ones and shedding light on institutional and organisational practices (Scraton and McCulloch, 2006; Scott Bray, 2016). Staff experiences and views are important in this context, offering much-needed insight on practices and mentalities relating to emergency responses to deaths in custody. Moreover, research of this nature is also valuable in

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[1] Commencing in April 2014, the Harris Review examined 87 cases of self-inflicted deaths in custody between April 2007 and December 2013.

understanding staff practice in the aftermath of prisoner deaths, particularly in the context of investigations into deaths in custody. Staff who respond to the death of a prisoner are often key informants in investigations into prisoner deaths, contributing written statements and oral evidence to internal and external investigative mechanisms. The Inspector of Prisons (2014a, 2016a, 2016b) has observed deficiencies in the written reports of staff on a number of occasions, highlighting issues regarding minimal content and misleading or inaccurate information. The extant prison staff literature suggests that there is a strong emphasis on personal accountability in prison work and governance (Poole and Regoli, 1980; Kauffman, 1988; Crawley, 2004a). Therefore, in addition to providing an opportunity to examine the operational and emotional contexts of staff encounters with prisoner deaths, explorations of staff experiences and views of these incidents can also lift the curtain on the operation of accountability at individual and institutional levels, uncovering the motivations and sensibilities behind the issues observed by the Inspector and suggesting directions for future reform.

1.2 Research Aims and Design

This thesis aims to address the dearth of domestic and international research on prison staff experiences of prisoner deaths in custody by providing a pioneering insight into staff encounters with prisoner deaths, informed by intensive interviews with Irish prison staff who have experienced a death in custody during their careers. Drawing upon the extant prison staff literature, as well as Bourdieu's (1977, 1980) theory of social practice and Hochschild's (1983), Bolton's (2005), Korczynski's (2003) and Knight's (2014) conceptualisations of emotion management and performance, the primary aims of this study are to explore staff encounters with prisoner deaths in custody, their emotional

responses to these incidents and their engagement with support in the aftermath of their experiences. Framed in an Irish context, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are prison staff experiences of dealing with prisoner deaths in custody?
2. What are prison staff emotional responses to deaths in custody?
3. What are prison staff experiences of support both inside and outside the prison in the aftermath of a death in custody?

An exploratory and qualitative research design is utilised to answer these questions. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 17 serving and retired Irish Prison Service staff who had experienced a death in custody. These participants were sourced from across the prison estate. While the participants occupied a range of Irish Prison Service grades, including governor grades, at the time of data collection, each had encountered a death in custody during their time as a prison officer. A constructivist approach is adopted, focused on exploring participants' views and meanings regarding prisoner deaths, as well as examining how these views and meanings are shaped by external factors.

1.3 Setting the Scene: Policy and Legislative Context

This section outlines the policy and legislative context in which the study was undertaken. An overview of the Irish Prison Service estate and staff is provided, followed by details regarding the history, incidence and investigation of prisoner deaths in custody.

1.3.1 Irish Prison Service Estate and Staff

Thirteen institutions comprise the Irish prison estate, consisting of ten traditional 'closed' prisons, two open centres, and one semi-open facility with traditional perimeter security but minimal internal security. Table 1.1 provides information on each prison.

In addition to the institutions detailed below, there are four Prison Support Units. These include the Building Services Division, Operational Support Group (set up to prevent contraband entering prisons), Prison Service Escort Corps, and Irish Prison Service College.

Table 1.1 List of Prisons in the Irish Prison Service estate

Prison	Description	Bed Capacity[2]
Arbour Hill	Prison for adult male prisoners. Arbour Hill, Dublin 7	131
Castlerea	Committal prison for adult male prisoners. Harristown, Castlerea, Co. Roscommon	300
Cloverhill	Committal prison for remand adult male prisoners. Cloverhill Road, Clondalkin, Dublin 22	414
Cork	Committal prison for adult male prisoners. Rathmore Road, Cork	296
Dóchas Centre	Committal prison for female prisoners aged 18 years and over. North Circular Road, Dublin 7	105
Limerick	Committal prison for adult male and female prisoners. Mulgrave Street, Limerick	209
Loughan House	An open centre for the detention of male prisoners aged 18 years and over. Blacklion, Co. Cavan	140
Midlands	Prison for adult male prisoners. Dublin Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois	870
Mountjoy	Committal prison for adult male prisoners. North Circular Road, Dublin 7	554
Portlaoise	Prison for adult male prisoners including the detention of high security prisoners. Dublin Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois	291
Training Unit	A semi-open place of detention for male prisoners aged 18 years and over. Glengarriff Parade, Dublin 7	96
Shelton Abbey	An open centre for male prisoners aged 19 years and over. Arklow, Co. Wicklow	115
Wheatfield	Place of detention for adult males and sentenced 17-year-old juveniles. Cloverhill Road, Clondalkin, Dublin 22	550

Source: Irish Prison Service (2015)

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[2] Bed capacity per the Inspector of Prisons for all prisons on 20 January 2017 except Cork, which is awaiting review following the opening of a new facility in 2016.

Staff in the Irish Prison Service comprise prison grade staff, headquarters staff and staff in civilian grades. At the end of 2015 there were 3,308 staff in the Irish Prison Service, including civilian grades and headquarters staff (Irish Prison Service, 2015). Participants in the current study were prison grade staff. Table 1.2 provides a breakdown of prison grades.

Table 1.2 Breakdown of Prison Grades

Prison Grades
Campus Governor
Governor 1
Governor 2
Governor 3
Deputy Governor
Assistant Governor
Chief Officer 1
Chief Officer 2
Assistant Chief Officer
Prison Officer
Recruit Prison Officer

Source: Irish Prison Service (2014)

Campus Governor is the most senior operational grade in the Irish Prison Service. Campus Governors head the three prison campuses: Mountjoy Campus, comprising Mountjoy prison, the Dóchas Centre and the Training Unit; Dublin West Campus, comprising Cloverhill and Wheatfield prisons; and the Portlaoise Campus, which comprises Midlands and Portlaoise prisons. Governors are responsible for the overall management of the prison, and are assisted by Deputy Governors and Assistant

Governors. Deputy Governor grades are currently being phased out of the Irish Prison Service. Assistant Governors may be based in accommodation units or have functional responsibilities within the prison e.g. human resources. Staff in governor grades wear civilian clothing. As those in governor grades are a small group within the overall staff cohort, governor grade participants are referred to as governors, regardless of their designation, to safeguard confidentiality. Chief Officers are the most senior uniformed grade in the Irish Prison Service. Their primary duties comprise oversight of uniformed staff, including attendance and behaviour. Assistant Chief Officers are the first line of management. There is typically an Assistant Chief Officer on duty in each accommodation block or unit. Prison Officer grade staff may be allocated to landings or units within accommodation blocks. They are responsible for supervision of the daily routine of prisoners and tasked with ensuring good order and safe and secure custody under Rule 85 of the Prison Rules 2007.

There are also a number of health care, vocational and administrative grades within prisons. Nursing care is provided by qualified nurses, who occupy grades of Chief Nurse Manager, Chief Nurse Officer and Nurse Officer. Some nursing staff may have previously served as prison officers. Staff training is delivered in prisons by Training Liaison Officers, appointed at Assistant Chief Officer grade. Administrative support is provided by Prison Administrative and Support Officers, who are responsible for local administrative and financial matters. Staff in these grades were recruited for transfer from the Civil Service, beginning in 2012.

The most recent available figures at the time of submission indicate that there were 2772.5 (whole time equivalents) prison grade staff in prisons on 30th September 2016.[3] The total number of prisoners in custody on the same date was 3,643, equating to a ratio of prisoners per staff in prisons of 1.31:1. While less recent, international comparative data is available for 2014 from the Council of Europe Prison Populations Survey (Aebi et al., 2015). In 2014, the Council of Europe average ratio of prisoners per staff in prisons was 3.6:1. Ireland's ratio in that year was 1.5:1, matching Norway and Italy. The ratios for the United Kingdom were as follows: England and Wales 3.8:1, Scotland 3.2:1 and Northern Ireland 1.4:1.

All Recruit Prison Officers are required to complete induction training. Prior to 2007, induction training comprised a nine-week course at the Irish Prison Service College. Following this, Recruit Prison Officers commenced their postings in prisons. This nine-week course was replaced by the Higher Certificate in Custodial Care in 2007, a two-year course provided by Sligo Institute of Technology. This was accredited as a Level 6 National Certificate by the Higher Education and Training Awards Council. Recruit Prison Officers undertook modular training at the Irish Prison Service College, covering topics such as dynamic security and prisoncraft, communications, human rights, custodial care and criminology. Local supervision was provided by Training Liaison Officers. Recruitment of Recruit Prison Officers did not take place between 2008 and 2016 due to a moratorium on public sector recruitment. In July 2016, the Tánaiste and Minister for Justice Frances Fitzgerald announced the recruitment of 120 Recruit Prison Officers per year for three years, with the first recruits due to enter the Irish Prison Service College in early 2017 (Department of Justice, 2016). A new contract with Waterford Institute of

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[3] Dáil Debates, 5 October 2016, vol 923, col 82.

Technology to provide the Higher Certificate in Custodial Care was also announced. The new Certificate will cover similar content to its previous iteration, and will be delivered over three phases, beginning with an intensive classroom training period followed by staff postings to operational prisons (Irish Prison Service, 2016a). In addition, suicide prevention training will be delivered to Recruit Prison Officers as part of the Mental Health Awareness Programme for staff, established in 2014. To date, 665 Irish Prison Service staff have received suicide prevention training.[4]

1.3.2 Deaths in Irish Prisons: History and Figures

The numbers of prisoners dying in custody began to rise in the 1980s, against a backdrop of worsening conditions, increased overcrowding and poor state finances (Rogan, 2011). Nine deaths occurred between January 1985 and June 1988.[5] John Lonergan (2010) recalls this particularly fraught time in his memoir of his time working as Governor of Mountjoy prison, where four deaths had taken place in a four-month period in 1986.

Political concerns regarding deaths in custody continued into the 1990s, leading to the establishment of the Advisory Group on Prison Deaths (Rogan, 2011). The Group published a report in 1991, outlining 57 recommendations (Advisory Group on Prison Deaths, 1991). These recommendations included improvements in cell accommodation, observation procedures and staff training on suicide prevention. Systemic issues were also addressed, with the Advisory Group calling for an end to slopping out. Five years later, the National Steering Group on Deaths in Prisons was established to review deaths

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[4] Dáil Debates, 13 December 2016, vol 934, col 115.
[5] Dáil Debates, 23 June 1988, vol 382, col 1631.

in custody since 1991, in addition to the earlier recommendations of the Advisory Group. The Steering Group reported on the causes of deaths between 1990 and 1997, finding that suicides constituted 56 per cent of deaths during this period, with drug-related deaths and natural causes deaths comprising 27 per cent and 17 per cent respectively. The Steering Group endorsed many of the earlier recommendations of the Advisory Group, and also made some additional suggestions for improvements to accommodation and prevention practices. Notable recommendations included the introduction of high support units and a pilot project for in-cell television.

A period of stagnation followed the Steering Group's report. Deaths in custody figures were reported sporadically in Irish Prison Service annual reports throughout the 2000s. Numerous concerns were raised regarding accountability for prisoner deaths, particularly the compliance of investigations with Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights (Rogan, 2009; Inspector of Prisons, 2010; Martynowicz, 2011). In 2014, the Inspector of Prisons (2014a) highlighted the need for a public database to record prisoner deaths. Staff and students at the School of Law at the University of Limerick collaborated on the design of this database. This project remains ongoing at the time of submission. More recently, The Detail, an investigative news and analysis website, collated updated figures on deaths in Irish prisons following a lengthy period of research and numerous requests for information from the Irish Prison Service, Inspector of Prisons and a number of coronial districts (Smyth, 2016).

Numbers of deaths in prison per year for the years 2007 – 2016 are provided in table 1.3 below. Table 1.4 details the numbers of deaths per prison for the same period. The Irish

Prison Service does not currently collate data on suicide attempts, self-harm or other near miss incidents.[6]

Table 1.3 Numbers of Deaths in Custody Per Year 2007-2016

Year	Number of Deaths in Custody
2007	7
2008	11
2009	10
2010	11
2011	6
2012	5
2013	9
2014	8
2015	15
2016	5
Total	**87**

Source: Smyth (2016); Dáil Debates, 31 May 2016, Vol 911, Col 92.

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[6] Dáil Debates, 13 December 2016, vol 934, col 121.

Table 1.4 Number of Deaths Per Prison 2007-2016

Prison	Number of Deaths
Arbour Hill	5
Castlerea	4
Cloverhill	7
Cork	4
Dóchas Centre	2
Limerick	7
Loughan House	3
Midlands	13
Mountjoy	27
Portlaoise	4
Shelton Abbey	1
Training Unit	1
Wheatfield	9
Total	**87**

Source: Smyth (2016)

1.3.3 Investigations of Deaths in Irish Prisons

There are four primary investigative mechanisms for deaths in custody in Ireland. These include an internal Irish Prison Service investigation, in addition to three external inquiries: an inquest and investigations by An Garda Síochána[7] and the Inspector of Prisons. The procedures for each are outlined below.

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[7] An Garda Síochána is the national police service of Ireland. Individual officers are referred to as Garda (plural Gardaí) or more informally, Guard.

1.3.3.1 Internal Prison Investigations

Under Rule 47(8) of the Prison Rules 2007, the Governor of a prison in which a prisoner dies must submit a report to the Minister for Justice and Equality on the death. This report should outline the circumstances of the death, as well as any other information that the Minister requires. The procedures adopted may vary depending on the prison, but a Chief Officer is usually tasked with collecting reports from prison officers about the circumstances of the prisoner's death (Inspector of Prisons, 2010). Included in the report submitted to the Minister are details regarding the prisoner's history while in prison, the result of any criminal investigation regarding the prisoner's death, medical evidence, the results of the post mortem and toxicology results (where relevant), the operational statements of prison officers and an overview by the Governor of the prison. Concerns have been raised regarding the consistency of these investigations and the adequacy of the detail contained with the reports (Rogan, 2009; Inspector of Prisons, 2010)

1.3.3.2 Inquests

All prisoner deaths in custody must be reported to the local Coroner under Rule 47(7) of the Prison Rules 2007. Additionally, Farrell (2000, p. 130) notes that the investigative role of the Coroner extends to prisoner deaths occurring outside the prison, explaining, 'the practice is to interpret the word 'prison' widely, to include any place where a person may be held in legal custody'. Thus, the deaths of prisoners on temporary release or in hospital must also be reported to the Coroner. This practice is not specifically provided for in the *Coroners Act 1962*, the current legislation governing coronial practice in Ireland, representing a regulatory gap (Martynowicz, 2011).

Inquests relating to deaths in custody are held before a jury. The purpose of the inquest is to establish the facts surrounding the death, place those facts on a public record, and make findings on the identity of the deceased, the date and place of death and the cause of death. The Coroner can summon witnesses to appear at an inquest, and is assisted by An Garda Síochána in the collection of evidence and statements. Witnesses typically include prison staff and prisoners. The family of the deceased are entitled to attend the inquest, and may ask questions of the witnesses either themselves or through legal representatives. As Martynowicz (2011) highlights however, coronial powers do not extend much further beyond the compelling of witness; Coroners are precluded from discovering documents or entering premises. Criminal or civil liability cannot be determined at an inquest.[8] The verdicts available to the jury at the end of an inquest are limited to the following: accidental death, misadventure, suicide, an open verdict, natural causes and unlawful killing. The jury may also make recommendations regarding prevention of future deaths or possible changes to operational procedures relating to the circumstances of the death.

1.3.3.3 Investigations by An Garda Síochána

Rule 47(7) of the Prison Rules 2007 additionally obliges the Governor to notify An Garda Síochána of all deaths that occur in the prison. The Gardaí carry out an investigation to ascertain the necessity of a full criminal investigation. If necessary, such an investigation is conducted and, where relevant, a prosecution follows. The Gardaí also collect evidence on behalf of the Coroner.

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[8] This principle was emphasised by Keane J in *Farrell v Attorney General* [1998] 1 ILRM 364.

1.3.3.4 Inspector of Prisons Investigations

In April 2012, the Inspector of Prisons was appointed by the Minister for Justice and Equality to investigate the deaths of all prisoners while in custody or on temporary release since 1st January 2012. These investigations aim to establish the circumstances of the prisoner's death, examine relevant operational policy and practice and management arrangements to determine whether changes may prevent the recurrence of a similar death or serious event, and address any concerns of the deceased's family (Inspector of Prisons, 2014a). The Inspector is informed of the death by the Governor under Rule 47(7) of the Prison Rules 2007. Relevant documentation, staff operational statements and CCTV are provided to the Inspector. Section 31(7) of the *Prisons Act 2007* instructs prison staff to comply, where practicable, with all requests for information made by the Inspector in the performance of his functions. The Inspector also meets with the family of the deceased, and has described these meetings as 'an important part of all investigations' (Inspector of Prisons, 2014a, p. 10).

The Inspector's reports provide comprehensive information regarding the death. They include general background information on the deceased, an examination of relevant CCTV footage, circumstances relating to the finding of the deceased prisoner, details of relevant Standard Operating Procedures and other policies and processes, the Inspector's contact with the family, and findings and recommendations. A record of all recommendations is maintained, with the expectation that they are to be implemented across the prison estate (Inspector of Prisons, 2014a). All reports are anonymised, with the deceased prisoner identified by letter only. Completed reports are submitted to the Minister for Justice and Equality for publication.

1.3.3.5 Commissions of Investigation

Additionally, deaths in custody may also be the subject of a Commission of Investigation under the *Commissions of Investigation Act 2004*. Section 3 of the 2004 Act provides that Commissions are instituted to investigate 'any matter considered by the Government to be of significant public concern'. To date, the death of one prisoner in 2006 has been investigated by a Commission with senior counsel Grainne McMorrow as sole member.[9] Commissions have wide-ranging investigative powers under the 2004 Act, including the power to direct a person to give evidence before the Commission and to produce documents in their possession. The Commission's inquiry was not conducted in public, and findings were published in May 2014 (McMorrow, 2014).

1.4. Organisation of the Thesis

There are ten chapters in this thesis. Following this introductory chapter, the next three chapters consider the theoretical and empirical basis of the study. Chapter two presents a discussion of Bourdieu's (1977, 1980) theory of social practice, highlighting its value in explorations of the experiences and views of prison staff. Following this, a comprehensive review of the extant literature on prison staff culture is presented. This developing literature base is supplemented by scholarship on those in similar occupations, both inside

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[9] This Commission investigated the death of Gary Douch in Mountjoy prison in 2006. It was established following an independent report on the circumstances of the death, conducted by a former senior civil servant. It was decided that a Commission of Investigation should be established to carry out further inquiries into the issues raised in this report and make recommendations where appropriate. The terms of reference for the Commission included a review of policies, practices and procedures regarding the safety of prisoners in custody, with particular focus on protocols for prisoners with specific behavioural problems or vulnerabilities (McMorrow, 2014).

and outside the criminal justice system. Chapter three outlines theoretical perspectives on the management and performance of emotion in the workplace, beginning with Hochschild's (1983) emotional labour thesis before exploring subsequent work on emotion management by Bolton (2005), Korcyznski (2003) and Knight (2014). The extant literature on emotion management in prison work and similar occupations is also discussed. Chapter four explores existing empirical accounts of the experience of encountering death in an occupational setting, highlighting key emergent themes within this extant literature.

Chapter five outlines the research design and methods utilised in this study. This chapter examines the methodological and ethical issues that arose during the research, and also includes a reflexive account of the research project.

Chapter six, seven and eight document the research findings. These chapters follow the chronology of the incident. Chapter six outlines participants' experiences of responding to deaths in custody, focusing on both the operational response and issues regarding emotion management and performance. Chapter seven considers participants' accounts of the immediate aftermath of prisoner deaths, highlighting the importance of operational continuity, participants' perceptions of liability risks associated with prisoner deaths, and participants' emotional responses to these incidents. This chapter additionally continues the discussion of emotion management in the previous chapter, emphasising the increasingly collective nature of emotion management via performances of humour and empathy. Chapter eight moves beyond the immediate aftermath to consider participants' experiences of accountability mechanisms for deaths in custody and engagement with

support both within and beyond the walls of the prison. This chapter also outlines participants' accounts of the impact of their encounters with prisoner deaths.

Chapter nine moves the discussion presented in the preceding chapters forward, synthesising the findings presented in these three chapters to propose four major themes emerging from this study: blame, risk, vulnerability and cultural expectations. Each of these themes is explored individually, further contextualising the analysis presented in chapters six, seven and eight in relation to the wider extant literature. Chapter ten brings the thesis to a conclusion, considering the implications of the research findings for both policy and future research.

CHAPTER TWO

UNDERSTANDING PRISON STAFF CULTURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an analytical review of the extant literature on prison staff culture. Grounded in the work of Pierre Bourdieu, this chapter commences with a discussion of Bourdieu's theory of social practice. The chapter then moves to examine the relational nature of practice within the arena of imprisonment, highlighting Bourdieu's concepts as valuable resources in explorations of the relationships between penal agents and the penal, social and political contexts in which they work. Following this, much of the remainder of the chapter is devoted to a review of the existing international literature on the working lives and cultures of prison staff, with a particular focus on the work of Kauffman (1988) Crawley (2004a) and Liebling et al. (2011). The chapter concludes with an analysis of the role of policing literature in prison officer research, underlining the utility of a broad and interdisciplinary literature base in studies of prison staff that includes research on occupational groups working outside the criminal justice system who may share sensibilities and practices with prison staff.

2.2 Conceptualising Culture: Bourdieu's Theory of Social Practice

This thesis draws upon Bourdieu's theory of social practice to explore Irish prison staff encounters with prisoner deaths in custody. As Layder (2006) notes, Bourdieu provides a

number of concepts that can be deployed to analyse and understand social life. His work is particularly valuable in illuminating how individual practices are patterned and shared across groups, and how particular fields shape these practices. In the current study, Bourdieu's concepts will be applied to analyse participants' experiences of prisoner deaths, elucidating individual practice relative to prisoner deaths and how this practice is shaped by participants' position within the penal field and activity therein. Bourdieu's concepts have been utilised in research on prison officers (Crawley, 2000; Lerman and Page, 2012), prison managers (Bennett, 2016) and prison officer unions (Page, 2011). Moreover, a number of studies of other criminal justice agents have also applied Bourdieu in their analyses. For example, Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and field are utilised by Chan (1996, 2007) in her research on police culture and in recent studies of the relationship between probation staff and penal culture (McNeill et al., 2009; Robinson et al., 2014).

Bourdieu (1980) argues that individual action is guided by two interrelated concepts; the individual's habitus, an internal set of dispositions that shape their perception, appreciation and action, and his or her position within their social field. The habitus is described as 'a system of lasting and transposable dispositions', integrating history and past experiences to produce individual and collective practice (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 95). As Bourdieu (1980, p.54) observes:

> [The habitus] ensures the active presence of past experiences, which, deposited in each organism in the form of schemes of perception, thought and action, tend to guarantee the 'correctness' of practices and their consistency over time, more reliably than all formal rules and explicit norms.

The habitus is thus, 'embodied history, internalised as second nature and so forgotten as history' (Bourdieu, 1980, p. 56). While it serves as a 'structuring mechanism' for individual action, the habitus itself is not fully determinative of conduct; rather it functions relative to activity and change within the social field in which the individual is located (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 18).

A field is semi-autonomous arena of action that is 'endowed with a specific gravity which it imposes on all the objects and agents which enter it' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 17). This gravity can come from the structure of the field and the positions of the actors within it, which are determined by each actor's amount of capital (Page, 2013). Bourdieu identifies several principal forms of capital, including: economic, social, cultural and symbolic. Whether actors occupy dominant or subordinate positions depends on their relative amount of capital (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Individual actors are aligned with groups within the field, whose capital determines individuals' ability to act with agency. The other source of gravity is doxa, a set of 'pre-verbal taken-for-granted' rules, expectations, values and assumptions (Bourdieu, 1980, p. 68) that circumscribe all possible action (Page, 2013). Experienced actors in a field intuitively grasp these rules and values, acting in accordance with expectations (Bourdieu, 1980).

Bourdieu also uses the language of sport to conceptualise the field. He likens the social field to a sporting field, wherein players act based on assumptions regarding the best strategies to win the game and on their position in relation to other players on the field, with the most successful players possessing a finely attuned 'feel for the game' (Bourdieu, 1980). Actors in a field will develop a habitus specific to that field after a period of participation (Page, 2013). This is particularly true in relation to occupation-specific

fields, and those in similar positions within an organisation will tend to share similar

values and views (Lerman and Page, 2012). As Wacquant (2008, p. 267) observes:

> These unconscious schemata are acquired through lasting exposure to particular
> social conditions and conditionings, via the internalization of external constraints
> and possibilities. This means that they are shared by people subjected to similar
> experiences even as each person has a unique individual variant of the common
> matrix (this is why individuals of like nationality, class, gender, etc.
> spontaneously feel 'at home' with one another).

External, macro-level factors are additionally relevant to Bourdieu's concept of the field.

To this end, the degree of autonomy in a field will determine its ability to refract external

trends (Wacquant, 1992). Wacquant (2008, p. 269) describes autonomy in a field as 'the

capacity it has gained, in the course of its development, to insulate itself from external

influences and to uphold its own criteria of evaluation over and against those of

neighbouring or intruding fields'. External influences and trends therefore affect the

behaviour and decisions of agents within a field and a single external force may produce

varying outcomes in different fields (Page, 2013). Understanding the macro-level context

in which the field is located is thus pertinent to understanding individual agents'

behaviour and values. Lerman and Page (2012, p. 510) explain:

> Because all practice is embedded within particular objective contexts, we cannot
> understand actors' attitudes or actions solely by examining their biographies,
> demographic characteristics, or positions within organizations. Instead, we must
> understand the broader context and meaning in which they operate.

Social practice is therefore relational in nature, the product of the 'almost miraculous

encounter between the habitus and a field' (Bourdieu, 1980, p. 66). In this way, the

habitus and field function fully only in relation to one another (Bourdieu and Wacquant,

1992). Bourdieu (2000, p.161) instructs that changes in the shape and structure of the field must be reflected in the habitus, explaining,

> Habitus change constantly in response to new experiences. Dispositions are subject to a kind of permanent revision, but one which is never radical, because it works on the basis of the premises established in the previous state. They are characterized by a combination of constancy and variation which varies according to the individual and his degree of flexibility or rigidity.

As Wacquant (1992, p. 19) explains, a field is 'not simply a dead structure', but a 'space of play which exists as such only to the extent that players enter into it who believe in and actively pursue the prizes it offers'. Social action is determined by a confluence of the field and the habitus, and in order to explain social action the 'makeup of the particular social universe', the 'social constitution of the agent' and the conditions under which they meet must be inseparably understood (Wacquant, 2008, p. 269) The field is thus a 'theoretical device' that aids in understandings of 'the relational character of social action' (Page, 2013, p. 153).

2.3 Penal Culture and Penal Practice

This section considers the relational nature of practice within the arena of imprisonment. It discusses the position of prison staff within the penal field and presents a review of research that engages with Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and field to explore the links between prison staff and penal culture. Page (2011) describes the penal field as the social space in which agents seek to accumulate and utilise penal capital to determine penal policies and priorities. The role of prison staff, both officer and governor grades, as

guardians of order and enactors of penal policy (Liebling et al., 2011) within prisons positions them as central agents of punishment within the penal field.

A number of studies in the sociology of punishment have sought to conceptualise punishment in cultural terms. These cultural studies endeavour to examine punishment as 'the product of cultural mentalities and prevailing sensibilities' (Zedner, 2004, p. 82). While the volume of scholarship in this area is plentiful and ever-growing, there has been a tendency to focus on descriptions of and comparisons between 'large-scale shifts in sentiments, rationalities, practices and policies' (Page, 2013, p. 157). Garland (1990, p. 210) offers some recognition of the significance of the personnel who comprise the penal system in shaping penal practice and policy. He describes prison staff as among the 'primary bearers' of penal culture, and as the agents who 'do most to transform cultural conceptions into penal actions'. As Page (2013) notes however, Garland's recognition of the centrality of prison staff and other penal agents in shaping and enacting penal culture does not remain in his later work. Page cites Garland's *Culture of Control* (2001), underlining that Garland does not investigate how the contemporary crime control fields explored therein affect penal agents' subjective orientation to penal practice. Page (2013) advocates for increased attention to the relationship between penal agents' practice and priorities or reconfigurations in the penal field, guided by Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and field. The next section thus builds upon the review of Bourdieu's theory of practice presented above, exploring studies of prison staff that utilise his concepts in their analyses.

2.3.1 Bourdieu's Concepts in Studies of Prison Staff Practice and Orientations

This section explores the use of concepts from Bourdieu's theory of practice in scholarship on the relationships between prison staff and penal culture. Page (2013) notes that much of the empirical growth within the sociology of punishment has tended to focus on macro-level examinations of activity and change, with lesser discussion of how these actions and changes are implemented and their effect on the subjective orientation of penal agents to penal practice. He identifies Bourdieu's concepts of field and habitus as valuable conceptual resources to seek to explain and understand the dynamics of penal agents' orientation and action relative to the penal field.

Lerman and Page (2012) deploy habitus and field to examine the professional attitudes of prison officers in California and Minnesota. Two large-scale surveys were used, measuring the attitudes and experiences of 5,775 officers working in 32 adult state prisons in California and 911 officers across Minnesota's eight state prisons. The surveys explored officers' ideological beliefs about imprisonment and their support for the provision of three types of rehabilitative programmes: vocational training; drug and alcohol treatment; and academic education and training. Lerman and Page argue that officers' sensibilities, values and experiences are shaped not only by events inside the prison, but also by the penal, political and social contexts in which they work. They note the existence of a 'prison officer habitus', acknowledging the significant influence of the penal field in shaping this habitus (Lerman and Page, 2012, p. 510). The authors additionally assert that prison officers' roles are embedded in both their physical workplace and the penal field in which they are situated. As such, officers are likely to 'share attitudes that stem from their position within the prison, but differ on attitudes tied

to larger debates and priorities within their respective penal field' (Lerman and Page, 2012, p. 513). While officers in both states expressed a similar degree of support for rehabilitation programmes, Californian officers' views on imprisonment were found to be considerably more punitive than those of the officers in Minnesota. Lerman and Page argue that the views of the officers in California were more punitive because California's penal field is more politicised and ideologically polarised than in Minnesota, thus demonstrating that penal fields have 'particular histories, hierarchies, and cultural traditions that affect contemporary practice and policy outcomes' (Lerman and Page, 2012, p. 510). The authors conclude that the prevailing ideologies and sensibilities of the broader political and penal fields can predict differences in officers' attitudes and orientations between fields.

Earlier work by Crawley (2000) provides further insight on the prison officer habitus. Crawley (2000, p. 103) describes the prison officer habitus as 'the walk, the talk, the posture, attitudes, values and beliefs' associated with prison work. New recruits must quickly embody the working practices, values and beliefs of the prison officer habitus if they are to successfully discharge their duties of dealing with 'those who are becoming, and being prisoners' and artfully navigate the informal social hierarchies among prison officers (Crawley, 2000, p. 3). Crawley asserts that an individual cannot achieve the prison officer habitus by simply dressing like an officer and learning the rules of the job; they must embody them. She explains:

> The process of becoming a prison officer is a relatively slow and complex one. The donning of the accoutrements of the position - the uniform, keys, chain and so forth - and the formal training which the new recruit undergoes is merely the start point of this process. It is not enough to simply wear the uniform; (s)he must learn to wear it. Nor is it sufficient that the new recruit learns the prison rules, the routines and working practices of the prison, the procedures for dealing with

uncooperative prisoners, the norms of the occupational culture, the 'recipe' or 'craft' rules of the job and the 'feeling rules' of the prison. Rather, (s)he must both know them and embody them … This is not acquired through mere habituation and repetition; rather it involves inhabiting a way of being … Through an internalisation, over time, of rules (formal, craft, and feeling), social practices, routines and the norms of the occupational culture, ordinary everyday people may become prison officers. (Crawley, 2000, p. 112)

Drawing upon Bourdieu's conceptualisation of the habitus as 'embodied history, internalized as a second nature and so forgotten as history' (1980, p. 56), Crawley (2000, p. 112) argues that the prison officer habitus operates 'without consciousness or will', offering officers a 'practical knowledge of a very ingrained nature'.

Recent research by Bennett (2016) on the working lives of prison managers in the United Kingdom considers prison managers' habitus and position within the penal field. Bennett observes that while managers may appear to have more penal capital than officers, they are also more constrained by both institutional and organisational structures than officer grade staff on wings and landings. Managers are also more sensitive to organisational-level changes within the Prison Service, owing to their closer relationships with headquarters staff, policymakers and other agents within the penal field, such as inspectorates. Bennett additionally acknowledges the habitus of prison managers in his study. Analysing the role of managerialism in shaping managers' expectations, practices and values, Bennett (2016, p. 96) observes that the advent of managerialist tools, such as those of performance management, had become 'deeply entrenched' in managers' identities and professional habitus.

2.4 Prison Officer Culture

This section considers the extant literature on the occupational cultures of prison staff. The literature presented herein informs the analysis of participants' accounts of their experiences of deaths in custody. Explorations of officers' values, beliefs and norms have been the focus of much of the research to emerge on prison work over the past number of decades (Arnold, 2016). While prison staff remained as 'invisible ghosts' (Liebling, 2000, p. 337) within prison sociology for many years, several important studies of prison officers have emerged in the past thirty years, most notably work by Kauffman (1988), Crawley (2004a) and Liebling et al. (2011), which illuminate officers' working lives, practices and traditions. This section considers this scholarship first, before moving to highlight insights on officer culture that can be gleaned from broader research on prison life. Next, existing literature on prison managers is presented, underlining differences between officers and managers. This section concludes with a discussion of the role of policing literature in extant understandings of prison staff, arguing for the importance of interdisciplinarity in studies of the experiences and perspectives of prison staff.

2.4.1 Kauffman's Typology of Prison Officer Culture

Kauffman (1988) provides the earliest comprehensive picture of prison work, and offers a detailed typology of prison officer culture. Kauffman's longitudinal research comprises of a series of interviews with prison officers in the Massachusetts prison system. Newly recruited officers were interviewed in the weeks before they began work, with follow-up interviews conducted two and four years later. A small cohort of officers working at

Walpole prison, a maximum-security facility in the Massachusetts system, were also interviewed in the course of Kauffman's fieldwork.

Observing that officers possess a distinct subculture within prisons that remains a powerful force in their working lives, Kauffman defines officer culture as a series of collectively endorsed rules of conduct, which she describes as 'norms'. These norms are central to officers' identity and work as prison officers. The transgression of any norm is regarded as a 'betrayal', often resulting in officers 'being cut adrift, set apart from the officer community' (Kauffman, 1988, p. 98). Nine norms are presented, in order of their strength and acceptance among officers. The first three encompass extreme situations: officers in distress, drug smuggling, and officer testifying against colleagues. The remaining norms concern the 'everyday conduct of officers, the routine behaviour expected of them vis-á-vis one another, the inmates, and the world beyond' (Kauffman, 1988, p. 99).

The first, and most highly prized, of these norms instructs that officers must always go to the aid of a fellow officer in distress. Kauffman explains that the significance of this norm lies in its function in fostering officer solidarity; officers' knowledge that they will always attempt to protect one another is key to developing shared reliance and a sense of community. Moreover, officers' steadfast adherence to this norm aids in the maintenance of solidarity over the long-term, with each positive response to an officer in danger creating an 'unparalleled source of good feeling and camaraderie among officers'. It also served to reassure officers that they were 'in it together', dedicated to upholding a shared perception of the 'common good' (Kauffman, 1988, p. 87). Kauffman (1988, p. 87) additionally observes that this norm not only ensures that officers in distress are protected

by their colleagues, but serves as a reminder to prisoners that officers will 'immediately back each other' whenever trouble occurs. Such is officers' belief in the importance of this norm that participants in Kauffman's study agreed that any officer in distress should receive assistance from their colleagues, regardless of their own record of response, and that once an officer remained faithful in his support of colleagues in trouble, 'he could be pardoned for a multitude of other sins' (Kauffman, 1988, p. 88).

The second norm prohibits officers from smuggling or 'lugging' drugs into the prison. Much like the preceding norm, this norm is highly regarded by officers and received more 'spontaneous endorsement' from Kauffman's participants than any other norm (1988, p. 90). Kauffman notes that officers' perception of smuggling as an inviolable offence arose from a shared belief regarding the operational and security threats posed by drug-using prisoners, rather than concerns regarding potential criminal sanctions.

Kauffman's third norm of officer culture instructs that officers are forbidden from betraying or 'ratting' on one another. This norm does not appear as rigid as those preceding it, allowing for a degree of flexibility with regard to sanctions for violation depending on 'which officer was being ratted out, to whom, and for what' (Kauffman, 1988, p. 94). Officers' devotion to this norm was particularly steadfast in two related areas, however; officers were forbidden from 'ratting out' a colleague to a prisoner and precluded from testifying against a fellow officer to the prison authorities or cooperating with any investigation into another officer's conduct at work. Either transgression was viewed by officers as a 'fundamental sin, in essence to betray one's own group to the enemy' (1988, p. 94). Kauffman highlights adherence to this norm as fundamental in

bolstering officer solidarity, with transgression likely resulting in expulsion from the officer group.

The fourth, fifth and sixth norms concern officers' interactions with prisoners. The fourth norm prohibits officers from criticising a colleague in the presence of prisoners. Described as the 'positive counterpart' (Kauffman, 1988, p. 101) of the previous norm, the fifth norm obliges officers to unfailingly support a colleague in a dispute with a prisoner. A more specific version of the fifth norm, the sixth norm compels officers to faithfully support a colleague's sanctions against prisoners, both formal and informal. Once again, officer solidarity is central to these norms, however the primary concern here is with prisoners' perceptions of the cohesion and strength of the officer group. As Kauffman observes, violations of these norms not only jeopardise the effectiveness of those present, but also 'undercut the appearance of officer solidarity and thus increased the vulnerability of the officers as a group' (1988, p. 99). Kauffman additionally notes also that officers' unwavering compliance with these three norms may also arise out of fears of reciprocity.

The seventh of Kauffman's norms warns officers against being a 'white hat', a label given to officers who expressed concern or sympathy for prisoners. Kauffman observes that officers did not appear to be as unforgiving of transgressions of this norm as they did others, asserting that officers who were steadfast in their adherence to the other norms and had achieved sufficient seniority in the officer group could often violate this norm without penalty.

The eighth norm explicitly addresses officer solidarity and cohesion, obliging officers to maintain the solidarity of the officer group at all times. Kauffman instructs that this norm extends the animosity felt by officers towards prisoners to any other individuals outside the officer group, noting particularly the prevalence of suspicion and cynicism of management among prison officers, as well as officers' wariness of revealing their occupation to those outside the prison, including, in some cases, family members. While officers indicated that their secrecy with regard to their job was to protect their loved ones, Kauffman additionally suggests that their reticence towards revealing their occupation to outsiders was also borne out of the prevailing sentiment among officers that 'no one understands'. As Kauffman observes, officers' mistrust of outsiders serves to further their isolation within the prison, and society more broadly, bolstering their need for camaraderie, support and solidarity with their colleagues.

The final norm obliges officers to always show positive concern for fellow officers. Kauffman maintains that this norm is noteworthy 'not because it was widely obeyed or transgressions against it severely punished but rather because it represented a behavioural ideal subscribed to by most officers' (1988, p. 112). Difficulties can frequently arise in relation to this norm however, with Kauffman noting that antipathy between officer groups, particularly those on different shifts, sometimes led to operational difficulties.

2.4.2 Later Examinations of Prison Officer Culture: Exploring Solidarity, Insularity, Masculinity and Relationships

Since the emergence of Kauffman's typology of prison officer culture a modest number of scholars have begun to probe and describe officer culture in their own jurisdictions.

Within this scholarship, studies by Crawley (2004a) and Liebling et al. (2011) conducted in the United Kingdom offer the richest explorations of contemporary prison officer culture, matching Kauffman's aspirations in presenting comprehensive sociological accounts of the working lives, sensibilities and traditions of prison officers. Crawley's (2004a) study entailed intensive ethnographic fieldwork in six public sector male prisons in England, interviewing staff and 'hanging around' for lengthy periods to understand prison officers' working environments. The later contribution of Liebling et al. (2011) arose out of a number of earlier studies of prison policy and prison officers commissioned by the Prison Service, including research on staff-prisoner relationships in a maximum security prison (Liebling and Price, 1999). Additional insights into the sensibilities and traditions of prison officers are also found in other studies of prison officer work, including research by Arnold (2005, 2008), Tait (2008, 2011), Nylander et al. (2011), Lerman and Page (2012) and Scott (2012).

Kauffman's research retains an enduring influence within these studies, providing an important touchstone as these authors advance understandings of the working lives and culture of prison officers. A number of major elements of that characterise 'traditional' prison officer culture can be drawn from this work, including solidarity, insularity, masculinity and relationships. These are discussed below.

The themes of solidarity and camaraderie inherent in Kauffman's typology of officer culture also feature strongly in the work of Crawley (2004a) and Liebling et al. (2011), with the authors making numerous references to Kauffman's norms throughout their observations on officer culture in English prisons. Echoing Kauffman's discussion of the

role of the first norm obliging officers to always assist a colleague in distress in maintaining solidarity, Liebling et al. (2011, pp. 165-166) observe:

> The ready response of officers to an alarm bell demonstrates (and is a function of) the tight camaraderie between officers in a prison. It defines the prison as a dangerous environment within which they support of fellow officers is required to survive. This close bonding and trust is very important to officers … At Whitemoor, officers frequently mentioned how being a prison officer (whether other officers liked you or not) meant that you were potentially protected by everyone else working in the prison. For most, this was an accepted – but much prized – aspect of prison work. As an officer, you respond instantly and without question to someone in difficulty, knowing (rather than hoping) that they would do the same for you … The knowledge that, at busy moments or times of crisis, you could rely on your colleagues and come through a problematic situation was cited as a very positive aspect of being a prison officer.

Crawley (2004a) similarly acknowledges Kauffman's first norm as significant in maintaining officer solidarity, and also highlights the expectation to close ranks against outsider groups as critical to continued unity among officers. She further observes that the need to keep each other safe fosters intimacy and shared reliance among the officer group, providing further support for solidarity.

Another strong theme throughout each of these three studies of officer culture is the insularity of the officer group. Officers have been noted to have a strong tendency to close ranks and remain united against outsiders, inside and outside the prison, a position which serves to isolate them inside the prison and in wider society (Kauffman, 1988; Arnold et al., 2007). In her study of prison officer training, Arnold (2008) argues that insularity is adopted at recruit stage, as peer trainers socialise recruits into officer culture. Liebling et al. (2011, p. 155) note that the insular nature of officer culture is a response to officers' dissatisfaction with their 'negative and disproportionate public image' and sensationalist media portrayals of their work. Crawley (2004a, p. 180) echoes this finding, maintaining that 'negative media portrayals of prisons do little to generate admiration or gratitude for

those who work in them', observing a widespread perception amongst prison officers that they are unvalued and misunderstood by the public. Officers in Crawley's study were particularly frustrated by the lack of recognition for, what they believed to be, their positive work. This perspective led staff to 'circle the wagons' against outsiders, turning in amongst themselves and adopting an adversarial stance against unsympathetic observations regarding their jobs. (Crawley, 2004a, p. 40).

Masculinity additionally emerges as a prominent theme in these studies. Crawley (2004a, p. 36) describes prison work as 'an occupation that is highly sex-typed male', observing the centrality of 'traditional male qualities of dominance, authoritativeness and aggressiveness' in prison officers' roles. Liebling et al. (2011, p. 76) examine the position of female staff within masculine culture in prisons, noting that the presence of female officers may both heighten and mitigate masculine expectations among their male colleagues; male officers felt a sense of duty to protect female officers, but also recognised their position as a 'normalising feature' within a traditionally male-centric environment. Masculinity may be understood and performed differently across and within prisons, however. As Crawley (2004a, p. 119) argues, 'macho peer pressure' may be particularly strong in one institution, obliging staff to 'put on an aggressive front' when faced with danger, while the masculine expectations in another institution may prioritise dignity and professionalism. Kauffman (1988, p. 86) links masculinity to solidarity, arguing that the 'sense of brotherhood' fostered by shared reliance and automatic responses to colleagues in trouble is key in maintaining officer solidarity.

Relationships are also recognised as an important element of the occupational culture of prison staff. Much of this work seeks to untangle the 'structured conflict' (Jacobs and

Kraft, 1978, p. 305) of staff-prisoner relationships, with both Crawley (2004a) and Liebling et al. (2011) considering officers' perspectives on the 'right' (and indeed 'wrong') relationships with prisoners. Officers in Crawley's (2004a, p. 108) study emphasised the need to 'draw the line' between closeness and distance, motivated by an awareness that becoming too close could risk their authority and the security of the institution. Arnold (2005, p. 416) similarly observes that a 'delicate balance' must be struck between becoming 'too involved or too detached'. Tait (2008, 2011) argues that the competing aims of custody and care are additionally relevant in understandings of officers' perspectives on prisoners, noting that some officers may find it difficult to reconcile care with control. Relationships between officers and managers are additionally recognised in the literature as a significant element of prison officer culture. Liebling et al. (2011, p. 196) note officers' frequent complaints of 'insufficient management attention', while other researchers identify an enduring belief among officers that they are undervalued by local and national management (Crawley, 2004a; Bennett and Wahidin, 2008).

These features are the foundation of the habitus (Bourdieu, 1977) or 'working personality' (Skolnick, 1966; Crawley, 2004a) of prison officers, shaped by their experiences at work, perspectives on themselves as a group, and relationships with prisoners, management and others connected to the prison system. While it is useful to identify and describe these features, the strongest message from the work of Kauffman, Crawley and Liebling et al. is that it is difficult to talk about officer culture as a homogenous phenomenon. As Crawley (2004, p.10) observes:

> The dominant occupational culture of uniformed staff in any one establishment
> … is dependent upon a variety of elements, including the history and function of

the prison and its formal and informal identity within the service. The occupational cultures of each establishment have evolved over time and in different ways; moreover, different cultures can be identified amongst staff of the same grade and working in the same prison.

Accordingly, prisons possess distinct cultures, shaped by the values, attitudes, traditions and practices of staff, which influence the relationships, regimes and atmospheres within the prison walls (Crawley, 2004a; Liebling, 2004). Similarly, Kauffman (1988) and Liebling et al. (2011) describe the role of structural factors, such as the timing of a work shift or nature of a regime, in shaping the sensibilities and expectations shared by officer groups. Using the example of a segregation unit, Liebling et al. explain that as the potential for danger and conflict with prisoners will be stronger than in other areas of the prison, the importance of the cultural obligation to unfailingly assist a colleague in distress will be greater, thus distinctly shaping the officer culture in that unit.

2.4.3 Prison Staff in Studies of Prison Life

In addition to the research focused solely on prison officers, a number of broader studies of prison life also contain contemplations of officers' working practices, sensibilities and traditions. These observations, while often brief and limited, provide additional insights into officer culture.

Observations of prison officer practice can be found in the classic studies of imprisonment by Sykes (1958) and Mathiesen (1965). In his sociological study of a maximum-security prison in New Jersey, Sykes (1958) presents a discussion of power in prison officer work. He argues that while it at first appears that the structure of the prison should operate to facilitate the effective discharge of officers' tools of power and punishment, in reality

officers must engage in an endless, and often fruitless, struggle to maintain power and order. Sykes (1958, p. 48) describes an 'apparent contradiction' in officers' power and authority over prisoners, noting that while prisoners may recognise the legitimacy of officers' position of control, they may not always feel an obligation to obey. In such a case, officers have no choice but to pursue alternative avenues to achieve order, resulting in the officer role becoming a 'complicated compound of policeman and foreman, of cadi, counsellor, and boss all rolled into one' (Sykes, 1958, p. 54). Sykes (1958) also recognises alienation from management as significant in the working lives of officers. In addition, Mathiesen (1965) alludes to the issue of role conflict in prison officer work, observing that officers are placed in the competing positions of punisher and domestic provider. This, he maintains, is a source of significant and continuous struggle in prison work, as officers work daily to meet competing expectations from prisoners and management.

The existence of a prison officer culture is acknowledged by Liebling in her study of suicides in prison (1992). In her discussion of officers' attitudes and perspectives on prisoner suicide and self-injury, Liebling (1992, p. 197) observes, 'Prison officers are a strong culturally bound body; they share a language. Like many highly structured (and uniformed) services they share an ideology'. Liebling also considers prison officer culture in her later sociological study of prisons, *Prisons and their Moral Performance* (2004), observing that the emotional tone of an institution is shaped by the culture and working personalities of the officers.

In his study of life at Wellingborough prison in England, Crewe (2009) observes that the onset of managerialism has changed officer culture significantly. He argues that the introduction of competence-based recruitment, a new emphasis on communication and

respect at training courses, the formalisation of control and restraint procedures, the publication and homogenisation of policy and procedures, and the increase in oversight and staff accountability each represent a significant contribution to the recent 'humanisation of staff culture' (Crewe, 2009, p. 100). Crewe (2009, p. 76) further asserts that this shift towards managerialism has greatly diminished officers' authority, leaving officers feeling increasingly frustrated with management reforms that have 'winched power to higher levels of the organisation, eroding their collective influence'.

2.4.4 Differing Experiences and Perspectives? Prison Officers and Prison Managers

As those who had progressed to management grades from officer grades were eligible for participation in the current study, it is useful to consider the extant literature on prison managers. While it comprises a smaller body of scholarship than the research on prison officers, the literature on prison managers underlines the heterogeneity of this cohort, presenting them as diverse individuals and emphasising their distinctiveness from prison officers (Bennett, 2016). Much of this work highlights the centrality of managers in shaping the nature of relationships and regimes in prisons. Managers' role in policy implementation has received particular attention in this context, with researchers characterising them as 'key actors' (Bryans, 2007, p. 191) in this regard, functioning as 'translators and transmitters' (Liebling and Crewe, 2013, p. 283) of penal policy. Recent research indicates that policy is not always faithfully executed however. Crewe and Liebling (2015, p. 8) observe that polices deemed impractical may be eschewed in favour of 'creative compliance', wherein managers may operate in accordance with the stated values of a policy, but in a way that is not wholly consistent with its procedures. Research on prison life and prison work has also noted prison mangers' influence on officer

practice; managers role model appropriate relationships to their staff and inform their use of discretion (Liebling, 2004; Liebling et al., 2011).

Additionally, the 'language of governing', which focuses on administration, performance management and accountability, has been found to create distance between managers and everyday life on wings and landings of prisons, sometimes isolating them from the lived experiences and humanity of both prisoners and officers (Liebling and Crewe, 2013). Bennett (2016) argues however that managers' focus on performance and targets does not insulate them from suffering, highlighting gender, ethnicity and absenteeism as issues that encourage diminished concern for the 'hidden injuries' of prison management.

A small number of typologies emerge from the literature on management in prisons and the criminal justice system. Based on his research with managers in the criminal justice system, Rutherford (1993) proposes three clusters of values or 'credos' that shape management practice. The first is the punishment credo, which entails the punitive degradation of offenders. The efficiency credo is second, wherein managers concentrate on pragmatism, efficiency and expedience. Finally, the caring credo sees managers adopt attitudes towards all service users in the criminal justice system based on 'liberal and humanitarian values' (Rutherford, 1993, p. viii). More recently, Bryans (2007) draws upon interviews conducted with 42 governors in the United Kingdom to identify four ideal types of prison manager: 'general managers', 'liberal idealists', 'chief officers' and 'conforming mavericks'. General managers are described as exclusively focused on performance management and career development, paying little regard to discourses on the morality or pains of imprisonment. Liberal idealists, in contrast, are concerned with the moral dimensions of imprisonment and typically engaged in wider penal reform

discourses. Chief officers progress through officer grades to management roles, incorporating their operational experience as officers into their managerial approach. Finally, conforming mavericks are individualists who develop innovative practices to achieve conventional targets.

2.4.5 The Dominance of Policing Literature in Existing Explorations of Officer Culture

Researchers studying prison staff have sought to compensate for the historical dearth of explorations of officer culture by drawing comparisons between the occupational culture of officers and that of the police. Police culture has been the subject of considerable interest in criminological research for a number of decades, and has been rigorously examined by, among others, authors such as Skolnick (1966), Holdaway (1983), Reiner (1992), Chan (1996, 1997) and Waddington (1999). It is these studies of police work that Crawley (2004a), Liebling et al. (2011) and Arnold et al. (2007) bring in to their discussion of prison officer culture. Crawley (2004a, p. 28) maintains that it is the similarities in the demographic and socio-economic profile of police and prison officers that render comparisons between their occupational cultures and working personalities useful, observing, 'prison officers and police officers are the only blue-collar, predominantly working-class occupational groups in the criminal justice system'. Liebling et al. (2011) particularly highlight Reiner's (1992) framework of police culture as relevant to prison officer culture, wherein a sense of mission, pessimism, cynicism, suspicion, solidarity, conservatism, pragmatism and machismo are central constituents of police culture. Prison officer culture is noted to share in a number of these facets of

Reiner's analysis of police culture, particularly pragmatism, suspicion, cynicism and machismo (Arnold et al., 2007).

While the literature on police culture is most certainly useful in aiding further understanding of prison officer culture, there are a number of significant differences between the work of prison officers and that of the police, particularly in the context of the environment in which they work and the organisational priorities of each occupational group (Crawley, 2004a). Crawley further observes that the social world of the police is much wider, as they perform a number of important administrative and civic duties within society, bringing them into more frequent contact with members of the public. She explains:

> Significantly, the social world of the prison officer is smaller, more intimate, more domestic in character than the world in which the police officer moves … [Police] deal with law-abiding members of the general public (people who have lost their children, pets or property, relatives of those injured or killed in road traffic accident and victims of a variety of crimes) as well as with offenders. In their working lives, prison officers deal, in the main, with people convicted of, or awaiting trial for, a criminal offence. Moreover … the degree of intimacy involved in working with prisoners is great in comparison; a prison officer may have close contact with a specific prisoner for a significant proportion of that prisoner's sentence … unlike police officers, most of whose relationships with suspects are relatively fleeting. (Crawley, 2004a, pp. 41-42)

2.4.6 Looking Beyond the Police: The Absence of Interdisciplinarity in Explorations of Prison Officer Culture

Crawley goes beyond simply acknowledging the differences between police work and prison work in her research, drawing upon literature on other occupational groups, primarily studies of medical personnel, to enrich her discussion of the working lives and cultures of prison officers. This approach is particularly notable given the choice of other

contemporary authors such as Arnold et al. (2007) and Liebling et al. (2011) to continue to focus exclusively on comparisons between prison work and police work when presenting their analyses of officer culture. While the policing literature is most certainly a valuable resource in explorations of prison officer culture, particularly as police and prison officers are both agents of the criminal justice system and, as such, share comparable experiences and working styles, it is useful to broaden considerations of literature concerning those working outside the criminal justice system in similar roles focused on the provision of custody and/or care. O'Sullivan and O'Donnell (2012) argue for the importance of interdisciplinarity in explorations of imprisonment and confinement, observing that scholars need to look beyond criminological literature for sources and to conceive of confinement in broader terms. Bearing this in mind, this section presents literature on medical and social services workers, highlighting the many similarities between the culture and experiences of personnel in these settings and those of prison officers. A similar approach is adopted in chapters three and four, wherein extant literature on the experiences and perspectives on these professionals, in addition to emergency services personnel, is utilised to explore emotion management and encounters with death respectively, informing the analysis presented in later chapters of this thesis.

One occupational group in the healthcare and social care arena that share a number of cultural and experiential aspects with prison officers are auxiliary and assistant workers in health and social care settings, such as nursing auxiliaries and health and social care assistants. While the physical characteristics of the settings in which prison officers and auxiliaries discharge their duties are quite different, the environments that both groups occupy are primarily domestic and residential. Crawley (2004a, p. 129) observes the degree of domesticity in prisons as 'striking', noting that as the prison is the home of each

prisoner for the duration of his or her sentence much of prison officer work is taken up with the performance of the perfunctory domestic tasks typically seen in family homes. Similarly, health and social care auxiliaries typically work in residential settings, secure or otherwise, such as residential care homes for the elderly and children, hospices and psychiatric units. Just as prison officer work entails daily monitoring and inspection of prisoners' cells, auxiliary workers are required to regularly enter patients' or clients' bedrooms to provide assistance with tasks such as personal hygiene (Lee-Treweek, 1997) or to perform domestic duties such as preparing meals (Stacey, 2005).

Another important similarity between prison officer work and auxiliary and assistant work in these settings is that both types of roles involve physical contact with individuals and groups who are socially stigmatised (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999). Hughes (1962) refers to work of this nature as 'dirty work', as it entails a physical, social or moral taint. This 'dirty work stigma' fosters the development of strong occupational cultures among such workers (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999, p. 419), and as seen above with prison officers, the occupational culture of auxiliary workers is also characterised by solidarity and cohesion (Lee-Treweek, 1997; O'Donnell, 2012). The nature of their duties and responsibilities are also quite similar, in that both prison officers and auxiliaries are primarily tasked with supervising those in their charge; prisoners, patients or clients. In addition, both occupational groups are charged with constructing and maintaining basic processes and order in unpredictable work environments (Lee-Treweek, 1997; Liebling et al., 2011). The pursuit of order is a daily priority for both prison officers (Kauffman, 1988; Crawley, 2004a) and auxiliaries (Lee-Treweek, 1997), with occupational pride grounded in the successful completion of duties without disorder.

Prison officers' shared experiences and cultural facets with workers in the health and social services arena are not limited to those in auxiliary and assistant roles only. The prevalence of verbal and physical abuse across the prison, healthcare and social services settings is an example of this. Kauffman (1988) and Crawley (2004a) acknowledge the frequency of verbal abuse from prisoners and officers' keen awareness of the ever-present threat of physical assault in their discussion of prison officer culture. Similarly, physical assault and verbal abuse have also been noted as problematic in healthcare and social care settings, with the threat and experience of abuse from patients or clients noted to be a particular stressor for workers (Balloch et al., 1998; Goodridge et al., 1996; Keogh and Byrne, 2016). In addition, studies of nursing staff (Lewis, 2005; Rose, 1997), social workers (Ginn and Sandell, 1997) and social care workers (Keogh and Byrne, 2016) demonstrate that employees in medical and social services settings face similar challenges to those faced by prison officers (Crawley, 2004b) in managing and performing emotions in accordance with the cultural rules of their workplace.

2.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter explored the theoretical basis for the current study, utilising concepts from Bourdieu's theory of social practice and extant scholarship on explorations of the relationships between penal agents and the penal, social and political contexts in which they work. Next, a comprehensive overview of the extant literature on the working lives and traditions of prison staff was presented. This chapter concluded with a discussion of the relevance of policing literature in empirical explorations of the lives and cultures of prison staff, arguing for the value of interdisciplinarity in research on prison staff and the need to look beyond existing literature on criminal justice occupations. The next chapter

will seek to broaden the theoretical basis of the study, presenting an exploration of the

extant literature on emotion management and performance in the workplace.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE OF EMOTION IN THE WORKPLACE

3.1 Introduction

Among the aims of the present study are the exploration of prison staff emotional responses to deaths in custody and their engagement in support in the aftermath of these incidents. The fulfilment of these aims demands an examination of the existing literature on the management and performance of emotion in the workplace. This chapter will thus commence with a review of concepts selected from the diverse literature on the sociology of emotions as most relevant to the aims of the current research. Beginning with a review of Hochschild's (1983) influential emotional labour thesis, the discussion will then move to consider the more contemporary concepts. These included Bolton's (2005) fourfold typology of emotion management, Korczynski's (2003) work on collective emotional labour and 'communities of coping' and Knight's (2014) concept of emotional resources. Following this, an analysis of extant scholarship on the experience of emotion management in the workplace will be presented, beginning with the emergent literature on emotionality in prison officer work. The significance of emotion in prisons will first be highlighted. Existing accounts of emotion management in prison officer work will then be discussed, with particular reference to the issues of gender, humour and the impact of emotion work on officers' personal lives. The chapter will conclude with a review of studies of emotion management in occupations that have been acknowledged in the previous chapter as culturally similar to prison officers.

3.2 Emotion Management in the Workplace: Concepts and Extant Research

3.2.1 Hochschild's 'Emotional Labour' Thesis

In her seminal text, *The Managed Heart* (1983), sociologist Arlie Hochschild introduced the concept of emotional labour in the workplace, setting the agenda for future studies of emotion in organisations (Tracy and Tracy, 1998). Her research primarily comprises interviews and observation with flight attendants, with cohorts of university students and debt collectors providing additional data. Emotional labour, Hochschild (1983, p. 7) observes, 'requires one to induce or suppress emotions in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others', and calls for 'the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display'.

Hochschild distinguishes between emotional labour in the workplace and emotion management in the private sphere, asserting that while both involve the same efforts to shape the presentation of emotion, emotion management takes place in private contexts for an individual's own purposes. Hochschild points to the emotive effort to appear sad at a funeral or jovial at a party as examples of emotion management in personal circumstances. Emotional labour, in contrast, entails the commercialisation of this principle in workplaces: employees in an organisation present a particular demeanour in exchange for payment of a wage.

Employees become aware of the expected emotional performance through acculturation to the organisation's 'feeling rules'. As Hochschild (1983, p. 18) explains, 'feeling rules

are standards used in emotional conversation to determine what is rightly owed and owing in the currency of feeling'. Hochschild notes that feeling rules in the workplace are significantly more rigid than in the personal realm, where they are flexible and personality-driven. Feeling rules in the workplace are anchored in the organisation's history, culture and values, with a tacit understanding shared among employees regarding the appropriate, acceptable and expected emotions in the work environment. Workplace feeling rules are additionally 'spelled out publicly' in an organisation through training and management discourse (Hochschild, 1983, p. 119). The 'feeling rules' concept has remained an important touchstone in later considerations of emotion in the workplace (Fineman, 1993b; Bendelow and Williams, 1998; Bolton, 2005), with the process of learning and adapting to feeling rules identified as an important part of the cultural assimilation of a new employee in studies of prison officer work (Crawley, 2004a; Liebling et al., 2011), police work (Waddington, 1999) and healthcare work (Lewis, 2005).

Hochschild (1983, p. 11) also points to the gendered nature of emotional labour, noting that the concept has a 'special relevance' for women. She observes gender to be an important determinant of skill in emotional labour, observing, 'as traditionally more accomplished managers of feeling in private life, women more than men have put emotional labour on the market, and they know more about its personal costs' (1983, p. 11).

Hochschild draws on Goffman's (1959) earlier work on impression management to further elucidate her thesis. Goffman (1959) adopts a dramaturgical approach to understanding social interaction, likening social encounters to theatrical performances,

wherein individuals adopt and maintain the appropriate appearance as determined by the social context to avoid embarrassment or shame. Hochschild extends her contemplation of emotional labour beyond Goffman's presentation of the self to probe 'how people try to feel' (Adams and Sydie, 2001, p. 518). In doing so, she divides emotional labour into two modes: surface acting and deep acting. Surface acting involves the simulation of emotion in accordance the expectations of the organisation: an individual does not genuinely feel this emotion, but rather is obliged to present it. Hochschild (1983, p. 35) points to 'the put on sneer, the posed shrug, the controlled sigh' as examples of attempts to express 'a real feeling that has been self-induced'. Deep acting occurs when an individual makes an effort to 'stir up' the emotion he/she is expected to display (Hochschild, 1983, p. 43). Both surface acting and deep acting are honed through experience and over time. As Hochschild (1983, p.36) explains:

> Feelings do not erupt spontaneously or automatically in either deep acting or surface acting. In both cases the actor has learned to intervene – either in creating the inner shape of a feeling or in shaping the outward appearance of one.

While Hochschild's discussion in *The Managed Heart* centres on the experience of private sector service workers, she briefly examines some distinctions between emotional labour in private sector work and public sector work. Her considerations in this context focus on her identification of the three characteristics of jobs that require emotional labour:

> First, they require face-to-face or voice-to-voice contact with the public. Second, they require the worker to produce an emotional state in another person – gratitude or fear for example. Third, they allow the employer, through training and supervision, to exercise a degree of control over the emotional activities of employees. (Hochschild, 1983, p. 147)

Hochschild cautions that the third feature of management control will not be apparent in many public sector jobs that appear to employ emotional labour, particularly those of a domestic or caring nature. Public sector workers, Hochschild observes, differ from those working in the private sector to produce a service for profit, as their emotional labour is not as closely supervised or controlled by management. While they remain obliged to consider organisational and professional feeling rules, they are afforded greater autonomy in their emotional labour and 'do not work with an emotion supervisor immediately on hand' (1983, p. 153).

Much of Hochschild's exploration of emotional labour focuses on its potentially negative consequences to workers (Wharton, 1999). For Hochschild, engagement in emotional labour can engender a disharmony between inner feelings and outward emotive expression, producing feelings of inauthenticity and self-alienation. She describes this as 'emotive dissonance' (1983, p. 90). Another significant consequence of the professional obligation to continually engage in emotional labour is, Hochschild asserts, a difficulty in establishing and maintaining close relationships in the personal context. Wharton (1999, p. 162) observes that Hochschild's warnings about the possible negative consequences of emotional labour formed the 'backdrop' of much emergent research following the advent of *The Managed Heart*. Studies following Hochschild have largely focused on the negative impacts of emotional labour, highlighting role-alienation and cynicism (Fineman, 1993a; Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993), burnout (Wharton, 1993) and job tension (Abraham, 1999).

While Hochschild's emotional labour thesis has firmly secured its place as the 'predominant conceptual tool for analysing employees' emotion work' (Brook, 2009, p.

531), the concept has not escaped critique. A number of authors highlight the undue emphasis placed on the divide between public and private performances of emotion management as the central weakness in Hochschild's work (Wouters, 1989; Bolton and Boyd, 2003; Bolton, 2005; McClure and Murphy, 2007). Bolton (2005, p. 60) argues that Hochschild creates an 'oversimplified dichotomy'. She also argues that Hochschild's comparisons between the physical labour process and the emotional labour process are misguided. Additionally, Lewis (2005) and McClure and Murphy (2007) reject Hochschild's arguments regarding the high degree of management control and manipulation of workers' emotions. In light of this debate on the 'contours and applicability' (Brook, 2009, p. 532) of Hochschild's work, later studies of emotion in workplaces have chosen to focus on presenting a more nuanced picture of the management of emotion in accordance with feeling rules, informed by more recent advancements of Hochschild's concepts.

3.2.2 Moving Beyond Hochschild: Bolton's Typology of Emotion Management

Bolton (2005) proposes an alternative framework for understanding emotions in the workplace. While recognising the significance of *The Managed Heart* in understandings of workplace emotion, Bolton (2005, p. 53) cautions that the proliferation of studies assigning the term 'emotional labour' to all forms of workplace emotionality has created an 'emotional labour bandwagon'. She argues for an alternative typology of emotion management in the workplace, observing that the dominance of Hochschild's concepts in research workplace emotionality 'gives little credit to the wealth of a person's experience, their ability to adapt to situations and their skill in managing situations in order to create the 'correct' emotional climate' (Bolton, 2000a, p. 161). Her typology of emotion

management in the workplace is developed through a series of articles (Bolton, 2000a, 2000b, 2001; Bolton and Boyd, 2003), building to a detailed account in her 2005 title, *Emotion Management in the Workplace*.

Unlike Hochschild, whose concepts are primarily based on research with commercial flight attendants, Bolton derives her typology from extensive fieldwork with public service workers: nurses in the United Kingdom's National Health Service. It is in this distinction that Bolton seeks to make the case for her typology. She suggests that Hochschild's focus on the private sector may raises questions regarding its applicability to public service workplaces, as it does not appear to account for situations when emotion management is not appropriated for commercial use. Bolton thus seeks to remedy this by providing a typology of emotion management that better incorporates workplace emotionality among public service workers. Bolton's typology of workplace emotion management therefore gains its relevance to the current study through its incorporation of the public service worker, aligning itself with the aim of the current research to explore the emotional responses to prisoner deaths of staff in the Irish Prison Service, an executive agency of the Department of Justice.

Bolton identifies four categories of emotion management: pecuniary, prescriptive, presentational and philanthropic. Within her typology, Bolton seeks to strike a balance between emotion management governed by organisational priorities and feeling rules, and that guided by informal expectations shared among colleagues. Pecuniary and prescriptive emotion management are underpinned by organisational concerns. The pecuniary category is governed by commercial feeling rules and motivated by instrumental concerns, while the prescriptive category arises from professional and

organisational feeling rules and is motivated by concerns of status. The presentational and philanthropic categories represent emotion management that is not exclusively controlled by organisational feeling rules, but rather by 'the implicit traffic rules of social interaction' (Bolton, 2005, p. 133). Presentational emotion management is 'not controlled by an organisation's feeling rules but by the implicit feeling rules of social interaction', whereby individuals manage their emotions to 'fit into the accepted conventions of feeling' (Bolton, 2005, p. 133). Philanthropic emotion management, Bolton (2005, p. 139) observes, is a 'special case', as it 'denotes extra effort has been invested into offering a sincere performance as a gift'. Bolton (2005, p. 140) suggests that philanthropic emotion management represents 'everyday humanity' in the workplace and, accordingly, is most prevalent among caring professionals.

Within Bolton's typology, individuals 'draw on different sets of feeling rules according to context and their individual motivations' (Bolton and Boyd, 2003, p. 291), thus demonstrating that organisational priorities do not exclusively define workplace emotionality. Moreover, the typology emphasises the complexities of emotion in organisations, highlighting the 'danger of labelling all performances of emotion management within the workplace under one heading' (Bolton, 2000a, p. 160). Additionally, individuals are not confined to performing only one category of emotion management at any one time, but rather are capable of 'mixing and managing all forms of emotion management according to 'rules' other than those solely controlled by the organisation' (Bolton, 2005, p. 103). This, Bolton asserts, represents an important point of departure from Hochschild's emotional labour thesis. Brook (2009, p. 532) notes the increasing use of Bolton's typology in contemporary scholarship on workplace emotionality, observing that the previous approach of employing Hochschild's emotional

labour concept only may be 'beginning to lose momentum'. Since 2005, Bolton's typology has been used as a companion to Hochschild's 'feeling rules' concept in a number of studies, including those by Lewis (2005), O'Donohoe and Turley (2006), McClure and Murphy (2007), Lynch (2007), Jenkins and Conley (2007), Simpson (2007), and Jenkins et al. (2010). The current study adopts a similar approach, utilising concepts from both Hochschild and Bolton, in addition to the work of Korczynski and Knight outlined below.

3.2.2.1 Gender in Workplace Emotion Management: Advancing Bolton's Typology

Bolton's typology is silent on the significance of gender in emotion management. As Lewis (2005) observes, the absence of gender in Bolton's typology is particularly puzzling given the continued references to the gendered nature of emotional labour woven throughout Hochschild's work. In neglecting gender, Lewis (2005, p. 568) argues that Bolton fails to 'draw out how the gendered nature of emotional labour may vary across the different categories she identifies'. Lewis attempts to remedy the gender deficit in Bolton's framework in her study of emotion management among neonatal nurses, submitting that the prescriptive and philanthropic categories are gendered masculine and feminine respectively. Her observations, while brief, are significant as they introduce a gendered perspective to Bolton's fourfold typology.

Lewis examines the prescriptive category first, focusing on the significance of professional rules of conduct to emotion management. Lewis suggests that the notion of 'professional' is 'borne out of a gendered perspective that focuses on male working practices, male behaviours and male labour-force participation' (2005, p. 568). She

additionally points to characteristics of the professional that she argues are inherently masculine, such as detachment, autonomy, expertise and self-discipline, and thus proposes that the prescriptive category of Bolton's typology is gendered masculine. Turning to the philanthropic category, Lewis notes that the enactment of behaviours that offer rapport, supportiveness, congeniality and empathy and the desire to demonstrate a higher level of involvement and care in work settings are 'associated with, and expected of' female workers (2005, p. 568). In light of this, she argues, it is possible to posit that the philanthropic category is gendered feminine.

3.2.3 Collective Emotion Management

3.2.3.1 Hochschild and Collective Emotional Labour

While Hochschild's (1983) analysis of emotional labour primarily focuses on the individual, (Korczynski, 2003), she pauses briefly to consider the role of interactions between colleagues in workplace emotionality. Hochschild notes that emotional labour becomes collective when workers rely on each other for mutual emotional support. Using examples such as the friendly banter exchanged between flight attendants and between flight attendants and passengers, she further explains:

> It is not that collective talk determines the mood of the workers. Rather, the reverse is true: the needed mood determines the nature of the worker's talk. To keep the collective mood stripped of any painful feelings, serious talk of death, divorce, politics, and religion is usually avoided. (Hochschild, 1983, p. 115)

Collective emotional labour operates to improve workers' moods and morale, while also facilitating catharsis between colleagues through the sharing of negative emotions. This,

Hochschild asserts, is perceived as particularly problematic by management, as collective negativity can often result in colleagues 'sharing grudges' (1983, p. 115). Hochschild quotes a facilitator at a training session cautioning against sharing negative feelings such as anger in order to avoid arousing the same feelings in others. She observes, 'the message was, when you're angry, go to a teammate who will calm you down' (Hochschild, 1983, p. 116).

3.2.3.2 Korczynski's 'Communities of Coping' in the Workplace

The brevity of Hochschild's consideration of collective emotion management has attracted strong criticism from Korczynski (2003). He is unconvinced by Hochschild's fleeting discussion of the concept, lamenting that she moves on to tackle a new topic just as her analysis 'begins to intrigue', leaving her examination as an undeveloped 'sketch' (Korczynski, 2003, p. 56). Advancing his own concept of 'communities of coping' in the workplace, Korczynski (2003, p. 56) seeks to build upon Hochschild's earlier contemplations of collective emotion management and 'turn this sketch of an idea into a picture that illuminates'.

Korczynski derives the concept of communities of coping from research conducted in four call centres in Australia and the United States, observing that individuals involved in any type of service work are emotionally impacted by their interactions with service users. He notes that workers receiving negative or abusive behaviour from service users will attempt to cope with any pain experienced by seeking support from their colleagues, thus creating what Korczynski terms, 'communities of coping', enabling individuals to cope with emotions experienced in different work situations. 'Communities of coping'

are not solely outlets for the expression of pain or distress however; they also provide workers with an opportunity to reflect humorously on their interactions with service users. Stories and jokes are exchanged about humorous incidents, serving to lessen the emotional impact of these events, particularly in workplaces where cynicism and antipathy dominates.

Korczynski additionally identifies 'communities of coping' as significant in the development of occupational cultures. Workers in front-line positions tend to 'cope communally and socially', with these 'communities of coping' constituting an important element of workplace social relations (Korczynski, 2003, p. 58). Moreover, strong 'communities of coping' were found to bolster dense, informal cultures among the workforce.

Gender is noted to play an important role in the establishment and maintenance of communities of coping. Korczynski observes that female participants were more likely to receive negative or abusive behaviour from service users. Additionally, participants perceived those responsible for abusive language and behaviour to be predominantly male. Korczynski (2003, p. 67) maintains that it is therefore 'not surprising' that 'communities of coping' are 'female dominated'. Lewis (2005) offers additional insight on the significance of gender in 'communities of coping' in her analysis of collective emotion management among neonatal nurses. Returning to her gendered reading of Bolton's typology of emotion management, Lewis (2005, p. 579) observes that communities of coping are typically located in 'off-stage arenas', as the masculine characteristics of professional feeling rules stipulate that collective emotion management is not acceptable in public areas. 'Communities of coping' thus convene in private

settings, 'where feminine philanthropic norms prevail', with workers 'giving the 'gift' of emotional support to each other on a reciprocal basis' (Lewis, 2005, p. 579). Lewis (2005, p. 577) further asserts that communities of coping provide 'the emotional support required to maintain a professional work identity in an emotionally challenging working environment', as they provide workers with a space where it is safe to behave unprofessionally, if only for a moment.

3.2.4 Managing and Making Sense of Emotions at Work: Knight's Emotional Resources

More recent work by Knight (2014) offers further insight into emotion management and performance within workplaces. Based on research with 28 probation practitioners working with high-risk offenders in the United Kingdom, Knight (2014, p. 186) observes a 'preponderance of negative emotions' caused by their experiences at work. In the absence of training to assist them in managing and making sense of these emotions, participants utilised a variety of professional and personal outlets to deal with both positive and negative events at work. Knight describes these networks of relationships and activities as 'emotional resources', a term that invokes Bourdieu's (1980) conceptual framework of social capital to explore sources of support that facilitate the maintenance of emotional wellbeing in the workplace. She eschews the term 'capital' in favour of 'resource', seeking to distance her arguments from the focus on organisational exploitation in the extant literature on emotional capital (Zembylas, 2007; Theodosius, 2008). Instead she explores the accumulation and depletion of emotional support through events and relationships in professional and personal realms.

Knight (2014, p. 173) describes how staff employ a range of strategies to 'counteract the silence' imposed by organisational and professional feeling rules. Emotional resources, she suggests, can arise from both formal and informal sources, and may include, line management supervision, debriefing, counselling, 'letting off steam' with colleagues, reflective practice and support at home. Organisational priorities play a significant role in the availability and nature of emotional resources, with Knight underlining the attitudes of line management as particularly formative in this context. Those that ignore the 'emotional and vulnerable underside of the working culture' diminish organisational emotional resources for their staff, pushing them to seek out informal peer support which may include collective disparaging of the organisation's ability to appreciate the emotional impact of their work (Knight, 2014, p. 167). Knight (2014, p. 193) convincingly argues for 'safe emotional spaces' within criminal justice organisations, suggesting that an organisational commitment to supportive emotional resources may transform the feeling rules of criminal justice practice, emphasising emotional engagement over detachment.

3.3 Extant Literature on Emotion Management in the Workplace

The following sections present a discussion of the extant literature on the experience of engaging in emotion management and emotional labour in the workplace. As the current study aims to explore prison officers' emotional responses to prisoner deaths, it is useful to consider existing scholarship on emotionality in prison officer work. Following this, literature concerning emotion management in the medical, social care and emergency services professions will also be analysed.

3.3.1 The Management and Performance of Emotion in Prison Work

This section explores existing research on emotion management and performance in prison work. It commences with a discussion of the prison as an emotional environment, before moving to consider extant studies of emotion management in prison work. Following this, gender, humour and the impact of emotion work on officers' personal lives will be examined.

3.3.1.1 The Prison as an Emotional Setting

The emotional climate of prisons remained unexplored within prison sociology for many years, with little acknowledge of the rich and varied emotional engagement that occurs within the walls of these institutions (Crawley, 2004a). Moreover, as Crawley (2000, p. 153) observes, when acknowledged, emotion was largely discussed in the context of major operational incidents and the negative emotions that precede them, with 'one-dimensional, rather tabloid descriptions' of emotional expression in prison prevailing in earlier research. Recent years have seen authors such as Crawley (2004a, 2004b), Liebling (2004), Arnold (2005), Tracy (2005), Nylander et al. (2011) and Crewe et al. (2014) begin to offer broader explorations of emotion in prisons and prison work, advancing understandings of prisons as emotional arenas and providing insight into the role and significance of emotion in day-to-day prison life.

Crawley (2004b) asserts that prisons are sites of rich and varied emotional performance and engagement. She points to the degree of domesticity in the prison environment, observing that in prisons, just as in the home, staff and prisoners spend long periods of

time together in intimate and domestic settings, and as such, are 'drawn into emotional engagement with each other' (Crawley, 2004b, p. 415). Citing a number of reasons why prions are particularly emotional places, Crawley (2004a) highlights their function as sites of captivity, the emotional pain caused by imprisonment, the infantilisation of prisoners through strict regimes, and the feelings of powerlessness experienced by both prisoners and their captors, as significant to emotionality in prison. Additionally, Liebling (2004, p. 420) argues that the 'emotional tone' of a prison can differ significantly between institutions, as the emotional climate of each prison is influenced by a number of different, and often competing, forces, including staff cultures, management styles, the prisoner population and 'the collective memory of the institution'. Recent work by Crewe et al. (2014, p. 59) underlines the importance of robust explorations of emotion in studies of prison life, with prisons observed to be 'complex and spatially differentiated emotional domains', wherein traditional 'backstage' or private spaces may become sites of public emotion performance.

3.3.1.2 Emotion Management in Prison Officer Work

A number of explorations of emotion management in prison work are found within the prison work literature. This scholarship primarily employs the earlier concepts of Goffman and Hochschild, with the work of Bolton, Korczynski and Knight yet to find influence in studies of the emotional texture of prison work. Among these analyses, Crawley's (2004a) ethnographic study of prison officers' working lives and cultures in England provides the most comprehensive exploration of emotion management in prison officer work. Drawing upon both Hochschild's (1983) emotional labour concept and Goffman's (1959) work on dramaturgy and impression management, she observes:

Clearly, to manage one's emotions in order to give a social audience (whether it be prisoners or colleagues) the impression that one is emotionally unaffected by specific attitudes, behaviours and/or settings is to engage in impression management. Thus in the prison setting … emotion management and impression management are inextricably intertwined. Time and time again, officers commented on the need to 'put on an act', and on the importance of masking how they really feel. (Crawley, 2004a, p. 141)

Crawley (2004b, p. 411) argues that working in prisons therefore demands 'a performative attitude', wherein officers are required to consciously engage in emotion work. The obligation to manage emotions while working as a prison officer is an unspoken part of the job description, with DiIulio (1987, p. 169) highlighting the expectation that officers will keep their emotions under tight control to enable them 'deal coolly and dispassionately' with their work at all times. Successful emotion management is additionally important to officers' relationships with colleagues and prisoners, prisoners' quality of life, the efficacy of prison policy and practice (Crawley, 2004b).

Crawley (2004b) suggests that emotion management in prison work has two dimensions; officers must manage their own emotions while also dealing, on a daily basis, with prisoners' emotions. While many officers believe themselves to be confident in tackling prisoners' anger, Crawley (2004b, p. 415) notes that the ability to handle more sensitive emotions can vary significantly, with many officers feeling 'ill-equipped to deal with emotions that require a tender and patient response'. She maintains that officers are inept at tackling situations that call for empathy and sympathy with prisoners, arguing that officers are socialised at induction stage to be wary of emotional engagement with prisoners and that officer culture is characterised by mistrust and suspicion of the inmate population. Officers thus view emotional engagement with prisoners with unease, and are keenly aware of the 'emotional danger inherent in developing empathy with prisoners'

(Lindahl, 2011, p. 24). Lindahl (2011, p. 25) describes a great degree of fear amongst officers about becoming emotionally involved with prisoners, with many believing that it 'jeopardises' their ability to maintain professional boundaries. Walker (2015) confirms this, observing that officers working in a therapeutic prison setting in England sought to balance instances of empathy with professional distance. Prison officers are also bound by institutional and professional feeling rules that caution against emotional identification with prisoners. Officers who transgress these rules risk losing their status as a trustworthy colleague and may suffer expulsion from the officer working group as a result (Crawley, 2004a).

Crawley (2004b) observes that in addition to dealing with prisoners' varying emotional states, prison officers must also face the task of managing the emotions that their experiences at work generates within them. She further explains:

> How officers feel about the work they do, and how they feel about prisoners and fellow officers has significant implications not only for the routine practices of prisons (and hence the nature and quality of imprisonment itself) but also for their relationships with fellow staff. (Crawley, 2004b, p. 415)

Drawing upon Hochschild's emotional labour thesis, Nylander et al. (2011, p. 477) observe the careful control of inappropriate emotions among Swedish prison officers, identifying the prominence of surface and deep acting in their work. The authors further note that the competing tasks of managing prisoners' diverse, and often difficult, emotions while also attempting to control their own emotional display presents a significant challenge for prison officers, often resulting in emotion strain and a 'conflict between the professional role and the more human, compassionate role' (Nylander et al., 2011, p. 477).

In addition to governing officers' emotional engagement with prisoners, institutional and professional feeling rules of prison work also place a number of constraints on how and where officers express and perform the emotions arising from their experiences at work (Crawley, 2004a). With regard to the areas where prison officers express emotion, both Crawley (2004a) and Nylander et al. (2011) acknowledge the architecture of the prison as significant in affecting the emotional tone of officers' exchanges with one another. Crawley (2004a, p. 148) asserts that prisons have 'emotional zones' – places and settings within the prison that 'become understood in terms of particular emotions'. Similarly, both Crewe (2009) and Nylander et al. (2011) observe the significance of 'backstage' areas in prison officer work, wherein prison officers can perform emotions among colleagues. Crawley (2004a) notes that some emotions are more acceptable to express than others however, describing displays of anger, frustration and resentment as tolerable, while admissions of anxiety or fear remain taboo. These feeling rules have operated to create a cultural norm whereby it is unacceptable to express fear or anxiety about prison work, with both Crawley (2004a) and Arnold (2005) highlighting officers' reluctance to acknowledge or articulate such emotions. Crawley (2004a, p. 136) further explains that officers perceived a disclosure of distress as akin to 'an admission of mental weakness', with many officers fearing the acquisition of 'a spoiled identity'.

3.3.1.3 Masculine Cultural Expectations in Prison Officer Emotion Management

Gender is additionally significant in prison officer emotion management. In addition to institutional and professional feeling rules, officers must contend with a well-established expectation to embody traditional masculine characteristics, including being 'courageous,

resilient, authoritative and fearless in all situations' (Crawley, 2004a, p. 132). Accordingly, expectations of bravado often prohibit 'the acknowledgement of adverse reactions', such as fear or anxiety (Snow and McHugh, 2002, p. 151). Crawley (2004a, p. 36) notes the cultural obligation on male officers in particular to actively manage any emotions perceived as non-masculine, and the ensuing 'steam roller' effect on such emotions. Female officers are also expected to conform to cultural expectations of masculine 'emotional fortitude' (Crewe, 2006, p. 398). In this context, Crawley (2004a, p. 133) observes that while some female officers accept the masculine norms governing emotional expression and submit to them in an attempt to 'dismantle female stereotypes' of women as sensitive and passive, others choose to employ 'traditionally female' emotional behaviour in their interactions with both colleagues and prisoners.

3.3.1.4 The Significance of Humour in Prison Work

Arnold (2016, p. 277) describes prison officer humour as 'multifarious, nuanced and instrumental', noting that although it takes many forms, such as joke telling, teasing, storytelling and pranks, these are typically united in their black or dark nature. As Crawley (2004a, p. 44) observes, humour functions as 'a strategy for conveying, disguising and managing emotion' among prison officers. It also serves an integrative function for new recruits who must 'learn to banter' (Crawley, 2004a, p. 85). Collective humour provides an outlet for officers to safely unload or neutralise any culturally inappropriate emotions that arise, particularly in the aftermath of traumatic or shocking events (Crawley, 2004b). Moreover, it allows officers to project an unaffected and hardened image to colleagues (Arnold, 2005). Drawing on research with Danish prison staff, Nielsen (2011) argues that humorous dialogues may also facilitate the safe

articulation of emotions such as hostility or anger, particularly in situations where officer solidarity and cohesion would otherwise be required.

3.3.1.5 'Taking it Home': Prison Officers' Emotion Management in Their Home Lives

In addition to contending with continued engagement in emotional labour arising from their work, prison officers must move between the emotional demands of the prison and those of their home lives. For prison officers, the line between the prison and the home can regularly become blurred (Lambert et al., 2015), often affecting their relationships with their partners and children (Kauffman, 1988; Crawley, 2002). In her research with spouses and children of prison officers, Crawley (2002) observed that officers were likely to adopt the same demeanour and tone used in the prison setting with their children. She further advises that this behaviour can be particularly prevalent among officers who work with young offenders.

Crawley (2004a, p. 234) notes that officers 'differ markedly' in terms of the extent to which they manage the emotions generated by their work at home and seek support from family members, with some choosing to actively seek support from loved ones while others endeavour to manage the emotions generated by their work in private. Those that rely on spouse and other family members for support may find that their emotional experiences at work will 'spill over into the home' (Crawley, 2002, p. 278; Lambert et al., 2015), altering their perspectives and behaviour in their personal lives (Kauffman, 1988). While 'prison spill-over' (Crawley, 2002, p. 278) can produce deleterious effects on officers and their families, Crawley (2004a, p. 235) observes that it is the 'preferred alternative' to engagement with workplace support, known in the Prison Service of

England and Wales as Care Teams. Liebling et al. (2011) highlight the underuse of workplace support among prison staff. Crawley's (2004a, p. 137) earlier findings suggest that prison staff may be wary of the motives of those providing workplace support, in addition to being concerned about confidentiality and the impact of being 'seen as needing help' on their career prospects. Prison staff engagement with post-incident support in the aftermath of prisoner deaths in custody will be discussed in the next chapter.

3.3.2 Emotion Performance and Management in Similar Occupations

This section expands the discussion beyond the prison staff literature to consider research on emotion management in similar occupations. Aside from Crawley (2004a), whose work contains brief references to studies by Lawler (1994) and Lella and Pawluch (1988) with medical professionals, considerations of the scholarship presented below have thus far remained absent from research on emotion management in prison officer work. Echoing the approach taken in the preceding chapter, the following sections present an analysis of studies of emotion management in occupations that have been acknowledged in chapter two as culturally similar to prison officers. Existing research on emotion management in the medical and social care professions will be presented first, followed by a discussion of empirical studies of emotion management with emergency services personnel.

3.3.2.1 Healthcare and Social Care Professionals

Health and social care workers have enjoyed significant academic attention in the literature on emotion management, with the past decades seeing the emergence of a

wealth of empirical explorations of emotions in these professions. Much of this work has focused on nurses, nursing assistants and social care workers. As with the previous discussion of cultural similarities between prison officers and individuals working in these jobs, the shared domestic characteristics of work environments and job tasks are significant in facilitating comparisons between emotional labour in prison officer work and in health and social care work. Like prison officers, the roles of nurses, nursing assistants and social care workers are often dominated by domestic tasks, such as such as providing assistance with washing and personal hygiene (Lawler, 1994), clothing (Lee-Treweek, 1997), and preparing and delivering meals (Stacey, 2005). Additionally, similar to prison officer work, nursing and social care work also entails considerable face-to-face contact with patients and clients, calling for high levels of continued emotional engagement from these professionals (Ginn and Sandell, 1997; Lee-Treweek, 1997; Gray, 2010; O'Donnell, 2012).

Like prison work, professional and institutional feeling rules are significant in emotion management in the medical and social care professions. As Lewis (2005, p. 571) observes, 'notions of professionalism' dictate acceptable emotional display, and competence is associated with emotional detachment and the deft navigation of professional and institutional feeling rules. Cultural norms are additionally important in emotion management for health and social care workers. Like prison officers, social care and medical professionals learn the rules governing emotional display from experience and interactions with their colleagues, rather than through formal training and education (Smith and Kleinman, 1989; Lawler, 1994; Gray, 2010). They must therefore conform to cultural expectations when controlling their emotional display, deferring to 'a hidden

curriculum of unspoken rules and resources' for managing emotion (Smith and Kleinman, 1989, p. 56).

The expression of humour emerges as an important similarity between emotion management in prison officer work and in the medical and social care professions. Like prison officers, health and social care workers use humour and storytelling when engaging in collective emotional labour (Gray, 2010; Lee-Treweek, 1997). Lee-Treweek (1997, p. 59) points to the significance of 'backstage' areas in humorous exchanges in health and social care work, describing the prevalence of laughter and joking in 'staff room stories and myth-making'.

In addition, the challenge of managing the emotions of anxiety and fear arising from interactions with individuals in their charge is not isolated to those working in the prison system. Kauffman (1988) and Arnold (2005) acknowledge prison officers' heightened awareness of the ever-present threat of major incidents, such as deaths and riots, as well as the possibility of physical and verbal abuse from prisoners. Moreover, Arnold (2005) notes officers' reticence to acknowledge their emotional responses to these anticipated incidents, and a prohibition against disclosures of anxiety and fear. Similarly, studies of health and social care workers reveal the threat and experience of distressing incidents and abuse from patients or clients as a particular stressor in emotion management, with workers suffering ongoing anxiety and seeking to ensure mental and emotional readiness for future events (Balloch et al., 1998; Goodridge et al., 1996; O'Donnell, 2012). Again, there is a 'heavy emphasis' placed on the need to maintain detachment at all times, so as to enable staff to perform their duties (Lewis, 2005, p. 576; Keogh and Byrne, 2016).

3.3.2.2 Emergency Services Professionals

While the literature on emotionality in the health and social care professions offers a wealth of insight into experiences of emotion management, it is worthwhile to also consider academic explorations of emotion among emergency services personnel, such as police officers, firefighters and paramedics. Once again, similarities emerge between the feeling rules governing emotional display in prison work and emergency work, particularly in the context of the protective function of emotional detachment. Tracy and Tracy (1998) highlight the priority placed on detachment and professionalism in emergency services work. For police officers, the value placed on emotional detachment is particularly high (Martin, 1999; Schaible and Gecas, 2010). In this context, Pogrebin and Poole (1995) observe that emotional detachment is seen as a vital characteristic of a good police officer, explaining that police will perceive a colleague who displays too much anger, sympathy or any other emotion in dealing with tragedy or danger as weak and unable to withstand the pressures of police work. Maintaining emotional detachment can be a troublesome task however; Schaible and Gecas (2010) acknowledge that many police officers find it difficult to remain emotionally distant when responding to tragic incidents. For firefighters, the challenge of emotional detachment does not lie in complete retreat from any emotional display, but rather in maintaining 'a suitable level of emotional intensity' (Scott and Myers, 2005, p. 75).

In addition, the extant literature on emotionality in the frontline and emergency services professions highlights a similar challenge in emotion management to that faced by prison officers as described by Crawley (2004b). Like prison officers, the nature of emergency services workers' roles requires that they not only temper their own emotional display,

but also manage the emotional response of the individuals and groups with which they come into contact (Tracy and Tracy, 1998; Martin, 1999). Scott and Myers (2005) describe this as a challenging aspect of emotion management in emergency and frontline work, particularly as much of this emotion work takes place in highly stressful situations, usually at the scene of an incident and with individuals or groups in the midst of distress or tragedy. Moreover, in their study of 911 call takers, Tracy and Tracy (1998) additionally observe that continued exposure to traumatic events, such as robberies, domestic violence, and deaths, appeared to cause particular anxiety for workers, with many fearful of what the next event would hold.

As is the case with prison officers, humour is a strong theme in the existing research on emotion management in frontline and emergency services work. Humorous chat and storytelling are a collective engagement, with workers swapping jokes and stories about their experiences to aid in emotion management (Tracy and Tracy, 1998). Humour is of particular significance when dealing with traumatic events as it allows frontline and emergency services workers 'to vent feelings, avoid the impression of vulnerability, and lessen the harshness of the tragic experience' (Martin, 1999, p. 123). Similar to prison officers, humour, storytelling and collective emotional management take place out of sight of management and clients in 'backstage interactions in the locker room and offstage informal activities' (Martin, 1999, p. 116). A more comprehensive discussion of the role of humour in emergency services workers' encounters with death is presented in the next chapter.

3.3.2.3 Emotion Management in Prison Work and Medical, Social and Emergency Work: An Important Difference

While prison staff and medical, social care, frontline and emergency services workers share approaches to emotion management, it is important to highlight an important difference between emotion in prison work and emotion in these other professions. As Crawley (2004b) observes, this distinction lies in the primary focus of these professions; medical, social and emergency services are primarily concerned with the delivery of care, while prison officer work centres on control and custody. Consequently, Crawley (2004b, p. 418) argues, emotion management in health, social and emergency services work is, 'primarily carried out in the context of alleviating the distress of worthy individuals'. Patients and clients are generally perceived as 'blameless' and 'seen as worthy of sympathy and compassion' (Crawley, 2004b, p. 418). On this, Gray (2010, p. 352) notes in his exploration of emotional labour in nursing that nurses accepted the important role of emotional engagement with patients in their duties, remarking that staff saw emotional labour with patients as 'part and parcel of the normal routine of nursing'. Emotional engagement with patients and clients is seen as having practical benefits, facilitating smooth completion of tasks and collection of important information, such as medical histories and incident locations (Tracy and Tracy, 1998; Lewis, 2005; Scott and Myers, 2005; Gray, 2010).

In contrast, the 'structured conflict' (Jacobs and Kraft, 1978, p. 305) embedded in staff-prisoner relationships presents challenges for officers when dealing with emotions arising from their contact with prisoners (Crawley, 2004b). Emotional engagement with prisoners is acknowledged as an important part of prison officer work, and as such, the

experience of emotions such as empathy and sympathy in interactions with prisoners is not uncommon (Arnold, 2005; Crawley, 2004a). Such emotions are troublesome however, as they arise from interactions with individuals who are 'often perceived as unworthy of such emotions', and as a result, officers must also manage additional feelings of guilt, frustration, anger and disgust (Crawley, 2004b, p. 418).

3.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter broadens the theoretical basis of the current study to include the extant theoretical literature on the management and performance of emotion in the workplace. It began with a comprehensive discussion of Hochschild's influential emotional labour thesis, before moving to consider more recent concepts within this arena, including Bolton's typology of emotion management and Korczynski's work on 'communities of coping'. Next, existing accounts of emotion management in prison work were analysed, with additional discussion of gender, humour and the impact of emotion management on officers' personal lives. Finally, the chapter closed with a review of studies of emotion management among professionals that have been acknowledged in the previous chapter as sharing cultural similarities to prison personnel. The next chapter analyses existing scholarship on the experiences of professionals who routinely deal with death.

CHAPTER FOUR

EMPIRICAL ACCOUNTS OF THE EXPERIENCE OF ENCOUNTERING DEATH IN AN OCCUPATIONAL SETTING

4.1 Introduction

As the current study aims to explore Irish prison staff experiences of deaths in custody, it is necessary to review extant literature on encountering death in an occupational setting, both within and beyond the prison walls. This chapter presents an analytical review of this scholarship. It commences with an evaluation of the extant literature on prison officers' experiences of deaths in custody, highlighting the limitations within this scholarship. This discussion also explores key themes within existing research on prison staff encounters with prisoners' deaths: the internal felt emotions of distress and anxiety, the significance of humour in collective emotion management and engagement with post-incident support. As the literature on prison staff experiences of deaths in custody remains limited, it is worthwhile to once again broaden the literature base to include a discussion of encounters with death in the medical, social and emergency services professions. Notable emergent themes include humour, language, storytelling and remembrance, emotional involvement and detachment, and the psychological impact of experiencing a death at work. The remainder of the chapter is devoted to an exploration of these themes.

4.2 Extant Literature on Prison Staff Experiences of Deaths in Custody

This section explores the existing literature on prison staff encounters with prisoner deaths in custody. It begins with an overview of the extant scholarship in this arena, before moving to consider themes of distress and anxiety, humour and post-incident support.

4.2.1 Existing Accounts of Prison Staff Experiences of Dealing with Inmate Fatalities

While the international literature on prison officers' working lives and perceptions of their roles continues to develop, empirical accounts of officers' experiences of deaths in custody remain scant. Moreover, the few existing examinations of officers' accounts of inmate fatalities have tended to focus on self-inflicted deaths only. Liebling (1992) considers prison officers' experiences of prison suicide, devoting a chapter of her study of prisoner suicide to a discussion of prison staff views on suicide and self-injury in prison. Informed by interviews with 80 prison staff, her findings illuminate officers' perceptions regarding suicide prevention, and offer insight regarding their views on the causes of prisoner suicide, which were primarily seen as personal and individual, rather than situational. Brief discussion of officers' encounters with prisoner suicide can also be found in Crawley's (2004a) study of the working lives of English prison staff. Here, Crawley offers brief observations regarding emotion management in the aftermath of prisoner suicides. Officers' experiences of suicide and self-harm in prison are also briefly addressed by Arnold (2005) in a discussion of how prison staff deal with serious incidents. More fleeting references to the impact of prison suicide on staff are also found in Liebling's (2007) observations on suicide prevention in prison and Liebling and Tait's (2006) discussion of the role of staff-prisoner relationships in suicide prevention.

While these works enhance understanding of officers' experience of self-inflicted deaths in custody, each of these examinations of the impact of prisoner suicide are quite brief, constituting components of much broader studies. Liebling's exploration of staff perspectives forms part of a larger study of self-inflicted deaths and injury in prisons generally, while Crawley's consideration of the impact of prisoner suicides on officers is presented as part of a larger chapter on conflict in prisons in her comprehensive examination of the working lives of prison officers. Arnold's (2005) discussion of officers' reactions to prisoner suicide is a brief pause in a chapter on the effects of prison work. Additionally, limited considerations of prison staff are found in research on prison homicides. Moreover, this discussion has tended to focus on staff-related factors, rather than staff experiences of these incidents. Reisig (2002) argues that staff morale may affect rates of prison homicides, while Cunningham et al. (2010) highlight prisoners' history of violence against staff as a relevant factor in ascertaining prisoners' motivations for prison homicides.

Few studies exist that exclusively examine the topic of prison officers' experiences of deaths in custody. Once again, the focus remains solely on self-inflicted deaths. Borrill et al. (2004) and Wright et al. (2006) outline findings from a mixed methods study with 49 prison staff who experienced a self-inflicted death in custody in England and Wales. Semi-structured interviews and psychometric scales were deployed to examine the impact of prisoner suicide on prison staff. Borrill et al. (2004) report that approximately half of the sample reported distress, tearfulness or shock as their reactions to the incident. Most participants remained in work after the death, with some noting that they preferred to do so. While some were mindful of staffing resources, the authors note that many participants preferred to stay in work for 'the benefits of being busy and receiving peer support and

companionship' (Borrill et al., 2004, p. 3). A later article analysing data from same cohort by Wright et al. (2006) focuses on trauma symptoms arising from participants' encounters with prisoner suicides. The authors identify a 36.7 per cent incidence rate of post-traumatic stress disorder among participants. Those with post-traumatic stress symptoms were found to be reticent to seek post-incident support. The authors also observe prior experience of suicide to be a direct mediator of the impact of encountering a self-inflicted death among the total sample.

Ludlow et al. (2015) offer more recent insight into staff encounters with prisoner suicides in a study commissioned by the Harris Review[1] (2015). Based on 47 interviews, four staff focus groups and participant observation, this research primarily examines staff experiences and views on the identification and management of suicide risk. Staff were found to view suicide risk as complex and unpredictable, preferring to rely on staff-prisoner relationships and 'on the job' experience or 'jail craft' rather than training when identifying 'warning signs' and 'situational triggers' of suicide (Ludlow et al., 2015, p. 24). Additionally, the authors briefly explore the impact of prisoner suicides at institutional and individual levels. On this, Ludlow et al. (2015, p. 57) highlight the effects of suicides on collective practice, observing that some cases may act as 'catalysts for reflection' while others cause as 'defensive professional and institutional reorientation'. The discussion of individual responses to prisoner suicides underlines the 'relational challenges' of encountering deceased prisoners' families, particularly at inquests (Ludlow et al., 2015, p. 60). There is also fleeting reference to the long-term aftermath of deaths

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[1] An independent review into self-inflicted deaths of 18-24 year olds in National Offender Management Service custody in England and Wales. Commencing in April 2014, the Harris Review examined 87 cases between April 2007 and December 2013.

in custody, wherein inquests and the time leading up to them are acknowledged as 'difficult periods' for staff (Ludlow et al., 2015, p. 61).

4.2.2 The Impact of Prison Deaths: Distress, Anxiety and Loss

Distress, anxiety and feelings of loss emerge as prominent themes within the existing scholarship on prison staff encounters with prisoner deaths. Crawley (2004a, p. 156) observes the sadness and distress reported by some who experienced a self-inflicted death, noting that one officer remarked on the 'sense of failure' in the aftermath of prisoner suicides. Passing acknowledgements of distress caused by prisoner suicide are also found in Liebling and Tait (2006, p. 117), who describe prisoner suicides as 'emotionally traumatic' for staff, and Liebling (2007, p. 424) wherein suicides are acknowledged to 'deeply distress' prison officers. The effects of post-incident distress are enduring; Borrill et al. (2004) note the prevalence of flashbacks and resurgences of distress among staff who dealt with a prisoner suicide. Similarly, Wright et al. (2006) argue that exposure to prisoner suicide puts officers at risk of experiencing traumatic stress and stress-related illnesses.

Additionally, encounters with prisoner suicides may cause heightened awareness and anxiety about future incidents (Borrill et al., 2004; Arnold, 2005). Arnold (2005, p. 411) observes officers as maintaining a 'high level of psychological preparedness' in the aftermath of prisoner suicide. The reason for this, Arnold asserts, is that officers believe previous experience of such an event to be unhelpful in future incidents, not only because the nature of these incidents can be unpredictable, but also because their own reaction, and that of prisoners and their colleagues, are also unknown variables. Borrill et al. (2004)

similarly observe that officers may become preoccupied with the unending danger of a death in custody occurring, continually expecting or looking out for the next incident. Both studies are silent as to the long-term effect of this preoccupation on staff practice and sensibilities regarding deaths in custody.

Prison officers may also experience feelings of loss and bereavement in the aftermath of prisoner deaths (Lancaster, 2001; Snow and McHugh, 2002). In this context, the nature of an officer's relationship with a deceased prisoner is significant. Crawley (2004a) observes that officers who maintained a good relationship with a deceased prisoner reported becoming upset upon discovering that the prisoner had taken their own life. Additionally, although officers must manage their emotional display in accordance with feeling rules, emotions such as sympathy are not completely forbidden. Rather, acceptability hinges on differences of degree. As Crawley (2004a, p. 148) observes, while an officer may be permitted to 'express dismay' at the suicide of a prisoner, it is less acceptable to 'cry openly after a prison death'.

Recognition of distress and anxiety in the long-term aftermath of prisoner suicides is confined to discussions of officers' attendance at inquests. Liebling (1992, p. 225) highlights the distress caused by participation in the inquest process, observing that officers' experiences of giving evidence 'in the dock' at inquests can leave them feeling exposed and defensive. Similarly, Borrill et al. (2004) report that the experience of answering questions at an inquest in the presence of the deceased prisoner's family was a source of anxiety for many in their cohort. Ludlow et al. (2015) additionally acknowledge officers' trepidation regarding the inquest process, noting that for many,

fear of giving evidence in front of lawyers and prisoners' families played a significant role in directing their work with prisoners identified as at risk of suicide or self-injury.

4.2.3 The Significance of Humour in Prison Staff Responses to Prisoner Deaths

While much of the discussion of the emotional texture of managing a death in custody focuses on the deleterious effects of involvement in such incidents, a small number of studies offer insight into the role of humour in shaping collective emotion management among prison staff in the aftermath of prisoner deaths. Crawley (2004a) observes that prison officers utilise black humour in the aftermath of tragic or shocking events, noting that officers may sometimes laugh and joke while dealing with prisoners' bodies. This joking may be particularly dark:

> When a suicide occurs, prison officers initially respond in very different ways. Some officers may laugh and joke about what has happened (the 'That's one less for dinner'/ 'There's an extra portion of chips going spare now'/ 'Hope it's not stew on the menu today' approach). (Crawley, 2004a, p. 157)

These humorous exchanges, she argues, are 'palliative', offering officers a culturally acceptable medium through which they can safely unload or neutralise any inappropriate emotions caused by events at work (Crawley, 2004a, p. 44). Similarly, in their exploration of the use of humour among prison staff, firefighters and emergency services telephone operators, Tracy et al. (2006) maintain that post-incident collective humour serves to reframe staff interpretations of tragic incidents such as deaths. As one participant in their study remarks, 'humour is necessary to get it out there and feel better about it' (Tracy et al., 2006, p. 300). In a recent chapter evaluating extant scholarship on prison officer culture, Arnold (2016, p. 278) similarly observes the function of humour as a 'coping mechanism' in the aftermath of serious incidents such as prisoner suicides.

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4.2.4 Post-incident Support for Prison Staff Who Encounter Prisoner Deaths

The limited extant literature on prison staff experiences of deaths in custody additionally provides some insight on staff engagement with post-incident support provided by the prison authorities. In their study of the impact of prisoner suicides on prison staff, Borrill et al. (2004) report that the majority of their cohort had some contact with the Staff Care Team in the aftermath of the incident. A small number of participants also attended post-incident debriefing, finding it helpful to speak about their experiences and ask questions regarding their decisions and practice during the response to prisoners' death. While most of those who disclosed significant engagement with staff support were positive about their experiences, some prison staff had reservations about engaging with support, which primarily arose from concerns about confidentiality. Ludlow et al. (2015) observe a similar perspective among prison staff in their study staff experiences of self-inflicted deaths. In contrast with the findings of Borrill et al. however, Ludlow et al. note that many staff reported limited or no engagement with post-incident support, questioning the abilities of Care Teams to provide adequate support for staff who experience prisoner suicides. Instead, staff preferred to find support from trusted colleagues (Ludlow et al., 2015). Crawley (2004a) observes similar wariness and resentment of Care Teams among some officers in her study, explaining that officers preferred to talk to their spouses about their encounters with prisoner suicide. Others, she explains, adopted a 'This is a prison, he's a prisoner, so what?' approach in the aftermath of prisoner suicides (Crawley, 2004a, p. 157).

Overall, participants in Borrill et al. (2004), Crawley (2004a) and Ludlow et al. (2015) were uncomfortable with the peer led nature of Care Teams, mistrusting their motivations and capacity to safeguard confidentiality. In addition, both Borrill et al. (2004) and Ludlow et al. (2015) report that some participants called for the provision of independent support. These findings highlight the necessity of further research on staff experiences and perspectives on staff support following encounters with deaths in custody.

4.3 Emergent Themes in Extant Research on Encounters with Death in Similar Occupations

The following sections present a discussion of the extant literature on the experience of dealing with deaths among medical, social and emergency services personnel. As the scholarship on prison staff experiences of prisoner deaths remains limited, it is worthwhile to once again broaden the literature base to include a discussion of encounters with death in other occupations. Following the similarities between prison work and these professionals highlighted in chapters two and three, a comprehensive review of existing research on the experience of dealing with death in these professions was undertaken. Death work, the process of dealing with death in a professional context, is a routine task for these occupational groups and, accordingly, a diverse body of literature exists on encounters with death in these occupations (Henry, 2004). Humour, language, storytelling and remembrance, emotional involvement and detachment, and the psychological impacts of experiencing fatalities emerged as prominent themes within this literature. These themes will be discussed below.

4.3.1 Humour

Humour emerges as a common response to dealing with death throughout the literature on the experience of encountering fatalities in medical, social and emergency services work. Like prison officers, these workers turn to humour to neutralise the impact of encountering deaths. In her study of accident and emergency departments at English hospitals, Scott (2007, p. 350) observes that 'humour lightens the air', preventing those in emergency rooms from seeing only 'doom and gloom'. Additionally, research emphasises the significance of humour in post-incident coping among emergency services personnel (Tangherlini, 2000; Haslam and Mallon, 2003; Rowe and Regehr, 2010). Collective humour is similarly described as a 'form of escape' for nursing staff when dealing with death (Hopkinson et al., 2005, p. 128), helping to manage stress and prevent burnout (Keller, 1990). Humour is also acknowledged as significant in medical education, with two earlier studies of medical students' contact with death during clinical education positing that humour also helps to assuage students' anxieties about performing procedures on cadavers (Lella and Pawluch, 1988; Smith and Kleinman, 1989). Additionally, humour is noted to have a reparative effect among police who encounter death (Martin, 1999; Charman, 2013). Mirroring Crawley's observations regarding the palliative effect of humour in prison work, Martin (1999, p. 123) observes that police use humour to 'lessen the harshness' of fatalities and other tragic experiences, using collective joking and laughter as a 'tension reliever'.

Humour also aids these professionals in maintaining control of their emotional display when dealing with a death and its immediate aftermath. Smith and Kleinman (1989) observe that medical students encountering dying patients and dead bodies during their clinical education avoid becoming unnerved by contact with death by redefining their

experiences as humorous. The authors argue that an approach grounded in humour offers reassurance to medical students, instilling self-belief that they can handle frequent encounters with death. Humour also mitigates the existential problems caused by frequent contact with death, which may cause 'fears regarding mortality, decay and decomposition' (Scott, 2007, p. 360). Scott (2007, 2013) asserts that humour is the most common and accessible strategy for maintaining ontological security in the face of this existential crisis, allowing workers to feel more confident in their contact with death. While expressions of sadness or anger may also help to ease fears about mortality raised by frequent encounters with death (Henry, 2004), humour remains the most culturally palatable response to such fears in the workplace setting (Palmer, 1983; Scott, 2007; Rowe and Regehr, 2010).

Much of the humour employed by these professionals is directed at the body of the deceased. In her study of nurses' interactions with patients' bodies, Lawler (1994, p. 190) describes how nurses engage in humorous exchanges when handling bodies after death and exchange 'dead body stories'. Incidents such as a body groaning as it is turned or moved are noted as inciting uncontrollable laughter. Similarly, Scott (2007) points to the body as the focus of humour among emergency services personnel. She highlights participants' stories of stifled laughter in morgues and jokes about unusual deaths, describing this as 'cadaver rhetoric' (Scott, 2007, p. 357). The cause of death can also provide vast material for jokes and humorous exchanges. Scott asserts that emergency workers responding to a fatality will often collectively seek to extract humour from the nature of the death, searching for a humorous 'moral to the story' (2007, p. 355).

As in prison work, much of the humour in medical, social and emergency services work is expressed within the occupational group only (Smith and Kleinman, 1989; Scott, 2007). This is particularly important when death is the topic of humorous exchanges, motivated by an awareness that such black or dark humour will not be easily understood by 'outsiders' (Young, 1995; van Wormer and Boes, 1997; Scott, 2007; Rowe and Regehr, 2010). The sharing of jokes about 'matters that are considered sacred to others' (Palmer, 1983, p. 84) forges strong bonds between workers, solidifying camaraderie and a strong occupational culture (Martin, 1999; Scott, 2007). Moreover, as Young (1995) observes, shared laughter and joking between colleagues maintains group solidarity, ensuring that colleagues work cohesively when dealing with fatalities.

4.3.2 Language

Language is additionally significant in shaping responses to death in medical, social and emergency services settings. Like humour, particular linguistic styles are adopted to aid in post-incident coping. References to the use of slang terms and colourful, and sometimes offensive, language are prominent within the literature, particularly among medical and emergency services personnel. As Coombs et al. (1993) observe, slang terms are utilised to ease any anxieties caused by encountering death, thus providing a safe medium through which workers can neutralise any distress. Moreover, slang and derogatory language depersonalises the deceased, facilitating detachment and distance (Fox et al., 2003). Palmer (1983, p. 85) highlights the role of slang in emergency response work, describing paramedics' use of codes and terms to characterise a fatality, such as 'greenie', a term used to identify a body that is in an advanced state of decomposition, and 'crispy critter', a code for a body that has received significant burn injuries. Scott (2007, p. 352) also

identifies the significance of slang as part of the 'unique language of sudden deathwork', observing the presence of a similar linguistic adaptation among emergency personnel in her research, pointing to the use of terms such as 'stiff' or 'gonner'. Crawley (2004a, p. 92) notes a similar colourful and offensive linguistic style among prison officers, highlighting their use of slang terms such as 'scumbags' and 'muppets' to describe prisoners.

Rowe and Regehr (2010) suggest that staff are aware of the offensive nature of their talk and, as such, restrict their use of derogatory codes and terms to the occupational group. Again, as is the case with humour, this insularity and exclusivity fosters solidarity within the occupational group (Fox et al., 2003). The use of this language thus continues in workers' encounters with death, and its role in easing anxiety and distress and fostering camaraderie remains highly prized (Palmer, 1983).

4.3.3 Storytelling, Remembrance and Memorialisation

Storytelling, remembrance and memorialisation additionally emerge as significant within the literature on death work in medical, social and emergency services work. Like humour, storytelling aids post-incident coping, helping to reduce distress and anxiety about the inevitability of death (Tracy and Tracy, 1998; Dempster, 2012). Stories tend focus on the response to the death, emphasising the successful completion of duties and notably courageous acts (Dempster, 2012). Most intriguingly, narratives of competence and heroism in the face of death are both downplayed and highlighted, depending on the tone of the story or remembrance. In his exploration of storytelling in paramedic work,

Tangherlini (2000, p. 43) identifies a 'self-deprecatory' tradition among paramedics when informally recounting their role in emergency responses:

> Rather than play into media presentations of them as silent heroes 'just doin' our job', paramedics tend to present themselves in their stories as anti-heroes, always ready with a sardonic quip in even the most horrific situations.

Times of solemn remembrance appear to yield a different approach however, as Dempster (2012) observes in his study of residential social care workers' responses to client deaths. Dempster (2012, p. 232) describes more serious and contemplative collective acts of memorialisation as peppered with an 'heroic carer/hard worker narrative' and tales of going the 'extra mile' for the deceased client. Similarly, Martin (1999) identifies storytelling in police work as significant in reaffirming status and competence among colleagues. Dempster additionally highlights the role of storytelling and remembrance in discharging responsibility, noting that care workers often constructed stories about a deceased client's care to positively reflect the ideals and priorities of the institution, and thus, themselves. He maintains:

> This process of collective remembering individualised the resident to the highest level, it acted as a eulogy, but more importantly it served to show that the person was well looked after and the home 'absolved' from the (blame of/stigma associated with) death. (Dempster, 2012, p. 232)

The choice to mark formally or remember a death, either privately or collectively, is also challenging. In his study of homeless sector workers' experiences of sudden deaths of service users, Lakeman (2011) observes a lack of consensus among participants about the best approach to marking deaths. Perceptions of the appropriateness of attending funerals appeared as a particularly divisive issue. Those who favoured funeral attendance, and collective memorialisation in general, indicated that participation in such events was

helpful with coping. Lakeman (2011, p. 937) additionally highlights private memorialisation, explaining that many participants reported doing 'small things', such as lighting a candle or spending a few moments in quiet remembrance.

4.3.4 Emotional Involvement and Detachment

Another prominent theme within the existing literature on medical, social and emergency services staff encounters with death relates to emotional involvement and detachment. An analytical review of this literature suggests a strong preference among these professionals for depersonalisation and emotional distance when dealing with death. Detachment in the face of traumatic events, including death, is particularly associated with professional competence (Lewis, 2005; Rowe and Regehr, 2010). Empirical accounts of these occupational groups' encounters with fatalities additionally reveal the importance of experience and socialisation in navigating the appropriate degree of involvement or detachment (Henry, 1995; Scott and Myers, 2005; Gibbins et al., 2011; Dempster, 2012; Jonas-Simpson et al., 2013).

Maintaining the appropriate degree of detachment is quite a nuanced and challenging task however, with many individuals often finding themselves becoming emotionally involved during their contact with death. Studies of nurses' encounters with dying patients offer particularly rich insights in this context, revealing a tension within nursing culture between a desire to remain committed to caring for dying patients and an awareness of the pitfalls of becoming too emotionally involved (Lewis, 2005). While the value of maintaining some degree of depersonalisation in their work with dying patients and their families appears to be strongly acknowledged within nursing culture (Hopkinson et al.,

2005; Wenzel et al., 2011), studies by Bolton (2000b) and Lewis (2005) report that nurses can experience difficulties in remaining detached in their encounters with death. Additionally, Lewis (2005) suggests that these difficulties may arise from the codification of emotional involvement with patients and families into procedures for caring for the dying or deceased. This inherent tension in nursing work generates uncertainty and liminality among nurses caring for dying patients, as the desire to maintain emotional detachment, and thus the appearance of competence, must often be abandoned in favour of some degree of involvement (Hopkinson et al., 2005).

In addition, the nature of involvement with the deceased is found to be significant in coping and continuity of performance in the aftermath of a death. In their exploration of oncology nurses' perspectives on patient deaths, Wenzel et al. (2011) note that those who developed close relationships with patients and their families reported difficulty in coping and moving on with their work. Gaffney et al. (2009) observe similar findings in their study of the impact of patient suicides on frontline mental health staff in Ireland, noting close therapeutic relationships with deceased patients as affecting adjustment and coping in the aftermath of their death.

4.3.5 Psychological Responses to the Experience of Death at Work

While participants with mental health issues, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, as a result of their experiences of responding to prisoners' deaths were excluded from the current study, it remains a worthwhile exercise to consider psychological responses to death work, which emerged as a notable theme within the extant literature on medical, social and emergency services professionals' encounters with death, particularly as

distress and anxiety were identified as prominent issues within the limited scholarship on prison staff experiences of deaths in custody, as discussed above.

4.3.5.1 Traumatic Stress and Anxiety

Traumatic stress and anxiety are acknowledged throughout the literature on medical, social and emergency services work as common psychological responses to encountering death. The nature of the death is significant in this context. Lakeman (2011, p. 933) observes that how a death is encountered makes a 'substantial difference' to how it can be dealt with, highlighting the experience of discovering a body or arriving first to the scene of a fatality as particular stressors for homeless sector professionals. In their study of emergency telephone operators, Tracy and Tracy (1998) note that calls relating to suicide or violent deaths caused significant anxiety and distress among participants. Similarly, encounters with self-inflicted deaths and homicides are acknowledged as particularly traumatic in police work (Sewell, 1994; Karlsson and Christianson, 2003; Henry, 2004).

In congruence with Arnold's (2005, p. 411) observations of a 'high level of psychological preparedness' among prison officers regarding future deaths and other incidents, Regehr et al. (2003b) identify anticipation of death as a prominent cause of anxiety and uncertainty among police officers. The authors suggest that this anxiety may arise from the occupational obligation to respond to traumatic scenes, noting that anxiety is particularly prevalent among police and emergency services personnel as they 'are called upon to run into a scene that most of us would run away from' (Regehr et al., 2003b, p. 383).

While anxiety about the potential of encountering a death in the course of work is undoubtedly a cause of distress among professionals for whom the experience of death is an occupational hazard, similar concerns arise among workers who are not occupationally obligated to attend to or handle bodies, such as the homeless sector professionals in Lakeman's (2011) research. He observes that traumatic stress and anxiety experienced as a result of exposure to the death of service user heightens workers' expectations that they will encounter a similar fatality in the future.

While much of the traumatic distress and anxiety caused by dealing with death at work arises from workers' visual and physical experience of the immediate aftermath of a fatality, participation in the subsequent formal investigative and review procedures that follow are also a significant stressor. Like prison officers, medical, social and emergency services professionals are also often obligated to contribute to internal and external investigations into deaths, such as post-mortem reviews, inquests and public inquiries. Sewell (1994) and Regehr et al. (2003b) highlight this as particularly distressing for police officers, who, in addition to contributing to public reviews of fatalities, are also responsible for criminal investigations of deaths, which often entail lengthy engagement with the facts of the death and frequent contact with the relatives of the deceased and any suspects. Public reviews and investigations also prolong the experience of traumatic stress (Regehr et al., 2003a), and may generate anxiety about humiliation or findings of culpability and diminished interest in and commitment to work (Regehr et al., 2003b).

4.3.5.2 Guilt

Guilt emerges as another prominent psychological response to the experience of death at work. Ting et al. (2006) observe that guilt may be particularly felt in cases of self-inflicted death, noting the prevalence of self-blaming language among social workers who had experienced a client suicide. Feelings of guilt in the aftermath of a death at work may also arouse doubts about professional competence and abilities (Lakeman, 2011). Additionally, in their exploration of emotion management among firefighters, Scott and Myers (2005) assert that the nature of any previous interaction with the deceased may also intensify the experience of guilt. Similarly, Tracy and Tracy (1998) highlight guilt as a common response among emergency telephone operators when dealing with a suicide call, describing participants' sentiments of guilt and self-blame in the aftermath of the emergency response.

4.3.5.3 Additional Psychological Responses to the Experience of Death at Work

Changes in sleep patterns and sleep loss additionally emerge as problematic for those experiencing traumatic stress and anxiety in the aftermath of a fatality at work (Greene, 2001; Neylan et al., 2002; Brysiewicz, 2007; Moores et al., 2007). Haslam and Mallon (2003) report incidences of insomnia and nightmares among participants in their study of traumatic stress among firefighters. Flashbacks and experiences of resurgences in distress are also common, particularly in cases of violent deaths (Greene, 2001; Haslam and Mallon, 2003). Anger is also frequently referenced, particularly in cases of self-inflicted deaths (Ting et al., 2006; Moores et al., 2007). Fullagar (2003) observes that the narrative of suicide as a 'wasted life' is implicated in a moral vocabulary about living and dying,

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with suicide sometimes viewed as wasteful, irresponsible and selfish in nature, which may prompt anger and frustration. The prevalence of avoidant behaviour and diminution of involvement and engagement is also noted (Ting et al., 2006). In this context, Lakeman (2011, p. 934) observes a tendency among homeless sector professionals to go into 'autopilot' in the aftermath of experiencing a death, noting that participants 'took solace from following procedures'.

4.4 Chapter Summary and Aims of the Current Study

This chapter presented an analytical review of extant research on the experience of encountering death in an occupational setting. Empirical accounts of medical, social and emergency services professionals' experiences of dealing with death reveal the multifarious impacts of death work experienced by these groups, in addition to the diversity of approaches to coping in the aftermath of responding to a death. These findings are utilised in the design of methodological instruments, as outlined in the next chapter.

In contrast with this robust literature, little attention has been given to deathwork in a prison setting. Moreover, while the few existing studies of prison staff encounters with prisoner suicide illuminate some aspects of staff experiences in this context, many gaps in knowledge remain. Limited insights exist regarding staff perspectives on suicide prevention, post-incident distress and anxiety, the 'palliative' (2004a, p. 44) effect of humour, officers' attendance at inquests, and staff perspectives on workplace support provision. In contrast, little is currently known about staff experiences of dealing with prisoner deaths of other causes, their emotional responses to these incidents, their experiences and perspectives on other accountability mechanisms for prisoner deaths, the impact of their encounters with deaths in custody on their practice and in their personal

lives, and their engagement with post-incident support beyond the walls of the prison. A stronger knowledge base around these issues is therefore required, informed by more comprehensive studies that fully consider staff encounters with all causes of deaths

The current study thus offers first account of staff experiences of deaths in custody that explores a range of causes of death, while also contributing to understandings of Irish prison staff and deaths in custody. Framed in an Irish context, the primary aims of this study are to explore prison staff experiences of dealing with prisoner deaths in custody, their emotional responses to these incidents and their engagement with support, both inside and outside the prison, in the aftermath of their experiences. The fulfilment of these aims is guided by the theoretical basis of the study, as outlined in chapters two and three. In chapter two, Bourdieu's (1977) theory of practice was introduced as a valuable prism for understanding prison staff sensibilities, practices and traditions. This chapter also discussed the norms and features of prison staff culture, and advocated for increased interdisciplinarity in explorations of prison work, guided by literature on medical, social and emergency services personnel. As this study aims to explore prison staff emotional responses to deaths in custody, concepts from the literature on emotion management in the workplace were considered in chapter three. Hochschild's emotional labour thesis, which has informed previous studies of the working lives of prison staff (Crawley, 2004a; Nylander et al., 2011), was discussed in addition to updated concepts from Bolton (2005) and Korczynski (2003). Additionally, Knight's (2014) recent work on staff support in criminal justice practice was identified as a useful lens for exploring prison staff engagement with and perspectives on support following their encounters with deaths in custody.

The next chapter presents the methodology that guided the fulfilment of the research aims.

CHAPTER FIVE

METHODOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology used to conduct the study. The chapter commences with an overview of the research design, including the epistemological view that guided this research. Next, the research methods are presented, with a detailed description and justification for the use of semi-structured interviews. The design of the research instruments is also outlined. Following this, a cohesive discussion of the data collection process is presented, detailing the preparatory tasks undertaken prior to data collection, the recruitment process and data collection settings and procedures. Participant demographics are also outlined. The chapter then moves to describe the data analysis phase, offering a comprehensive overview of the progression of analysis across each stage. Methodological issues are then explored, beginning with the ethical considerations relevant to the study. Following this issues regarding the quality and credibility of the data are explored, including reflexive accounts of the impact of the researcher's personal characteristics on the research process and the impact of the research experience on the researcher. Finally, the strengths and limitations of the research methodology are considered.

5.2 Research Design

As the current study seeks to uncover the experiences of prison staff in their encounters with prisoner deaths, an exploratory and descriptive design was utilised. This approach was selected with reference to the under-researched nature of the study topic (de Vaus, 2001), as well as the overall paucity of scholarship on the working lives and traditions of Irish prison staff. An exploratory and descriptive approach was additionally selected for its suitability to deep and intensive inquiry (Bryman, 2012). As de Vaus (2001, p. 2) highlights, exploratory research not only illuminates the social phenomena under research, but can also 'provoke action', suggesting new issues or avenues to be addressed in future research.

The research design was guided by a constructivist position. This approach was informed by the theoretical basis of the study, particularly the centrality of an interpretivist worldview in the extant scholarship on the working lives of prison staff (Kauffman, 1988; Crawley, 2004a; Liebling et al., 2011), the constructivist approaches to emotion management adopted by Hochschild (1983) and Bolton (2005), as well as Bourdieu's (1989, p. 14) characterisation of his theory of social practice as 'structuralist constructivism'. A constructivist approach, as Silverman (2010, p. 113) outlines, advises researchers to focus their attentions on 'how meaning gets defined by people in different contexts'. These subjective meanings are multifarious, negotiated socially and historically by individuals based on their engagement with the world (Crotty, 1998). Within constructivism, truth is a matter of shared meanings and consensus among a group of people, rather than correspondence with an objective reality (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). As Creswell (2014, p. 8) further highlights, meanings are 'not simply imprinted on

individuals but are formed through interactions with others and through historical and cultural norms that operate in individuals' lives'. Researchers can thus draw out 'the complexity of views' among their participants, interpreting how these meanings are constructed and shared among a cohort (Creswell, 2014, p. 8). Accordingly, a constructivist and interpretivist approach is valued as a route to interpreting the complexity of views among prison staff regarding prisoner deaths in custody, as well as how these views are shaped by institutional and organisational factors.

A qualitative approach was utilised, selected for its epistemological stance that emphasises gaining an understanding of the meanings that individuals attach to behaviour and experiences (Fossey et al., 2002). In keeping with the constructivist worldview of the study, qualitative methods, namely in-depth interviews, were employed as they produced data that best facilitated illumination of the complexity and nuances of meaning in participants' experiences and views in the context of prisoner deaths in custody (Bryman, 2012). A cross-sectional design was employed, wherein participants were interviewed on a single occasion. This decision was guided by the sensitive nature of the study topic.

5.3 Research Methods

This section outlines the research methods utilised in the study. In keeping with the focus of the research questions on the experiences and perspectives of participants regarding their encounters with prisoner deaths in custody, interviews were selected as the most appropriate method of exploring participants' stories about these incidents. While a multi-method approach was considered during proposal stage, the use of ethnographic or observation methods were felt to be intrusive, given the focus of the research on prisoner

deaths. In keeping with a constructionist approach, participants were assumed to 'actively create meaning' (Silverman, 2010, p. 226) during interviews. As Holstein and Gubrium (1995, p. 8) further explain:

> Constructed as active, the subject behind the respondent not only holds facts and details of experiences, but, in the very process of offering them up for response, constructively adds to, takes away from, and transforms the facts and details. The respondent can hardly 'spoil' what he or she is, in effect, subjectively creating.

One-to-one interviews were selected over focus groups, with this decision again guided by the study topic, in addition to the extant literature considered in chapters two and three, which suggests that staff may suppress or mask some feelings when in the presence of colleagues (Crawley, 2004a; Nylander et al., 2011). Participant confidentiality was another factor; one-to-one interviews would offer improved confidentiality over group settings.

5.3.1 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were identified as an appropriate method of data collection. A semi-structured approach has also been utilised in international research on prison staff experiences of prisoner suicide (Borrill et al., 2004; Ludlow et al., 2015), as well as in studies of the experiences of other professionals involved in death work (Regehr, 2005; Jonas-Simpson et al., 2013). Semi-structured interviews were selected as they offered valuable coherence across the data set, while also facilitating in-depth exploration of participants' experiences of prisoner deaths.

The selection of semi-structured interviews was guided by the aim of the study to explore staff experiences of all types of prisoner deaths in custody, rather than focusing on one cause of death. Accordingly, it was anticipated that participants' accounts may progress differently depending on the nature of the prisoner's death and their own experiences of the incident. Semi-structured interviews were thus considered advantageous with regard to the potential diversity of experiences among the cohort, as they would offer appropriate flexibility for further exploration of issues of relevance to a particular cause of death (Robson, 1993).

In addition to their adaptability regarding participants' encounters with different causes of death, a semi-structured approach was also deemed beneficial as it allows the interviewer to deviate from the interview guide to explore unanticipated topics as they arise. On this, Bryman (2012, p. 471) cautions against 'slavishly' following guides. Instead, interviews should be open-ended and discursive in nature, with participants given space and time to respond to questions in the manner that feels most natural. This was felt to be particularly advantageous in light of the limited literature on staff experiences of prisoner deaths, as well as the dearth of research on the working lives and traditions of Irish prison staff.

While flexibility is a key component of the semi-structured approach, the use of an interview guide also ensures some consistency across data sets (Robson, 1993). As Galletta (2013) notes, a semi-structured approach facilitates the collection of rich data in a focused manner, improving efficiency in data analysis.

5.3.1.1 Appreciative Inquiry

The appreciative inquiry approach was explored prior to the design of the interview guide. Liebling et al. (2001, p. 162) describe appreciative inquiry as:

> [B]ased on strengths rather than weaknesses, on visions of what is possible rather than what is not possible. It identifies achievements and 'best memories', and through this technique, locates 'where the energy is' in an organisation. It is based on the establishment of familiarity and trust with a workgroup in the first instance, on the discovery of that organisation's best practices, memories and achievements.

Appreciative inquiry may 'supplement 'problem-oriented' knowledge with alternative readings of the nature of prison officers' work, in an attempt to look for new ways for 'the truth' about what they do' (Liebling et al., 1999, p. 75). An appreciative approach has been successfully employed in research with staff in prisons in England and Wales (Liebling et al., 1999; Liebling et al., 2011), as well as in broader studies of imprisonment (Elliott et al., 2001; Liebling et al., 2001; Liebling, 2004) and with probation staff (Robinson et al., 2012). While appreciative inquiry is grounded in the search for good practice, Liebling et al. (1999, p. 78) additionally argue that 'by starting from an explicitly appreciative position, one will be led into a wider and deeper understanding of the negatives that are subsequently reported'. Scott (2014, p. 31) cautions against an entirely appreciative outlook however, arguing for the importance of uncovering subjective experiences and meaning in prison research, 'whatever the shape or form'. Accordingly, an exclusively appreciative approach in the design of the interview guide was rejected, as this may have prohibited the expression of potentially negative accounts or perspectives during interviews. Instead, it was decided to include some appreciative questions in the

interview guide, to capture positive narratives where appropriate. It was also planned to use appreciative probes to follow up on suitable emergent topics during interviews.

5.3.1.2 Design of Semi-structured Interview Guide

An interview guide (Appendix A) was designed for use during data collection. The creation of this guide was informed by the research questions, in addition to the extant scholarship on prison work, emotion management and death work synthesised in the preceding chapters. In keeping with the interpretivist paradigm, the majority of questions were open-ended, designed to encourage disclosure of personal experiences and views and to avoid rigidity as the interviews progressed (Creswell, 2014). Some probes were included to assist in the collection of rich and detailed narratives on participants' encounters with prisoner deaths.

Additionally, a self-report questionnaire (Appendix B) was designed to collect demographic information, to be administered prior to commencement of interviews. Questions regarding general demographic information, including gender, marital status and education, were guided by Census 2011 questions. Additional questions were included to capture information regarding participants' employment in the Irish Prison Service.

The design of the interview guide was informed by the aim to construct knowledge on Irish prison staff experiences of deaths in custody, thereby illuminating some expectations, attitudes and traditions in Irish prison work (Kvale, 1996; Mason, 2002). In doing so, it sought to go beyond 'knowledge excavation' (Mason, 2002, p. 226) by asking

interviewees to recount their encounters with prisoner deaths, including their perspectives, attitudes and emotions. The questions were divided into three main sections, designed to reflect a chronological progression through participants' experiences, beginning with the operational response to the incident, before moving to consider their emotional responses to the death, and concluding with a discussion of post-incident support and coping. As Gerson and Horowitz (2002, p. 206) note, it is useful to follow a chronological progression in interviews as it provides 'a structure for recounting a coherent narrative and for remembering potentially important, but easily overlooked events and experiences'.

The first section commences with an invitation to participants to recall an experience of responding to a death in custody while at work. For participants with multiple experiences, it was suggested to begin with the most memorable encounter. The conversation then progressed according to the nature of the participants' account, with some questions designed to address issues specific to the cause of death. The operational response to the incident and participants' involvement in investigations are then explored, followed by issues regarding preparedness, training, practice and staff-prisoner relationships.

The second section investigated emotional responses to deaths in custody. Emotion was discussed in an institutional context first, focusing on the atmosphere in the prison after a death, including the mood between colleagues and among prisoners. From there, the conversation began to explore participants' feelings about the death. Some questions about participants' first day back at work were included to ease participants into this sensitive discussion. This approach was informed by the extant literature on prison staff,

particularly Crawley's (2004a) research on emotion management and performance in prison work, as well as feedback following piloting, which suggested that participants may have been unsettled by direct enquiries about their emotions at the commencement of this group of questions. The interview then moved to discuss how participants displayed these emotions while at work, as well as acceptable emotional display in the aftermath of the death of a prisoner. Probes were designed to capture institutional or organisational 'feeling rules' (Hochschild, 1983). Questions were also included to address participants' perceptions of colleagues' emotional responses.

The third group of questions explored participants' experiences of support and coping in the aftermath of a death in custody. Participants were invited to share what they found to be helpful following their experiences. The discussion then examined different sources of support in more detail. Questions were designed to address sources of familial, peer and social support, as well as formal occupational support provided by the Irish Prison Service. Finally, the role of management and trade unions in support provision was explored.

A fourth section was included to bring the discussion to a close, utilising three questions. The first question was an open-ended appreciative question, seeking participants' perspectives regarding the best approach for handling a death in custody. Some probes were included here, aimed at eliciting accounts of good practice. Next, participants were asked to explain their motivation for involvement in the study. Finally, questions or comments about the study were invited from participants. These questions assisted in concluding the interview on a positive tone, facilitating transition from the interview to the final briefing about the study.

5.4 Data Collection

This section presents a comprehensive description of the data collection process, from preparation to completion of interviews. It begins with an overview of the preparatory work undertaken prior to commencing data collection. The interview settings, recruitment and selection processes and data collection procedures are also discussed. Finally, the demographic profile of the participant cohort is outlined.

5.4.1 Preparation for Data Collection and Analysis

Reflections from those who have conducted research on the working lives of prison staff (Crawley, 2004a; Bennett, 2016) and prison life more broadly (Crewe, 2009) reveal the importance of preparatory meetings, pilot testing and induction processes. In the current study, this preparation involved preparatory meetings with the Irish Prison Service Research Officer and Prison Officers' Association and a pilot test of the research instruments.

5.4.1.1 Preparatory Meetings with the Irish Prison Service and Prison Officers' Association

Prior to the commencement of data collection, preparatory meetings were convened with a national officer of the Prison Officers' Association and the Irish Prison Service Research Officer. The primary aim of these meetings was to seek the support of both organisations with the recruitment process. During these meetings, the research aims and data collection

procedures were outlined, and the views of those in attendance regarding the conduct of the study were invited. Both organisations agreed to assist with recruitment. The meeting with the Irish Prison Service Research Officer also began the Irish Prison Service research approval process (see section 5.6.1).

5.4.1.2 Pilot Test of Interview Guide

Bryman (2012) advises researchers to conduct a small pilot study prior to the commencement of data collection to evaluate the operation of the research instruments. Accordingly, piloting was conducted to assess the semi-structured interview guide and other research instruments. The pilot test was also undertaken to determine the duration of interviews.

The pilot test took place in March 2014. The semi-structured interview and other research instruments were piloted with two participants, both retired.[1] Full interviews were conducted with both participants. At the conclusion of each interview, participants were invited to reflect on their experience of the process. Some short additional questions were prepared in advance (Appendix C), and participants were encouraged to express any additional views on the interview process and research. Participant feedback was recorded by the researcher.

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[1] While it was hoped to include at least one currently serving participant in the pilot test, recruitment within prisons had not yet commenced with the initiation of the pilot test. Feedback was sought from the first two currently serving participants following their interviews. Both were satisfied with the process and no further issues or difficulties were reported.

Several useful insights were gleaned from the pilot study. Duration of interviews was identified as between one and a half and two hours. Both participants indicated that they were happy to participate in interviews of this length. It also emerged that it would be useful to ask participants to clarify their role in the response to a prisoner's death. Both participants offered helpful insight regarding the questions on emotion. The interview guide was amended to incorporate these recommendations prior to data collection.

Both pilot interviews were audio recorded and transcribed in full. Each of the participants gave consent to be included in the study.

5.4.2 Sampling and Recruitment

5.4.2.1 Sampling Approach and Selection

The sampling strategy was developed with reference to the attributes outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994). The authors advise that sampling frames should be developed in accordance with the conceptual framework and research questions used in a study. Accordingly, the sample population was identified as prison staff who had experienced the death of a prisoner in custody. Collecting data directly from staff with experiences of prisoner deaths facilitated the generation of rich information and believable descriptions relevant to the research questions, as suggested by Miles and Huberman. Both currently serving and retired staff were included, as well as staff in management grades (with previous experience of serving in officer grades), following Miles and Huberman's (1994, p. 34) suggestion to 'work a bit at the peripheries' of the phenomenon to be investigated. Criteria for inclusion in the current study was defined as follows:

1. Individuals who currently worked or previously worked in the Irish Prison Service as officer grade staff. Staff who had since progressed to operational management grades (e.g. Campus Governor, Governor) who had previous experience of working in officer grades were also eligible;

2. Such individuals must have experience of dealing with the death of a prisoner in the course of their duties.

Miles and Huberman (1994) additionally encourage researchers to consider ethical and feasibility issues in their methods of selection. Accordingly, informed consent was emphasised in the recruitment materials. Additionally, Curtis et al. (2000) highlight the relevance of ethics in decisions regarding the exclusion of individuals from research. The sensitive nature of the research topic emerged as an important consideration in this context. It was therefore decided to seek to exclude participants with mental health issues, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, as a result of their experiences of responding to prisoners' deaths, as it would be unethical to commence a researcher-participant relationship with such individuals. A strict approach was not taken in this context, however. Rather, this issue was highlighted with participants in the recruitment materials, advising them to self-select or self-exclude with reference to their assessment of appropriate support in their personal lives. Participants were invited to discuss this issue further with the Researcher. No participants were excluded on these grounds. All participants met the selection criteria.

5.4.2.2 Recruitment

Recruitment commenced in early 2014. The Irish Prison Service was the primary source of recruitment. Following receipt of research approval, copies of the recruitment poster/flyer (Appendix D) and participant information sheet (Appendix E) were sent to the Research Officer, who undertook to disseminate these throughout the prison estate. These were circulated at local level by Training Liaison Officers, who publicised the study using hardcopy posters and flyers and email alerts. Five rounds of recruitment took place between March 2014 and June 2015. The researcher also initiated contact with the Training Liaison Officers, inviting their feedback on the materials. Suggestions from those who replied included the provision of additional flyers, which the researcher forwarded by post, as well as the inclusion of a short biography of the researcher for circulation among staff. Fourteen participants were recruited via the Irish Prison Service. While each round of recruitment yielded considerable interest, a number of those making contact were ineligible (i.e. did not have experience of dealing with a death in custody) or unavailable for interviews.

The Prison Officers' Association agreed to publicise the study to its members, as well as those in its retirees' network. Recruitment materials were forwarded to the Information Officer, who arranged for an advertisement in their newsletter. Some of those recruited via the Irish Prison Service channels indicated that they had seen this notice, remarking that they appreciated that the study was endorsed by the Prison Officers' Association.

A snowball sampling approach was also used to recruit participants. This was informed by the extant literature on prison staff culture, which suggests a high degree of cohesion

and insularity among staff (Kauffman, 1988; Crawley, 2004a; Liebling et al., 2011). Accordingly, it was anticipated that participants would be well placed to identify colleagues who also fitted the selection criteria. After each interview, the researcher explained the process and invited participants to pass on her contact details to colleagues who they thought may be interested in being involved in the study. The voluntary nature of this process was strongly emphasised with all participants. Overall, this approach was well received, some were particularly enthusiastic. The snowball strategy yielded several new contacts, including one additional participant. Those who referred potential informants reported multiple encounters with deaths in custody and were among the most experienced in terms of years of service, suggesting that their experience, both in the context of deaths and more generally, may have been productive.

5.4.3 Interview Settings

As recruitment was open to currently serving staff across the prison estate, as well as retired prison staff, interviews were held at a number of settings throughout Ireland. Interviews with Dublin-based participants were conducted at the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) campuses at Mountjoy Square, where the researcher's office was based until September 2014, and Grangegorman, where the researcher remained until completion of the study. Twelve participants (including the pilot participants) were interviewed at these sites. Interviews were held in small meeting rooms at both locations. The doors, which contained small panes of glass, were closed during the interviews. The researcher greeted participants at the building entrances. A comprehensive risk assessment of these locations was completed, receiving full approval from the DIT Research Ethics Committee.

Five participants were interviewed outside Dublin: three in Limerick and two in Portlaoise. Interviews with Portlaoise-based participants were held at the Irish Prison Service College, located adjacent to the Portlaoise prison campus.[2] Following consultation with participants based in Limerick, interviews were held at Limerick prison, in meeting rooms in 'staff only' locations on the prison grounds.

All participants were satisfied with the interview locations. Additionally, possible privacy issues were also considered in the context of the Portlaoise and Limerick settings, similar to those noted in previous research on prison staff (Kauffman, 1988; Crawley, 2004a). Interviews at the Irish Prison Service College took place in a separate building used for meetings and seminars. On both occasions, the interviews were the only events held at the building. Participants in Limerick were informed of the researcher's location prior to the interviews, and the researcher greeted each participant alone. No concerns regarding privacy were raised by participants in Portlaoise and Limerick regarding the interview settings. Doors were closed during all interviews. All participants were offered the option of meeting at an alternative location, such as a meeting room in a local hotel. No such circumstance arose during data collection.

5.4.4 Participant demographics

Of the seventeen participants who were interviewed, sixteen were male and one was female. All participants listed their ethnicity as white Irish. While these gender and ethnic

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[2] The Irish Prison Service College is the primary training location for Irish Prison Service staff. While it is situated beside the Portlaoise prison campus, it remains a separate site with a separate entrance.

configurations may appear unbalanced, these demographics are reflective of the general under-representation of female staff and ethnic minority staff throughout the Irish Prison Service (Roche, 2012). All participants were over 30 years of age: one participant was aged between 30 and 39 years; eight participants were aged between 40 and 49 years; seven were aged between 50 and 59 years; and one participant was aged between 60 and 69 years. Twelve participants reported their marital status as married (first marriage). Of the remaining five participants, two were divorced, two were separated, and one was single (never married). Fourteen participants had children.

Fifteen participants were currently serving in the Irish Prison Service at the time of interview, and two had retired, both within the past ten years. The participant cohort included a variety of grades, ranging from prison officer to governor grades. Six participants worked as Prison Officers, four as Assistant Chief Officers, one was a Chief Officer, and five worked in Governor grades[3]. The sample also included one nurse officer who had spent thirteen years as a prison officer prior to obtaining a nursing qualification. While some Irish Prison Service grades are further categorised (e.g. Chief Officer 1 and Chief Officer 2), this information was not collected to protect participants' confidentiality.

Most participants (n=14) reported being qualified above upper secondary level; three participants held postgraduate diplomas or degrees, four participants held an honours bachelor degree or professional qualification, four participants held an ordinary bachelor degree or national diploma, one participant had a higher certificate, two participants had

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[3] Each of these participants occupied officer grades prior to their progression to governor grades. All had dealt with multiple deaths in custody during their careers, and recounted experiences from their time working as both officers and governors.

advanced certificates, and three were qualified to upper secondary level. The five governor grade participants were the most highly qualified, with three holding postgraduate diplomas or degrees and two holding honours bachelor degrees.

The majority (n=13) of participants had worked for the Irish Prison Service for over twenty years; the length of service ranged from five years to thirty-four years, with a mean of 23.06 years. At the time of interview, the fifteen currently serving participants were working across a range of prisons in counties Dublin, Laois and Limerick. In Dublin, two participants worked in Cloverhill, one in the Dóchas Centre, two in Mountjoy, one in St Patrick's Institution, one in the Training Unit, and one in Wheatfield. In Laois, one participant worked in Portlaoise and another in the Midlands prison. In County Limerick, three participants worked at Limerick prison. Over one-half (n=10) of all participants had worked at three or more Irish Prison Service sites during their career. These included Arbour Hill (n=2); Cloverhill (n=7); Cork (n=1); Dóchas Centre (n=2); Limerick (n=3); Loughan House (n=1); Midlands (n=3); Mountjoy (n=11); Portlaoise (n=4); St Patrick's Institution[4] (n=7); Training Unit (n=1); Wheatfield (n=6); Fort Mitchel[5] (n=1) and the Irish Prison Service College (n=3). The Governor grade participants were the most mobile within the sample.

The participant cohort had experience of a range of causes of death, including self-inflicted deaths, homicides, drug-related deaths and deaths by natural causes. Thirteen participants had encountered multiple deaths in custody, with the remaining four reporting a single incident during their careers.

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[4] A closed, medium security prison for males aged 17 to 21 years. Plans for its closure were announced in July 2013.
[5] A prison located on Spike Island, Cork. It was closed in 2004.

5.4.5 Data Collection Procedure

The Researcher sought to arrange interviews with all eligible participants who made contact during recruitment. Seventeen interviews were conducted. The duration of interviews was between 40 minutes to 129 minutes, with an average of 101 minutes and a median of 106 minutes. All interviews were recorded using a digital audio recorder. Audio recording not only ensured an accurate record of participants' accounts, but also allowed the researcher to maintain eye contact and listen attentively to participants, aiding rapport.

Interview rooms were prepared in advance of each interview. Those who attended interviews were greeted by the researcher, who introduced herself and thanked the participant for attending. Refreshments were served prior to the commencement of each interview. Brief informal conversation facilitated the development of rapport.

Before commencing interviews, the researcher outlined the purpose of the research and the interview process, following the discussion points in the interview guide. The content of the consent form (Appendix F) was reviewed verbally, underlining voluntary participation. Participants were invited to ask questions regarding the consent form or any aspect of the research. The consent form was given to the participant to read and sign, and then securely stored in a folder. Following this, the Researcher coded a participant demographic sheet with the participant number, using a combination of the letter P and interview number (e.g. P01). Participants were reminded that their name would not appear on this instrument. They were then invited to complete the demographic sheet.

Formal permission for the use of the digital audio recorder was sought before it was switched on and positioned in the centre of the table. The researcher demonstrated how to pause or stop the recorder, inviting participants to do so themselves at any time. While the order and nature of interview questions were directed by the interview guide, the flexibility of the semi-structured approach facilitated the exploration of emergent issues also. Verbal and non-verbal probes were used to manage and clarify the conversation (Rubin and Rubin, 2012), as well as gaining a 'deeper and fuller understanding of the participant's meaning' (Legard et al., 2003, p. 141). After each interview, questions or comments were invited from each participant. The researcher thanked each participant for their time and contribution to the study. A copy of the support contact information sheet and researcher's business card were given to all participants. Participants were encouraged to contact the researcher if they had any questions regarding the study.

Following the conclusion of each interview, handwritten field notes were completed to record the researcher's experiences, as well as any questions or comments from participants. All interview data was securely stored. The audio recorder, field notes, consent forms and demographic sheets were stored in a locked cabinet in the Researcher's office. Digital audio file names were coded using participant numbers. These were stored on an encrypted computer accessible only by the Researcher.

5.5. Data Analysis

5.5.1 Data Preparation

The content of each recording was transcribed following the completion of each interview. As the aims and design of the study emphasise participants' accounts of their experiences of prisoner deaths, interviews were transcribed verbatim. Transcripts were completed by the researcher, which facilitated the analytical process of familiarisation.

Interview transcription is not without challenges, however. Above all, the process of converting the spoken word into text form can prove most difficult, particularly regarding sentence structure, filler words or sounds, incomplete or unclear words or phrases and the use of quotations (Meadows and Dodendorf, 1999). The Researcher sought to ameliorate these issues by offering all participants the opportunity to review their completed transcripts and evaluate whether the meaning of their contributions had been accurately captured in text form. Seven participants opted to receive a copy of their transcript. All were satisfied with their transcripts, and no amendments were necessary.

5.5.2 Analytical Framework

Interview transcripts were analysed using thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 79) describe thematic analysis as 'a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data'. It goes beyond the organisation and identification of themes, offering a framework for the interpretation of various aspects of the research topic (Boyatzis, 1998). The framework for data analysis was selected with reference to the aims

of the study. Thematic analysis offers a number of advantages including a high level of flexibility and a capacity to develop rich descriptions of data sets, highlighting similarities and differences as well as generating unanticipated insights (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun and Clarke, 2006). These advantages were considered with reference to the exploratory focus and interpretivist design of the research, as well as the under-researched nature of the study topic.

Braun and Clarke (2006) note that a theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, representing some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set. Themes were identified using an inductive approach, remaining strongly linked to and driven by the data (Patton, 1990). Again, the paucity of research on both the study topic and life in Irish prisons more broadly was considered relevant in this decision. Accordingly, while extant literature guided the labelling of a very small number of initial codes e.g. 'emotion rules', pre-existing assumptions or coding frames did not shape the analysis.

While the flexibility of thematic analysis facilitates the determination of themes in a number of ways, this may also lead to issues with interpretation (Boyatzis, 1998). Accordingly, in addition to maintaining consistency in the determination of themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006), intercoder reliability coding was utilised during the analysis stage. As Mays and Pope (1995) advise, such an approach can enhance the analysis of qualitative data. Three interview transcripts were independently coded by the researcher and a member of the supervisory team. These were compared for agreement by the researcher, and then discussed at supervision meetings. Although the labelling of codes

differed at times, it was agreed that there was a sufficient degree of consensus in the identification of codes. An example is presented in table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Example Extract of Intercoder Reliability Coding

Data extract	Researcher code	Supervisor code
What they'll do is they'll say, 'You missed your four o'clock check, you're responsible. That person is dead because of you.' Nothing about the resources not being there.	Blame	Officer liability

5.5.3 Phases of Thematic Analysis of Interview Data

Thematic analysis progressed over a number of phases, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). The authors advocate a six-stage analytical process, beginning with familiarisation, and then moving to the generation of initial codes and then themes, followed by review and definition of themes, concluding with final write up. They further advise that these stages should not be strictly viewed as a linear model; rather analysis is a recursive process, 'where movement is back and forth as needed' (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 86). Analysis over these stages is described in detail below.

5.5.3.1 Familiarisation

Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 87) describe familiarity with all aspects of the data as the 'bedrock' of analysis. Possible codes were recorded in field notes during data collection. The Researcher's role in transcribing interviews intensified this process of immersion. More than a preparatory act, transcription is 'a key phase of data analysis within interpretative qualitative methodology' (Bird, 2005, p. 227). Further notes were taken

during transcription, documenting thoughts about possible codes and themes present in the data.

5.5.3.2 Generating Initial Codes

Following familiarisation, analysis moved to the generation of initial codes from the data. Transcripts were imported into NVivo (version ten) to store and manage the data. NVivo was selected for its flexibility with regard to coding; its design supports inductive and holistic coding, allowing researchers to revise codes as needed (Bachman and Schutt, 2013).

Initial coding commenced, working systematically through the data set. Boyatzis (1998, p. 63) defines a code as 'the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon'. Short descriptions were written for all codes, referring to their content. As outlined above, an inductive, data-guided approach was adopted throughout this process. As thematic analysis is sometimes criticised for decontextualizing data and ignoring trends that may be identified at a later stage in the analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Bryman, 2012), care was taken to code data extracts inclusively, keeping surrounding text for context where relevant. Uncommon or deviant aspects of the data were also coded.

Descriptive (e.g. humour), in vivo (e.g. 'back to business') and process (e.g. going off duty) codes were utilised during initial coding (Saldaña, 2016). Approximately 250 codes were generated during this initial coding phase; Braun and Clarke (2006) advise researchers to code for as many potential themes or patterns as possible. As the code list

grew, sub-coding was used, wherein several codes were grouped together under a primary tag. For example, a number of codes were grouped together under 'investigation', including 'coroner's inquest', 'Inspector of Prisons' and 'preserving evidence'. This aided the organisation and management of codes as this phase progressed. Some individual extracts were coded to multiple labels, as outlined in the example below.

Table 5.2: Example of Code Generation

Data extract	Researcher code
My experience is that it always happens to me at night time, and [laughing] the group I worked with, we were known as 'The Flatliners' because we were just unfortunate with fires and things like that, attempted escapes and all that kind of thing [laughing]. But again, that's another way of coping with it, people slagging you.	1. Humour 2. Night time 3. Coping

5.5.3.3 Searching for Themes

Following completion of initial indexing of the data set, analysis moved on to consider potential themes. The codes generated at the previous stage were reviewed and sorted into possible themes. Pattern coding was utilised to 'pull together' material from initial coding into 'more meaningful and parsimonious units of analysis' (Saldaña, 2016, p. 236). As Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 89) suggest, visual representations were used to 'play around' with the codes, which helped to create a picture of the overall data. Relationships were identified between codes using thematic maps. Some codes were merged into larger codes, with others combined to create early main themes. Different levels of themes were also considered, and numerous sub-themes were matched with main overarching themes. At this point, some initial codes were set aside for later review, as they did not appear to

fit within the emergent analysis. An initial thematic map of this phase is presented in Appendix G.

5.5.3.4 Reviewing Themes

The fourth phase of Braun and Clarke's model involves reviewing and refining themes. This process takes place over two levels, beginning with the coded extracts. As Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 91) explain, 'data within themes should cohere together meaningfully, while there should be clear and identifiable distinctions between themes'. All collated extracts for each theme were reviewed, yielding some organisational changes at the level of sub-themes. For example, a review of the data extracts within the sub-theme *empathy* revealed that participants were discussing empathy in a presentational context, rather than as an emotional reaction in the immediate aftermath of the death. Accordingly, it was moved from *emotional responses* to become a sub-theme of *managing emotion*. In addition, the sub-themes of *first aid*, *bodily fluids*, and *dangerous bodies* were combined into a new sub-theme named *dealing with prisoners' bodies*.

The main themes of *'back to business'* and *personal consequences of a death in custody* contained sub-themes such as *'getting on with the job'* and *blame*. After reviewing these themes, *'back to business'* and *personal consequences of a death in custody* were brought together under an overarching theme of *switching priorities in immediate aftermath*, as the content of the coded extracts suggested a pattern regarding participants' shifting focus in the time following a prisoner's death. This theme change was felt to 'adequately capture the contours' of the coded data (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 91).

The second level of refinement considers the thematic map in relation to the entire data set, which is reviewed to ensure the proposed themes accurately reflect the meanings evident in the data set as a whole (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The transcripts were re-read to ascertain whether the themes 'worked' in relation to the data set. This process also facilitated the coding of any additional data that was missed during the earlier coding phase. After re-reading the data, the distinctions between response and aftermath noted earlier with regard to managing emotion were identified as potential organising themes for the thematic map. Participants' discussed their experiences of prisoners' deaths in three temporal contexts: their experiences during the response to the incident, their experiences in the immediate aftermath of the death, and their experiences in the time beyond the immediate aftermath. The extant themes were then grouped under a relevant temporal theme.

Additional thematic maps reflecting the results of the refinements during this phase are presented in Appendix G. The final definition of themes is outlined in the next section.

5.5.4.5 Defining Themes

The fifth phase entails further refinement and definition of the themes that will be presented for analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 92) recommend identifying the 'essence' of what each theme is about and determining what aspect of the data each theme captures. Detailed memos were drafted for each theme. Some theme names underwent further refinement during this phase. For example, *'back to business'* was renamed *operational resilience*, as this title was felt to better reflect the content captured within the theme. Similarly, *learning from experience* became *value of experience*. The three

overarching themes were titled, *experiences during responses to deaths in custody*, *experiences in the immediate aftermath of deaths in custody*, and *experiences beyond the immediate aftermath*, with sub-themes nested under each theme. The final thematic map is presented in Appendix G.

5.5.4.6 Writing up Themes

The last phase involved the final analysis of the themes and write up of the remaining chapters of the thesis. The memos drafted during the preceding phase were expanded, as the Researcher began to look for explanations to interpret themes and contextualise them in relation to existing literature. The three overarching themes suggested a three-chapter structure, with the analytic narratives of the relevant sub-themes presented within each chapter. Data extracts are embedded within these narratives to illustrate the story of the data across the three findings and analysis chapters (Braun and Clarke, 2013). The interpretation of the data was further deepened in the discussion chapter (chapter nine), wherein the significance of patterns and meanings within the data are considered in relation to the theoretical basis of the study (Patton, 1990).

5.6 Methodological Issues

5.6.1 Ethical Issues

As Westmarland (2011) highlights, myriad ethical issues can arise in criminal justice-related research, which may not always be resolved easily. King and Liebling (2008) advise that attention and sensitivity should be paid to ethical issues in prison research

during all stages of study, from proposal through to design and execution of the methodology, continuing beyond the conclusion of data collection and analysis to the presentation of findings. Accordingly, comprehensive attention was given to ethical considerations relevant to the current study, guided by the DIT Research Ethics Committee Guidelines on Ethical Principles and British Society of Criminology Code of Ethics (2006). The following sections outline the considerations that emerged around the issues of ethical approval, informed consent and confidentiality.

5.6.1.1 Ethical Approval

The DIT Research Ethics Committee granted full ethical approval for the study in November 2013. All research instruments used in the study were approved. Approval for the study was also granted by the Irish Prison Service in January 2014, as part of their research approval process. This submission outlined the ethical considerations and methodology of the study, as well as the value of the research to the Irish Prison Service.

5.6.1.2 Informed consent

Informed consent was an important ethical consideration in this study. Before attending an interview, potential participants were sent a copy of the Participant Information Sheet (Appendix E). This was presented in a question and answer style, seeking to address any questions or concerns participants may have about their involvement in the study. It sought to address any questions that potential participants may have regarding the research, offering comprehensive detail on anonymity, exceptions to confidentiality and practical concerns, such as the expected duration of interviews.

Prior to the commencement of interviews, participants were given an informed consent form (Appendix F) to read and sign. The nature and contents of the form were explained and questions were invited from participants before they signed the form.

Marshall and Rossman (2016, p. 55) advise that the 'formulaic completion' of consent forms is often not satisfactory in qualitative studies, arguing that informed consent is not satisfied by the single event of completion of the consent form. Similarly, Bhattacharya (2007, p. 1105) suggests that participants' consent may be contingent on evolving negotiations of 'multiple subject positions, life events, and a shifting understanding of research'. Such changes may occur during interviews or can take place as the research progresses beyond data collection. A number of approaches were utilised to address this in the current study. During interviews, it was made clear to participants that they could decline to answer any question or end the interview if they so wished. After interviews concluded and the recording device had been turned off, participants were given time to talk and ask questions about the research. Contact details for the Researcher were also provided. Participants were free to withdraw from the study at any time after their interviews.

In addition, participants were advised of the status of the research as a doctoral study, as well as the researcher's plans for dissemination of the research findings. Participants were also invited to indicate if they wished to receive a summary document of the research findings or a copy of the final thesis.

5.6.1.3 Confidentiality

Confidentiality was another important ethical consideration. Participant numbers were used to preserve anonymity for those taking part in the study. While anonymisation of participant names is an important component in ensuring confidentiality in research, Wiles et al. (2008) state that a holistic approach is necessary when considering qualitative data. Accordingly, safeguarding confidentiality for the deceased prisoners whose deaths participants recounted during interviews was also treated as an important ethical concern in data collection, storage, preparation and presentation.

In order to address any concerns that identifying information about deceased prisoners may be disclosed in this thesis, the following protocols were adopted. Participants were advised prior to the commencement of audio recording that names and other identifiable details regarding deceased prisoners were not being sought as part of this study. While some participants mentioned deceased individuals' names and other identifying details, this information was anonymised during transcription. This approach was informed by the Inspector of Prisons deaths in custody reports, wherein a practice of anonymisation has been adopted since reporting began in 2012. The Prisons and Probation Ombudsman in England and Wales utilised a similar protocol of complete anonymisation during the data collection period, and this was also consulted.[6] Additionally, as it was intended to use extended data extracts when presenting research findings (Silverman, 2010), the findings and discussion chapters of this thesis were reviewed for information that may have identified deceased prisoners, as well as participants. This approach was also utilised

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[6] All Prisons and Probation Ombudsman reports published until mid-2015 were completely anonymised, with all names removed, including that of the deceased. This practice was amended in 2015 so that the name of the deceased was no longer removed from reports, although other names, such as those of prison staff, continue to be redacted.

during all dissemination activities during the study, and will remain for all future outputs. Identifying information relating to other individuals, such as participants' colleagues or family members, was also managed using these practices.

Data preparation and storage was also relevant in this context. Completion of transcription by the researcher only served to bolster confidentiality. All data generated in the course of this study was securely stored in accordance with DIT ethical guidelines. The researcher had the sole right of access to physical and electronic data. Some anonymised transcripts were shared with the primary supervisor for intercoder reliability. All participants were informed of the data storage and sharing procedures. Continuity of secure storage was maintained during the researcher's transition from the Mountjoy Square campus to the Grangegorman campus. All files were securely transported by the researcher.

Ritchie and Lewis (2003) advise researchers to consider the circumstances in which it may be necessary to break participant confidentiality prior to the commencement of data collection. Ethical guidelines and research literature provided guidance. It was decided that participant confidentiality would be broken in reports of child abuse or neglect, life-threatening situations, and cases of serious harm risks (Lee, 1993; Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). Disclosure relating to child safety and life-threatening situations would be immediately reported to the Gardaí. It was planned to report other scenarios, such as serious psychological distress, to the primary supervisor in the first instance, who undertook to independently manage the situation on a case by case basis with a view to arranging appropriate assistance, including consideration of police contact. Two issues informed this decision; the inclusion of retired staff in the sample and the data collection

procedures. As the majority of interview data was collected away from the prison environment with both currently serving and retired participants attending during their free time, it was felt to be inappropriate to report information to the Irish Prison Service. Both the DIT Research Ethics Committee and Irish Prison Service Research Office endorsed this position. Information regarding the exceptions to confidentiality and procedures for disclosure were included in the participant information sheet. All participants were reminded of these exceptions before they signed the consent form. There was no requirement to breach confidentiality during the course of the study.

5.6.1.4 Protection from Harm

Due to the sensitive nature of the study topic, it was deemed important to minimise potential harm and distress to participants. A number of approaches were employed to protect participants from harm. These included the selection of suitable research methods, as outlined earlier in this chapter, and careful ordering of interview questions. The voluntary nature of participation was also helpful in this context, particularly during interviews wherein participants were free to decline to answer any questions. Additionally, participants were advised that they could take a break or stop the interview at any time. A contact information sheet (Appendix H) with details of relevant support services was offered to all participants at the conclusion of interviews.

One participant became visibly upset when recalling a suicide attempt. The researcher reiterated that this participant could take a break or stop the interview if he wished. The participant decided to continue with the interview. At the conclusion of the interview he reassured the researcher that he was not feeling distressed and wished to remain in the

study. The remaining participants did not show any visible signs of unease or distress during the data collection process. A small number of participants took breaks during interviews to check their mobile phones. Overall, participants reported that they enjoyed taking part in the study, with many expressing a wish that their accounts would inform future policymaking.

Minimisation of harm and distress was also an important ethical consideration beyond the participant cohort. The deceased prisoners whose deaths were discussed during interviews and their families were an important constituency in this context, requiring an approach that called for compassion in addition to robust ethical protocols. Although the research methods did not entail direct contact with deceased prisoners' families, it was deemed imperative to minimise any harm or distress that may arise from the presentation of research findings. Literature on methodology in end of life and bereavement research advises that confidentiality and protection from identification are among the primary approaches to protecting bereaved participants from harm and distress (Koening et al., 2003; Dyregrov, 2004; Bentley and O'Connor, 2015). The protocols for safeguarding confidentiality of deceased prisoners outlined in the preceding section thus had multiple aims. Firstly, anonymisation of names and identifying details ensured confidentiality for these individuals, and secondly, these procedures also minimised any possible harms of identification for their families.

5.6.2 Quality of the Data

This section outlines the variety of approaches adopted to enhance the quality of the data and research findings. Quality is discussed in the context of credibility and

trustworthiness rather than validity (Seale, 1999), informed by the suggestion by Lincoln and Guba (1986) that qualitative research should be judged by dependability and authenticity. Credibility and trustworthiness are discussed with reference to the data collection method, data management and preparation procedures, and the analytical process. Reflexive accounts exploring the relationships between the researcher and research data are also presented.

As interviews were the single method of data collection used in this study, the truthfulness of participants' accounts is an important consideration in the context of the credibility of the data. Paulhaus and Vazire (2007) highlight the self-report nature of interviews as significant in this context, noting that participants' concerns regarding social desirability may see them adapt their responses to present a positive image to researchers. The ethical considerations outlined in the preceding sections served to mitigate issues of social desirability, thus minimising threats to reliability and credibility of the data. Voluntary participation was productive in this context, as participants could not only withdraw from the study at any stage, but were also free to decline to answer any question during interviews. Moreover, the confidential nature of participants' contributions enabled them to speak openly about their encounters with prisoner deaths, including their perspectives on their institution and organisation. Indeed, that most participants talked freely about their emotions such as humour and empathy, as well as their attitudes to prisoners (including deceased prisoners), prevention practices and management priorities, and that consistency was identified on many themes across the data set, suggests a good level of credibility. In addition, analysis of participants' reasons for taking part in the study appeared to counter the possibility of social desirability bias. In describing their motivation for involvement in the study, most participants referred to a desire for their

contribution to be used to effect change or inform policy and/or the lack of research interest in prison staff in Ireland.

Additional assurances are reflected in the data preparation and management processes. Audio recordings of the interviews provided an accurate reflection of the participants' responses for transcription and analysis. Moreover, the use of verbatim transcripts captured and maintained the trueness of participants' accounts. Much of the transcription was completed while the data collection phase was ongoing. This not only facilitated data familiarisation, but also informed early analysis of participants' contributions with regard to saturation, indicating when data collection could cease (Dyson and Brown, 2006). Data management aided by NVivo also ensured consistency and credibility in data analysis (Miles et al., 2014).

Credibility was also increased during the data analysis process. The analytical approach informed by Braun and Clarke (2006) increased dependability of the data (Lincoln and Guba, 1986). While prevalence can be determined in a number of different ways in thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006), simple counting, as recommended by Seale and Silverman (1997), was undertaken in the early stages of analysis to establish how representative categories were across the data set. These internal checks also included the identification of cases which deviated from the identified themes, helping to untangle contradictions within and between participants' narratives, and thus providing a thicker description (Geertz, 1973). Accordingly, this study recognises the multiple realities that are present in the data, seeking to account for these to enhance credibility and trustworthiness. The presentation of large and extended data extracts in the findings and analysis chapters provided access to the context relevant to the discussion of themes

(Silverman, 2010). Consistency of the analysis was also bolstered by the use of intercoder reliability coding, as outlined above. It is argued that the account provided within the forthcoming chapters is credible based on the procedures described in this section.

A further approach to maximising quality in the research findings relates to the practice of reflexivity (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003; Marshall and Rossman, 2016). Lincoln and Guba (1986) state that the authenticity, and thus dependability, of a study can be improved by acknowledging the reflexive consciousness about one's own perspective. Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009, p. 79) caution that a view of the relationship between the researcher and the object of study as a 'one-way street' is untenable, arguing for the importance of reflection to explore how both affect each other 'mutually continually' throughout the study. More specifically, the value of reflexivity is increasingly recognised within the contemporary literature on prison research (Crewe, 2009; Jewkes, 2012; Farrant, 2014; Rowe, 2014). Both Jewkes (2012) and Rowe (2014) emphasise the importance of providing honest reflective accounts of fieldwork in prison-related studies, and particularly encourage researchers to acknowledge the emotionality and autoethnographic dimensions in the research process.

The following sections present the researcher's thoughts and experiences of conducting the fieldwork. In keeping with the constructivist approach of the study, these sections seek to position the researcher in the research, acknowledging the personal, cultural and historical sources of interpretation (Creswell, 2014). As research on both prison staff, and indeed prison life more broadly, continues to develop in Ireland, it is hoped that these reflections may be helpful for future researchers within this arena. Van Maanen (1988, p.

74) states that reflective writing 'demands personalised authority'. Accordingly, these accounts are written in the first-person.

5.6.2.1 Reflecting on the Potential Impact of the Researcher and Research Process on the Research Data

Marshall and Rossman (2016) encourage qualitative researchers to reflect on the possible environmental and individual factors that may have impacted their research data. An important environmental consideration for the current study related to the interview settings. As outlined in section 5.4.3, interviews with Dublin-based participants were conducted on DIT campuses, with participants in Limerick and Portlaoise interviewed at Irish Prison Service buildings. While no environmental difficulties arose in relation to Limerick and Portlaoise locations, there were some limited practical challenges associated with the Dublin settings. Most Dublin-based participants attended interviews in their personal time. Although many welcomed the opportunity to meet away from the prison environment, it was sometimes difficult to arrange times that suited participants' schedules. In a number of cases, participants who had contacted me to arrange an interview did not attend. Those who responded to polite follow-up invitations to reschedule indicated that they were too busy to travel to DIT. While these instances were disheartening, particularly given the advance preparation required for each interview, those who did attend for interviews in Dublin all indicated that they were satisfied with the location. Overall, all participants indicated that the interviews were a positive experience, with some commenting that they found our conversation to be enjoyable.

A number of individual factors may also have impacted the research data. The most prominent of these was gender, particularly my position as a female researcher. Some researchers offer accounts of their experiences of conducting prison research as a woman, with both advantages and disadvantages highlighted. While Liebling (1992) notes her gender to be advantageous when conducting research with prisoners, observing that it encouraged openness among her participants, others report negative experiences arising from their position as female researchers (Mills, 2004; Piacentini, 2005). In the current study, the issue of gender emerged in a number of ways during data collection. Firstly, some participants highlighted my gender before or after interviews, indicating that they preferred talking to a female interviewer:

> While I was wrapping up the interview I asked the participant how he found the experience. He replied saying that he found it enjoyable overall. He noted that it was particularly easy to talk to a female researcher about his emotional responses to prisoner deaths, as well as any concerns he had in the aftermath of these incidents. I asked if he could explain why. He said that it was 'just easier' to talk to women about 'the deeper stuff like feelings'.
> (Interview Field Notes, June 2014)

While attitudes such as these were sometimes advantageous during data collection, particularly with regard to facilitating conversations about emotions and support, it is also important to acknowledge potential drawbacks in this context. Some participants apologised for cursing during interviews, suggesting their bad language was inappropriate for a 'young lady'. Indeed, when most participants referred to my gender they also referred to my apparent age at the time of interviews (26-27 years). As outlined above, all but one of the participants were over 40 at the time of interviews. While I insisted that such language was acceptable and did not bother me at all, it was clear that some of these participants made an effort to tone down their language as our conversations progressed, thus impacting the research data. I attempted to minimise the possibility of censored

contributions in this context by encouraging all participants to speak freely about their experiences and perspectives at the beginning of each interview.

Gender and age appeared to be additionally relevant in a small number of participants' perspectives on the research project. These participants expressed concern or bemusement regarding my interest in prison staff experiences of prisoner deaths and prison life generally. These attitudes seemed to be motivated by my gender and age:

> At the end of the interview I outlined the progression of the study and my hopes regarding dissemination and impact. The participant said he was happy that I was keen to 'get the research out there' and said he hoped the Director General would read it. He then stated that he was surprised that I was so interested in his experiences at work, remarking 'what's a nice young lady like you doing researching prison officers? Sure, we're all apes'.
> (Interview Field Notes, July 2015)

Another participant was sceptical about my status as 'an outsider', suggesting that I should undertake prison officer training to gain an appreciation for his experiences at work by 'walking in his shoes'. I agreed that a study of this nature would certainly be useful and highlighted Helen Arnold's (2008) research wherein she participated in a staff training programme. In both contexts, I found it useful to restate the aims of the study, as well as the paucity of Irish research on prison staff. It is important to note however that these exchanges took place at the end of interviews, and participants' perspectives regarding my gender and age and status as an independent researcher may have affected their contributions. These attitudes represented the minority, however, and overall most participants were supportive of the research and my motivations for conducting the study, welcoming academic interest in their working lives and occupational culture. Many were particularly interested in the status of the research as a doctoral study. Some participants

recounted their own experiences of third-level education, expressing empathy regarding the writing up process. Others were interested in criminology as a field of study.

5.6.2.2 Reflecting on the Impact of the Research Process on the Researcher

Liebling (1999, p. 164) highlights the value of acknowledging the emotional nature of prison research, remarking, 'our emotions do not need to be reconciled with our so-called data. They constitute data'. Similarly, Rowe (2014) argues for increased visibility of emotion, and thus the self, in research on prison life. As discussed previously, the extant literature on emotion management and performance in the workplace is an important component of the theoretical basis for the current study, thus positioning this research as part of the 'return to emotions' in recent criminological scholarship (Karstedt, 2002, p. 301). Jewkes (2012) suggests that researchers who seek to explore the emotional texture of prison life should also acknowledge the subjective and embodied emotional dimensions of their fieldwork. Accordingly, in this section I reflect on my emotions during the research process and the possible impact that they may have on the data.

While the literature review undertaken prior to data collection provided a useful education in the traditions and working lives of prison staff in a broad context, the limited Irish scholarship on prison life proved to be somewhat disadvantageous when I began interviewing participants. As interviews commenced, I discovered that I lacked familiarity with the local practices and traditions of Irish prison staff. Although this added richness and depth to the analysis of interview data, enabling me to not only describe and interpret participants' experiences of deaths in custody, but to also uncover some previously hidden aspects of the informal work culture of Irish prison staff, it also proved

challenging during data collection. While the participants were positioned as key informants, selected for inclusion because of their experiences of prisoner deaths, I found at times that a small number of participants also wanted to test my knowledge about their work practices. I initially found this to be a little disconcerting. The field notes detail one such incident:

> I felt that we built good rapport at the beginning of the interview. However, once we moved to explore the participants' experiences of the operational response to a prisoner's death, they began to ask me questions about my knowledge of procedures regarding ligature removal, as well as some more general questions about keys and the keys office. I felt a little uncomfortable, as I did not know the answers to some of the questions regarding the regulation of keys, but hoped this was not evident in my reaction. I described what I knew about ligature removal, mentioning the Hoffman knife[7], and the participant nodded approvingly and confirmed the accuracy of my response. I felt relieved. The interview then continued without any similar issues.
> (Interview Field Notes, April 2014)

On reflection after the interview, I recognised these questions as analogous to the credibility and personal integrity tests described by Patenaude (2004). As data collection continued, it became clear how important these short exchanges were for building rapport and trust, and accordingly I sought to respond to participants' interest in my knowledge, where possible. More broadly, I found that as the interviews progressed, I became more comfortable interacting with participants. In my conversations with participants before, during and after interviews, my knowledge deepened as I began to learn their shared language and colloquialisms:

> When we began to talk about workplace support the participant mentioned the Staff Support Officers. He referred to them as SSOs several times, before pausing to ask me if I knew what an SSO was. I said yes, that they were Staff Support Officers. He laughed and said, 'But that's not their real name', explaining that he and his colleagues referred to them as 'Sad Stories Officers'.

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[7] Hoffman knife, used for ligature removal.

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In some ways, this process echoed that of a new recruit 'learning to banter' (Crawley, 2004a). This process intensified, as I spent more time interviewing participants and speaking to potential participants and other staff who were interested in the study. I not only learned about their shared language, but also heard about informal and/or localised practices regarding deaths in custody. For example, one participant described how he and his colleagues would make arrangements locally for the prison chaplain to hold a remembrance service for prisoners who had died in the prison.

While familiarity and identification with the experiences and views of prison staff can be a 'positive and powerful stimulus in the formation of knowledge' (Jewkes, 2012, p. 69), I was also aware of the importance of resisting bias throughout the research process. My initial concerns in this context related to the potentially traumatic stories that may be recounted by participants. The use of appreciative inquiry in the interview guide was also relevant here; in the early stages of the study I was concerned about being drawn in or 'going native' during the data collection. Scott's (2014) advice to focus on exploring and interpreting of the subjective meanings of prison life, regardless of their nature, offered assistance in maintaining a neutral outlook. Additionally, participants' explanations of their reasons for participating in the study were helpful in focusing my attention on the outcomes of the study, in addition to the process within. The contrast between participants' accounts of limited workplace support and my own experiences also proved to be stark, and I was grateful to have access to robust resources in this context. Many peers, both inside and outside the Institute, offered their views and expertise as each stage of the research progressed.

While the research process was a positive and fulfilling experience overall, it is important to acknowledge that the research was at times heavy with emotion. On a basic level, much of the emotional impact that I experienced emanated from the study's focus on death, and particularly the deaths of prisoners. As the volume of accounts of prisoners' deaths increased with the progression of data collection, I started to feel somewhat guilty that participants' stories of deaths that I had no first-hand knowledge of would ultimately become the foundation of a thesis that would be submitted for a doctoral degree. Additionally, the nature of the data collection process meant that these stories were mediated through participants' experiences, causing further tension in my feelings about the study. I sought to balance this by ensuring that ethical issues were addressed using a holistic approach that considered deceased prisoners and their families. Compassion, as well as ethical rigour, guided this process. Above all, I felt it was important to recognise that these individuals were not just accidental participants in the study, but rather remained a central consideration throughout each stage of the research and in its dissemination. Participants' motivations for taking part in the study also served to ameliorate these tensions. Many remarked that they wanted their stories to be visible to researchers, penal policymakers and the prison authorities, while some also hoped that the research findings would also be used to inform policy creation and reform. This offered further assistance in refocusing my attention on ensuring the quality of the research data and findings, which would in turn facilitate dissemination across a variety of outlets, thus maximising the potential audience for the study, and its impact beyond this thesis.

The centrality of death in the study additionally presented some emotional challenges in a personal context. These challenges particularly emerged in the context of the

bereavements that I experienced in my personal life during the research process. At times during these events, I found it difficult to return to the study. Again, the network of support both within DIT and outside was helpful. Supervision meetings proved to be a particularly invaluable source in this context, supplemented by meetings with the DIT counselling service, as advised by the supervisory team and DIT Research Ethics Committee. Conversations and advice received from peers at conferences offered additional support.

5.7 Strengths and Limitations of the Study

This section considers the strengths and limitations of the research process, informing assessment of the value of the study. The primary strength of the study relates to the under-researched nature of prison staff experiences of prisoner deaths, illuminating an area of prison work that until recently has seldom received robust academic attention. The scant scholarship on the working lives of staff in Irish prisons is additionally relevant. While the data generated in this study offers valuable insights regarding staff encounters with prisoner deaths, in a broader context, it also sheds much-needed light on the experiences and perspectives of Irish prison staff. The constructivist and interpretivist approaches utilised in the study are a further strength, resulting in the collection of a rich data set that seeks to describe and interpret the subjective meanings of participants.

Another valuable strength relates to the inclusion of participants with a range of experiences of prisoner deaths in custody, both in the context of volume and cause of death. This facilitated the analysis and interpretation of a variety of subjective meanings regarding prisoner deaths, thus offering a broader and more complete insight into the

nature and meaning of death work in prisons. While the use of interviews facilitated the collection of rich data on the experiences and perspectives of participants, one limitation emerges regarding the interview settings. As detailed above, interviews were held at DIT campuses, the Irish Prison Service College and in a training area of Limerick prison. Those who attended interviews in Irish Prison Service buildings may have felt uncomfortable discussing certain aspects of their experiences at these locations. Both Kauffman (1988) and Crawley (2004a) note the possible censoring effect of conducting staff interviews inside prisons. This limitation may be minimised by the nature of both Irish Prison Service locations in that they were not typically places that participants visited in their everyday activities, and thus were not associated with participants' experiences of deaths or their work in a broader context. Additionally, all participants at these locations were given the choice of an alternative setting, which may have also mitigated any issues in this regard.

Another limitation relates to the demographics of the sample, particularly regarding gender. As outlined previously, the sample of seventeen participants included sixteen males and one female. This limitation may be mitigated by the diversity in grades and experiences within the cohort, which facilitated rich analysis of the complexities and nuances of participants' experiences and perspectives on prisoner deaths. In particular, the inclusion of governor grades supported analytical insight into staff-management relationships in the context of deaths in custody. Additionally, while the sample is smaller than those used in Borrill et al. (2004), Wright et al. (2006) and Ludlow et al. (2015), it is important to emphasise the exploratory focus and design of the current study. Moreover, it is submitted that the deep and focused nature of analysis moderated any issues in this context. It is hoped that the research findings and will guide future studies

in this arena, as outlined in chapter ten. Later projects could also utilise the methods adopted in the current study and draw from the reflections presented herein.

5.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented a comprehensive overview of the research methodology. It began by considering the research design, outlining the constructivist and qualitative approaches that guided the study. Following this, the selection of semi-structured interviews as the data collection method was described and justified. A cohesive discussion of the data collection and data analysis processes were then presented, highlighting the focused and detailed nature of these phases of the study. Methodological issues were explored next, focusing on the ethical considerations of informed consent and confidentiality, as well as detailing the ethical approval processes. Issues regarding the quality of the research data were outlined, offering reflexive accounts to supplement theoretically informed discussion in this context. Finally, the strengths and limitations of the research methodology were highlighted. The findings that emerged from the process described in this chapter are presented and analysed in the next three chapters.

CHAPTER SIX

'KICKING INTO GEAR': RESPONDING TO DEATHS IN CUSTODY

6.1 Introduction

The structure of the discussion presented in this chapter, and the two that follow, is guided by the analytical framework outlined in the previous chapter. These chapters seek to 'tell the story of the data' (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 93), with data extracts and extant literature embedded in the analytical narrative. The current chapter presents findings related to the first overarching theme identified during analysis; the experience of responding to deaths in custody. It commences with an overview of the cohort's encounters with prisoner deaths, before moving to consider participants' experiences and perspectives on responding to individual causes of death in greater detail. Following this, the focus shifts to the process of responding to deaths in custody, focusing first on participants' accounts of the operational response to deaths. A number of themes are explored in this section, including the need to respond swiftly and collectively, the distinct features of responding to deaths during the night time, participants' attitudes to body handling and participants' perspectives on the value of experience and policies. The discussion then progresses to explore emotion management during operational responses to deaths in custody, describing participants' accounts of the emotional texture of death work in prisons in both an individual and collective context.

6.2 Participants' Experiences of Prisoner Deaths in Custody by Cause of Death

This section explores participants' experiences of prisoner deaths by cause of death. It begins with an overview of participants' encounters with deaths in prison, before moving to discuss their experiences and perspectives of different causes of death, including suicide, drug-related deaths, homicide and natural deaths. While suicides emerged as the most memorable and significant experience for many participants, participants' accounts of drug-related deaths, homicides, and natural causes reveal important insights regarding the experience of death work in prison.

6.2.1 Overview of Participants' Experiences of Prisoner Deaths in Custody

At the time of interview, thirteen participants had encountered multiple deaths in custody during their careers. When recounting their experiences, nine of these participants quantified them, offering precise numbers ranging between four and twenty-five deaths in custody. The remaining four participants with multiple experiences offered vaguer estimations such as 'a few' (P10, P14) and 'a multitude of experiences' (P07). Four participants reported experiencing a single incident during their careers.

While 13 participants had worked in the Irish Prison Service for over twenty years, length of service did not emerge as relevant to frequency of deaths. For example, two participants who reported single experiences had 25 and 26 years of service, while one participant who had dealt with five deaths in custody had worked in the Irish Prison Service for nine years.

The participant cohort had experience of a range of causes of death, including suicides, homicides, drug-related deaths and deaths by natural causes. Suicides were the most common cause of death reported by participants, with sixteen participants disclosing experience of prisoner suicides. Additionally, five of these sixteen had encountered multiple suicides; the highest number of suicides experienced was six. Drug-related deaths were described by ten participants, with five recounting several experiences. Five participants recalled encounters with natural causes deaths in custody. Homicides were reported by four participants, with three experiencing more than one homicide.

6.2.2 Participants' Experiences of Suicides in Custody

As outlined in the previous section, sixteen participants reported experiencing a self-inflicted death, with five participants encountering more than one suicide during their careers. Much of the limited literature on prison staff experiences of deaths in custody focuses on prisoner suicide. Liebling (1992, p. 195) argues that prison staff accounts are 'an essential component' in the exploration of suicide in prison, noting that it is important to uncover the perspectives of those who are tasked with responding to suicide and suicide attempts.

For many in the cohort, suicide and self-harm were understood as an occupational hazard of prison work, with incidents acknowledged as an inevitability in the career of a prison officer:

> It's part of the job, absolutely. It's a part of the job that's not nice, but it's necessary. You *will* come across [a suicide] at some point. Like, I hope staff don't, but generally there will be some issue.
> (P09, Assistant Chief Officer)

My attitude is that it's unfortunate, but it's not unexpected.
(P03, Assistant Chief Officer)

Analogies were drawn between suicide in prison and in the community:

I'd say broadly like, I think suicide and self-harm are reflected in society too. It's very prevalent in society at the moment. And I think that everything that's in society is reflected in prison anyway, whether it's suicidal ideation and actual suicide and all the rest of it.
(P15, Governor)

Some participants highlighted the demographics of the prison population as problematic in this context, pointing to the prevalence of mental illness and drug abuse among prisoners, as well as the perceived high incidence of instability in their personal lives as risk factors for suicide and self-harming behaviour:

I don't think you will talk to any prison officer over the years that hasn't had some serious incident or an attempted suicide. […] Prisons are nearly like a casualty department of life, because we get people in who are on drugs, a lot of people with mental health issues; they are just thrown into us and we are expected to deal with them. So it's not an easy job to do. And the likelihood of people self-harming or taking their own lives is very, *very* high.
(P04, Governor)

It's part of the job, you know. Because prisoners, a lot of them do come from families, or even no families, just through a life of hell really. A life of drugs misuse and substance abuse and misuse. And I think that it's the combination of that; their bad start in life, their bad living in life, you know. […] I think the mental impact will lead to some cases of suicide. So as prison officers, I think we're more prevalent to come by it in our work, in our daily life.
(P05, Prison Officer)

Discussions of participants' experiences of responding to suicides led to reflection upon the possible reasons for a prisoner's decision to take his/her own life. Some pointed to the 'pains of imprisonment' (Sykes, 1958), particularly the deprivation of liberty and autonomy, as possible explanations: 'At a certain time of day we can leave, we can clock out and go home. They can't' (P03). Similarly, the attendant issues of loneliness and

hopelessness were also highlighted. While these participants were aware of situational pains, the prevailing view was that prisoner suicide was caused by personal vulnerabilities, either imported or attained while in prison. In her discussion of staff attitudes to suicide, Liebling (1992, p. 200) similarly observes a 'tendency to locate the cause of the problem in the individual'. Prisoners who had taken their own lives were described as 'hopeless' (P03), 'not coping very well' (P04) and 'unfortunate' (P13). Family issues, guilt and mental health difficulties were cited as common factors related to prison suicide, and cases where these and similar causes were apparent did not tend to prompt further questions or curiosity.

Crawley (2004a, p. 179) notes that working in 'a place where people with widely differing needs were simply thrown together' can sometimes harden and desensitise staff to the issues they encounter in the prison. Similarly, some participants reflected upon how their attitudes to self-inflicted deaths in custody and their work in general have evolved following their experiences. One participant with over 25 years of service and multiple experiences of suicide underlined the importance of self-preservation and 'getting on with it', describing himself as unaffected by prisoner suicides:

> I don't care about people killing themselves; that's up to them. That's their decision. […] He was in prison, he killed himself. I tried to do my best, it didn't work. Get on with it.
> (P09, Assistant Chief Officer)

Another participant, a governor with over twenty years of service and multiple experiences, highlighted the limits of suicide prevention, and particularly managers' role in emphasising these limits with their staff:

> A thing that I do, there was death in custody here – there have been two since I've been here – where a guy committed suicide, he hung himself off the bed on one

of the landings, and I went and spoke to the staff, as the boss, and said 'Look, this guy made his own decision to do what he did. We had been doing our jobs correctly, nothing we could have done could have stopped what he did.' And I said that we needed to be conscious that he had made the choice to do what he did.
(P15, Governor)

For these participants, focusing on the prisoner's decision to take their own lives facilitated detachment from the death. Other participants drew similar attention to suicide as a choice in their discussions of their attitude to self-inflicted deaths, describing their perspectives on suicide as a decision to 'waste life'. Fullagar (2003) observes that the narrative of suicide as a 'wasted life' is implicated in a moral vocabulary about living and dying, with suicide viewed by some as wasteful, irresponsible and selfish. One governor participant who, as an officer, escorted the body of a prisoner who died by suicide to a local hospital, described his thoughts during his journey back to the prison:

And the only thought going through my mind, and I can still remember it quite clearly, is what a waste of a life. And that's still how I feel today.
(P12, Governor)

Similarly, another participant reflects upon how the experience of responding to a self-inflicted death in custody has influenced his views on suicide generally, seeing him becoming angry about the difficulties and 'mess' of the aftermath:

But, the whole suicide thing now with me, I can tell you now, I have completely different views now than I had. *Completely* different views about it. I'd be more angry with people committing suicide now, because of the mess they leave behind. And I think, and we were only having this discussion a couple of weeks ago actually, I think my attitude towards society and suicide is different. Like, before I would have been 'Ah the poor soul'. I think that chap down in Kerry, [Donal] Walsh[1], he summed it up for me; people who commit suicide have to be woken up first to the mess they're going to leave. And maybe that's only as a result of what happened. Before I would have said, 'Ah the poor souls', you know. I

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[1] A terminally ill teenager from Co. Kerry who, shortly before his death in 2013, came to national prominence following statements regarding suicide and young people in the *Sunday Independent* and on *The Saturday Night Show* on RTÉ, the national public service broadcaster of Ireland.

> mightn't be, and this sounds very strange, I mightn't be as sympathetic towards
> somebody who commits suicide now.
> (P06, Prison Officer)

Anger at the deceased's decision to take their own life emerges as a common theme in the scholarship on the experiences of professionals involved in sudden deathwork (Ting et al., 2006; Moores et al., 2007). Returning to Fullagar's consideration of suicide and 'waste', she observes that suicide may 'disturb our own comfortable notions of what a meaningful existence is' and may thus anger and frustrate those who have experienced a self-inflicted death (Fullagar, 2003, p. 293).

Moreover, the conception of suicide as a wasted life has implications for perspectives of life as having value (Fullagar, 2003). These participants' reflections upon prisoners' wasted lives may point to a positive view of the value of prisoners' lives, and thus their humanity. A tension therefore emerges within the cohort, between those who see prisoners as having some value attached to their existence, and those, as illustrated by the contributions from P09 and P15, who do not recognise any value in prisoners' lives.

6.2.2.1 Preventing Suicide: Participants' Experiences and Perspectives

Participants' descriptions of their encounters with prisoner suicide also included their experiences and perspectives on suicide prevention. All participants reported responding to suicide attempts or self-harming behaviour during their careers. Some participants were particularly keen to emphasise the good work done by staff in this area:

> We do an awful lot of good. The amount of times staff have found people *about* to hang themselves or *about* to cut themselves is *phenomenal.*
> (P11, Prison Officer)

The staff save more than anything else.
(P03, Assistant Chief Officer)

Many believed that successful prevention work was not recognised or appreciated at an organisational level, however. Consistent with findings in Liebling (1992) and Ludlow et al. (2015), participants described feeling blamed in the aftermath of a suicide, while positive outcomes were felt to be ignored, prompting frustration:

There's certain people, like [prisoner's name], he tried to kill himself weeks before he died. He was always trying it. So, we save him ten times, and the one time he dies there's the big inquiries into it, and staff lose money and everything. But sure, we're doing a good job; we'd saved him ten times already. We just got unlucky once. But that's not seen.
(P16, Prison Officer)

When asked to describe their role in preventing suicide, many highlighted the duty to check cells, particularly during night time, as the primary prevention activity in prison work. References were also made to suicide awareness, and four participants reported completing suicide awareness training. Suicide awareness was understood as the ability to recognise 'warning signs' of suicide risk. Like staff in research by Liebling (1992) and Ludlow et al. (2015), participants identified high risk categories as changes in behaviour (both positive and negative), withdrawal from activities, first night in custody and receipt of a lengthy sentence. Milestones in prisoners' personal lives were also highlighted, such as the anniversary of a family member's death.

Participants additionally acknowledged the introduction of in-cell televisions as significant in the context of suicide prevention. When reflecting upon their experiences of suicides, participants with multiple suicides and lengthy service suggested that the introduction of in-cell televisions in 2002 had reduced suicide numbers. Previous research

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has identified an association between in-cell television and suicide prevention, with Knight (2012) observing that in-cell television relieves boredom among prisoners, thus improving mental health and forestalling suicide and self-harm. Similarly, participants strongly believed that access to television served to alleviate the boredom associated with lengthy lock-up times, and thus the possibility that a prisoner's thoughts would turn to suicide or self-harm:

> One of the big things in the jails at the time was the lack of televisions, the lack of in-cell entertainment. And it was only subsequently after that that they introduced televisions into the cell, particularly in isolated areas of the prison as well. So, the idea behind that then is that they would be preoccupied. If they're going to take their life there'd be something there to prevent them really, you know. And to a degree it has reduced it.
> (P03, Assistant Chief Officer)

> The incidents of self-harm in the prisons have dropped dramatically for the simple thing of giving them televisions in the cells, Playstations, access to computers. It's a long twelve hours to be locked up in a cell from eight o'clock at night until eight o'clock the next morning, especially if you are in for crimes like murder and some sexual offences and you reflect back as to what you have done.
> (P04, Governor)

In-cell televisions were thus understood as a preventative measure, minimising suicide risk, particularly during the night. Importantly, increased media availability was not just welcomed as a suicide prevention tool however; it was also viewed as relieving the perceived burdens of prevention on prison staff:

> It's what we call the 'EastEnders factor'; instead of at lock up time having to herd them into the cells to lock them up, a lot of them are happy to go in and watch EastEnders or whatever was on the box at half seven. So, that has made our jobs slightly easier. When you are on nights you're now peeking into cells and seeing a fella watching whatever he is watching. It keeps the mind occupied. And when a young lad's mind is occupied, he's not thinking dark thoughts.
> (P11, Prison Officer)

While in-cell televisions were viewed as supplementing the task of monitoring cells during the night time, participants also argued that prevention work had become more

nuanced, requiring increased emotional intelligence and a more relational approach in addition to regular surveillance of prisoners. Suicide awareness was bolstered by good relationships with prisoners, as participants were able to elicit relevant information about a prisoner's background or familial and social relationships. Some participants also described how they would be cognisant of anniversaries related to a prisoner's offence(s) and sentencing. In some circumstances, this intelligence was shared between staff when changing shifts, echoing the exchange of operational information when handing over duty.

Additionally, the value of a 'kind word' (P06), a 'moment of understanding' (P05), and 'quick chat' (P14) about how a prisoner may be feeling was underlined by many participants in this context. Neutral language was typically used, and the possibility of deeper emotional exchanges were met with derision and dismissed as 'touchy feely' (P16). As one participant describes:

> One of the things we would say to a prisoner if we thought there was something up with him is 'Are you alright there?' And that conveys an awful lot more than just the mere words. […] It's not just a simple question of are you alright? It's a question that when asked conveys a lot of concern. And the prisoners would by and large respond with 'Ah yeah, I just got a bad letter from the missus' or whatever. They tell you so much and then based on what you've heard, you might say it's grand and he'll be OK in an hour or two. Or you might get the Chaplain to have a word with him.
> (P11, Prison Officer)

Although participants acknowledged the centrality of prison staff in suicide prevention, they also emphasised the limits of suicide prevention practices. As the following excerpts illustrate, this position appeared to emanate from acceptance of the inevitability of prisoner suicide in some situations, particularly if a prisoner is determined to take his or her own life:

The truth is we do all we can to stop people, but if somebody is intent on murder or somebody is intent on suicide themselves it's extremely difficult to stop.
(P04, Governor)

Sure, you can't prevent every death. If someone wants to kill themselves, they *will* kill themselves.
(P09, Assistant Chief Officer)

As much as you try to save someone from taking their own life, that can't always happen. I realised that a long, long number of years ago.
(P01, Retired)

The perceived limits of suicide prevention were accepted by those in the cohort who raised the issue. A common explanation related to being unable, in a practical context, to monitor all prisoners at all times. Once again, the resolve of a prisoner to take his/her own life was emphasised. One participant argued that even checks scheduled at very close intervals in observation cells could still prove deficient if a prisoner was determined to act:

If someone decides well I'm going to hang myself, and I'm going to do it in such a way that they won't catch me, so just after I've been checked, I'll do it. And if you check a fellow, as we do sometimes in an observation cell, every few minutes, that window is enough for someone who is attempting anything at all. They *will* do it; they'll find a way to do it. And that window, if I'm in the cell and he's just checked me now and it will take him a few minutes to come back to me, that's enough. That window would be enough if the determination to do the damage to yourself is there.
(P11, Prison Officer)

Like staff in Liebling's (1992) research, participants distinguished between genuine and non-genuine intentions when discussing suicide prevention. Some incidents were viewed as purposive acts, undertaken by prisoners to highlight a deficiency or produce an outcome, typically medical intervention. These were described as 'cries for help':

I have seen people self-harm, seriously self-harm, simply to get the staff in and get attention and be brought to hospital, because they have no one to talk to.
(P04, Governor)

I also have seen the cuttings, which are just cries for help. I have seen young lads with a plastic serrated knife, which wouldn't cut a loaf of bread, sawing it, the upper part of the wrist, which is not going to do one bit of harm, in the hope that we'll see them and take them out, put them into a padded cell so they can be looked after.
(P11, Prison Officer)

I was on nights there last week and I went up and checked the prisoners and there was a prisoner stabbing himself in the arm, right? [*OK*] And we went down and we got the medics. He wasn't slicing himself, he was stabbing. And I'm going, 'What's wrong with you, what are you at?' He had only a mattress in his bed and that was all that was in his cell, nothing else. There was no what we call a 'kit', your duvet and things like that. There was nothing. I got very annoyed about that, because that's the reason he is stabbing himself. And he was telling me, 'I'm gonna do meself in. They threw me in here at half seven and look'. So, we got him everything. We got him what he was entitled to; his duvet cover, his sheet, his pillowcase, the whole lot. The lad got into bed and went to sleep then, and there was no problem with him.
(P06, Prison Officer)

Participants did not believe that these behaviours were connected to a genuine risk of suicide, but recognised these actions as the bodily expression of needs or harms. Although the reaction was regarded as genuine, participants believed that the prisoner's intent was not to end their lives or seriously injure themselves. Not all suicide attempts or self-harm incidents were perceived as a reaction to a genuine need or deficiency, however. Some prisoners' suicide attempts and self-harming behaviour were described as calculated and manipulative, performed to aid material gain or criminal activities, either inside or outside the prison. As one participant explains:

You get prisoners self-harming because they want to get out to the hospital, because they make a phone call saying 'I'm gonna be in hospital in two hours in the Mater, bring me up tablets or heroin or hash or whatever'. So if they self-harm, they have to be sent to hospital. And they think they're pulling the wool over your eyes, but they're not. And you're looking at him and saying, I'm here twenty-odd years, I know exactly what you're doing, so stop treating me like an eejit.
(P08, Chief Officer)

Echoing findings in Liebling (1992) and Ludlow et al. (2015), the ability to distinguish between sincere and manipulative cases was a skill acquired through experience, becoming part of participants' 'jailcraft'. This was characterised as a mixture of common sense and intuition or a 'gut feeling' (P05), and, once again, was based on participants' interactions and relationships with prisoners.

6.2.3 Participant's Experiences of Drug-related Deaths in Custody

As noted above, ten participants reported experiencing a drug-related death in the course of their duties, with five of these reporting multiple experiences. There is a dearth of empirical considerations of prison staff experiences of drug-related deaths in custody, eclipsed by the sharp focus on suicide in the existing scholarship on staff encounters with prisoner deaths. Broader research on staff perspectives on drug use reveals ambivalence about treatment programmes (Carlin, 2005; Gjersing et al., 2007). Studies by Kauffman (1988) and Crawley (2004a) also highlight drug dependency among prison staff as a means of coping with occupational stress. Just as Liebling (1992) argues that staff perspectives are a necessary component in understandings of prisoner suicide, it is submitted that staff experiences and attitudes are also vital in explorations of drug-related deaths in custody.

In congruence with participants' perspectives on suicides in custody, many within the cohort accepted the possibility of drug-related deaths in custody, and prisoner drug use more generally, as inevitabilities in prison work. Some pointed to the prevalence of drug use among the prisoner population, explaining that their frequent encounters with prisoners taking drugs had 'normalised' (P07) the issue for them. One participant

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described being 'used to' (P05) drugs and therefore not shocked by drug-related deaths, emphasising that the imagery and paraphernalia associated with suicides and attempted suicides was more troubling, as these incidents were not everyday occurrences:

> You kind of the see them out of their face on drugs all the time. It's not as if she has a rope around her neck. It's probably, I don't know, more acceptable, is it? Because you see them drugged up to their eyeballs all the time and it's probably part of the norm. […] I think we're so used to seeing them taking drugs and kind of out of their face. Whereas if you look in and see someone with something around their neck, it's more shocking. You don't see that every day. So we're used to the drugs scenario, you know.
> (P05, Prison Officer)

Another participant reported feeling unperturbed by drug-related deaths, citing the presence of drugs in his community when he was growing up:

> I'm OK with [overdoses]. That's what they want to do. I'm not on drugs, but I'm from just around the corner here. I grew up with drugs and friends of mine on drugs, but I didn't take them. That was my choice. You want to take drugs, that's up to you. I couldn't care less.
> (P09, Assistant Chief Officer)

Previous studies of Irish prison staff attitudes to prisoner drug use reveal a similar outlook. In her study of drug-related knowledge and attitudes of prison staff in six Dublin prisons, Allen (2001) observes prison staff as having little fear of drug users compared to the public. Furthermore, in a study of the perceptions of Mountjoy prisoners and staff regarding the provision of methadone treatment, Carlin (2005) notes the liberal views of prison staff towards cannabis use, as well as their ambivalence about methadone maintenance programmes and other drug treatment provision.

Once again, discussions of 'wasted lives' emerges in participants' accounts of their attitudes to drug-related deaths in custody. Just as some participants believed suicide was

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a decision to 'waste life', other participants described the drug-related deaths that they had encountered as a waste of life:

> He overdosed and was found in his bed in the morning. He was only 18, in for a minor charge and with a very sad background. He was sharing a room with another chap who jumped out and called us when he didn't wake up. It was very sad. He was so young; it was just such a waste.
> (P14, Assistant Chief Officer)
>
> The first one was a young lad that overdosed, and that was it. Now, that was a terrible waste of a life.
> (P07, Governor)

As with participants' perspectives on suicide, the perception of a drug-related death as a life squandered implies that these participants may view prisoners' lives as having an inherent value, perhaps also recognising their humanity.

6.2.3.1 Preventing Drug-related Deaths: Participants' Experiences and Perspectives

Echoing the observations discussed above regarding suicide prevention, some participants also underlined the limits of prevention for drug-related deaths and drug use in prison generally. Here, perceptions regarding the limits of prevention appeared to emerge from a position that it was extremely difficult to maintain a drug-free prison. One governor participant highlighted the practical challenges of monitoring and obstructing the passage of drugs into prison:

> [H]e had taken drugs that were thrown over the wall of the prison, and I can't control that, no matter what I do. Unless I have people with machine guns on the wall shooting people who pass the prison, maybe that would work. But they just go to huge lengths to get the illicit drugs, and they don't mind where they're made or what they are, they just take them, but it could turn out it was strychnine, and it could kill them.
> (P15, Governor)

Similarly, another participant remarked that prevention practices could not completely eradicate the presence of drugs, as prisoners would simply find another way to bring drugs into prison:

> Well, we're doing our best to prevent it coming in, but there's a lot of pressure. What's happening now is with all the security measures that have been put in place between security checks at the gate, both for staff and prisoners coming in, and the nets in the yard so that the contraband can't get into the yards where the prisoners are congregating, it has forced prisoners now who are out on bail to reoffend, to come into prison packed so that they can distribute the drugs that way. (P03, Assistant Chief Officer)

Discussions of prevention also focused on the personal responsibility of the deceased. The governor participant who argued above that prison staff could not completely control the flow of drugs into prison also asserted that a prisoner's choice to take drugs and breach the Prison Rules[2] should be considered when evaluating the circumstances of the death:

> The prisoners also have a responsibility around not trying to subvert the security of the prison in terms of getting drugs into the prison. And we're having conversations more and more with the prisoners around their responsibility to that end. Because we need them to understand that this is a two-way street. If we're trying to develop a community in the prison, well then everybody is part of the community. It's not just me and my rules, it's the prisoner and his values as well. (P15, Governor)

Another participant highlighted the difficulties posed by prisoners' lack of education on drug misuse, particularly regarding tolerance levels, when recalling a drug-related death:

> Ideally it would have been great if we had saved him or got him earlier. But like I said, I didn't give him the drugs. And these prisoners, they're what is called 'opiate naïve'. They don't know the dangers of the opiates. They have no idea

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[2] Section 26 of the *Prison Rules 2007* prohibits possession of controlled drugs, as defined by the *Misuse of Drugs Act 1977*.

how low their tolerance level goes if they stop, and they have no idea of the dangers of mixing it with hooch.
(P17, Nurse Officer)

Other participants also pointed to the effect of imprisonment on an individual's tolerance for drugs, which has been acknowledged as a reason for increased mortality among recently released prisoners (Seymour et al., 2000; Farrell and Marsden, 2008; Lyons et al., 2010). While the previous research on this topic focuses on prisoners' mortality rate post-release, some participants highlighted the issue of prisoners returning to the prison from temporary release, having smuggled drugs bought in the community back into prison with them, and accidentally overdosing due to reduced tolerance levels.

6.2.4 Participants' Experiences of Homicides in Custody

Four participants disclosed experiences of homicides in custody during their careers. Three of these participants had dealt with multiple homicides, the most being five. All four participants had more than twenty years of service, and three worked in governor grades at the time of interviews. As noted above and in previous chapters, there is a strong focus on prisoner suicide in the extant literature on staff encounters with deaths in custody. Additionally, when staff are considered in research on prison homicides, the discussion has tended to focus on staff-related factors. Reisig (2002) argues that rates of prison homicides may be influenced by staff morale, while Cunningham et al. (2010) consider prisoners' history of violence against staff as a relevant characteristic in their study of the motivations for prisoner homicides. Little is therefore currently known about how staff experience violent deaths in prison.

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Interprisoner violence was the primary theme within participants' discussion of their experiences of homicides. The nature of violence experienced was varied, as was participants' proximity to the incident. One participant who encountered multiple homicides summarises his experiences:

> I had two stabbed to death. One on a landing, where he attacked another prisoner with a knife and the prisoner took the knife off him and stabbed him and caught him onto the side here, and it went straight to his side and hit his heart. So I was on the scene. I actually went to hospital with him where he was pronounced dead as well. On the next one a fellow was stabbed in the chest on the division. I have one where a fellow got a bang on the side of the head with two batteries in a sock and it killed him. And I had another fellow who was killed in a fight and died from the injuries.
> (P04, Governor)

Another participant described breaking up a fight between two prisoners, after one had stabbed the other, who later died. All four participants believed that they had become hardened to violence as a result of their experiences in the prison, including the homicides that they had dealt with. Similar to staff in studies by Kauffman (1988) and Crawley (2004a), participants described themselves as 'desensitised' and 'inured' to violent scenes:

> I suppose you get used to it over the years. You can't work in a prison environment without getting used to it. And I have been involved in lots of different incidents. But you do become somewhat desensitised to violence.
> (P04, Governor)

> You become inured to violence. I worked in pubs, *rough* pubs, and I saw a lot of violence before I ever came into the job. And I always was sickened by violence. I'm not sickened by violence anymore. […] I've seen so much violence in the prisons now in my twenty-five years.
> (P07, Governor)

The three governor participants with experiences of homicides also underlined the additional operational challenges of the aftermath these incidents. In contrast with

suicides and drug-related deaths, participants did not highlight prevention as a source of frustration in their discussion of homicides, but rather emphasised homicides as stressful 'only from the point of view from what they may mean to the running of the prison' (P07). While these governors reported similar interest at headquarters level in the aftermath of the death as in other deaths, this 'pressure from headquarters' (P04) was focused on effective management of the prisoner population, with managers tasked with easing possible tensions between prisoner groups and preventing further incidents.

6.2.5 Participants' Experiences of Natural Causes Deaths in Custody

Five participants recalled encounters with natural causes deaths in custody. All five participants had experienced other types of deaths, and three kept their descriptions of these deaths quite brief, preferring to focus on their experiences of non-natural deaths, explaining that the circumstances of these deaths were more memorable and had greater impact on their practice, perspectives and emotions. While the natural deaths were not 'good deaths' (Bradbury, 2000, p. 59), in that they were unexpected and occurred 'at the wrong place at the wrong time', their circumstances proved less troubling than unnatural deaths:

> Like, I've had men collapse and they'd be in their fifties, from heart attacks and health problems. And you'd resuscitate them or whatever … It sounds terrible, but if it's a health problem you don't feel it as much, there was nothing anybody could have done, do you know that kind of way?
> (P14, Assistant Chief Officer)

Two participants cited a death by natural causes as their most memorable experience of a death in custody. These participants pointed to the character and behaviour of the deceased when explaining the memorable nature of the deaths. One participant recounted

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the death of a comatose prisoner following his removal from life support, focusing on the prisoner's history of volatile behaviour in the prison. Another participant offered a lengthy account of the death of a prisoner who he supervised on hospital escort. He recalled the prisoner's transfer from the prison to the hospital shortly following his committal, describing the prisoner's physical deterioration in hospital:

> He never spoke, he never lifted his head. He never engaged. If they took him out to change his bed they'd leave him sitting in a chair and he'd just flop in the chair; they'd have to tie him to the chair. And he just wouldn't engage, that was it. I don't think he ever spoke. No, he didn't speak at all.
> (P09, Assistant Chief Officer)

Describing the prisoner as 'giving up' and 'deciding to die', he acknowledged the impact of this death as being greater than any of the suicides or drug-related deaths that he had encountered, admitting, 'That, to this day, frightened the shit out of me'. In her analysis of the courtroom narratives of death row prisoners who are seeking to abandon their appeals in order to advance their execution date, Rountree (2012, p. 590) observes that western cultures usually view desires and efforts to hasten death as 'socially deviant'. Moreover, the prisoner was repeatedly described as 'uncooperative' during the interview, and the participant suggested that his 'decision to die' may have been motivated by a desire to resist imprisonment and its associated difficulties. Death-seeking activities, most notably hunger strikes (McEvoy, 2001; O'Hearn, 2009; Reiter, 2014), are among the multifarious ways that prisoners exercise their agency to transform their bodies into 'instruments of resistance' (O'Hearn, 2009, p. 518). Rubin (2016, p. 5) cautions however that many descriptions of prisoner resistance rely on the 'symbolic potential' of the behaviour, rather that the express intentions of the prisoner, something of which this participant admits having limited knowledge.

6.3 Participants' Accounts of the Operational Response to Deaths in Custody

This section explores participants' accounts of operational responses to prisoner deaths. A number of sub-themes are considered to illuminate the experience of death work in prisons. The obligations to respond swiftly and collectively are examined first, followed by analysis of the distinct features of responding to deaths at night, participants' attitudes to body handling, and perspectives on the value of experiences and policies.

6.3.1 'Working on Autopilot'

A strong theme to emerge from the interviews was participants' characterisation of their actions during the response to a prisoner's death as automatic and instinctive. Many participants emphasised the automatic nature of their response to the incident, explaining that once the alarm was raised they began to work on 'automatic pilot' (P08, P10). The analogy of 'kicking into gear' was common:

> It's intuition, we know what to do. We kick into a higher gear, and we do it almost without thinking.
> (P10, Governor)

> Everything was kicked into gear; it's like driving a car.
> (P03, Assistant Chief Officer)

A number of participants described themselves as working on autopilot when dealing with a death in custody, and others underlined the automatic nature of their response:

> So when it happens you kind of go into procedure. You call staff, call the ACO, call the medic, the keys. And once you call the keys the ACO will bring the Hoffman[3], just to have it. I think it would, the adrenaline would just kick in and it

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[3] Hoffman knife, used for ligature removal.

just takes over. You don't say, 'Oh god, what's my next step?' Automatically, your mind automatically does it and your body automatically does it.
(P05, Prison Officer)

You kick into automatic pilot. You just say, 'OK, work. I have to get my Hoffman, I have to get my master keys, and I have to go to this cell.' Everything else goes out the window. You don't think, 'Oh Jesus, what am I going to do?'
(P08, Chief Officer)

It's that fight-or-flight response that we're trained to overcome. Like firefighters running into burning buildings and people run out, we *have* to go in. […] It becomes almost second nature.
(P10, Governor)

This inclination to 'go into response mode' (P07) is also observed among prison officers in Arnold's (2005) research, wherein she notes officers' desire to focus on procedure following a death in custody. The tendency to go on 'autopilot' during major incidents is also a common theme in the scholarship on the experiences of deathwork among similar occupations, particularly medical and emergency services personnel (Collin, 2001; Riba and Reches, 2002; O'Connor, 2008; Mastracci et al., 2014). Additionally, Lakeman (2011) observes that homeless sector professionals focused on following procedures in the aftermath of the death of a service user.

The capacity to respond to incidents in this intuitive manner was linked to practical experience and knowledge. In this way, the ability to respond automatically to deaths in custody becomes second nature with each experience:

You respond to a death the same way as you respond to a threatening or violent prisoner, someone assaulting you, an incident in the jail, a riot in the jail; you just *respond*. You just go into response mode. And after the first one and the second one you just know what to do. You just *know* what to do.
(P07, Governor)

> People that have been through one before, the second one is almost automatic for them. The third one is, the fourth one and the fifth one. It's building up that bank of experience, and the more they do it, the more us it is to them.
> (P10, Governor)

Overall, and in contrast with the officers in Arnold's (2005) study, participants felt confident about the possibility of dealing with future incidents, believing that their previous experiences helped to hone their instincts, thus improving their performance when responding to deaths in custody. Participants emphasised that the ability to go into 'autopilot' or 'response mode' during major incidents was of critical importance in prison officer work, and many therefore viewed their first experience of a death in custody as an important test of whether they had the necessary mettle and instincts for the job.

6.3.2 'We're All in This Together': Assisting Colleagues in Responses to Deaths in Custody

Automatic response to an alarm or sign of trouble is a significant cornerstone of officer culture (Kauffman, 1988; Liebling et al., 2011). Kauffman (1988, p. 86) particularly underlines this obligation within prison staff culture, arguing that it is 'the norm on which officer solidarity is based, the foundation of their sense of brotherhood'. Participants' accounts of the responses to deaths in custody point to the existence of this expectation among Irish prison staff. When describing the response to a death in custody, participants spoke of their instant response to an alarm or a colleague's request for assistance:

> I heard, 'We've a swinger! We've a swinger!' And I just ran down [the landing] and there were three or four lads already ahead of me by then.
> (P08, Chief Officer)

> The officer came down and said, 'Swinger down here'. So we got the keys, and
> just ran down.
> (P09, Assistant Chief Officer)

Another participant characterised the instinct to run towards a landing where he had heard a commotion as 'natural', explaining: 'It's bred into you here from day one. When something happens, you run towards it' (P13). A chief officer participant provides further support for the presence of this duty among Irish prison staff, describing it as 'an unwritten rule in the Prison Service' (P08).

Like staff in Kauffman's study, participants believed that the duty to assist a colleague in the response to an incident extended to all those working in the prison, no matter how they or others felt about them. In his account of his time working in the Irish Prison Service, Bray (2008, p. 109) describes how personality clashes or grudges became irrelevant during times of crisis: 'even if we didn't like each other, we had to dive in when there was a row'. Similarly, many participants stressed that they would assist any colleague in the response to a death or other major incident, regardless of their opinion of them:

> I don't care what prison officer you are, if you hear a shout for a suicide you *run*.
> (P06, Prison Officer)

> It is a family. You mightn't get on with most of them, but when I have that uniform
> on or if you've the uniform on and God forbid something happens, individuality
> doesn't come into it at all. You would just get in and that's it.
> (P13, Prison Officer)

> Now, if I don't get on with someone in work, it doesn't mean that if they're in
> trouble that I don't run to their assistance. I will run to anyone's assistance.
> (P05, Prison Officer)

Kauffman (1988, p. 87) notes that staff who do not immediately assist their colleagues in an emergency situation are often viewed with suspicion and risk 'being cast adrift' by the staff group. Participants also appeared to subscribe to this idea. One participant, who had experienced a colleague 'completely fall apart' (P08) during the response to a suicide, described how he felt about staff who fail to uphold this norm:

> It's proper order, you should leave. If you're not there to assist somebody, whether you like them or hate them, if you're not there to assist somebody that's in trouble, if you walk away from that your name should be mud as far as I'm concerned. And that's the unwritten rule, you're there to assist, end of story. And your colleague, whether you hate them or like them, you're there to help someone that's in trouble, and you'd never leave them on their own.
> (P08, Chief Officer)

Support for this obligation to assist staff during deaths and other incidents was deeply entrenched among participants who worked as uniformed staff (i.e. those who were not governors). For many, it was part of their identity as a prison officer, and was critical for their professional habitus (Bourdieu, 1977) or 'working personality' (Skolnick, 1966; Crawley, 2004a). In contrast, none of the governor participants discussed this duty to run towards an alarm or trouble when recounting their experiences, even when describing incidents that they had encountered as officers. As Crawley (2004a) observes, uniformed staff work closely together physically to respond to incidents in the prison, generating intimacy and a sense of shared reliance, and thus bolstering solidarity among the officer group. As a result, uniformed staff may regard themselves as being distinct from governor staff, with whom they do not work as closely (Liebling, 2008b). Conversely, as they occupy management roles, prison governors may no longer see themselves as belonging to the uniformed staff group, and as such, may feel somewhat distant from officer culture. Bennett (2016, p. 48) observes that following progression to management grades, prison managers may see a 'mutation' in their professional identity or habitus, with aspects of

officer culture lost to give way to newer managerial concerns. This distance, both in a physical and cultural sense, between governor and uniformed staff may explain why the governor participants in the current study did not assign importance to the expectation to assist colleagues during an emergency response in the same way that uniformed participants did. This is not to say however that governor participants did not seek to aid their counterparts during major incidents, but it did not emerge as a highly prized cultural norm as it did among uniformed staff. Instead, it appeared to be motivated by professional concern. As one governor participant recalled:

> You see like, if I heard now that there was a serious incident in [prison], I'd be ringing my colleague in [the prison] and saying 'are you all right? What's the story? Do you need a help with anything? Can I take prisoners out of your way?' and we will always do that. There'd be a very good working relationship between [the prison] and [our prison] in that regard. And I'm sure [other prisons] would have a similar type of relationship. And I would always ring a colleague like that. (P15, Governor)

6.3.3 Responding to Deaths in Custody during the Night

Many participants encountered prisoner deaths during night shifts. The majority of these deaths were non-natural, and primarily self-inflicted. A common thread in participants' accounts of responding to these deaths related to the operational challenges of dealing with deaths in custody during the night time. Ludlow et al. (2015, p. 30) note the 'practical difficulties' caused by low staffing levels in terms of responding to self-inflicted deaths and incidents of self-harm. Similarly, some participants underlined the reduced numbers of staff on duty when recounting the response to a death, noting that while they felt confident working during nights, the reduction in staff left them feeling 'vulnerable' (P14) or 'cautious' (P08) about the possibility of deaths and other incidents:

I would be confident and self-assured on nights too, but I'd never be complacent. I've always got that in the back of my mind, you know, deaths, fires and that sort of thing. It's because you're so short on staff, those things are difficult to deal with at night time. Whereas during the day you've plenty of staff on hand. The gates are manned, so if you needed to get an ambulance in or something in quickly it's easier to do it during the day. At night time, you've got no back up as such. At the moment in the [prison] there's only three of us on nights. So if something goes wrong there's just the three of ye there and that's it, you have to deal with it. So I'd be hugely aware of the implications of working nights and what can go wrong and what can happen.
(P14, Assistant Chief Officer)

In addition to presenting operational difficulties, night shifts were acknowledged by almost all in the cohort as high risk periods for unnatural deaths, particularly suicides and overdoses. As noted above, the majority of deaths experienced during night shifts were self-inflicted. Previous research points to the increased incidence of self-inflicted deaths in prisons during the night (Dooley, 1990; DuRand et al., 1995). Based upon their experiences at work, there was a particularly strong perception among participants that self-inflicted were more common during the night:

It's the one thing at night, it's more prevalent at night I think. Now, I know there have been hangings during the day as well, but it is one thing on nights – excuse the expression – you don't want to find a swinger. And that's when it happens mostly.
(P06, Prison Officer)

I'm sure, well it's definite, factual, that more suicides occur at night time.
(P08, Chief Officer)

Most fatalities will occur at night. If it's a suicide, it's the easiest time to do it. Nights are the one time you have watch for suicide and be aware of it.
(P11, Prison Officer)

Participants described their awareness of suicide and self-harming behaviour as heightened during night shifts. Nights were described as 'deadly dangerous' (P09) for prisoner suicide, with the risk characterised as 'one hundred per cent' (P08) and 'really, *really* high' (P17). Echoing their discussions on suicide prevention, participants

highlighted historical problems with a lack of activity or 'in-cell entertainment' (P03) during the night, as well as a perceived propensity for prisoners to 'think negatively' (P05) while locked in their cells at night, as increasing the likelihood of suicides. Additionally, some participants explained that the atmosphere within a prison was different during the night, on the wings and landings and also among staff. Crawley (2004a, p. 197) notes the atmospheric shift that arrives with the night in prisons, observing that the 'deathly quiet' of nights creates a different mood among staff. Participants' accounts mirror Crawley's observations, with many describing a shift in mood as the prison moved from day to night, bringing a heightened awareness of the risk of unnatural deaths. Decreased staffing levels not only caused possible operational problems; routine tasks such as checking cells became more solitary, changing the 'feel' (Crawley, 2004a, p. 197) of the prison for participants. Time alone on a landing could intensify the awareness of the potential for things to go wrong:

> I was always aware of how vulnerable [prisoners] are at night time. And I still am very much aware and would be very much alert on nights. I wouldn't relax too much on nights now. I would be sort of pottering around the place by myself all the time. I'd be really aware.
> (P14, Assistant Chief Officer)

While a heightened awareness of risk was recognised as important in the context of prevention, some participants cautioned against allowing risk awareness to dominate their professional performance, suggesting that becoming consumed with risk could inhibit their ability to perform their duties:

> Well you're always aware. But you can't think about it like, 'Oh God, what's going to happen?' You can't think about it. If you thought about it as I said, you'd be in the rubber room yourself. If you thought about what might happen, I mean anything might happen.
> (P09, Assistant Chief Officer)

[Suicide] is always at the back of your mind, but you can't let that rule your night shift either, because if you spent your twelve hours in a bit of a panic, you're not really able to take notice of what is going on around you.
(P11, Prison Officer)

6.3.3.1 Nights and the 'Fear of the Spyhole'

Cell checks are among the primary duties of officer grade staff during night shifts. Almost all deaths that took place during the night were discovered following a cell check performed by participants or their colleagues. The possibility of encountering a suicide or suicide attempt emerged as a prominent concern when participants were discussing the process of checking cells via viewing panels or spyholes. As one Assistant Chief Officer participant explained: 'Every time we're on night duty, every time we lifted a spyhole that's what we were expecting' (P03). Similarly, a Prison Officer grade participant spoke about 'the fear of the spyhole on nights' (P06), and the discovery or a suicide or suicide attempt when checking a cell appeared to be a considerable source of concern:

The big fear of any prison officer looking in the little spyhole at night, is finding [a suicide]. My friend *found* him, and that's the big fear. I *knew* when he shouted what was in there. Whereas when he did that he didn't know, and that's your huge fear at nights. It's looking in that little hatch and seeing what he saw.
(P06, Prison Officer)

Another participant similarly reflected upon the experience of finding a suicide or suicide attempt during a night shift:

There is nothing worse than lifting up a spyhole in a cell at night and seeing somebody hanging, there is *nothing* worse.
(P08, Chief Officer)

In this way, the chance of discovering a suicide appeared to be on many participants' minds when looking through spyholes at night time. Although the language used by participants when discussing this issue was quite expressive e.g. 'the fear of the spyhole' and 'there is *nothing* worse', it appeared that participants had resisted becoming consumed by a heightened awareness or fear of finding a suicide or other unnatural death. While these participants acknowledged their unease with checking cells at night, a pragmatic approach also emerged, with some observing that although they feel worried about what may lie behind the viewing panel, their professional obligation to check cells and respond to incidents served to counteract their hesitations. The Chief Officer participant quoted above concluded his discussion of the spyhole by commenting: 'It's a horrible feeling. But, you deal with it' (P08). Other participants similarly emphasised the duty to respond and the importance of resilience when suicides and other major incidents are discovered during a cell check:

> On a landing every night where the fella would check, he'd have 44 cells to check multiplied by three times every half hour. So you can imagine, 120-130 cells for you to check. If he was to say, 'I wonder is there someone hanging behind that door?' your job would be impossible. So you just kind of take your focus off it a bit.
> (P05, Prison Officer)

Moreover, the participant who described the 'fear of the spyhole on nights' (P06) also cautioned against surrendering to that fear, explaining that focusing on 'getting back on the horse' and resuming cell checks at night in the aftermath of his experience assisted in his continued performance of this task:

> I think it wasn't long after that I was back on nights. And I was kind of going 'Will I or won't I?' And I said, 'Look, I have to get back on the horse here.' And I do remember looking through the first hatches, I was scared stiff all night doing it, expecting to see it. I was nearly expecting to see it; you know preparing myself.

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> I know you say you're preparing yourself but you don't normally, but I was preparing every hatch I went to that I'm going to see something here. But I just said to myself, you have to get on with it, you know. And I did get on with it. (P06, Prison Officer)

6.3.4 Dealing with Prisoners' Bodies

Most participants reported some involvement with body handling when dealing with a prisoner's death. Common experiences included assisting with ligature removal, moving a body for medical assistance, and assisting with the removal of a body from the prison. Some participants underlined the importance of depersonalisation when handling or near a prisoner's body during the response to a death, asserting that such an approach enabled them to continue to perform their duties. Depersonalisation and detachment are common themes in the extant literature on the experiences of professionals involved in frequent body handling, such as funeral directors, paramedics and police officers (Charmaz, 1980; Palmer, 1983; Thompson, 1991; Karlsson and Christianson, 2003). In his research on the body handling experiences of funeral directors and morticians, Thompson (1991, p. 414) observes that these professionals preferred to focus on the technical aspects of their job 'rather than thinking about the person they are working on'. Similarly, some participants reported being unable to remember the deceased's name, but could recall in great detail the position, appearance or weight of the deceased's body. Moreover, one participant, who had encountered multiple deaths early in his career in what he described as 'a real baptism of fire' (P16), recalls advising a colleague who had recently experienced a suicide to change his perspective on the deceased and their appearance after death:

> I said, look, you have to look at it as a slab of meat. You got there on time, you checked and you checked a half an hour later and he was dead. But he said it was

the bubble. You've probably heard it before, there's a kind of bubble and they urinate themselves. And I said, you get used to that, and that's the way it is.
(P16, Prison Officer)

6.3.4.1 Dealing with Bodily Fluids

While depersonalisation and detachment aided some participants in dealing with bodies, memories of the 'sensory properties' (Ursano and McCarroll, 1990, p. 398) of the newly dead body endured for others. Much of these memories related to the visual and olfactory sensations of bodily fluids, which were noted as challenging or unpleasant:

> He had been there for a period of time, not a long period of time I heard afterwards, but a period of time. And the bodily fluids, the smell of which were less than pleasant, were dripping out the end of his trousers.
> (P12, Governor)

The presence of blood caused particular discomfort in this context. In their study of trauma in police work, Karlsson and Christianson (2003, p. 428) highlight the 'sight of damaged bodies and blood' as a stressor for police officers involved in body handling. Similarly, the visual sensation of blood and blood injuries caused much unease and distress for some participants:

> He had the wrists cut and body fluids and all that type of thing. It was so graphic, it wasn't nice. Going into the cell there was blood everywhere; it's not a nice thing. It's the worst I've had to do.
> (P08, Chief Officer)
>
> I find blood injuries far more traumatic to deal with. […] It's something that I find very hard to get used to, even after twenty years. I was a class officer in [a landing] years ago and we had a lifer who killed himself, but he bit his veins. He cut himself and he bit his tendons, bit them out of his arm and bit the blood vessels and was squeezing them. The place was like a fucking slaughterhouse; I'll never forget it. And he was squeezing his hands like Spiderman doing his webs; do you remember Spiderman would do that? [*Yeah*] And they were spurting blood everywhere. The

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cell would be not much smaller than this, but the floor was *that deep* with blood when we got into it.
(P09, Assistant Chief Officer)

Blood was particularly associated with suicides and self-harm. The visual sensations of suicides by exsanguination were more traumatic than those of suicides by hanging. The Chief Officer participant quoted above disclosed that he found suicides by hanging easier to deal with, explaining, 'He won't have cut the wrists and have blood all over the cell and body fluids everywhere; it's a horrible, horrible thing to do' (P08). Additionally, another participant, who had not experienced a self-inflicted death at the time of interview, reported that seeing 'the slashing of wrists' would be a 'disturbing factor' (P05).

In this way, the sensory stimulations associated with the bodily fluids of deceased prisoners presented a challenge to participants' efforts to detach themselves during the response process. That participants reported receiving limited training in body handling may be relevant in this context. In his study of paramedics' approaches to dealing with death Palmer (1983, p. 84) observes that training and education served to temper the 'gruesomeness' of deaths, transforming 'blood and guts and gore to signs to be surveyed, symptoms to be elicited, procedures to be initiated, radio contacts to be made and medical protocols to be followed'. The frequency of contact with death was also relevant. As dealing with death is not an everyday task for the Irish prison officer, they may not have developed a lens through which they can reinterpret the imagery and odours of 'the unusual and untimely dead' (Ursano and McCarroll, 1990, p. 397).

6.3.4.2 Dangerous Bodies

Some participants also emphasised the public health risks associated with dealing with deaths in custody. As noted above, many participants reported having physical contact with deceased prisoners' bodies. Crawley (2004a) finds that prison staff advocate for some degree of distance from prisoners, mindful of the safety and reputational risks that may follow closeness with prisoners. Similarly, proximity to a deceased prisoner's body was also understood to be dangerous. Those participants who spoke about the risks associated with prisoners' bodies pointed to the threat of blood-borne viruses and other infectious diseases when handling or near a body. Prisoners with a history of drug use were seen as particularly dangerous in this context. This threat resided in prisoners' bodily fluids, which participants risked coming into contact with during the response to the death:

> What I noticed was the individual had actually soiled himself and there was blood as well, so we were conscious of our own safety too, you see.
> (P03, Assistant Chief Officer)
>
> It's the blood, and the getting someone out of the cell and the vomit. And when you go into the cell it isn't ideal, you have to watch and be careful. Watch the cell and clear the area and make it safe.
> (P17, Nurse Officer)
>
> You're always conscious of AIDS and hepatitis and everything.
> (P13, Prison Officer)

While some participants recounted having contact with living prisoners' bodily fluids, most commonly from being spat at or having bodily fluids thrown at them by prisoners, these incidents did not appear to cause participants comparable concerns. Following death, bodies become symbols for 'disorder and decay', the antithesis of wellbeing and health (Komaromy, 2000, p. 300). Perceptions of prisoners' bodies as potential sources

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of disease shaped participants' interactions with the deceased prisoner's body. Like nursing staff (Quested and Rudge, 2003) and paramedics (Palmer, 1983), participants were mindful of the need to reduce the risk of contagion from the obligation to respond to deaths and near miss incidents:

> There could be blood and stuff everywhere, but you still have to go in and hold this guy while someone else cuts the ligature. Or get up there and cut it yourself. You just have to be careful whatever you're doing, and do it in a way so that you don't get exposed to anything that the prisoner may have.
> (P09, Assistant Chief Officer)

6.3.5 The Value of Experience

All participants reported receiving limited or no instruction on responding to deaths in custody during their induction period. Any training received was typically very brief, focusing on emergency response procedures or ligature removal practices: 'When I say we trained, it was *mentioned*' (P03); 'Yeah, you do receive some training on the knife alright' (P06). Three participants mentioned a manual or checklist for responding to deaths in custody, but never received training on these procedures:

> You were never trained in sort of what to do. There is a book there now, the deaths in custody book, and you can get the manual out and say, 'OK, this is number one, this is number two.' So like the manual is there if you want to read, but nobody has ever compiled a little course.
> (P14, Assistant Chief Officer)

Although minimal in scope, most participants were satisfied with the training they received for responding to deaths in custody. Some questioned the usefulness of further training in this context, preferring to learn from their own experiences of deaths and other

major incidents. For those who reported multiple encounters with prisoner deaths, the practicalities of the response process became easier with each incident:

> In crisis situations, the more often you deal with a crisis situation and handle it, every one after that gets easier. You improve, you know that sort of way. […] It's valuable experience.
> (P03, Assistant Chief Officer)

Multiple experiences of responding to deaths in the workplace can ease anxiety about future incidents (McCarroll et al., 1993; Dickinson et al., 1997; Henry, 2004). Participants with several deaths reported feeling less anxious about the possibility of encountering future incidents than those with single experiences. While some worried about the prospect of dealing with a more difficult incident in the future, overall most were confident in their ability to respond to further deaths in custody. In contrast with staff in research by Borrill et al. (2004) and Arnold (2005), participants were not concerned about future incidents, believing that their experiences served as useful preparation for any problems to come:

> I'm fortunate in so far as I've been through them at every level of my service, as an officer, a supervisor and as a governor. So I've built up that experience bank. And it's kind of whatever the Service throws at me regarding a death in custody I know I've dealt with that before. So it's that experience bank that I have that stands to me now.
> (P10, Governor)
>
> It's only with the experience and the years under my belt that I can sort of say, yeah, I'll be able to deal with a death much better now.
> (P11, Prison Officer)

Additionally, reflective learning was a common thread in some participants' discussions of learning from their experiences of responding to deaths in custody. While many participants reported participating in informal conversations with colleagues about the

response process in the immediate aftermath, this served as a means of unwinding or breaking tensions after the incident rather than as a review of practice. Group or one-to-one reflective learning activities, such as post-incident debriefs, were less common, with only two participants reporting experience of such an activity. Operational debriefs appeared to take place on an ad hoc basis, dependent on the interest of local management. Rather than viewing debriefs and reflection as avenues to discuss any emotions arising from the incident (Mackie, 2009; Knight, 2014), these participants saw these activities as an opportunity for operational learning. One governor participant described how he had introduced post-incident debriefs in his prison, advocating their value in the context of improving practice:

> I think debriefs are very important. I think the formal part is very important, but I think debriefs are too, where you sit down and talk to the people. There's a term for it now but I can't think of it, you know where the pressure is off but let's put out the same set of circumstances and see could we have done anything better here or what went wrong here. It's not about what any individual did. And in fairness, people bought into that very quickly when we did it. They did, and we had a really, really constructive meeting.
> (P15, Governor)

Other participants spoke about engaging in reflective practice as an individual:

> I just try and learn from it then. I'll *always* reflect on it, and see could we have done something better. […] Reflective practice is a great way to hone your skills, and to be more prepared or in a state of readiness if something happens again.
> (P17, Nurse Officer)

> I have gone through it in my mind to make sure that everything was right the first time, and that at every stage what I did I had I done correctly. But yeah, you would reflect back and say, what could have done better?
> (P04, Governor)

6.3.5.1 Learning from Colleagues' Experiences

Participants not only learned from their own encounters with deaths in custody, but also from those of their more experienced colleagues: 'You just deal with it. You watch the older staff and you do what they do' (P09); 'I watched how they did it over the years. How they saved lives' (P16). Similar to the officers in Crawley's (2004a) research, participants evaluated the actions of senior staff during the response to a death and modelled their own practice on those deemed competent. Some also highlighted the limits of training, arguing that some actions, particularly those related to prevention, were not taught in a classroom setting, but rather learned over time in the job or from experienced colleagues. Two participants offered the example of moving a suicidal or self-harming prisoner in with a prisoner who did not spend much time out of cell during unlock periods as a prevention approach that they learned from senior-ranking colleagues rather than during their induction training. Strategies such as this were underlined as more effective than some of the approaches taught at training.

For many participants, observing the practices of senior staff assisted in bridging any gaps in their practical knowledge, such as the operation of ligature knives. One participant reported that he was never trained in the operation of a ligature knife, but rather 'picked it up' (P08) after watching senior-ranking colleagues use it and relied on these observations when responding to his first suicide by hanging. Another participant recalled piecing together how suicides should be handled from hearing a small number of stories of self-inflicted deaths that had happened previously or elsewhere in the prison.

6.3.5.2 The Experienced Governor

As noted previously, all five governor participants had served in officer grades prior to their progression to management, and were thus positioned as 'Chief Officers' within Bryans' (2007) prison manager typology. Each recounted experiences of deaths in custody from their time working as officers, as well as governors. While the governors' roles in the response to a death in custody differs from those of staff in officer grades, the governor participants believed that their experiences in lower grades aided their work as managers:

> Based on my previous experiences with deaths in custody you have that intuitive gut reaction that you know what to do and when to do it, and it kind of falls into place. From that point of view, it benefits you when you're leading the staff, as I am now, in that sense, and they recognise that you've done it before and you know what you're doing and there's a bit of confidence that comes from that.
> (P10, Governor)

In this way, governors' experiences in lower grades were seen as highly valuable, with some participants asserting that a broad range of experiences of dealing with deaths and other major incidents as an officer aided their performance in responding to incidents as a governor. Time 'on the floor' (P12) was valued not only in the context of how governor participants viewed their own abilities to respond to deaths and other incidents, but also the abilities of their colleagues. On-the-job experience was viewed more favourably than educational qualifications. Those who lacked the 'war stories' (P07) that came with time spent working with prisoners and dealing with deaths in custody and other major incidents could find it difficult to negotiate acceptance to the governor group. One governor participant recalled attending a social event with a management colleague who had not spent time 'at the rough end' (P07), in addition to several experienced governors who had

served in officer grades like the participant. This participant described that when the group began to exchange stories of their encounters with deaths in custody and other incidents, he noticed that his colleague did not have any stories to tell. He explained:

> The fact that I have these stories to tell means I deserve to sit at this table. Whereas this man that we were talking about that doesn't have the stories, we don't believe he belongs in our group. He hasn't got the war stories, he hasn't got the experiences, he hasn't got the deaths in custody that we have.
> (P07, Governor)

6.3.6 Participants' Attitudes to Policies and Procedures for Responding to Deaths in Custody

Participants' accounts of their experiences of responding to prisoner deaths also shed light on their attitudes to policies and procedures, both in the context of prisoner deaths and more broadly. Previous research on prison staff has acknowledged their centrality in the implementation of policy and procedure (Jacobs, 1978; Vuolo and Kruttschnitt, 2008; Liebling et al., 2011; Lerman and Page, 2012). In this way, prison staff are the 'street-level bureaucrats' (Lipsky, 1980) of the prison system, responsible for the application of policies and procedures. When asked about the best approach to responding to deaths in custody and any changes to the current or previous processes that they might suggest, a strong consensus emerged among officer grade participants that additional rules or procedures in the form of Standard Operating Procedures, Governor's or Chief's Orders and other policies were undesirable. Some participants were wary of the possibility of new procedures, believing an abundance of policies and protocols would tie the emergency response up in bureaucracy and act as a barrier to action: 'Procedures are good and all that, but there can sometimes be too much procedure where we need to just respond' (P16).

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These participants were also frustrated with the aims and outcomes of procedures, believing them to be concerned with changes at the 'top level', ignoring practicalities for staff 'on the ground'. These complaints related to issues of practicality, with participants highlighting examples where cell and landing designs were incompatible with the requirements of Standard Operating Procedures. Changes to procedures and policies regarding deaths in custody were also viewed as seeking to augment or correct participants' practice. This was a source of contention for some, who felt that protocols were emphasised at the expense of support for staff:

> There should be more emphasis on supporting the staff, and there should be less emphasis on the timeframe that it has to be done in.
> (P08, Chief Officer)

Officer participants also spoke about feeling excluded from the process of formulating procedures and policies for deaths in custody. Crawley (2004a) similarly notes that officers in her research felt that they were rarely consulted about the regimes and rules under which they worked. Moreover, officer participants believed rules and policies were drafted at a distance, without their input on what would and would not work 'on the ground', and were cautious about the introduction of additional procedures and policies for responding to deaths in custody that did not take account of their experiences and views. One participant emphasised the importance of collaboration in this context:

> I accept that you do need Standard Operational Procedures for deaths that people follow, and you need training, and you need people to follow instruction because situations have to be dealt with and you have to deal with them as a team, singing from the same hymn sheet. I get that. But there's also an area where it's important to have other people's input, regardless of their rank or their service, or where they came from or their gender. You know, people have a lot to offer, and surprisingly enough are more than willing to make the effort, given the opportunity.
> (P14, Assistant Chief Officer)

Governor participants were similarly wary about the introduction of further policies and formalisation. Unlike officer participants however, governors were not worried about the impact of new procedures on their practice, but instead were apprehensive about the intention of policies and their effective implementation:

> Policies will only go so far with things like deaths. Policies are very, very important, so you have a guideline on how to handle situations, but there's no point in pushing through massive policy or having massive policy change when in reality they're not giving the policies enough scrutiny to see do they actually work on the floor. But you're pushing it through because there's a political agenda on whatever behalf, be it the Inspector of Prisons, be it HQ, you know.
> (P12, Governor)

6.3.6.1 Eschewing Procedure: The Pre-eminence of Common Sense?

Common sense emerged as a prominent theme in officer grade participants' discussions of their attitudes to policies and procedures for responding to prisoner deaths. Due to the 'experience-laden nature' of their duties, prison officers tend to regard much of their work as common sense, favouring tried and tested approaches over new procedures and policies (Liebling et al., 2011, p. 205). While procedures were mentioned during interviews, most described the process of responding to deaths in custody as firmly based in common sense:

> You see we have the radios, one person goes for the keys and gets the doors open and gets the knife. Like that's all fairly grand and to be honest I think sometimes procedures can take over from common sense. Common sense is ten fellas don't run for the keys, there's no need for ten fellas. The ACO makes sure the ambulance is called. There was a problem a few years ago with an ambulance, one person thought the other person had done it, one of those situations. That little area is tidied up. But it's common sense, you know.
> (P03, Assistant Chief Officer)

When a death takes place in let's say normal circumstances, such as they're in their cells and the prison is locked up, it's fairly simple and straightforward as to what to do thereafter.
(P02, Retired)

Officer grade participants' preference for common sense is most clearly seen in their attitudes to cell checks. As discussed above, checking cells was understood as an important means of incident detection and suicide prevention. The current Standard Operating Procedures instruct that 'ordinary' and protection prisoners should be checked at hourly intervals during periods of lockdown, with special observation prisoners and prisoners in Safety Observation or Close Supervision Cells (all referred to by participants as 'special obs') to be checked every fifteen minutes (Irish Prison Service, 2012a). While participants were aware of the rules for checking prisoners during lockdown times, some believed that these were impractical and unrealistic. Tensions between procedure and what common sense suggests might be more appropriate is a familiar 'grey area' for staff (Liebling, 2008a; Liebling et al., 2011). Participants' objections focused on the negative impact of strict application of the rules on prisoners, maintaining that frequent checks would agitate prisoners:

You're supposed to do your checks every 15 minutes. It's physically impossible to do that on a special obs prisoner; it's physically impossible to check him every 15 minutes because you'd be going all night. You can't do that, because they're going to start going, 'What are you looking in again for?'
(P09, Assistant Chief Officer)

The possibility of annoyance or irritation for prisoners was not the only justification offered for this approach to cell checks. Cheliotis (2006) observes that criminal justice professionals may exercise discretion to circumvent policies that may produce harmful or inhumane outcomes. Similarly, as one participant describes:

We check the prisoners at night, we open a little flap to see them, and they could be in bed asleep or be in bed dead; it's very difficult for me to tell the difference or anybody else for that matter. Now if you were to apply to the letter of the law and check and make sure everything is OK, you would have to wake up the prisoner to see is he alive, which is absolutely grotesque, that's torture when someone is asleep. […] And it's a hard one to answer because you are caught between a rock and a hard place. If you give the door a kick, make a bit of noise and wake up the inmate, well grand he's alive, but he'll be like an antichrist because you have ruined his night's sleep, and the noise you make will wake up the whole wing, and that's not right. I know you can say well yes, I made sure he was alive, I'm a great officer, no blame can be attached to me, but that's absolutely inhumane, sadistic.
(P11, Prison Officer)

Thus, the preferred practice was to eschew procedure in favour of a common sense approach:

There's a certain amount of cop on when you're dealing with these people. I used to check every hour and a half, but I *would* check them.
(P09, Assistant Chief Officer)

While Liebling et al. (2011, p. 8) observe that prison staff often 'take for granted' their common sense in the context of relational and 'peacemaking' skills, participants' reflections on their approaches to checking cells demonstrate the high value that they placed upon common sense and 'cop on' in cell checking. Moreover, officer participants' attitudes in this context demonstrate their participation in shaping operational regulation in the Irish prison system into meaningful practice through interpretation and reconstruction of Standard Operating Procedures. It is important to note however that practices such as those described above have been repeatedly highlighted in external investigations into deaths in custody. The Inspector of Prisons has underlined failures to check prisoners in accordance with procedure in many reports (Inspector of Prisons, 2014a, 2015b, 2016a). Similar concerns about time between cell checks have also been raised at recent inquests (Humphreys, 2013; Naughton, 2014).

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6.4 Maintaining Control: Managing Emotion When Responding to Deaths in Custody

This section considers emotion management during responses to deaths in custody. It explores participants' accounts of professional 'feeling rules' (Hochschild, 1983) for emergency responses to prisoner deaths, noting the role of detachment in facilitating individual and collective action. The reputational and operational risks associated with transgressions of these 'feeling rules' are also discussed.

6.4.1 Emotions and the Professional Response to Prisoner Deaths

As discussed above, participants characterised their responses to deaths in custody as swift and automatic, focused on 'kicking into gear', relying on experience and minimising risk. Participants' accounts of their experiences of responding to prisoners' deaths reveal little room for emotional reactions during this process. Responses to incidents were evaluated with regard to the emotional display of the staff involved. A good response was one that saw staff maintain emotional neutrality throughout, focusing on procedures rather than panicking or 'falling to pieces' (P08):

> There wasn't a sense of panic in the air, there was a sense of urgency in the air, but not panic. There wasn't panic or anything. A lot of that was to do with the type of people who were there at the time. There could have been panic, but there wasn't. It was an effective response.
> (P02, Retired)

> It's kind of routine, or it was at that stage because it's what we've been doing. I was seventeen years in [the prison] at that stage. We do it as a matter of course,

it's second nature almost. So as regards it being an emotional experience, no, it wasn't.
(P10, Governor)

Good responses were those that were calm and effective. In this way, participants appeared to work under an 'efficiency credo' (Rutherford, 1993), emphasising action, competence and the fulfilment of their professional obligation to respond to deaths. This approach served to shape the 'feeling rules' (Hochschild, 1983) for participants' encounters with deaths, with emotions that might disrupt the response process, such as panic, fear and sadness, regarded as unacceptable. Participants managed their emotions during a death in custody in accordance with Bolton's (2005) prescriptive emotion management, motivated by professional expectations and concerns of status. Knight (2014, p. 161) observes a strong emphasis on professionalism in probation officers' emotion management, noting that being a professional was understood as 'being about the concealment of feelings'. Similarly, participants also appeared to manage their emotional display when dealing with a death in accordance with a professional expectation of tight control of emotions. Deaths in custody were seen as requiring a 'business-like' (P01) approach, which left no room for emotions regarded as inappropriate and unprofessional:

> There's no point in me blubbering in the corner getting really upset over something that happened when actually a job still has to be done. Who's going to do the job then?
> (P07, Governor)
>
> You can't get too much emotional about it. Like, I brought a fella from [the prison] to [the hospital], and we were told he was going to die on the way. Be prepared, and he was dying, like. But you can't get emotional.
> (P16, Prison Officer)
>
> I actually didn't really feel; how can I say it? I felt nonplussed about it.
> (P17, Nurse Officer)

6.4.2 'Getting on with the Job': Emotional Detachment and Responses to Deaths in Custody

The professional obligation to control and suppress inappropriate emotions during the response to a prisoner's death saw participants pursuing a strategy of detachment when dealing with these incidents. Crawley (2004a) explains that emotional detachment is held in high esteem among prison officers, who learn to conform to occupational expectations to deny and quash the emotions generated by their work. For deaths in custody, emotional detachment was seen as a means of conforming to the professional 'feeling rules' that obliged staff to quell any inappropriate emotions. In this way, detachment was advocated as a means of 'getting on with the job':

> I'm always saying to people; an emotional response isn't the way to go. Try and step back and just detach yourself from it, and just follow the training or follow the guidelines of your checklist. Take the emotion out of it, because you mightn't have time to be emotional. Deal with the incident now. You can deal with your emotions later on.
> (P04, Governor)

While detachment emerged as the prevailing emotion management strategy among participants, some recognised that performing and maintaining detachment during responses could be difficult. Reflecting upon his encounters with prisoners' deaths and how he remained detached throughout multiple experiences, one participant observed:

> It's how you deal with the situation; it's how you deal with the feelings that it brings. I've seen staff snap and break down, completely go off and take sick leave because they can't deal with what's going on. It's a huge emotional thing. Like, when you think about it, say you're involved in finding a swinger, it's an awful thing to find because there's normally body fluids around and blood and all that. It's not the easiest to deal with I suppose.
> (P09, Assistant Chief Officer)

6.4.3 Keeping up Appearances: Managing Emotional Display When Responding to Deaths in Custody

The expectation of emotional detachment during the response to a prisoner's death also directed participants' management of their emotional display to colleagues and prisoners. Crawley (2004b, p. 411) argues that working in prison demands a 'performative attitude', obliging officers to engage in 'impression management' (Goffman, 1959) to appear confident and unaffected by their experiences at work. Like staff in Crawley's study, participants knew which emotions were acceptable and which were not. Emotions that transgressed the professional 'feeling rules' could not be displayed during the response to prisoner deaths. Moreover, for some participants, these 'feeling rules' appeared to be deeply embedded, with these participants maintaining that they could not imagine a circumstance where they would be emotionally impacted by a prisoner's death to the degree that they would be unable to manage their emotional display in accordance with the 'feeling rules'. For those that felt inappropriate emotions creeping in and their display faltering, 'surface acting' (Hochschild, 1983) was necessary: 'If you did feel sad or whatever about it, you bloody wouldn't show it!' (P05); 'I'm in the middle of a prison, and I would bite my tongue off before I would cry in there' (P14). Suicides and deaths of younger prisoners were the most likely to cause trouble for participants in this context.

Participants were also mindful of prisoners' perceptions of their emotional display during the response to the death of a prisoner. Prisoners, particularly those who were close friends or relations of the deceased, were seen as having their own expectations regarding staff emotional performance:

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> [Prisoners] want you to be calm at all times. They want you to be in charge. They want you to show respect. So yeah, they will look to the staff, no matter what your rank, to look after things during incidents. Look, if you want to flake out, flake out when you're away from everything. But don't do it there in front of them.
> (P07, Governor)

Failure to manage emotional display in accordance with professional expectations and 'feeling rules' threatened staff reputations and status. Just as Crawley (2004a) observes that officers are at risk of acquiring a 'spoiled identity' (Goffman, 1963) if they admit feelings of anxiety or stress, participants who appeared to be unable to keep their emotions in check were also in danger of stigmatisation. Indeed, displaying unacceptable emotions during the response to a death was regarded not only as inappropriate, but also unprofessional, serving to highlight an individual's inability to 'get on with the job' and prioritise the emergency response over their emotional reactions. As one governor explains, the reputational risks in this context were significant:

> I can recall one or two previous governors that didn't cope well in these situations. And we knew who they were. And because we knew they didn't cope well we didn't involve them as much as we should. And that actual death in custody was one of them. Because there was a governor at the time who we knew didn't cope well in such situations, myself and another governor kind of took over and said, 'Leave it to us, we'll look after it.' One, because he's not overly confident doing it, and two, because it would have had an adverse impact on him emotionally, and the combination of that would have impacted our ability to respond to the death. So from that point of view, we tend to pigeonhole people. And he was pigeonholed as being less confident with incidents because of his reactions.
> (P10, Governor)

Similarly, another governor participant underlined the dangers associated with an inappropriate emotional display. Recalling an incident early in his career of over twenty years, he described the enduring reputational harm experienced by a colleague who became upset and 'freaked out' during the response to an incident:

He's still reminded to this day about it. And it happened eighteen years ago. There you go, I can even tell you when it happened. Yeah, he's still slagged about it 18 years later.
(P07, Governor)

6.4.4 'Don't Flake Out on Us': Managing Emotion as a Team

Transgressions of the feeling rules for responding to deaths were not just risky for an individual, but also for their colleagues. As discussed above, the expectation to assist colleagues and collectively respond in times of crisis is a cornerstone of prison staff culture (Kauffman, 1988). Consequently, the response to a death in custody was typically a collective effort, with participants assisting and contributing to the actions of their colleagues. In this way, staff that failed to manage their emotions in accordance with professional feeling rules not only risked reputational damage, but also disrupted the actions of their colleagues. Invoking theatrical language, Crawley (2004a) observes that in working together, staff become members of a 'performance team' (Goffman, 1959, p. 48), expected to work harmoniously and support their colleagues' performance. Staff who allow the intrusion of inappropriate emotions, such as sadness or panic regarding a prisoner's death, to affect their emotional display, also interrupted their colleagues' performance, and thus the operational response to the incident:

I can't afford an officer to get all blubbery and upset if someone is dead. I will look after them and I understand, but I need them to hold themselves right just until I know what's going on, and then I can move them out. […] You can't afford for some fella to be getting upset like that. Because is he gonna flake in the middle of something and then you're on your bloody own?
(P07, Governor)

Crawley (2004a, p. 150) describes this process as 'corpsing', wherein a prison officer 'freezes' and is unable to remain emotionally detached while at work. One participant's

description of a colleague who 'fell apart' (P08) during the response to a suicide by hanging illustrates the impact of staff who are unable to maintain an image of emotional detachment in an operational context. As the senior-ranking officer, it was this participant's responsibility to manage the response. While he directed his other colleagues to assist him with ligature removal, he sent this particular officer to another location in the prison. He recalled seeing a 'look of sheer fear and horror on her face' when he first arrived at the prisoner's cell to respond to the incident, and accordingly, judged her as having little operational value: 'She was just gone, her mind was totally gone then'. While she had been dispatched elsewhere, her inappropriate emotional response during the incident had a significant impact on this participant's actions in responding to the suicide. As he recounted, he was not only focusing on the emergency response, but also his colleague:

> Funnily enough, even when I was cutting this guy down, and I was sweating because it was a few minutes – but it felt like an hour, because the sheet was rolled up so tight and was so thick – she was on my mind, because I had to put her into my office and say ring an ambulance and to contact me, that I needed her to be on the radio and answer me when I called her on the radio. And I was calling her on the radio for this and that. And I was actually thinking of her as well, while also thinking about getting him down, getting the medics sorted and in to work on him, and getting the ambulance. And then thinking I better go in and make sure she's alright.
> (P08 Assistant Chief Officer)

As this participant described, his colleague's diversion from the professional expectation of emotional detachment and an image of competence when dealing with a death had a significant impact on the response to this incident. When asked about the prospect of working with this officer again during the response to a death or other major incident, this participant replied, 'I would prefer somebody else.'

6.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented research findings on participants' experiences of responding to prisoner deaths. It opened with analysis of participants' experiences and perspectives on responding to different causes of deaths. Next, participants' accounts of the operational process of responding to deaths in custody were explored. This section examined participants' perspectives on the necessity of automatic, swift and collective responses, responding to deaths at night, body handling, and the value of experience and policies. The chapter then moved to consider participants' accounts of emotion management during operational responses to prisoner deaths, describing the role of shared expectations regarding the individual and collective management of emotions in shaping the response to a prisoner's death. The next chapter examines participants' accounts of the immediate aftermath of a death in custody.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SHIFTING FOCUS: THE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH OF A DEATH IN CUSTODY

7.1 Introduction

This chapter considers participants' accounts of the immediate aftermath of the death of a prisoner. While the deceased prisoner remains a central focus during the emergency response to their death, participants' recollections of the hours and days following the conclusion of the response process reveal a marked shift in focus, away from the deceased prisoner and towards participants and their colleagues. This occurs in operational, professional and emotional contexts, as participants began to examine the outcomes of the incident at both an individual and institutional level. This chapter commences with a discussion of the drive for operational continuity in the immediate aftermath a prisoner's death, describing participants' pursuit of the swift resumption of the daily prison routine. As will be discussed, the deceased prisoner became a peripheral figure in this endeavour, as staff attempted to get 'back to business' in the immediate aftermath of his or her death. Next, this chapter explores participants' concerns regarding the professional consequences of a prisoner's death. Here, the perception of the deceased prisoner as a source of professional risk will be examined, as the outcome of the death becomes an increasingly significant concern for staff. Finally, participants' emotional responses to the incident will be considered. Following on from the discussion of emotion in the previous chapter, this chapter will review emotion management and performance in the immediate aftermath of a prisoner's death, noting developments in the professional feeling rules. It

will highlight emotion management as an increasingly collective act among colleagues, wherein performances of humour and, in some circumstances, empathy are facilitated.

7.2 Switching Priorities: Staff Concerns in the Aftermath of a Death in Custody

Following the conclusion of their role in the emergency response to a death in custody, participants recalled a shift in their concerns, with their attentions drawn away from the deceased towards the pursuit of operational continuity within the prison in the immediate aftermath and the professional consequences of the death. This section explores participants' experiences and perspectives in this context. As their focus pivoted from the death, participants concerns became increasingly self-referential, focusing on the impact of the incident in an operational and professional context. A common theme in their discussions of these issues was a preoccupation with risk, both at an individual and organisational level.

7.2.1 Operational Resilience

In the immediate aftermath of a death in custody, participants' attentions turned away from the deceased and the emergency response to focus on the restoration of the daily routine of the prison. The importance of getting 'back to business' (P01) was highlighted by many of the cohort during the interviews, with participants underlining the need for continuity of routine and recovery of the 'control factor' (P04) following a prisoner fatality. As such, a good response to a death in custody was characterised as one that not only adhered to standard operational procedures, but also saw a quick resumption of regular staff duties: 'All the staff did everything like they were supposed to do, and people

were back to work *very* quickly' (P15). In this context, participants particularly emphasised the domestic tasks performed by prison staff (Crawley, 2004a), such as unlocking cells at meal times, as necessitating a speedy reinstatement of the prison's routine:

> Everything has to keep going. It's one of those services where things *can't* stop. So even if that incident had happened in the middle of us feeding the prison, we'd have to continue the main operation. […] We just can't stop. At that time there was almost 800 in [the prison]. So we can't put the lives of 800 people on hold because of one [death].
> (P10, Governor)

> The prison was locked down, and within an hour two o'clock would have come, and at two o'clock they would have fallen into the exact same regime as every other day. That's just the way it is. It stays going, it *has* to stay going. It doesn't matter what happens. Even after a huge riot you go back to, eight o'clock: breakfast; nine o'clock: school; etc. It has to, it won't work otherwise.
> (P13, Prison Officer)

> Your focus has to be getting the prison back to normal as soon as possible. Because we'd have 800 prisoners there, so we can't just stop the day. I'd have had 60 prisoners in the area where that prisoner was murdered. So I'd have to get them out and get them fed for breakfast. And the day must go on so.
> (P04, Governor)

These excerpts illustrate the significance of the operational resilience of the prison in the immediate aftermath of a prisoner's death. In pursuing operational resilience, staff concerns, particularly those in management and supervisory positions, are recalibrated to focus on wider operational issues beyond the deceased prisoner. As one participant explains:

> I find that with a lot of deaths, the person who is dead is almost secondary very quickly, because there's other stuff going on. I've found that in all the deaths I was involved in. […] So this fella's death was actually secondary then. It actually became secondary. You know, it happened, but I had a lot of other issues to deal with, most importantly keeping the prisoners from wrecking the prison. So his death then was the last thing on my mind, and I mean, the *last thing* on my mind.
> (P07, Governor)

Moreover, safeguarding operational resilience was not just a case of ensuring that lock up times and meals remained on schedule. Procedural issues relating to accountability and investigations were also a dominant concern, particularly for managers, whose attentions were drawn beyond the immediate aftermath of the death, to 'balancing off' (P10) the need to protect the long-term resilience of the prison against liability and reputational damage.

7.2.1.1 'Getting on with the Job'

This focus on operational resilience also required individual staff to remain internally resilient following a death in custody. Recent research indicates that prison staff can maintain high levels of personal resilience following self-inflicted deaths in custody, near misses and incidents of self-harm (Ludlow et al., 2015). Indeed, a similarly strong consensus emerged within the participant cohort on this issue. Many participants spoke of the expectation for staff to 'get on with the job' (P01, P03, P04, P07, P10), 'get back on the horse' (P06), 'get straight back to work' (P16), and get 'back to brass tacks' (P17). As one participant elaborates:

> If you have a death in custody, no matter what it is, if it's a suicide or a murder or natural causes, you have to be resilient and get on with it. You do the job and get back on. And everybody will tell you in a jail, 'get back to normal'. (P04, Governor)

Analogies were drawn to similar professionals in this context, most frequently police and emergency services personnel, with detachment, indifference and a 'battlefield mentality' (P04) emphasised as necessary in safeguarding operational continuity within the prison:

> A fireman could tell you the most horrific things that they've had to do after car crashes and so on, and they just get on with it. They get on with it, and we're no different to them, you know. (P07, Governor)

When recounting this process, some participants described perspectives that pointed to indifference and detachment. Crawley (2004a, p. 157) observes that officers may 'shrug their shoulders' or take a 'good riddance attitude' in the aftermath of prisoner suicides, using the language of there being 'one less' prisoner to deal with. In addition, studies of emergency personnel acknowledge derogatory language and objectification as bolstering resilience among staff and ensuring their ability to continue performing their duties (Palmer, 1983; Scott, 2007, 2013). Similarly, the perspectives of participants in the current study reflected attitudes of indifference and a language of objectification:

> It's just another number gone off. As far as the prison is concerned someone has actually left and the jail just gets on with its day-to-day business, you know.
> (P03, Assistant Chief Officer)
>
> In jail terms, I'd always say if your numbers are reduced, if you went to a guard and took a prisoner out somewhere, you'd say 'one off'. It would mean one off the numbers. So you just say 'one off the landing', and it was just that he is dead and he's gone.
> (P04, Governor)
>
> From an officers' point of view, it's 'you pack 'em and stack 'em.' It's just a case of OK, it's done and dusted. We have to move on; we've a jail to run.
> (P14, Assistant Chief Officer)

In this way, detachment from the incident and the deceased prisoner was viewed as an operational necessity, helping prison staff to work towards easing the wing or entire prison back to its everyday activities. For those with multiple experiences, the transition from focusing on responding to the deceased prisoner to 'cracking on with the job' (P04) and confronting the 'bigger picture' (P07) was characterised as becoming easier with each experience. Moreover, while less experienced participants recalled initially feeling

somewhat uncomfortable with the push to 'get on with the job' and work to resume the daily schedule of the prison, the importance of resilience at both an officer and institutional level was acknowledged.

7.2.1.2 Mitigating and Negotiating the Impact of the Death on Prisoners

The drive to ensure operational resilience following the death of a prisoner arose from a recognition that deaths in custody could have an immediate transformative effect on the mood and relationships in the prison, with such incidents described as heightening tensions and vulnerabilities among prisoners. Safeguarding operational resilience thus obliges prison staff to closely monitor prisoners' responses to the incident: 'You're watching to see what else is happening around, to see is there going to be a negative reaction' (P02). Threats to the restoration of routine did not just encompass aggression directed at staff; participants also had to manage the relationships between prisoners, particularly following non-natural deaths. One participant recalled an incident following a fatal overdose, in which friends of the deceased violently attacked another prisoner because they believed he was responsible, having given him 'too much gear' (P16). Prisoners' emotional responses to a death in custody were thus viewed as an operational risk; their behaviour emerges as a hazard that must be effectively managed to get the prison 'back on track'. Another participant described this process as 'cleaning up the consequences' (P07), explaining:

> It was very full on, because we had some very serious criminals being very, very upset and we had to calm them down and get them thinking. And even on the Sunday it was really, really dodgy. It nearly went up in the church, *nearly*. When I say 'went up', we nearly had a huge incident in the church over one of his friends giving a speech from the altar. We thought we were gonna lose the prison. […]

So that's actually the priority. The priority is to keep this prison from not getting pulled down around our ears. We need to keep this thing contained.
(P07, Governor)

In addition to aggression and violence, participants also highlighted the problem of the possibility of a prisoner's suicide precipitating further self-inflicted deaths, suicide attempts or self-harm among the prison population in the immediate aftermath. Ludlow et al. (2015, p. 57) observe that a 'defensive professional and institutional reorientation' typically follows a prisoner suicide, as staff orientate their activities towards suicide prevention. Similarly, participants viewed potential suicide contagion as an obstacle in their attempts to stabilise the atmosphere, a problem that required additional effort to overcome:

You're also watching then that the other prisoners have probably heard and copped what's happened. So they also have to be watched. […] because sometimes – I don't know if there's any evidence to back it up – when a suicide happens in the jail there's usually one or two more. […] we're always watching them now, and any of them you thought were vulnerable you'd keep an eye on them even more because it might have put the idea even more into their heads, you know.
(P06, Prison Officer)

It's always the worry that it would trigger other people to do something similar. So for a day or two after a death in custody we are always ultra, ultra-cautious and ultra-vigilant. We'd bring on extra staff on nights sometimes just to have extra bodies patrolling and checking, just to make sure nobody did anything daft.
(P11, Prison Officer)

Quite often there'll be a knock on as well, you'll get self-harmers after that, you'll get other people attempting. I don't know what the connection is, you're just really aware that it can happen again.
(P14, Assistant Chief Officer)

Although suicides and suicide attempts were believed by many within the cohort to provoke additional incidents and, as one participant described, 'come in threes' (P03), it appears that participants were more unsure about possible explanations for this perceived

phenomenon. Some drew upon what Cheng et al. (2014) describe as contagion-as-cluster and contagion-as-affiliation to explain this behaviour:

> I suppose prisoners kind of dwell on it. In that time inside the cell they do a lot of thinking I suppose. They see probably their friends taking their own lives, and maybe they're thinking that there's no hope for themselves and that the easiest way out is to do what they did, you know.
> (P03, Assistant Chief Officer)

The discussion above illustrates that neutralising the risks to operational resilience posed by prisoners' aggression and vulnerabilities requires a more relational approach to the maintenance of control and order. The significance of staff-prisoner relationships and interpersonal engagement in the effective conservation of order is a prominent theme within the literature on prison work (Crawley, 2004a; Liebling, 2004; Arnold, 2008; Drake, 2008; Liebling et al., 2011). While indifference and detachment were seen as essential for the protection of personal resilience, participants acknowledged the role of interpersonal engagement with prisoners when seeking to restore normality within the prison and avoid further incidents:

> I'd be wearing out shoes and wearing out vocal chords, a few of us would be. Just talking to them about it. […] by god did you need throat lozenges afterwards! [laughing]
> (P01, Retired)

> These [deaths] were really full on. All the negotiating and all the talking […] you almost crowd them. And you talk to them, and keep talking to them, gauge how they're doing.
> (P07, Governor)

> It's a matter of talking to them, explaining what happened, without obviously divulging too much, and addressing the aggression, it's quite often expressed in aggression. The following day then some of them were quite emotional because they were friendly with both parties involved so there was a bit of uncertainty about what happened and what didn't happen. So it's about managing the personal relationships after that.
> (P10, Governor)

This tension between involvement and detachment is discussed in the extant literature on the experiences of professionals involved in deathwork (Lewis, 2005; Hopkinson et al., 2005; Rowe and Regehr, 2010; Wenzel et al., 2011). Just as nurses accept that interaction with bereaved families is codified into procedures for caring for the dying or deceased (Lewis, 2005), interpersonal engagement with prisoners was recognised as the best approach for softening the atmosphere and renegotiating order after a death in custody. Some participants suggested that the nature of staff-prisoner relationships in the Irish Prison Service facilitated this relational approach to the protection of operational resilience. In this context, a number of prisons, Limerick and Arbour Hill prisons in particular, were praised for their positive staff-prisoner relationships. Another participant maintained that the quality of staff-prisoner relationships in Ireland expedites the return to normality, thus bolstering operational resilience:

> It's a very different relationship in the Irish Prison Service. We are quite envied around the world by other prison services, because we have good prisoner-staff relationships. It's much more open and relaxed. It's only when there is a problem that everybody goes to their side of the room, and there is a line in the sand. And then there is a bit of hullabaloo or a disturbance, and then the air is cleared quite quickly. So I think the relationship between the Irish prison officer and the Irish prisoner is much better.
> (P04, Governor)

7.2.1.3 Operational Resilience and the Problematic Body

The presence of the body of the deceased prisoner in the prison also emerges as a potential threat to operational resilience. When recalling their experiences of the immediate aftermath of a prisoner's death, many participants highlighted the quick removal of the body from the prison as facilitating a speedy return to normality: 'It allows the prisoner

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division to return to normal' (P04). The longer the body remained within the walls of the prison, the more of an anomaly it becomes, and thus a greater source of risk to the protection of operational resilience. Its swift exit from the prison was therefore a necessity:

> Can the body be moved? That's our priority; can we move the body out of here so we can open up this prison? And if the answer is no, then we have to say, 'Well Christ, we're gonna have to have a contingency now, how are we gonna work this?'
> (P07, Governor)
>
> We try and get them to the hospital as soon as possible. You get them out as quick as you can.
> (P03, Assistant Chief Officer)

In this way, participants perceived the body as an object to be moved, understood in terms of the logistical challenges presented by its relocation: 'We would take the body out, through the lunch hour when everyone is locked up' (P01). Death creates distance from the body, facilitating disengagement from the personhood and identity of the deceased (Hallam et al., 1999). For professionals involved in deathwork, the process of death sees the deceased redefined as a 'body', 'corpse' or 'cadaver' (Smith and Kleinman, 1989; Scott, 2013).

Scott (2007, p. 360) observes that the 'potentially polluting body' must be managed and controlled by those working with dead bodies. However, through the process of death the prisoner's body enters the custody and management of professionals and agencies outside the prison, and the power and control that prison staff maintained over the prisoner is eroded in his or her death:

> [I]f he is there, and he is dead, and the ambulance crew won't take him, well now I have a problem. I have to wait until the Guards are satisfied that there is no foul

play suspected. I have to wait on somebody to come from the undertakers or the mortuary to come and take the body away.
(P04, Governor)

The body, if he is deceased, is moved *after* the Gardaí have been called and examined it. The body is not moved before then.
(P12, Governor)

In dying, the prisoner is no longer what Foucault (1979, p. 136) describes as a 'docile body', and cannot be 'subjected, used, transformed or improved' by prison staff, but rather remains at the mercy of the power and procedures of other professionals and agencies. This curtailment of power caused much frustration, and some participants recalled attempts to circumvent procedures such as the requirement to postpone removal until the conclusion of a police examination of the scene by engaging in misrepresentation and pretending that the deceased was still alive. Bradbury (1996, 1999) draws upon Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical analysis of social life as theatre to describe the interaction between professionals involved in deathwork and bodies. She observes that these professionals engage in a performance for an audience, typically relatives of the deceased, acting out a theatrical representation of the body. Scott (2013) additionally highlights the methods of wrapping and positioning bodies by emergency department nurses, noting that this process is guided by sensitivity to relatives. While participants in the current study reported engaging in similar theatrical representations, their motivations were not as altruistic:

I had a fellow before, he was dead alright and the nurse said to me 'he's dead', and I said 'no he's not, keeping working on him'. And I had said to the officer who was on the landing, 'As soon as the ambulance crew come in tell me because I'm going to tell the nurse to start giving him CPR.' And he was like a board. So I said, 'Thank god you are here, I think I felt a slight pulse.' And he went over and he said, 'No he is dead.' And I said, 'No, you're not qualified to tell me he is dead.' And he said, 'I'm the Chief.' And he pulled up your man's shirt on the bed and said, 'You see those marks on his body there?' And I said, 'Yeah what's that?' And he said, 'That's rigor mortis, he is dead.' I just wanted to get rid of the body.

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I wasn't worried about whether he was dead or not, I just didn't want the problem in the prison.
(P04, Governor)

He was dead in the cell, but we can't say that because the ambulance won't take him then. So he has to die outside the prison, do you see? [*Yeah*] So I got him out and was doing CPR, and the next thing I was pressing and I broke his fucking rib! Bollocks! [laughing] I kept going, but he was dead.
(P09, Assistant Chief Officer)

7.2.2 Evaluating the Personal Consequences of a Prisoner's Death

In the immediate aftermath of a prisoner's death, the atmosphere and mood among staff in the prison was inward-looking, as individual and collective attentions were recalibrated to evaluate the consequences of the incident. The circumstances of the death were assessed with reference to the possibility and repercussions of personal liability, causing an 'electric atmosphere' (P14) and a heightened tension among staff. Personal accountability is strongly emphasised within prison work and governance (Poole and Regoli, 1980; Kauffman, 1988; Crawley, 2004a), and participants characterised their thoughts during the days following the death as almost exclusively dominated by concerns about 'self-preservation' (P09) and personal consequences:

A prison officer's worry is about, 'How am I going to come out of this? Fuck, did I do my checks? Did I check him? Am I going to be held responsible for this?' It's normally *never* about the prisoner dying. It's about, 'Am I going to be alright?' They have to think like that.
(P09, Assistant Chief Officer)

A lot of fear and concern would be that it's something you have done or haven't done that has led to this. And people really want to try and cover their arse basically [laughing]. They always say in the Prison Service, ABC: always be covered. And DEF is don't ever forget.
(P04, Governor)

I think you are concerned that you're going to be held responsible for this; that somehow the buck will stop with you and you'll get the blame for this and you'll get the rap for this.
(P14, Assistant Chief Officer)

> You're always sort of conscious, what if I did this or what if I had done that? Or should I have done this or that?
> (P11, Prison Officer)

The consequences of being found to be in some way responsible for a prisoner's death were exclusively discussed in the context of the disciplinary implications, and the ensuing financial risks presented by disciplinary sanctions. A finding of individual accountability was viewed as threatening security of tenure and participants' finances, with the possibility of loss of salary increments and termination cited as major concerns. As one participant elaborates:

> Oh, [the consequences] wouldn't be good at all. You'd be looking at disciplinary issues; you'd be dealt with under the code of discipline. You would lose an increment possibly. You'd be disciplined and it would go on record. So no one wants that, particularly in the economic times we're in; we're losing more increments and being shafted totally and absolutely since this USC[1] shite came in. […] The big fear is the job, that you'll lose it. The second biggest is the financial.
> (P17, Nurse Officer)

The death of a prisoner therefore posed professional and financial risks for participants, with participants' concerns regarding the penalties for being found to be negligent or liable in their response to a death in custody centring on the potential loss of income and occupation. In this way, prisoners and their behaviour were viewed to be inextricably connected with staff income: 'They're your bread and butter, that's your job' (P09). This emerged most strongly in discussions of self-inflicted deaths and drug overdoses, causes of deaths in which the deceased was viewed as having a direct hand. Many participants offered similar first- and second-hand accounts of deaths in custody wherein colleagues lost salary increments or faced dismissal following failures to check prisoner cells.

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[1] Participant is referring to the Universal Social Charge, a tax payable on gross income introduced in January 2011.

Interestingly, most tales of staff being dismissed were second-hand stories, whereas most first-hand accounts detailed colleagues' loss of salary increments or 'near misses' in which staff may have faced dismissal but ultimately escaped sanction. One participant, a nurse officer, recalled such a 'near miss' incident involving a colleague:

> [T]here was a female prisoner below in isolation and my friend was working. I had dealt with her, and had been brutally honest and frank because was in isolation. I came in and she was saying, 'I want this, I want this.' And I said, 'You just shut the fuck up, you'll get what you're entitled to.' Because I knew what she was about and what she was at. The following night he went in to her. He went in with the glass of water, went in with the medicine and gave her tablets. And she said, 'Could I have another glass of water?' And he said, 'You can of course.' But he had paracetamol in his pocket in a packet, and he put the same paracetamol down on her desk and went out to get the water. What happened when he came back? She'd knocked all the paracetamol back. And she was then taken out to hospital and he could have lost his job over it.
> (P17, Nurse Officer)

Similar stories were heard during many other interviews, held up as cautionary tales, examples of how prison staff could risk 'losing a fortune' (P15) as a result of self-inflicted and drug-related deaths. In the same way that the bodies of deceased prisoners are perceived as a threat to the operational continuity of the prison, prisoners' autonomous engagement with their own bodies was viewed as a risk to individual staff, potentially endangering participants' salaries and positions, and consequently, their lives outside the prison. This may be overwhelming for staff, particularly as Ludlow et al. (2015, p. 24) observe that staff perceive most prisoners as 'risky' in the context of suicide. In this way, the management of prisoners' bodies and behaviour was not just a prevention-oriented task, but is also motivated by participants' desire to manage potential risks to their financial and occupational security.

7.2.2.1 Becoming Risk-oriented

Just as prison staff observe and assimilate the techniques of more experienced staff, the attitudes and values of the occupational group are also absorbed via 'a complex process of acculturation' that begins at recruit stage (Crawley, 2004a, p. 65). In the context of prisoner deaths in custody, this process of acculturation saw participants becoming aware of the professional and financial risks attached to encounters with prisoner deaths. The extant literature on death work is silent on risks of this nature, instead focusing on the possible psychological and emotional threats associated with working with death (Greene, 2001; Neylan et al., 2002; Haslam and Mallon, 2003; Ting et al., 2006; Vivona, 2014). One participant described hearing a story early in his career about an officer who had been dismissed for failing to check a prisoner who later took his own life, remembering how it was from this story that he realised the professional and financial risks associated with prisoner cell checks and other prevention-oriented tasks.

The prioritisation of risk avoidance and the assessment of personal consequences was not just embedded among participants via observation of the behaviour of more senior staff, however. Participants in supervisory and training roles with multiple experiences also explained that they strongly emphasised the possible risks and consequences associated with prisoner deaths when instructing or advising less experienced staff in their charge:

> You do a check; you do a specific check at a specific time to prevent [deaths]. If you don't do the check and somebody is found dead, there are big consequences then, you know. So that's something that I hammer back to staff coming in, is that checks are done at a specific time for that reason; don't miss them.
> (P03, Assistant Chief Officer)

> Just be on your post. Do your job and you won't go wrong. If you're found to be lacking, you'll have questions to answer. That's what I say to my guys. Do what you're supposed to do, and we'll have no problems. If I find you missing or if I find you not doing your checks, I'll do you.
> (P09, Assistant Chief Officer)

7.2.2.2 Risk and Practice

The focus on the personal risks and consequences associated with deaths in custody emerged as significant in participants' judgement of the outcomes of prisoner deaths. Participants expressed satisfaction and relief about having 'ducks in a row' (P15) and 'boxes ticked' (P17). Staff performance and the possibility of individual or collective liability were also assessed when evaluating the outcome of an incident. In this way, a death in custody wherein staff acted in accordance with procedure could be regarded as a 'near miss' (P12) for staff:

> They would talk about it with comments like, 'it was a near miss', or 'that was unfortunate'. And what I mean by that is that the officer had just completed his check, the end result is obviously that the prisoner is dead, but there was a near miss for the officer in that he was lucky that he conducted his checks when he did, and that he didn't stay watching the match or reading a book or that he wasn't a lazy sod, you know.
> (P12, Governor)

This self-referential attitude and focus on personal consequences manifests itself in staff practice and their approaches to the duty to prevent deaths in custody. Participants' accounts pointed to a tension in their motivations when performing cell checks, with the desire to avoid potential liability competing with the recognition of their duty of care to prisoners. As the following contributions illustrate, the scales appear to be tipped in favour of an awareness of personal liability, and the resulting professional consequences:

> [I]f you do your check when you're meant to check and something does happen, being cynical, you've done your bit. The CCTV will show you doing your bit, and the records will show you doing your bit. […] Again it's a little bit selfish because your motivation is as much to prevent something happening as to make sure that if something does happen that the finger can't be pointed at you.
> (P11, Prison Officer)

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Once you're seen on camera to lift the spyhole and check, you're covered. That's the attitude. And I'm not going to lie to you, if you look in, you look in. But once you do that and you're on camera doing that, you're covered.
(P09, Assistant Chief Officer)

Once you catch them within one or two hours of the death, that's it. You see, a coroner can't say exactly how long he's dead. It takes four hours for the coroner to come usually, so once there are three or four hours in it, your job is safe – unless he's stiff as a board. That's all you're worried about. […] I was actually just telling the lads there as I was walking down that I was coming in here, and they said, 'Look, once he's not stiff as a board, our jobs are safe.'
(P16, Prison Officer)

7.3 From Operational Response to Emotional Response: Emotion Management and Performance in the Immediate Aftermath of a Death in Custody

This section explores the emotional texture of the immediate aftermath of a death in custody. As the interviews progressed, participants were asked to reflect upon their emotional responses to prisoner deaths. While some reported that the incident had no impact on their emotions in the hours directly following the incident, others described feelings of anger, guilt, sadness and disappointment. Participants continued to manage and perform their emotions in accordance with professional 'feeling rules' (Hochschild, 1983) in the immediate aftermath of a prisoner's death. While they remained aware of their emotional display, the shift in participants' operational and professional concerns following the conclusion of the emergency response also precipitated a shift in their approaches to managing emotion. Emotion management became an increasingly collective act in the immediate aftermath of a death, with participants reporting humorous and empathetic exchanges between colleagues. Participants were also more aware of their presentation to colleagues, as these collective performances brought increased visibility, and thus scrutiny, of their emotional display.

7.3.1 Participants' Emotional Responses to Deaths in Custody

Participants' accounts of their reactions to a prisoner's death in the immediate aftermath of the incident reveal an array of emotional responses. The emotions reported by some included anger, guilt, disappointment sadness and shock. In contrast, other participants asserted that they were unaffected by the death, adopting the 'This is a prison, he's a prisoner, so what?' approach observed by Crawley (2004a, p. 157). Overall, these participants espoused the more cynical and pessimistic attitudes towards prisoners within the cohort, and such viewpoints were relevant in their discussions of their emotional responses to deaths. As one participant described:

> I don't feel anything. I don't feel sad; I don't feel anything. It's just the way it is in here, you know. These are not law-abiding people. Society gave these lads too much. That's the way we see it, that they get too much in life. You can't get too emotional about it.
> (P16, Prison Officer)

Similarly, when asked about whether he had felt upset or sad in the aftermath of any of his multiple experiences of deaths in custody, another participant replied:

> It's not going to happen. I'm not even entertaining that question because it's not going to happen. If it's an officer's death, I'll be upset. But if it's a prisoner, I don't care. Not in a million years would I get upset over a prisoner dying.
> (P09, Assistant Chief Officer)

Indeed, those who claimed to be unaffected by their experiences had each encountered multiple deaths during their careers. Detachment and indifference appeared to grow as participants mastered the response process, eventually producing a 'numbing, desensitising effect' (Arnold, 2016, p. 274) that served as a protective mechanism for

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future incidents (Arnold, 2005). One governor participant who had dealt with numerous deaths in both officer and management grades explained that his 'bank of experience' (P10) of handling fatalities facilitated emotional detachment in his work. Another participant reflected that he could trace his adaptation of emotional neutrality and detachment through his many experiences, pointing to one death that he felt cemented his transition to emotional dissociation when dealing with these incidents:

> It was the first one where I could turn around and say no, this is business. Now, I saw the chap on the bed, I saw him being put on the stretcher and taken off in the back of a van and off to mortuary. And you sort of say look, I'm not taking this personally; this is my job, and off you go. […] You do become thick-skinned and say look, I can't be getting upset, he's dead. He's dead, so be it. God love him and the best of luck to him, and that's it.
> (P08, Chief Officer)

In contrast to these participants, others disclosed feeling angry in the immediate aftermath of a prisoner's death. Extant research with prison staff highlights anger and frustration as the most common emotions in the daily working lives of prison staff (Crawley, 2004a; Arnold, 2005). In the current study, participants' anger in the immediate aftermath of a death was pointed at a range of targets. Suicides and drug overdoses stimulated the most annoyance, with a small number of participants recalling their frustration and anger with the actions of the deceased prisoner. Operational or systemic issues were also a source of frustration for some in this context. Describing a suicide of a recently committed prisoner that occurred during the 1990s, one participant remembered how staff were only told about the prisoner's mental health vulnerabilities shortly after the emergency response had concluded:

> It miffed me that I knew so little about this chap's background. That had we been told a bit about him, we might have been able to do something for him, or we may not have been. But the staff were treated like mushrooms, kept in the dark and fed

shite basically. That's changed. Now it hasn't changed in leaps and bounds, it has just gradually changed.
(P11, Prison Officer)

For another participant, the anger felt in the immediate aftermath had a broader context:

> The anger I have at young people throwing away their lives. But I don't blame the person that does it. I'm kind of inclined to blame the media, society. They're not, to me, they're not letting anybody know about the wider picture of the mess these people are leaving behind. And like, when you think of it, that suicide affected all his family.
> (P06, Prison Officer)

Other participants recalled feeling guilty or disappointed in themselves in the aftermath of the death. Both Liebling (1992) and Crawley (2004a) acknowledge that some staff may experience guilt and a 'sense of failure' following a suicide. Similarly, Lakeman (2011) observes feelings of guilt in the aftermath of a death among homeless sector professionals, noting that such feelings may arouse doubts about professional competence and abilities. These feelings saw participants questioning their practice, as well as the quality of their relationship with the deceased. Self-blaming talk, as noted in previous research (Tracy and Tracy, 1998; Ting et al., 2006), was common among these participants:

> I suppose again, I was a bit disappointed, if you like. And to think that I probably failed. That he could have came or she could have came and spoke to me, and why didn't they? And sometimes it's drug-related or a bad time. But I suppose you don't think as a prison officer that when you are talking to somebody on a day-to-day basis that you are actually preventing them from taking their own lives. But you may very well have done that. And so it's disappointing when somebody does take their own life. You think, I was only talking to him last night or I was the last one to see him in his cell, sure why didn't he say something to me? Am I not that approachable? Or did I miss something that I should have seen?
> (P04, Governor)

> You question if I'd have only gone two seconds earlier, or if I'd have gone two minutes earlier, or if I'd said something, or if I'd put the orange light on instead of the blue light on. You just question could it have been prevented. […] There are hundreds of people here, how come one of us didn't see? And I think

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sometimes we're so wrapped up, and I know [prisons] are really fast-moving places, and sometimes you just need time to catch your breath. And this person was walking around in the middle of all of this chaos with their own little chaos going on in their head. How come nobody saw it? How come nobody stopped it? (P14, Assistant Chief Officer)

Scott and Myers (2005) observe that the nature of any previous interaction with the deceased may intensify feelings of guilt or regret. Similarly, another participant recalled an incident where he had 'dismissed' (P17) the mental health issues of a prisoner who later took his own life. He described how the prisoner's death 'niggled' him:

Now, there was a guy here one time actually. I didn't directly face his death, but he had said something to me about a psychiatric problem he had, and I had kind of dismissed him. And he killed himself the following week. He was still being seen by the psychiatrist. That kind of bothered me a little bit. It did, that niggled me.
(P17, Nurse Officer)

Suicide attempts and near miss incidents also aroused emotional responses among some participants. These could be just as intense as any emotions felt in the immediate aftermath of a death in custody, particularly in the context of suicide attempts, as participants recognised the value of their interventions. One participant described how preventing a suicide stimulated a greater emotional reaction than any of the deaths in custody that he had experienced:

The only time I ever became emotional about anything was actually when a prisoner said to me, 'You saved my life'. And even to this minute, I get a bit emotional about it [tearing up]. […] When he was released I had forgotten about him and he came up to the door [of the prison] one day and he was looking for me. He had three kids with him and he introduced me to the three kids. And he said, 'I'm here because of you.' So I was the most upset when this man said 'I have three kids and you saved my life.'
(P01, Retired)

Very few participants spoke at length about feeling sad or experiencing grief or loss following the death of a prisoner. Most of those who referenced sadness in the immediate aftermath of the incident focused on the objective tragedy of a prisoner's death:

> You're sad for what happened. You're acknowledging the reality of the event, the death, you know, which has to be sad to some degree.
> (P02, Retired)

As Crawley (2004a) observes, the nature of an officer's relationship with the deceased prisoner is also relevant; those who disclosed feeling sad or upset immediately after a death reported a good relationship with the deceased.

7.3.2 Collective Emotion Management and Performance in the Immediate Aftermath of a Death in Custody

This section considers participants' accounts of managing and performing emotions with colleagues in the immediate aftermath of a prisoner's death. It outlines participants' perspectives on acceptable and unacceptable emotional displays, the significance of masculine cultural expectations in guiding emotion performance, collective humour and empathy.

7.3.2.1 Crossing the Rubicon: Acceptable and Unacceptable Emotions in the Immediate Aftermath of a Death in Custody

The feeling rules governing staff emotional reactions to deaths in custody not only shaped participants' emotion management and performance during the response to an incident, but also in its immediate aftermath. As will be discussed further below, feelings were

managed during this period not only for operational and reputational reasons, but also to facilitate some degree of catharsis via collective emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983; Korczynski, 2003). With the emergency response concluded, space opened up for staff to regroup and discuss the incident, and emotion management and performance thus became an increasingly collective process. Once again, detachment and emotional neutrality were prioritised, with emotional displays associated with bereavement, such as crying or becoming upset or angry, prohibited, described as 'not the done thing' (P03). In contrast, expressions of humour, and in some circumstances, empathy were permitted in the immediate aftermath as they were viewed as accessible mechanisms for coping and 'getting on with the job'. As Nylander et al. (2011, p. 477) observe, prison staff are 'very careful not to lose control over inappropriate emotions'. Similarly, participants were keenly aware that emotions that transgressed collective expectations of detachment and professional competence were off limits:

> If you had a physical injury, a cut, a broken bone, there was no problem, 'Look at me, my bloody wrist is in bits here.' There was no problem in saying that. But you would never say, 'I feel a bit fuzzy up here', because you were afraid of being laughed at.
> (P11, Prison Officer)

> Do I think that certain things are perceived to be off limits for people to say? Absolutely, yes. No doubt in my mind about that. There is that peer pressure, sometimes its perceived rather than real, but it's there, and therefore I've no doubt that there are things that wouldn't be said that might be felt.
> (P01, Retired)

In this way, the emotional responses described in the previous section could not be presented to colleagues, with participants once again engaging in 'surface acting' (Hochschild, 1983) to 'keep it together' (P14). One recalled his colleagues' reluctance to assist his attempts at first aid, disclosing his annoyance with their attitude following the

conclusion of the response. He did not verbalise this however, as it would have displayed positive concern for the deceased prisoner, which could be perceived as unacceptable:

> Although I was angry, it was an argument I couldn't get into because I'd lose. If I'd have got into an argument I know what would have happened. The other six would have said, 'Ah yeah, he's only a knacker[2]. Why are you saving a knacker?' So it was an argument that I wasn't going to win.
> (P06, Prison Officer)

Overall, participants reported that instances of emotion mismanagement in the aftermath of a death were less frequent than those that occurred during the response process, however. Moreover, some participants were particularly incredulous about the idea of themselves or colleagues displaying sadness or grief following a prisoner's death. When asked about the possibility of becoming upset in the aftermath of an incident, one participant replied:

> Jesus, no way would you cry, are you joking me? That doesn't happen. Not at all. Are you joking me? You just don't cry when prisoners die. It doesn't happen. Are you joking me? No that doesn't happen. I've never seen it. In my experience I've never seen it. And I've never heard of it happening. I've never heard of an officer going, 'Ah God love him', never heard of it.
> (P09, Assistant Chief Officer)

As with the response process, participants endangered their reputation and standing among colleagues if they failed to assume the appropriate emotional display in the immediate aftermath of a death. Not only would they be thought of as lacking competence, those who transgressed professional feeling rules also risked the acquisition of 'a deviant identity' (Crawley, 2004b, p. 424) and possible expulsion from the staff group: 'They'd be kind of outcasted. They wouldn't be in the social circle' (P05). Echoing

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[2] A pejorative term used to describe members of the Travelling community in Ireland.

the sentiments expressed in the previous chapter, the reputational and image risks associated with an unacceptable emotional display following the death of a prisoner could be significant:

> Ah it sticks like glue. And it's thrown at you the whole time there. Absolutely, you're destroyed by it. It would be thrown at them alright. They'd be going [crying noises] or called 'Wobbly Head' or whatever. But very rarely at them, they would talk *about* them. [*When they're not there?*] Yeah, and in a derogatory manner.
> (P09, Assistant Chief Officer)

> You'd wanna have a bloody good reason [for being upset]. It's not acceptable [laughing]. And if you did, you'd never live it down. You'd *never* live it down. If you lost it after an incident, whatever the incident was, it would be remembered until the day you walk out of the job. And you'll be reminded of it until the day you walk out of the job. No, it's not acceptable.
> (P07, Governor)

7.3.2.2 Masculinity and Emotion in the Immediate Aftermath of a Death in Custody

Some participants pointed to cultural expectations associated with masculinity in their explanations of the feeling rules governing their emotional display in the immediate aftermath of a death in custody. As Crawley (2004a, p. 223) notes, the performance of masculinity for prison staff is often not about physical dominance, but rather about 'staying calm and maintaining a sense of dignity and professionalism'. In the hours following a death, being 'manly' was associated with a stoic and unaffected emotional display, demonstrating competence and an ability to 'get on with the job'. While norms of masculinity can vary between institutions (Sim, 1994; Crawley, 2004a), those who highlighted this issue drew on broader cultural expectations of masculinity, most prominently the maxim that 'men don't talk about their feelings': 'Sometimes it's probably too macho to speak of feelings, particularly amongst males anyways. That'd be my experience' (P03). Masculinity and emotion in prison was thus felt to be a reflection

of the cultural character of masculinity in wider society. When asked about why he felt

staff could not, and indeed did not, display or verbalise their emotional responses in the

aftermath of a death, one participant replied:

> That's just men. Yeah, I would think so. I'm old enough now to say it, I'm fifty! [Laughing] Men don't talk about their feelings. That's the truth, they don't. I'm being honest with you. It's a male thing, absolutely. I've been out with my wife and her girlfriends and I've heard them talking about, as you know, from their toenails to their head and worse things. That's what women do, and it's easy saying that, but that's what ye do. You hear the wee ones at the breakfast table every morning giggling and cackling, and you'd hear different yokes being mentioned. While we're over in the corner talking about football and bits and pieces.
> (P13, Prison Officer)

As the above excerpt demonstrates, emotions were felt to be the preserve of women.

Others echoed these sentiments, referring to the 'macho thing' (P03) or 'macho effect'

(P11) when discussing professional feeling rules. Moreover, the single female participant

also referenced this: 'I suppose maybe it's because when I came into the prisons first there

were no females in the male prisons, and you couldn't be seen to be a cry baby' (P14).

She further described how she would 'whisk out' female colleagues who appeared to be

in danger of crying:

> It was always the one thing that I always said to the girls after incidents, 'Just try and hold it together. There's a locker room there, head straight for it. Get yourself out.'
> (P14, Assistant Chief Officer)

Other participants challenged the dominance of masculinity in the emotions of prison

staff. While the role of masculinity in emotion management and performance was

acknowledged, these participants felt that it had waned in recent years, offering increased

opportunities for staff to speak more openly about emotions with their colleagues:

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> People, from the most basic grade of officer, have no problem now in going and saying to somebody, 'Are you OK?' Whereas it wouldn't have been like that years ago. Now, it might be a simple thing as saying, 'Come on into the mess and we'll go for a cup of tea', but that's the way it is now. People are much more open to coming into it.
> (P04, Governor)

The importance, as some participants argued, lay in 'knowing your audience', with some staff described as being more concerned about projecting a masculine and tough image than others. One participant referred to a 'rufty tufty scale' (P06) for prison staff, explaining that he only felt comfortable talking to colleagues about deaths and other incidents who were at the same position on the scale as he was. In the aftermath of a suicide, he described why he felt comfortable talking about his emotional responses with a particular colleague:

> We're on the same wavelength, in the rufty tufty scale; we're not big, hard men. I'm not the big hard man by any extent, in my attitude or physically, you know, I'm not. And this chap wouldn't be either so it's grand to be able to talk to him about it.
> (P06, Prison Officer)

While this participant was more open to talking about emotions with particular colleagues, he also cautioned against offering too much information regarding emotional responses: 'We didn't ever talk about it *too* much, you know' (P06).

7.3.2.3 Collective Humour

Humour emerges as a prominent theme in participants' accounts of the immediate aftermath of a death in custody. As the prison transitioned from the emergency response to the immediate aftermath, the atmosphere between staff also evolved, with space

opening up for conversation and reflection about the incident. For most participants, these exchanges were typically humorous, with jokes and laughter used to 'break the ice' (P03) or 'lighten the atmosphere' (P14) in the aftermath. As Hochschild (1983: 115) observes, 'the needed mood determines the nature of the workers' talk'. Recent scholarship on prison staff and prison life has pointed to the ubiquity of humour in prison settings (Crawley, 2004a; Nielsen, 2011; Arnold, 2016). Like the staff in Crawley's study, participants used humour in the immediate aftermath of a death as a means of 'conveying, disguising and managing emotion' (2004a, p. 44). In this way, humour was functional, serving a diverse range of purposes for the participants; humour acted as 'social proof' (P10) among colleagues, aided participants in projecting a hardened and detached image after the incident, bolstered staff solidarity and camaraderie, and served to relieve any post-incident tensions or anxieties.

The humour described by participants had numerous manifestations, and included storytelling, joke telling, banter, sarcasm and teasing. It was characterised as 'black humour' or 'graveyard humour', with many describing it as 'dark', 'sick', 'dry' or 'perverse'. Some participants highlighted the similarities between prison staff humour and the humour of police officers, emergency services workers and medical professionals, arguing that like these groups, humour was an occupational necessity, allowing them to 'get on with the job' after deaths and other major incidents:

> I suppose if you talk to Guards or talk to Fire Brigade lads or whatever, in a lot of ways you get this black humour and it gets you through these incidents, you know; it will sustain you.
> (P04, Governor)

Humour was thus framed as a 'coping mechanism' (P04; P10) for deaths in custody, performing a 'palliative' function (Crawley, 2004b, p. 419) in the immediate aftermath of these incidents:

> It's another coping skill. Because, to be fair, you are dealing with deaths like, and I don't think you will talk to any prison officer over the years that hasn't had some serious incident or an attempted suicide. Like it's traumatic enough to find anybody that has cut themselves or tried to hang themselves or you have to cut them off a window; it's a horrible thing to have to do, really horrible. But black humour gets you through, it really does get you through, you know.
> (P04, Governor)
>
> Jail humour, that's one way that people cope, you know. […] Sometimes when something happens in the prison, when the jail humour comes in it kind of makes people more relaxed I suppose.
> (P03, Assistant Chief Officer)

For some participants, the function of humour as a coping mechanism went beyond the immediate aftermath of an incident. In the long-term, the humour between staff after a death in custody had a more enduring protective factor, facilitating collective emotion management within the staff group and offering succour and 'communities of coping' (Korczynski, 2003) that went beyond a quick icebreaker: 'Most of the therapy I've gone through has been black humour therapy with colleagues' (P10).

Collective humour also provided a medium through which staff can offload or neutralise any emotional responses that may transgress professional feeling rules (Crawley, 2004b). Within the confines of a professional culture that prioritises detachment and depersonalisation of the deceased prisoner (as discussed in the previous chapter), opportunities for expressions of sadness and distress are limited. One participant, in describing officers' reticence about discussing emotions with colleagues, observed that

humour offered staff an opportunity to bypass the risks associated with performances of emotions deemed culturally inappropriate:

> I think the one way staff get around it now is to have the joke and the banter about it, you know. And I think that's one way of getting around the issue of opening up to people.
> (P03, Assistant Chief Officer)

Black humour and banter were therefore seen as safer approaches to talking about a death in custody with colleagues:

> I do the black humour thing better. I'm a bit more bolstered by that than somebody asking me how I'm feeling. I have to look at this person tomorrow, I'm not going to tell them how I'm feeling, absolutely no way. That's like making a fool of yourself at the office party, you just don't do it! [laughing]
> (P14, Assistant Chief Officer)

Post-incident collective humour also served as a means for staff to regulate the emotional display of their colleagues, reinforcing the professional feeling rules for those who appeared to have forgotten them:

> They wouldn't *allow* you to be miserable. You wouldn't have permission to miserable. So you'd come in miserable, and you wouldn't be allowed to stay that way because they would absolutely cut you in two and slag you off until you had no choice but to shake yourself out of it. They would actually be slagging your bloody moroseness. And tell you to cop yourself on or making a few comments and so on. And before you knew it you were laughing away with them and you'd no reason to be in the dumps about it, you know.
> (P07, Governor)

There were some examples of the 'that's one less for dinner' approach observed by Crawley (2004a, p. 157). One participant described how his colleagues laughed and joked after a prisoner died by drug overdose: 'Even though he was a nice fella, it was, 'Ah sure he'll save the state a few pound now'' (P16). Although the deceased prisoner was a

primary topic of jokes, the humour reported by participants did not match the 'cadaver rhetoric' (Scott, 2007, p. 357; Palmer, 1983; Lawler, 1994) of emergency services and medical personnel. Indeed, some participants were uncomfortable with jokes that focused too much on the presentation or position of the body. One governor participant recounted an incident from his time as a Chief Officer wherein a prisoner had passed away while holding a cigarette, which caused a junior-ranking colleague to comment, 'Have a look at your man here, it's good proof that smoking kills you'. He described his discomfort with the comment, reflecting: 'People have to be aware that at the end of the day it is somebody's son or husband or brother or whatever' (P04). This attitude may be understood further in the context of the discussion of participants' apprehension regarding bodies in the previous chapter. Unlike nurses or paramedics, body handling is not a regular task for prison staff, and while humour aids in coping more broadly, it may not be able to sustain cognitive reframing or reinterpretation of the physical, and thus more tangible, nature of the death (Moran and Massam, 1997).

Much of the humour in the aftermath of a death took the form of teasing or slagging between colleagues, rather than direct mockery of the prisoner. One participant described how a colleague who discovered a suicide by hanging quite early during his familiarisation some years ago is still teased about the incident: 'So every time [he] walks past they'd whisper, [laughing] 'I see dead people'' (P09). Similarly, the governor participant who recalled in section 7.2.1.3 above claiming to detect a pulse on a deceased prisoner with rigor mortis to hasten the removal of the body from the prison described how staff would joke about this incident with him: 'They always say, 'Is he dead Governor?' And I'd say, 'I'm not sure, has he got rigor mortis?' So people joke about it.'

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(P04). Nicknames (e.g. 'The Flatliners') were also common, particularly for staff who encountered multiple incidents.

While participants' accounts pointed to the enduring nature of black humour among Irish prison staff, their experiences also revealed limits of acceptability in this context. Between staff, these boundaries were enforced by those in supervisory or management roles (i.e. Assistant Chief Officer grades and above), some of whom described how they would intervene with a quick 'that's too much now lads' (P09) if they felt any teasing or jokes had become inappropriate. Jokes and commentary about the deceased prisoner were also moderated in this way.

7.3.2.3.1 Humour and 'humans': Perception and identity in black humour.

Participants were also keenly aware of the perception of the black and dark humour that they described during interviews, with some emphasising its function as a coping mechanism, rather than as a means to disparage or mock the deceased prisoner:

> It's never been done to denigrate somebody; it's just done kind of to cope with the situation. […] It's a way of just dealing with what's going on. Laughing and joking. Be it morally or ethically incorrect as it is, it happens and it helps to deal with the situation. I wouldn't say it's in any way insulting to the deceased. It's more a lively banter, yeah. The odd joke here and there, the comment here or there. I'd put it down to similar things you see about stories breaking on footballers and then suddenly a few jokes come out, that kind of thing.
> (P10, Governor)
>
> It isn't nastiness. It isn't disrespectful; it's never meant in that way. It's just a way of people coping, I think.
> (P14, Assistant Chief Officer)

Others were reticent to go beyond typifying their humour as 'black' or 'dark' during interviews. A small number of participants cited the researcher's status as 'an outsider' (i.e. not a prison officer), explaining that those who did not work as prison staff may not be able to fully understand their humour. When asked about what they thought outsiders' opinions of their humour might be, some participants suggested that it would viewed as 'callous' (P11) and 'disgusting' (P16), leaving those who heard it 'shocked and horrified' (P07). Conversations about participants' concerns regarding the perception of prison staff humour also touched upon a deeper issue of identity. Not only would 'outsiders' perceive their humour as harsh or dark, they would also be unable to understand it:

> The 'humans' as we call them i.e. you people that aren't in the Prison Service [laughing]. Humans have a different mentality, you know, 'You can't talk about them like that.'
> (P09, Assistant Chief Officer)

The role of humour as a means of fostering solidarity and a collective identity has been observed in research with prison staff (Crawley, 2004a; Nielsen, 2011). It appears that in the current study, the black humour described by participants served as a demarcation between themselves and 'humans':

> We have a saying in this job, 'Are you going out with humans tonight?' And that's the way it is. Our sense of humour changes, we get sicker-minded, you become a very sick in the head individual. Like, put it this way, a fella won the lotto, an officer, and another fella approached him and said, 'Jesus Christ, you won the lotto, fair play to you, this is the second time you won the lotto this year.' And your man said no, and he said, 'Sure didn't your wife die as well?' That's the norm to us. If you said that to somebody on the outside, they'd be disgusted. We say really hurtful and disgusting things.
> (P16, Prison Officer)

7.3.2.4 Empathy

Empathy additionally emerged as a notable theme in participants' accounts of their interactions with colleagues in the immediate aftermath of a prisoner's death. As Crawley (2004b, p. 418) observes, empathy and compassion for prisoners can be a troublesome in prison work, as prisoners are often 'perceived as unworthy of such emotions'. Balancing the appropriate degree of empathy with professional distance is a familiar challenge for officers (Walker, 2015), and many are keenly aware of the 'emotional danger' of developing and displaying empathy for prisoners (Lindahl, 2011, p. 24). Knight (2014) similarly observes the need to counteract empathy with professional boundaries in her research with probation staff, noting the relevance of the overall punitive ethos of the agencies within the criminal justice field and negativity associated with offending in criminal justice professionals' performances of empathy. These challenges, coupled with the image and reputational risks associated with showing compassion for prisoners, leave little room for expressions of empathy within the staff group. Indeed, many participants acknowledged the existence of restrictions on talking about prisoners with empathy and compassion in front of their colleagues. Additionally, some felt that they had undergone a process of emotional hardening during their time working in prisons (Crawley, 2004a): 'We all score very badly on empathy, that we don't empathise with people enough. And that's probably because of the manner in which you do the job' (P04). In the immediate aftermath of a prisoner's death however, the professional feeling rules were broadened somewhat to accommodate expressions of empathy. While black humour remained the more common means for participants to relate their experiences to their colleagues, empathy and compassion for the deceased prisoner was accepted as human reaction to death generally:

There would be something wrong with you if you didn't have some degree of empathy for the loss of life, no matter who they were. […] If a person loses their life, and if you don't have some degree of human sadness about that well then there's something wrong with you in my view, you know. I don't think you have to get all watery and whatever about it, just acknowledging what happened.
(P02, Retired)

Like humour, expressions of empathy had distinct boundaries, however these were more restrictive than the prohibition against 'going too far' with slagging. Language was important in this context; participants who spoke about expressing empathy for a deceased prisoner with colleagues warned of the dangers of being too effusive in their sympathies:

It's important that you say it the *right* way. I mean if you start coming out and saying, 'God, I feel so sad about that, that's awful', I just think that's the wrong way to say it, because you could be perceived, and with some degree of understanding, people would think, 'Is he for the birds or what? He's in the Prison Service.' Whereas it's better if you could say a more neutral, but nonetheless a statement of fact such as, 'It is sad that something like that should happen.'
(P02, Retired)

Those who ventured beyond acceptability in articulating their empathy for the deceased could become the subject of ridicule, damaging their standing among colleagues: 'They'd brand the officer as a 'Lag lover'' (P03); 'It'd be, 'Ah you're soft', 'Lag lover', 'Sure he's dead anyway'' (P04). Expressions of empathy for colleagues who responded to a death were not as tightly regulated however. Prison staff culture encourages positive concern for fellow staff (Kauffman, 1988), and empathising with those involved in the incident was accepted within the professional feeling rules, particularly if the officer had limited experience or the nature of the death was particularly challenging or grim.

Additional observations regarding the performance of empathy can also be gleaned from participants' interactions with the family of the deceased prisoner. A number of participants described how, on some occasions, the family of a deceased prisoner had visited the prison in the immediate aftermath of the death. On these visits, the family might view the deceased's cell and speak with staff who may have known the prisoner or been involved in the emergency response. Any interactions with families required the performance of empathy and compassion, which typically involved some degree of surface acting (Hochschild, 1983):

> With the family then, you might talk to the family and so on. And if you meet the family, you do all that. So that's what you do, you show as much consideration as you possibly can, and as much empathy as you can, which is probably kind of a little bit hard, but that's what you try to show. […] It's almost like, you know if one of your neighbours dies and you go to the house and you talk about something they did, so you try to do it like that. You talk about them, and you do it in just common language.
> (P07, Governor)

While such exchanges appear to be examples of Bolton's (2005) philanthropic emotion management, in that empathy and sympathy are given as 'a gift' to the family of the deceased prisoner, a small number of participants' accounts challenge this. For these participants, the performance of empathy with families served a different purpose, motivated by a perception of a 'blame culture' (P10) among prisoners and their families regarding the actions of prison staff. Additionally, in cases where a relative of the deceased was also a prisoner in the same prison, empathy was performed with these individuals as part of staff efforts to renegotiate order and ensure operational continuity in the immediate aftermath of the death. Moreover, as Crawley (2004a) notes, empathy and compassion for prisoners is somewhat at odds with the masculine culture of prison staff.

7.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented a discussion of participants' accounts of the immediate aftermath of a death in custody. It described a sharp shift in focus following the conclusion of the emergency response process, as participants' concerns pivoted from the incident to its outcome. The chapter explored how this occurs in both an institutional and individual context, as operational, professional and emotional concerns turn to examine the outcome of the incident. Beginning with an exploration of the operational context of the aftermath of a death, the pursuit of operational resilience is identified and examined. This analysis reveals the perception of the deceased prisoner as a source of institutional and professional risk. Next, this chapter continued the discussion of emotion in the previous chapter, offering insight into emotion management and performance in the immediate aftermath of a prisoner's death. It sheds further light on the professional feeling rules of Irish prison staff, noting how the prioritisation of emotional detachment offers limited avenues for collective expression. The next chapter moves beyond the immediate aftermath, seeking to explore the professional and personal impact of involvement in death in custody, as well as participants' construction and engagement with networks of emotional resources both inside and outside the prison.

CHAPTER EIGHT

BEYOND THE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH: ACCOUNTABILITY, IMPACT AND SUPPORT

8.1 Introduction

This chapter moves beyond the immediate aftermath of a prisoner's death to explore the enduring impact of participants' involvement in a death in custody. Continuing the theme of the previous chapter, the deceased prisoner moves further into the background as participants begin to examine the longer-term professional and personal outcomes of their encounter with a prisoner's death. This chapter commences with a discussion of participants' experiences of internal and external investigative mechanisms for deaths in custody. In doing so, it goes beyond the brief references to staff experiences of inquests found in Liebling (1992), Borrill et al. (2004) and Ludlow et al. (2015), to offer a comprehensive picture of the lived experience of accountability for prisoner deaths. Next, the chapter considers the impact of involvement in a death in custody in both the professional and personal realms. Finally, participants' experiences of post-incident support and coping will be examined. This section seeks to describe participants' interaction with a network of emotional resources, both inside and outside the prison walls.

8.2 The Lived Experience of Accountability for Prisoner Deaths

This section explores participants' experiences of internal and external investigations into deaths in custody. Participants' accounts not only illuminate the lived experience of accountability for prisoner deaths, but also highlight a sense of blame, sometimes fraught relationships with local and national management and perspectives on investigative mechanisms.

8.2.1 The Problem of 'Paperwork'

Paperwork emerged as a prominent discussion topic during conversations about participants' experiences of the various investigations that are held following a death in custody. For prison staff, being involved in the response to or investigation of the death of prisoner can create a 'pile of unwelcome paperwork' (Bray, 2008, p. 191), and the investigative processes, particularly the internal Irish Prison Service investigation, were explained with reference to the amount of bothersome paperwork each required. 'Paperwork' was used as term to encompass all administrative tasks associated with internal and external investigations into deaths in custody, which were viewed by participants in all grades as generating additional, and often unwelcome, administrative work. Moreover, increases in the volume of paperwork over time were cited by participants as evidence of expansions in prison accountability in general.

For officer participants, post-incident paperwork primarily entailed the completion of operational reports, referred to as 'halfsheets'. Much of the annoyance or stress caused by halfsheets and other paperwork related to the short timeframe afforded to their

completion. In the days and weeks following a prisoner's death, the preparation and collation of paperwork for the different investigations was prioritised, becoming 'top of the list' (P14). During this time, officer grade participants described feeling pressurised by governors to complete and submit halfsheets in an expeditious manner. This practice was criticised as unfair:

> I think the pressure has to be taken off. It's as if [the Governor] wants this within seven days to make sure it wasn't a murder! I just think it's crazy, the pressure that's put on people when there's a death in custody; it's crazy. And it's not fair on staff […] I think it's just too much pressure, that it has to be done now, and this has to be done and that has to be done. I think it's time to ease back a bit, maybe have the report in three weeks' time, something like that.
> (P08, Chief Officer)

It was felt that governors were too focused on paperwork in time following a death in custody, and that the pursuit of operational reports from staff was perceived by officer grade participants as being about 'covering arses' (P05) and 'having their ducks in a row' (P06). Some participants remarked that operational reports were prioritised at the expense of the welfare needs of staff, particularly those who acted as first responders. One participant recalled dealing with a governor who became irate upon learning that staff had been sent home without submitting operational reports, as concerns had been raised about their wellbeing. Similarly, another participant observed:

> I think in the last few years it's really gone to saying, is this done? Is that done? Is this done? But hang on a minute, there's somebody over there bawling his eyes out and you're wanting him to write a four-page essay on this damn thing. And I think that's ridiculous.
> (P06, Prison Officer)

Just as staff in officer grades felt hassled by governors to complete and submit halfsheets in a short timeframe, governors described a similar experience of feeling pressurised to

produce paperwork and evidence for Irish Prison Service headquarters and external bodies. Governors in particular find themselves 'inundated' (Roche, 2012, p. 40) with paperwork on an ongoing basis, and the increased administrative workload following a death in custody was acknowledged as stressful by governor participants. They described a similar 'frenzy of paperwork' to that observed by Calavita and Jenness (2014, p. 124) in their conversations with staff who processed prisoner grievances in California:

> You need the reports for the Inspector of Prisons, the reports for the Guards, the reports for the Department, the reports for the Coroner; it's *endless*, it's bloody endless. The administrative end of a death is *endless*, it's bloody endless. […] It's highly pressurised, because everyone wants their report *now*. The IPS want their report now, the Inspector wants his reports now, the Press Office want their quotes now; so everyone wants it *now*, you know.
> (P07, Governor)

Moreover, governor participants reported that the process of assembling the required paperwork was frustrated by minimal or incomplete halfsheets completed by officer grade staff. The problem of a lack of detail in operational reports has also been the target of sharp criticism from the Inspector of Prisons on a number of occasions (Inspector of Prisons, 2014a, 2014b, 2015a), and it appeared that governor grade participants were similarly rankled by this approach from their staff:

> What I do find annoying or irritating is the pace at which people respond to the request for reports and sometimes the absence of content. So some people are very cursory in their report writing, even though it's obviously a serious case […] There's a tendency in the Service for people to write minimal reports, and I find that terribly frustrating. […] Don't have me coming back again and again and again looking for fuller reports or updated reports or extra statements. Give it to me all in one go and then we can move on.
> (P10, Governor)

Participants' perspectives on post-incident paperwork additionally suggest that their frustrations were not just targeted at the physical act of producing and collating halfsheets

and other reports. The accounts detailed above also highlight the term 'paperwork' as a symbolic shorthand that encompasses participants' sometimes fraught relationships with local and national management, annoyances with bureaucracy, and resistance to accountability for prisoner deaths.

8.2.2 Investigations and an Organisational Culture of Blame

In addition to being a source of unwelcome bureaucracy and high volumes of paperwork, participants' experiences of the various investigative mechanisms for deaths in custody were recalled with reference to the issues of blame and disciplinary consequences for staff. Many participants were keen to underline the existence of, what they identified as, a failure-focused approach and 'blame culture' (P15) embedded in the investigative processes, particularly within the internal Irish Prison Service investigations:

> The investigative procedures now are very much focused on trying to find out what went wrong rather than trying to find out why someone killed themselves or died. The focus is on 'where's the failure?' not the cause of the death. Now if they're the same thing, well and good, it'll show it up. But sometimes the systems we have in place work fine, and someone still dies.
> (P10, Governor)
>
> Touch wood, if there is a fellow found hanging tonight the biggest investigation that would take place is did the staff check on him every fifteen or twenty minutes, and if they didn't, why didn't they and who didn't do it? It's a blame game.
> (P11, Prison Officer)
>
> [T]he whole thing is the blame now; who's to blame? That's the whole thing now. […] Who can we hang out to dry?
> (P05, Prison Officer)
>
> It's all about blame. It's all about pointing the finger in our job. It's all about who was wrong or why didn't you do something right? It's all about blame, you know.
> (P09, Assistant Chief Officer)

This culture of blame was strongly felt across the cohort, directing participants' focus to 'self-preservation' (P09) and the possibility of individual liability in the immediate aftermath of a death in custody, as discussed in the preceding chapter. This finding sits in contrast with the recent observations of Calavita and Jenness (2014), who noted that staff processing and adjudicating grievances saw their role in the investigation of prisoner complaints as safeguarding the institution from liability or blame, rather than focusing on individual accountability. Conversely, participants in the current study perceive their role as not just contributors to investigations, but often subjects of them also. As one participant explains:

> Like you're massively aware that somebody has died, but on the other side there is the self-preservation and you're massively aware of where this is going and who is going to have to carry the can for it, you know. As one of our famous chiefs used to say, 'Who am I going to blame?' [Laughing]
> (P14, Assistant Chief Officer)

Participants' experiences of the internal investigative process pointed to a significant division between prison-based staff and those working at Irish Prison Service headquarters. Alienation between frontline prison staff and senior management is a prominent theme throughout the extant literature on prison work, believed to be supported by 'organisational role prescriptions that stress personal accountability rather than cooperation and collective responsibility' (Poole and Regoli, 1980, p. 306; Kauffman, 1988; Crawley, 2004a; Liebling et al., 2011). Moreover, the Irish Prison Service itself was often referred to as an entirely separate entity to staff in prisons, and in the context of investigations into deaths in custody, its approach was criticised as excessively blame-oriented: 'it's a witch hunt for staff when somebody kills themselves' (P16). For participants in officer grades, this perceived focus on individual accountability was strongly felt when completing halfsheets and other necessary paperwork. In contrast to

the frustration that brief operational reports caused for governors and the Inspector of Prisons, as noted above, participants in officer grades preferred a succinct approach to paperwork as a means of avoiding blame. Halfsheets completed by these participants were described as 'brief' (P11), 'very short' (P13), and kept to 'a small few lines' (P06). Participants' wariness about their written contributions to investigations also reveals a self-referential perception of risk and blame. Just as participants viewed prisoners' actions as a potential threat to their position and income in the context of non-natural deaths (as outlined in chapter seven), they similarly viewed their own participation in investigations as posing these same risks also. Accordingly, some participants were particularly wary about their written contributions to all types of investigations, appearing to be concerned that detailed descriptions of their actions would risk inviting further scrutiny of their involvement in the response to a death:

> The more you write in this job, the more questions they can ask you. So just a basic, 'I ran up the stairs, blah blah blah.' And that's it.
> (P13, Prison Officer)
>
> You would be very aware of what you're writing in reports and what you're saying […] it would be about wording; do you know what I mean? Like quite often I would be very precise about my wording, and [the Gardaí] would sort of say 'this is what you mean', and I'd say, no this is what I'm saying and this is the way that I want it written. Because to them it's just taking a statement, but for me, I am so conscious of my wording that I want it written the way that I said, not the way they think it should be written. I think that's because I don't want the repercussions.
> (P14, Assistant Chief Officer)

The need for reports to match CCTV camera evidence was also described as 'another added pressure' (P14) in this context, and participants warned of the possibility of 'getting in trouble' (P16) if operational statements did not match CCTV content.

8.2.3 External Investigations into Deaths in Custody

This section explores participants' experiences of external investigations into deaths in custody. It considers participants' accounts of participation in the three primary investigative mechanisms outlined in chapter one; inquests, Inspector of Prisons investigations and Garda investigations.

8.2.3.1 Inquests

The first external investigative process discussed at interviews was the coroner's inquest. Ten participants reported attending inquests, with nine giving oral evidence in the Coroner's Court. The majority of participants who attended inquests reported feeling apprehensive or nervous beforehand, particularly if it was their first time participating in the process and they were unsure what to expect from the proceedings:

> To use the Yankee term, I suppose there was the FUD factor; a little bit of fear, uncertainty or doubt, in regards to what's happening here or what's taking place. You know, you have their side and your side, and in that context it was a learning curve for me because I wasn't certain of it.
> (P12, Governor)
>
> You're nervous going in. Of course you're nervous, absolutely. […] It can be very, very intimidating. If you let it intimidate you, it can intimidate you.
> (P09, Assistant Chief Officer)

Research on prison staff experiences of prisoner suicide suggests that anxiety about the inquest process is related to a lack of training and familiarity with coronial proceedings (Borrill et al., 2004; Ludlow et al., 2015). Indeed, much of participants' trepidation was centred on uncertainty about the operation of the Coroner's Court. Some participants remarked that they were not aware that the deceased's family could ask questions of each

witness, either themselves or through legal representatives. A number of participants also highlighted the time between death and inquest as a source of anxiety. A lengthy delay between a death and the conclusion of its investigation can be problematic for those involved in a professional capacity, often serving to prolong the experience of traumatic stress (Regehr et al., 2003a). Additionally, just as the often protracted coronial process can intensify or prolong grief for bereaved families (Riches and Dawson, 1998; Shaw and Coles, 2007), some participants remarked that their involvement in an inquest several months or years later aroused difficult memories or emotions associated with the prisoner's death. As one participant describes:

> The one thing I didn't like was, I think it was a year and a half later, you're told the day before that you're in the Coroner's Court tomorrow. That brings the whole thing back to you then. That brings the whole thing back.
> (P08, Chief Officer)

Similar to the approach taken by healthcare professionals when preparing for participation in medico-legal proceedings (Wong et al., 2004), participants looked to more experienced colleagues for advice and information about the process, which was acknowledged as easing nervousness:

> With some of the more senior colleagues that would have known more, if there's someone new going in or it's your first time going in, your colleagues will give you a heads up and say, look, this is the makeup of the Coroner's Court, this is what happens, this is what you can expect. They would give you a heads up on what's going to unfold so then it's not a big deal.
> (P07, Governor)

Most participants were called to the inquest along with colleagues from the prison, and the presence of their colleagues also mitigated anxiety for some: 'We had moral support' (P03). Additionally, participants reported that the court setting of inquests helped them to feel at ease. In contrast to their concerns about the coronial process, participants reflected

that their familiarity with courtroom settings, gained through their experiences of escorting prisoners to court appearances, helped them acclimatise to the process:

> You have to remember that we take prisoners out to court every day of the week, and have been for the years leading to that, so from my point of view the Coroner's Court is no different than any other court we've been in. So from that point of view it's not strange, you know. […] The inquest itself would have been a new experience, but not necessarily the environment, if you know what I mean.
> (P03, Assistant Chief Officer)

> A court is a court, and giving evidence is giving evidence.
> (P09, Assistant Chief Officer)

While participants' fears about the inquest process were in assuaged in part by the physical features of the court environment, the courtroom practice of cross-examination of witnesses was the primary cause of dissatisfaction and stress. Giving oral evidence in the presence of the deceased's family has previously been acknowledged as a source of anxiety for prison staff in the aftermath of a death in custody (Borrill et al., 2004; Ludlow et al., 2015), and participants' negative experiences were particularly related to questioning by the family or their legal representatives. Those participants whose oral evidence was examined by the family or their legal representatives described a shift in the nature of the proceedings, from inquisitorial to adversarial, and with the aim of assigning responsibility or blame:

> Unfortunately for a lot of the families, well I won't say a lot of the families, that's incorrect, but for some of the families it becomes very adversarial. You know, 'you should have done this' or 'you should have done that'. And that is not the function of the inquest. The inquest is there to establish how the death occurred. It's not to apportion blame or whatever.
> (P12, Governor)

Participants' accounts of their dissatisfaction intensified when recounting an experience of being questioned by a family's legal representative. The questioning styles of barristers

and solicitors at inquests was described as 'heavy' (P08) and 'combative' (P07), while another participant recalled being 'berated' (P04) about a prisoner's death. Blame was repeatedly emphasised as legal representatives' sole objective during cross-examination, and the experience was characterised as a challenge in avoiding liability and being 'caught out' (P12): 'you have to be absolutely on your game, always on your guard' (P07). In contrast to the difficulties of those who reported being questioned by the family or their representatives, participants who were involved in inquests where the family did not take the opportunity to ask questions characterised their experiences as relatively unproblematic: 'It was a simple thing, very matter of fact' (P01) and 'I had no problems with it' (P03).

Governor participants additionally highlighted narrative verdicts and recommendations from Coroner's Court juries as a source of frustration. As one governor participant explained, juries were seen as lacking understanding of the operational realities of prison work and governance, with their recommendations making 'no operational sense'. The implementation of such recommendations thus had to be resisted:

> We had some [recommendations] from the Coroner's Court in a death in custody about a year or two ago that are just completely impractical, we just can't do them, regarding contacting this and having this in place. As a service we just simply cannot do it; its impractical. So you have to then go and almost fight a rearguard action to explain why you can't do it. Because Coroner's Court juries can make recommendations, but they've never seen a prison. And that's difficult when you get those. A Coroner's Court jury's recommendations carry a lot of weight as you would expect. But you look at it and say, 'We just can't do that, we can't meet that requirement.' And then to have to go and try and fight that rearguard action is difficult.
> (P10, Governor)

Leaving aside infrequently used mechanisms such as Commissions of Investigation[1], the inquest is typically the final investigation convened into a prisoner's death. For this reason, the conclusion of the proceedings was welcomed as the conclusion of participants' involvement and association with the death in custody:

> We sat down then and that was the end of it now. That's the inquest done into the death in custody. Everything was done and that was it. Done and dusted, move on.
> (P08, Chief Officer)

While the inquest was a significant source of anxiety and stress for participants who were called to appear, it was also an opportunity to draw a line under their experiences, facilitating the process of moving on. Additionally, the Coroner's Court was viewed as an important arena for staff to meet or see the deceased's family and shed light on the death of their loved one, particularly for participants who were not called to appear or give evidence:

> I would have loved to have commiserated with the family […] at the end of the day he's someone's son, and I would've liked maybe to have shaken his mother's hand or his wife's hand and said I'm sorry for your troubles. And it would have been nice for her to say I heard you were the officer on the scene and you did a good job. Maybe that would have been nice, but it didn't happen.
> (P13, Prison Officer)

> I wanted the family to know – in some ways it was very awkward because of the Prison Service: a prison officer and a prisoner – but I wanted the family to know that he wasn't just left as a prisoner, that somebody *did* try, but the Coroner never called me.
> (P06, Prison Officer)

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[1] To date, one prisoner death in custody has been investigated by a Commission of Investigation under the *Commissions of Investigation Act 2004*.

8.2.3.2 Inspector of Prisons Investigations

In addition to inquests, participants' experiences and perspectives of investigations of deaths in custody conducted by the Inspector of Prisons were also explored during the interviews. The Inspector of Prisons has investigated the deaths of all prisoners in custody or while on temporary release since January 2012 (Inspector of Prisons, 2014a). As a recently introduced investigative mechanism, few participants reported experiences of contributing to an Inspector of Prisons investigation following a death in custody. Nevertheless, some of those participants who had not been involved with an Inspector of Prisons investigation also offered their perspectives on the introduction of this investigative process.

A common issue highlighted by participants in governor and supervisory grades was their frustration with what they perceived to be unreasonably short time periods in which the Inspector expected delivery of operational reports and other relevant documentation and evidence. A participant who had been involved in the transfer of reports and evidence to the Inspector for deaths in custody investigations described the process as deadline-focused and often pressurised:

> [T]he Inspector puts you under pressure and you feel that the Inspector has *zero* understanding of exactly what you have to do, you know. When he's demanding reports in a particular time frame, and with the best will in the world it's not bloody possible. Or he's asking for so much bloody information that you question whether it's all necessary. It's times like that you just go, ah for Jesus sake, give us a break! And you resent him for it, because you're saying to yourself, I have more than enough to be doing, but I am looking after you but you just need to be a little more patient thanks very much.
> (P07, Governor)

The consequences of failing to produce the requested materials for the Inspector were understood as significant. In Ireland, the Inspector has advocated and since adopted an investigative approach to deaths in custody that is firmly rooted in human rights law (Inspector of Prisons, 2010, 2014a). Whitty (2011, p. 131) observes that criticism of a prison or prison service by national and international human rights-focused bodies can have a 'sharper intensity' than condemnation from other oversight or investigative mechanisms, and represent a greater organisational risk as a result:

> [The Inspector] is very forceful and he basically says, I want this. And if you don't deliver then the prison gets a bad reputation […] If he doesn't get his report he's on to [the Minister for Justice], and then he's on the news and this and that.
> (P08, Chief Officer)

Overall, the Inspector of Prisons investigation was the investigative mechanism that prompted the most dissatisfaction among participants. In addition to frustrating deadlines, participants complained that the process of completing operational reports and collating documentation and evidence was quite onerous and time-consuming. One participant, who had recently been involved in collating halfsheets and other documentary evidence for an Inspector of Prisons investigation described the process:

> [I]f I went into work today […] and something happened and I got the investigation, that's it. Your life is basically gone on hold, because you must stay. And you're working the weekend, the whole lot, gathering information, *just* for the Inspector of Prisons.
> (P08, Chief Officer)

The process was also viewed with greater suspicion than coronial and police investigations into deaths. Bennett (2014, p. 455) observes the existence of a 'perception gap' between inspectors and those working in prisons. Indeed, it was felt that the overall approach of the Inspector was clouded by preconceived ideas about prisons and prison

staff, rather than evidence. While coroners were described as 'decent' (P08), 'straightforward' (P01), and 'excellent' (P06), and the motives of the Gardaí were entirely unquestioned, it was felt that the Inspector's intentions were focused on assigning blame to staff:

> It's a blame game […] His goal doesn't appear to be how can we make it better for the prisoners, but how can we point the finger, and who can we scapegoat? (P11, Prison Officer)

8.2.3.3 Police Investigations

In contrast with participants' encounters with the inquest process and the Inspector of Prisons, police investigations were viewed as largely unproblematic. Even though the police investigation was the most physically intrusive, in that members of An Garda Síochána will typically be present in the prison in the aftermath of a death in custody to collect statements and evidence, the process was not greeted with the same apprehension or suspicion as the other investigative mechanisms: 'It was grand, part and parcel of the job really' (P03). A number of participants highlighted perceived similarities in working styles and occupational cultures among the 'uniformed services' (P07) in the interviews, the Gardaí being the most common example cited. The similarities between the occupational cultures and working personalities of prison staff and police officers are acknowledged in prison staff literature (Crawley, 2004a; Arnold et al., 2007; Liebling et al., 2011), and it appears these cultural similarities may have influenced participants' perspectives on police investigations into deaths in custody.

While facilitating the collection of reports and other evidence for the Inspector was described as frustrating and an inconvenience, participants in governor grades appeared

to be very conscientious about the preservation of evidence for the Gardaí. One participant described a detailed focus on the preservation of forensic evidence for handover to the Gardaí following a homicide, while another discussed escorting a body to a mortuary with reference to maintaining the 'chain of evidence' (P13). Evidence was seen as something to hand off, and participants' involvement with the police investigation concluded quite shortly after a prisoner's death, in comparison to the much lengthier coronial process. The emphasis on blame and failure, as identified by participants as a significant issue in the investigative processes, was also notably absent from participants' discussions of the Gardaí.

8.3 Changed by Their Experiences? The Enduring Impact of Encountering a Death in Custody

As discussions moved beyond the immediate aftermath of a prisoner's death, many participants began to reflect upon the impact of their experiences on their perspectives and behaviour, both at work and in their personal lives. This section explores participants' accounts of these impacts. Crawley (2004a) notes that most prison officers in her study believed that they had been changed in some way by their jobs. Moreover, recent research by Ludlow et al. (2015, p. 60) on prison staff experiences of prisoner suicides highlights the 'significant impacts' of involvement with a suicide on the emotions and practices of prison staff. The previous chapter reports that while some participants experienced emotional indifference in the immediate aftermath of a death, others disclosed feeling sad, angry or guilty regarding the objective tragedy of the incident. As the conversations progressed beyond the hours following the death however, it became clear that for some participants, the impact of their experiences permeated deeper than they initially

described. Self-inflicted deaths had a particularly transformative effect on participants' working practice, as well as attitudes and behaviour in their personal lives.

8.3.1 The Impact of Encountering Deaths in Custody in Participants' Working Lives

Many participants reflected upon the changes that took place in their working lives and professional practice following their experiences. Some of these developments have been discussed in chapters six and seven, including participants' perspectives on suicide prevention, approaches to working night shifts, attitudes to policy, appreciation of experiential learning, and estimations of risk and blame. In this context, many participants cited improvements to their professional practice as long-term impact of their involvement with a prisoner's death, wherein the particulars of the incident served to alert them to vulnerabilities or structural issues. Many of these changes related to prevention practice, as discussed earlier in chapter six, and influenced participants' subsequent interactions with other prisoners. One participant described how previous experience of responding to a suicide impacted his consideration of a recent request from a prisoner:

> I remember being in the Seg[2] a couple of weeks ago, and I opened the cell door and there was a big prisoner there, a huge big fucker, and I remember saying to him, 'Are you all right?' Because I knew by him there was something wrong, and he says 'No, I want a phone call.' I told him he won't be getting one until tomorrow morning until you see the Governor. I asked him what was wrong and he said it was the anniversary of his brother committing suicide. Now, up to this [death] happening I probably would have said 'Well you still have to see the Governor in the morning', and closed the door on him, but I actually went up to the ACO and said that I was going to give so-and-so a phone call. And so I brought him up and said go on and ring your family. Maybe that helped him, I hope it did.
> (P13, Prison Officer)

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[2] Segregation Unit

In addition to gaining increased awareness of the imported and acquired vulnerabilities of the prison population, some participants also reported that their encounters with deaths in custody altered their perspectives on prisoners more broadly. One participant spoke about transformations in this context:

> I'd say they've made me more compassionate towards prisoners. Something like that makes you see them in, I suppose, a more humane light.
> (P14, Assistant Chief Officer)

Describing his involvement in the response to the death of a prisoner who had been serving a sentence for a murder conviction, a participant briefly contemplated the impact of that incident on his attitude to prisoners more generally. As he asserted, his ability to view the prisoner as a 'human' (P11) mitigated his outlook on the traditional divide in staff-prisoner relationships:

> The fact that I could separate a fella who'd murdered [someone], and thought of him as a human with a *dreadful* background and felt sorry for the poor bugger, that didn't do me any harm as a person. There used to be an ethos in the Prison Service that we're the officers, they're the lags; us and them. There still has to be a certain bit of division between the two, there is a line that must not be crossed, but it's softened from what it was for me. I think that did me some good, both as an individual and a prison officer.
> (P11, Prison Officer)

For some participants, the impact of their experiences on their working lives went beyond adjustments in their practice and perspectives, transforming their relationships with spaces in the prison, most commonly the location of the death or the prisoner's cell. Passing by or checking a cell where a prisoner had died evoked strong memories of their involvement in the incident. One participant described how he would be reminded of a drug overdose that took place in a particular cell every time he passed it, explaining the 'connection' he felt to that space in the prison:

You'd always have that little, that mindfulness of that. Like, with the girl with the tablets, you know I'd see that door and I'd say, 'Ah that's where such and such done that.' […] You'd always have a … a connection with a particular place if it was a bad or negative thing that happened. So yes, you would, if you went by the cell door you would think of it.
(P05, Prison Officer)

The memories aroused by cells and other spaces could result in unwelcome or intrusive reminders of the incident. Another participant disclosed that he preferred to avoid, when possible, a cell wherein he had previously responded to a suicide by hanging, citing unpleasant visual memories:

You go in to do a cell search, and you're looking and thinking, 'This is where the rope was hanging.' You try to avoid the room, to be honest with you. If there's a general search, I always try to avoid the cell, but sometimes, you have to go in. You remember it, you do get the picture and you do see where the rope was hanging.
(P16, Prison Officer)

In contrast, a small number of other participants reported minimal impact on their practice, perspectives or experiences at work. Echoing the discussion in chapter six and seven, some of these participants explained that the emotional detachment engaged in during the response to the incident and in the immediate aftermath had been maintained long beyond the prisoner's death. Each disclosed multiple experiences and, once again, they described themselves as becoming acclimatised to deaths and other major incidents: 'It didn't really affect me too much because you get used to it when you've seen so many' (P09); 'You can become inured to violence, become inured to suicide or death or self-harm' (P07). Reflecting upon the processes through which prison officers become hardened and desensitised over the course of their careers, Crawley (2004a, p. 184) observes, 'What is at first bizarre and frightening becomes normal, routine'. For others,

the impact of their encounters with death were lessened by minimal possibilities for individual accountability:

> I'm lucky that I've been able to deal with them and accept them for what they are. The reason I have dealt with them I think is because I'm satisfied at a personal level that the systems or procedures in place and my own actions weren't at fault. That I didn't, you know, neglect to do a check; I didn't not check someone, I didn't not do something. The deaths I've encountered have been as a result of direct action by prisoners, that our procedures couldn't have prevented, or an accidental overdose, that kind of thing. So it's a kind of conscience thing. If your conscience is clear, you know you've done your best, and regardless of that if the tragedy still happens, you can accept it better. That's what I've done.
> (P10, Governor)

> I've no difficulty with it. No difficulty. I've looked at my notes as well afterwards, and there's very little that I would have done differently. […] It would hit me just periodically, more to do with questioning how did I respond to it. And I would have gone through my notes to see was everything OK after. And it was.
> (P17, Nurse Officer)

8.3.2 The Impact of Encountering Deaths in Custody in Participants' Personal Lives

Participants' experiences of deaths in custody also affected their lives outside the prison. Events in the prison can often 'spill over into the home' (Crawley, 2002, p. 278; Lambert et al., 2015), altering officers' perspectives and behaviour in their personal lives (Kauffman, 1988). As discussed in the previous chapter, the professional feeling rules of the prison offered limited avenues through which participants could express their emotional responses to deaths in custody. While some participants reported minimal impact in their personal lives, others described the various ways that their experiences had bled into their lives outside the prison. Some began to feel to the presence of the death in their personal lives when they left the prison in the aftermath of the incident. One participant described the dissonance felt when returning to the 'outside world' following

the completion of his shift. He initially struggled to reconcile his recent experience in the prison with the routine and obligations of his life outside it:

> I dropped my kids to school and I was thinking, two hours ago I'm cutting a guy down and now I'm dropping my kids to school. And they're all happy in the car and joking and laughing. It was *strange*. Really, really *strange*.
> (P08, Chief Officer)

For others, their experiences had a more durable impact in their personal lives. In their study on the mental health consequences of self-inflicted deaths for prison staff, Borrill et al. (2004) observe that a number of their cohort struggled with visual memories of the incident. Similarly, some participants who reported dealing with a suicide by hanging described experiencing visual flashbacks or having trouble with images or representations of this method of death. Films and television programmes that depicted suicide by hanging sometimes stimulated these visual memories, bringing the incident back into the mind of some participants. One participant explains:

> At times it does come back to me, mainly if you see it in films or TV, someone hanging. It kind of brings you back to what happened that day.
> (P13, Prison Officer)

Two participants also referred to subsequent bereavements in their personal lives when discussing the impact of their encounters with deaths in custody, explaining that these deaths prompted visual memories and a re-experiencing of prisoners' deaths. Others also reported trouble sleeping, both in the immediate aftermath of the incident and later. One participant with multiple experiences revealed that he found it difficult to sleep following deaths and other incidents:

> I find it hard to sleep any time [a death] happens. It's like when anything happens in this job, I find it hard, do you know that way?
> (P16, Prison Officer)

Another participant recalled persistent problems with sleeping in the weeks following an incident, describing how he would lie awake 'rethinking' and 'remapping' (P05) the events. Recent research by Walker et al. (2015) with prison staff working in a therapeutic community setting highlights sleep loss as an impact of the mental demands of prison work. More broadly, studies of other workers involved in deathwork also highlight sleep loss as a frequent consequence of encountering death in a professional context (Neylan et al., 2002; Brysiewicz, 2007; Moores et al., 2007).

Actions and materials associated with self-inflicted deaths were also problematic in this context. One participant, who reported a single experience of a suicide by hanging, remarked that while he was satisfied regarding his professional performance during the response and in the immediate aftermath, he was not initially aware of how the death might affect his life outside the prison. He recalled an incident at his children's school in the month following the death, describing how his experience of ligature removal had led him to become vigilant about objects around children's necks. This incident served to alert him to the enduring personal impact of his involvement with the prisoner's death:

> That still lingers with me, a little bit. You know like, if I can give you some examples, I'd be very, very obsessed with people with stuff around [children's] necks. I remember, now this gets a bit upsetting, I think it was about a month afterwards I was in the school bringing my children to school and I'm thinking I'm grand. And I saw this chap, and I can still see him, a coloured chap, little child. He had a bag, you know those little string bags? [*Yeah*] But he had it this way, criss-crossed across his neck. And I didn't think, I just went straight over to him and took it off his neck. And I knew people would be like, 'What are you doing?' And I came back down a little bit then. And you can ask the children at home, nothing goes around their necks, *nothing*. And it sounds ridiculous, but I don't even like scarves on their necks. Now, not saying there's no putting a scarf

around you, but I'd be maybe kind of thinking, now hold on, what if that went this way or that way? That's kind of the sum of it, and even that was 2006 so it's eight years later and I'm still like that, you know. […] The schoolbag thing got me. I thought maybe, 'Ah yeah, sure you're moving on here.' I knew then after that schoolbag thing with that child that actually there's a little bit more to this that I thought, that it had more of an effect than I thought. [*So did you surprise yourself then?*] Yeah. I got a shock that day now. Now, I thought I was doing it for the right reasons. If it was something that I saw maybe a month or six weeks before the incident I wouldn't have seen it, whereas now I am quite aware. I won't have the children putting hands on necks or anything like that. And they know; they know I won't have it.
(P06, Prison Officer)

8.4 Finding Support Following a Death in Custody: Constructing Emotional Resources

This section considers participants' experiences of support following their encounter with a death in custody. It examines their perspectives, needs and engagement in the context of support, both within and beyond the walls of the prison. The following sections explore participation across a network of 'emotional resources' (Knight, 2014), describing how participants relied, to varying degrees, on sources of professional and personal support in the aftermath of prisoner deaths. Like the probation staff in Knight's research, participants in the current study employed a range of formal and informal strategies to 'counteract the silence' (Knight, 2014, p. 173) imposed by professional feeling rules. In addition to collective humour as discussed in chapter seven, these included engagement with employee assistance services as provided by the Irish Prison Service, informal peer support networks, and relationships and activities in the personal realm.

8.4.1 Finding Support inside the Prison Walls

This section explores participants' accounts of emotional resources in the workplace. It considers both formal and informal sources of post-incident support, describing participants' engagement with and perspectives on support found within the prison walls.

8.4.1.1 Participants' Engagement with Formal Workplace Support

This section discusses participants' experiences of formal support in the aftermath of their encounter with a prisoner's death. Post-incident support for Irish Prison Service staff is provided through the Employee Assistance Programme, a civil service wide support programme. Several staff work as Employee Assistance Officers within the Irish Prison Service, in addition to Staff Support Officers in each prison, who perform these duties in addition to their prison duties. For staff seeking support, the Staff Support Officers – described by most participants as 'Sad Stories Officers' – are the first point of contact and referral within the prison. A Critical Incident Protocol also exists for staff who have 'been exposed to assault, trauma, injury or fatality in their course of duty', and this may include the provision of psychological support for staff, if necessary (Irish Prison Service, n.d., p. 2). The experiences recounted by participants primarily relate to their contact with Staff Support Officers and subsequent psychological support provided.

Previous research with prison staff in the United Kingdom suggests that workplace support is underused in the aftermath of deaths in custody (Borrill et al., 2004), and more broadly (Liebling et al., 2011). Similarly, four participants reported engagement with psychological support following a death in custody. In each case, this support was offered

in the aftermath, by a manager or Staff Support Officer. Each of these participants had one meeting with a counsellor or psychologist. Another participant disclosed that he was receiving ongoing support at the time of interview, however this related to a number of incidents over the course of his career, including some deaths. Of those who did not engage with formal support services, three reported declining offers from managers or Staff Support Officers, while the remaining participants did not receive referrals to any support services.

Those who engaged with workplace support following their encounter with a prisoner's death reported differing experiences. Each received support after a suicide by hanging. One participant, who had a single incident during his career, characterised his meeting with a counsellor as positive and helpful, remarking that he has since advised colleagues who experienced prisoner deaths to attend. He explained that the discussion focused on strategies to mitigate the impact of the death in his personal and professional lives, recalling an incident at home when he found this approach useful:

> I went up to one of the girls in Park House once and she was very good. And basically she kind of said well look, this is what could happen and that is what could happen, and this is how you deal with it. And it was grand. She gave me what she called 'a little toolkit in your head'. Like, I remember the first time then I saw somebody hanging on the telly and I got very muppety[3] about it, and then I said, 'Hang on, no no no, what do I do?' And the girl had given me a little bit of literature and I walked away for a while. And my wife knew what was going on with me, because in fairness she tried to change it. And I went, and I just sat down and read through the stuff and went back down. 'How are you?' she asked. 'I'm grand yeah.' And the next time now I wouldn't look at it, but now I know the tool to use, you know, which is grand.
> (P06, Prison Officer)

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[3] Muppet: Informal term used to refer to a foolish person.

Another participant found the experience similarly positive, commenting: 'I did find it helpful, because any lingering doubts that I had, I got rid of them' (P11).

In contrast, the other two participants described their appointments with psychologists to be underwhelming. Both highlighted the delay between the incident and their appointment, arguing that it reduced the efficacy of the support provided. One participant recalled his annoyance at being told an appointment had been arranged for him in one month's time:

> So then they said 'OK we'll set up an interview with you with a psychologist' and all that. And I said, 'Well I don't know, I think I'm fine.' And [the Chief] says, 'No you should go anyway. So I says all right I'll go. And then two days later I came back into work and they said we have your appointment set up for you, you're going in 28 days' time. So I says, '28 days' time? I only cut your man down yesterday or the day before.' 'Oh yeah well we'll have it sorted for you in a month.' So I says, 'Ah stick it up your arse.' You do get very bitter. But I did go to see this guy.
> (P08, Chief Officer)

In addition to delays, the other participant was also irked by what he felt was a process that treated him like a 'statistic':

> I did get to meet someone after it, but I think it should have been *immediate*. The first day back I should have been sent up. The guy that I saw, I wouldn't rate him at all. You knew by him that he was just going through the run of the mill; A, B, C, D and E. [*Like a checklist?*] Yeah. And he was probably too long around. He was nearly 70 and he was probably too long in it doing this. And you were just another statistic; that's what I felt like anyway. And you could see that by him, and I am a very good judge of character. That's what prison officers are, the same as Guards; they can suss you out very quick. And I knew with this guy that you'd be better off talking to the cup in front of you there. It didn't help.
> (P13, Prison Officer)

Crawley (2000, p. 276) notes similar perspectives among staff in her research, observing a widespread view that workplace support was a 'cosmetic exercise', aimed at giving the 'impression of a caring management' rather than pursuing staff wellbeing.

A common reason cited by those participants who did not seek or engage with support after their experiences was that they simply felt no need. Like staff in the recent study by Ludlow et al. (2015) many reasoned that they were unaffected by their experiences, and therefore did not need formal support:

> I do remember being given the opportunity and I felt I dealt with it no problems at all. There was no benefit for me to talk to somebody else about it, and looking back today I still believe that. I don't regret not talking to anybody about it at the time.
> (P03, Assistant Chief Officer)

Some participants with multiple experiences pointed to the 'bank of experience' (P10) they had accumulated over the years, describing how their multitude of encounters with prisoner deaths served to reduce their need or desire to request post-incident support:

> I'll tell you why I didn't take it. I didn't take it because I had seen so many of them over the years and as far as I'm concerned, they hadn't affected me.
> (P01, Retired)

> It's relevant to my time. Because I have so much time and so much experience, and because I've been around so long, I take it all in my stride now.
> (P09, Assistant Chief Officer)

In this way, these participants viewed their experiences as supportive, believing them to ameliorate any possible impact of their encounters with deaths in custody:

> If you were to go into [the prison] in the morning and get a drill and drill a hole through one of the walls on one of the landings, what you'll find is layers and

layers and layers and layers and layers of paint. If a lump breaks away, you'll actually see all the lines where it's painted and then another coat of paint over the years. It's quite interesting to see, quite unusual. But you know, when I'm saying that I didn't need any help, what I suspect of the years is that one incident was layered, another then another one was layered over that, and another one, and another one, another one, to the point that I can you tell you, no, they don't bother me anymore. Not anymore even, that they don't bother me full stop.
(P07, Governor)

Others disclosed that they were satisfied with the support that they received in their home lives, while some also indicated a preference for informal peer support over formal structures: 'As Michael D. Higgins[4] would say, that's not my cup of tea' (P17). Not all participants who did not receive offers of support were satisfied, however. Two participants remarked that they were disappointed with the lack of support provided. One of these had been working in the Irish Prison Service for almost thirty years, and was particularly aggrieved regarding his experiences of post-incident support:

No one has ever come to me and asked me did I want any type of counselling or was I OK for any death I've ever had in the last thirty years. Ever. I think that's very wrong.
(P04, Governor)

8.4.1.2 Participants' Perspectives on Workplace Support Provision

Participants' contributions in the context of workplace support went beyond their own engagement (or lack of engagement) with extant structures. While many commented on the introduction of the Staff Support Officer positions, describing these as a welcome improvement to a previously barren landscape of staff support, multiple structural issues were highlighted, including access, confidentiality, lack of follow up and appropriate

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[4] The ninth President of Ireland.

information. Problems relating to stigma and perceptions regarding management commitment to supporting staff were also underlined.

The introduction of Staff Support Officers was largely well-received among participants. The Staff Support Officer is currently a part-time position, with staff performing a peer support role in addition to their regular prison duties. Some participants described this positively, believing it to be an advantage in terms of understanding and appreciation of staff experiences of deaths and other incidents:

> I think a prison-based Staff Support Officer that we have in place, why it works so well because they *get it*. They know the environment you are talking about, and they know the lingo or whatever is going on, so it's easier.
> (P04, Governor)

> The people in the welfare service are prison officers who have taken on that role and developed it themselves, and they know what it's like to open a cell and find whatever. So that's massively helpful.
> (P11, Prison Officer)

Others, in contrast, challenged the part-time nature of the role, arguing that it compromised access for those in acute need. Issues regarding confidentiality were also highlighted. Similar observations have been made regarding Care Teams in the Prison Service in England and Wales, who offer a comparable peer support provision (Borrill et al., 2004; Liebling et al., 2011; Ludlow et al., 2015). As one participant explained, making initial contact with a Staff Support Officer could be fraught with problems, particularly regarding confidentiality:

> The Staff Support Officer could be driving a truck or driving a prison van or they could be dealing with ten prisoners in reception. What do you do if you've no staff to replace you? You've got prisoners to process; you can't just go. And then a very, very important point is the confidentiality. That I have to say to you, say you're the Chief, 'Chief listen, I need an hour off.' 'What do you want hour off

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for?' 'Chief I need an hour off.' 'What do want an hour off for?' 'Look Chief, your man down there, he's having a bit of hassle.' Another Chief comes in, 'Here, your man is having a bit of problems there and whatever'. And before you know it it's gone throughout the jail. You've breached your confidentiality, straight away.
(P05, Prison Officer)

In this way, access to staff support was sometimes dependent not just on the availability of the Staff Support Officer, but also the needs and attitudes of managers. Management outlook thus shaped participants' experiences of workplace support. One participant described how access to Staff Support Officers had since improved 'with the help of the Governor' since his earlier engagement with support, noting:

People can actually look to get off their posts to go and speak to these people now, whereas before you were told, 'You're fucking staying on that gate and that's it. You can go on your own time.'
(P13, Prison Officer)

Another issue that emerged in discussions of participants' perspectives of staff support related to follow-up contact and monitoring, which is provided for in the Critical Incident Protocol (Irish Prison Service, n.d.). Participants' concerns in this context related to initial offers of support, in addition to opportunities for those who accessed support to provide feedback on their experiences. Two of the participants who attended psychological support disclosed their disappointment that a Staff Support Officer or manager did not 'check in' with them about their appointment. One suggested that a casual inquiry would be sufficient:

Nobody ever came back to me after that, after the initial [appointment] with the girl up in Park House. Like, maybe they could build into something that somebody would give you a shout after it maybe. Like initially with me it was, 'You're fine, if anything comes up, give us a shout', a kind of by-the-by comment. Whereas I feel maybe, and I've said this in work, that maybe after three months, and it's not a mandatory thing, but that somebody gives you shout or calls you up and says,

'Listen, that incident a few months ago, where are you on it?' [*So they check in with you?*] Just check in with you. They don't have to do it very formally or anything.
(P06, Prison Officer)

Others underlined a lack of information about support services. While services were offered to a number of participants, some admitted that they were not aware of the support provision for staff. These participants recommended that information regarding employee assistance should be provided to staff, possibly at recruit stage:

There's nowhere in [training] where it shows you how to deal with a prisoner dying, nowhere. You're gonna come across prisoners injuring themselves and prisoners dying, there's nowhere where it's said you go to the welfare officer, you can go to the staff support services, you can go to the Governor. You know, that you can go to look for help from these people.
(P09, Assistant Chief Officer)

I mean, even you got a little bit across, like where to go and who to see afterwards, if you had been affected by it. If you watch a programme on the telly it will say afterwards, if you've been affected by the subject in this programme, please phone whoever. But that's never said to a prison officer! [laughing].
(P14, Assistant Chief Officer)

In addition to problems related to structure and information, a number of participants also pointed to issues of perception and stigma as relevant in shaping their decisions to access staff support in the aftermath of a death in custody. As noted earlier above, Staff Support Officers were colloquially referred to as 'Sad Stories Officers', and some participants explained that being seen by colleagues to access Staff Support Officers and their services could reflect poorly on an officer: 'If you go to the [Staff Support Officer] you're seen as being a Nancy. Or people would say, I'm not fucking talking to him; that's the attitude' (P09). Crawley (2004a, p. 137) similarly observes that prison staff are often 'simply reluctant to be seen as needing help'. This outlook was particularly strong among those who chose not to seek support following their experiences:

Ironically, I think if I was as Chief Officer had said, 'Yes, I need support' it would have lessened my standing with my superiors and peers. That's something that I think we're not good at. Especially in the management grades. It's that some people won't admit there might be a slight chink in the armour – it's probably the wrong word to use, chink in armour – but that there might a slight need for an adjustment or an intervention.
(P10, Governor)

While some participants disclosed that they would feel stigmatised by their peers for seeking support, many also felt uncared for by senior management and headquarters staff following the conclusion of the response to a death. Although some commended the Irish Prison Service for improving the staff support provision in recent years, most felt that these improvements did not translate to practice. Echoing their perspectives on the operation of accountability, as discussed earlier in this chapter, a number of participants asserted that management, both local and headquarters-based, typically prioritised paperwork and investigations in the aftermath of a prisoner's death: 'I do believe that the investigation is more important to the hierarchy than the staff' (P08).

8.4.1.3 'In a Twilight Zone': Support Provision for Governor Grade Staff

Discussions of staff support with the five governor grade participants saw each bemoan what they perceived as a paucity of support for local senior management in the aftermath of a prisoner's death. Indeed, two governor grade participants cited among their reasons for participation in the current study a desire to raise awareness of the lack of support provision for governor staff. Many pointed to the introduction of Staff Support Officers, emphasising the absence of a similar facility for managers: 'There's no SSO for the governors' (P12). Some participants believe that this oversight was attributable, in part, to union representation. The Prison Officers' Association, the trade union for officer

grade staff, was acknowledged by many as being particularly active in staff support and welfare. Governors, in contrast, are members of the Association of Higher Civil and Public Servants, an organisation that represents a wide range of senior managers across the public sector. As one participant explained, governors were a small cohort within this group, and as a result did not benefit from similarly strident lobbying and support as members of the Prison Officers' Association. Additionally, governor participants challenged what they saw as expectations of emotional resilience when dealing with deaths in custody:

> We're very good at offering staff support, we're very poor at offering management support. Even as a Chief Officer I was coordinating interventions and support for the staff involved in that death in custody, I was never offered it. You're kind of seen because you're a chief or a governor, you're grand. Now, personally I was grand but I know others that aren't, and haven't been. But it's the management grades are in a twilight zone almost on that issue. I suppose management grades would be reluctant to step forward and say 'I need counselling' in one sense, but I think they should be offered it regardless, as the staff are offered it regardless. So that's the one thing I'd really focus on. The process and the incident can have an impact and it can impact on everybody, not just the people involved in it. […] I'm hoping your research advises the Prison Service or opens their eyes to the fact it's more than just the officer on the ground that's involved.
> (P10, Governor)

In an effort to offset perceived deficiencies in support, the five governors explained that they relied on informal peer support networks, which they had fostered among their senior management colleagues. These relationships not only provided practical support for governors dealing with deaths (as described in chapter six), but also served as a means of informal peer support. As one participant described:

> If I know a governor that has a death in custody, I always make a point of ringing next day and asking is there any help I can give him, does he need to move prisoners or does he want to talk to anybody about it? Because I know myself what it's like to be left on your own, and it's not nice. But that's more informal.

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[*So is that something that you are doing off your own bat?*] Yeah. There should be a formal structure in place.
(P04, Governor)

While many treasured these support networks, particularly in the early stages of their tenure as governors when dealing with deaths in custody and other incidents, one participant cautioned that their continued existence should not be used an excuse for procrastination in policy improvements in this area: 'Chatting about what happened over a cup of tea isn't proper support, you know. We need proper support' (P15).

8.4.1.4 Support between Staff in the Aftermath of a Death in Custody

Informal peer support networks were not solely significant for governors, however. Many participants in other grades also found comfort in their colleagues following their encounter with a death in custody, enjoying the same camaraderie as observed in previous research (Crawley, 2004a; Liebling, 2004). Extant studies of encounters with death among similar professionals, including police and medical personnel, highlight support between colleagues as an important outlet for 'letting off steam' (Lewis, 2005; Moores et al., 2007; Gaffney et al., 2009; Wenzel et al., 2011; Charman, 2013). Indeed, those who did not seek or accept the services provided by the Irish Prison Service often cited their relationships with their colleagues as valuable and sufficient support: 'You look to your mates for support, to give it. If that was gone, I could not come into work on the day' (P07).

In addition to finding support in collective humour, as discussed in chapter seven, many participants also pointed to storytelling as an important source of informal support between colleagues. Crawley (2004a) observes that sharing stories and reminiscences of

past incidents serves many purposes for prison officers, increasing excitement in an often boring job and fostering camaraderie and solidarity between colleagues. In the current study, stories about previous incidents shared between colleagues were shared to achieve 'mutual morale raising' (Hochschild, 1983, p. 115), in addition to performing an educational function, as outlined in chapter six. Some participants described how colleagues came to them to recount their own experiences with prisoner deaths, from which they derived comfort:

> And some people I know were saying you know 'How many are you at? Ah, I'm on me sixth.' And I don't really care how many you've found you know, I've found one and that's enough for me. And in fairness now one or another were saying, 'Ah listen, you found one, this is my sixth.' You know a little bit of a pat on the shoulder, 'You'll be alright'. It was nice, you know. That was one of the medics, 'You will be alright, there's nothing you can do.' It was nice at the time.
> (P06, Prison Officer)

> Friends will close in on you, and they'll mind you and protect you. And I've cut a few down, but [my friend] as a medic over 30 years, I'm sure he's cut down probably 30 or 40 people. But the most comforting thing, which is strange, is him saying, 'You won't cut one down as bad.' That actually felt comforting, well comforting to a point, if you know what I mean.
> (P08, Chief Officer)

Others reported that they would be keen to reciprocate for colleagues who may encounter deaths in the future:

> If it happened again in [the prison] and I found out who found it, I would make it my business to bump into that person, and say, 'Listen, don't worry buddy, this happened to me' and tell him about it. I'd put my arm around that person and say, 'Listen, it will go away, time will solve it.'
> (P13, Prison Officer)

As the above quotations illustrate, participants and their colleagues engaged in philanthropic emotion management (Bolton, 2005), sharing stories with one another as 'gifts' in the aftermath of a potentially traumatic incident. Like humour, storytelling

provided participants with an avenue to 'cope communally and socially' (Korczynski, 2003, p. 58) following a prisoner's death.

In addition to offering support and catharsis, the exchange of 'war stories' (P10) was also seen as an acceptable medium for the disclosure of emotional responses to deaths in custody. As Snow and McHugh (2002, p. 151) note, expectations of bravado and emotional detachment in prison work 'often militate against the acknowledgement of adverse reactions, normal though they may be'. Sharing stories about deaths thus facilitated conversations about emotional responses:

> It's cathartic, absolutely. And people often sit around and they often refer to it in work, sitting there and swapping war stories. Yeah it is, it's a great way. Because it's a *safe* environment of saying how you felt at the time. And it's good to be able to do that. And it's even more satisfying to hear when somebody else they felt the same, like if they say, 'Sure I was the same, I was shitting myself, I didn't know what to do.'
> (P04, Governor)

Participants stressed that storytelling and other conversations between colleagues about the incident must remain within the boundaries of professional feeling rules, however. In this context, care was taken not just with content: 'You'd have support from colleagues if you wanted it. I suppose, talking about from a purely business viewpoint' (P01), but also with language:

> I think there's a bit in there about how a tight group of people deal with stuff, and it's about, 'Jesus that was shocking wasn't it?' And there's a small bit of talking and it's kind of compartmentalised for people then, and they move on. I suppose what I'm getting at is the camaraderie, where people deal with stuff in an informal way over a cup of tea and say, 'Jesus that was shocking, an awful thing to happen.' You're actually playing it out without realising it, but you are actually articulating it to somebody. So yes, I probably would have done that around peers. Like with my own senior management team here, maybe the two assistant governors, I'd say, 'Oh jesus that was terrible', you know. So we actually would talk about it,

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without actually identifying its impacts on ourselves. It wouldn't be too soft. It would be a general commentary rather than me saying, 'Jesus I couldn't sleep that night after that.'
(P15, Governor)

In addition to storytelling, a number of participants described telephone calls from colleagues as a valuable source of support following a prisoner's death. Informal debriefing among colleagues that focused on evaluating the operational response was also viewed as helpful:

Do you talk about it? Yeah, you do. Have I experienced talking about it in a counselling fashion? No. most of the time we just discuss what happened, how it happened, something we recognise we have to change, that kind of thing.
(P10, Governor)

8.4.1.5 Spatial and Temporal Considerations in Support between Colleagues

While participants across all grades underlined informal peer support as helpful in the context of coping with deaths in custody, it appeared that access to collegial support differed between grades. These differences related to two primary concerns, space and time. Just as the architecture of the prison is significant for prisoners' experiences of surveillance, and thus control (Foucault, 1979), participants' accounts of the performance of collective emotional labour suggest a variation between different sites, depending on their design and function. Crawley (2004b, p. 414) suggests that officers' emotion performance within the prison is geographically distributed, with specific spaces on the prison's 'emotional map' understood in the context of which emotions are acceptable (or unacceptable) at these sites. More recently, Crewe et al. (2014, p. 59) argue that prisons are 'complex and spatially differentiated emotional domains', urging researchers to move beyond binary distinctions of 'frontstage' and 'backstage', as derived from Goffman

(1959). The authors also assert that the public and private worlds of 'frontstage' and 'backstage' are often difficult to maintain for prisoners, offering the example of shared cells. Similarly, the findings of the current study suggest that informal peer support is performed and experienced in the private and public spaces of prison staff, depending on their grades.

The locations, and thus nature, of informal peer support differed according to the spaces to which participants had access. The communal coping described by most of the governor and chief officer participants took place in spaces that were allocated solely to their ranks. For example, a number of the governor participants who recounted sharing stories or reaching out to colleagues reported that these events took place in management offices and boardrooms, spaces to which they had a continuing right of access. Here, collective emotional labour that tipped the scales in favour of displays of empathy and sympathy were acceptable. One governor participant disclosed that while laughter and joking bolstered his mood after a death, he and his management colleagues would have a 'serious chat amongst ourselves' (P04) about their emotions. When asked about where these chats occurred, he explained that they would always take place in management offices. Another participant described the Chiefs' Office as the 'bunker' (P08). That these rooms were typically smaller and more closed off in comparison to spaces such as staff messes is also significant, as the design offered increased privacy, limiting the chances of eavesdropping.

In contrast, prison officer and assistant chief officer grade participants had access to a more limited array of spaces in which to engage in collective emotional labour following the death of a prisoner. The function and design of staff messes as spaces of 'backstage

recovery' (Nylander et al., 2011, p. 480) and emotional respite from prison landings rendered them as suitable sites for communal coping via humour and informal debriefing 'like after a football match' (P14) in the aftermath of a prisoner's death. Here, participants found support, but were aware that they must perform their emotions in accordance with professional feeling rules: 'You wouldn't walk into the mess crying' (P17). Shared stories and empathy between staff as detailed in the previous section were often performed in spaces of privacy found in traditionally public arenas (Crewe et al., 2014), such as wing offices that became a 'temporary backstage' (Nylander et al., 2011, p. 481) during lock-up time or night shifts.

Time was also significant in participants' engagement in informal peer support. Like space, time was experienced differently by participants in different grades, due to the variations in the temporal distribution of staff routines depending on their roles. Once again, governor participants appeared to have more time to come together to communally cope with deaths in custody, while the collective emotional labour of those working on wings and landings was influenced to a greater degree by temporal considerations such as unlock times. When asked about the nature of the talk between his colleagues in the immediate aftermath of a prisoner's death, one participant responded:

> Um, well Colette the unfortunate thing is we go back to doing our duty, you know, that's just it. Our checks still have to go on. [*Yeah*] We have to double check to make sure that nothing actually happens during the course of that night so we just went back to doing what we did. That's just the reality of it you know.
> (P03, Assistant Chief Officer)

For some participants, this was a source of frustration, as they felt they had limited time to collectively recover from their experiences. This particularly rankled some, as they felt

it may thwart their efforts to keep their encounters with prisoner deaths out of their home lives:

> There should be a few minutes to get together and say, 'Listen, how are you feeling?' You know, 'What were you thinking about when you took the knife off her or when you stopped her taking those tablets?' Get people to talk and get people to get it out of their system and be open about it and de-stress, debrief, go home to their family … they take off their work mask and they put their social mask back on and they become civilians and humanised again.
> (P05, Prison Officer)

8.4.2 Finding Support at Home

This section explores emotional resources in participants' personal lives. While many participants were reluctant to speak to their family members in the aftermath of their encounters with prisoner deaths, seeking to protect their home lives from their experiences at work, support was found in participation in family life and the physical separation between the prison and the home.

8.4.2.1 Protecting the Home and Family from Deaths in Custody

As noted earlier in this chapter, the capacity of the prison to 'spill over' into the home is documented in extant research on prison work (Crawley, 2002; Lambert et al., 2015). A strong consensus emerged within the cohort regarding the negative impact of talking about deaths with family and friends. Moreover, while a small number of participants reported discussing their experiences with family, typically partners, these conversations were typically brief, and support was gleaned from a spouse's presence rather than anything said. Many participants outlined the importance of maintaining separation between their experiences at work and their lives at home, with most of these discussions

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containing some reference to the idea of 'leaving work behind' when returning home from the prison. Both Kauffman (1988) and Crawley (2004a) observe similar preferences among staff in their studies. Refraining from discussing prisoner deaths was seen as the simplest way of ensuring that their experiences did not intrude upon their personal lives.

Some participants suggested that partners and other family members and friends would not fully understand their experiences. Those outside the prison, including family and friends, were referred to as 'humans' or 'civilians', individuals for whom events in the prison take place at a great distance. Their unfamiliarity with the processes and emotions associated with responding to a death in custody meant that they would be unable to appreciate participants' experiences:

> It's different, a human wouldn't understand. I wouldn't want to tell them about [a death]. I don't see why, because they wouldn't understand it. It would take you longer to explain everything. Whereas if it was somebody prison-based, they would understand it
> (P04, Governor)

> You can't go home to your wife and tell her. And you can't tell your friends, because they don't have an iota. They don't understand, because you have to be in the prison, in that environment.
> (P16, Prison Officer)

Participants' reluctance to talk about their experiences with family and friends went beyond an issue of understanding, however. For many, the division between their work lives and personal lives defended their family and friends from 'vicarious contamination' (Crawley, 2004a, p. 242) as a result of their encounters with prisoners' deaths, thus establishing their homes as protected spaces. While participants' involvement in the response to a death in custody often sparked concern and curiosity in family members, particularly spouses, many were determined not to discuss their experiences of prisoners'

deaths while at home, believing that their families should not be contaminated or burdened by these incidents. Crawley's (2004a) research explores the views of officers' spouses and children regarding the vicarious contamination they felt as a result of their family member's occupation. The current study, in contrast, describes staff perspectives on the contaminating effect of their experiences of deaths in custody on their home lives and families. Many participants reasoned that they refrained from discussing deaths while at home in an effort to shield their families from their experiences:

> I very rarely tell my wife about anything serious in work. I might tell her a funny story that happened. But I never go home and say, 'Jesus, this fella was killed today.' Or sometimes she'll ring me and say, 'There was an incident in the prison; is everything OK?' And I'll say that no, somebody died or there was fella killed. And she'd go, 'Why didn't you ring me and tell me?' The furthest thing on my mind is ringing and telling her. I have a job to do and have to get through it and do it. I'll tell her later on, if she happens to pick it up in the paper or the news, but other than that, I don't. [*Why do you think that is?*] I suppose it's protection. […] I don't want that prison part of the job, and I love the Prison Service, but I don't want it to contaminate my home life.
> (P04, Governor)

> Sure how can you tell your wife? Can you tell your wife that you cut someone down a half an hour ago? Can you tell her that you were rolling around the floor an hour beforehand with a fella with a shiv? [*So is it that you don't want to cause her to be worried about you?*] Yeah, I suppose. You can't tell her. It's not like an office job like, 'How'd you get on?' 'Jesus I was flat out with paperwork.'
> (P16, Prison Officer)

> My father was a prison officer. But I only found out what happened on a day-to-day basis when I joined up. He never spoke about it. And I never tell my wife anything about our work. I *never* speak about [deaths], never open my mouth to her. She doesn't need to know about that.
> (P09, Assistant Chief Officer)

> I don't want to be bringing it home on her. I don't want to be putting my problems on her shoulders. I should be dealing with it in work, I should be dealing with it in work time. I should be coming and saying, 'How are you? How was your day? I'm *great*, I had a great day', you know.
> (P05, Prison Officer)

Fear of contamination led to discussions of the importance of containment of experiences within the walls of the prison. Some participants described instances when they endeavoured to prevent possible contamination of their home and family after a death. One governor participant described an incident earlier in his career, explaining that he decided to remain in work after the removal of the prisoner's body, despite being offered the opportunity to leave early, as he preferred to leave his experience in the prison: 'I didn't particularly want to be bringing that experience home with me. I was quite happy to let it sit in the job' (P07). Others offered similar contributions: 'Contain it, in work. Deal with it, contain it and deal with it in work. And then come out' (P05); 'I don't want to bring it home with me' (P16).

While most participants asserted that they maintained their personal lives as contamination-free zones, some recalled occasions where deaths and other incidents followed them home. The officer grade participant whose difficulties with objects around necks are discussed above recounted an incident when his wife challenged him regarding changes in his behaviour with their children in the months following his encounter with a prisoner suicide. He remarked that their exchange highlighted that his experience was beginning to infiltrate his home life and disrupt his relationship with his children:

> I realised that she was one hundred per cent right. And I said to myself, this is wrong. No, no, no; hold on a minute. *No way* is this gonna come in here. *No way* is it going to affect my kids.
> (P06, Prison Officer)

8.4.2.2 Finding Support in Family and Home Life after a Death in Custody

While participants refrained from talking about their experiences with family and friends, many disclosed that they found support and comfort in their home lives following an encounter with a death in custody. Rather than talking, this support came from the routines of family and home life, which offered respite from their encounters with prisoner deaths. Fourteen participants had children, and most cited their children as an invaluable source of support in the aftermath of their encounter with a death:

> What would have helped a lot then was at that time we would have had three kids and they were small; a toddler, and two, three, four years, that sort of age group. They take up an awful lot of your time and every day is different; they are doing different things, or saying different things, saying new words and doing new things. Watching that takes away an awful lot of bad stuff that's going on. It was great to go home and see little kids doing things little kids do; playing with Daddy and Mammy and building things with Lego or jigsaws or stuff like that. Now, that's a great way to clear the mind and get it back into shape. [*So was your family at the time a good source of support?*] Oh yeah, absolutely. And I'd say for most people who have families that would be hugely helpful. It helped me enormously. I think having something to focus on, whether it's a family, or going out to play a game of football or going out to play darts or whatever, once you have something to focus on, it can take your mind off any lingering after effects of a death like that.
> (P11, Prison Officer)

> You'd get your babies and give them a big hug, you know. Because you're thinking of that mother, she's lost her baby, that's her baby. And you've got your own there and you're saying, how blessed am I? How lucky am I? […] You know, you go home and you get your cuddle off your children and life is good again.
> (P14, Assistant Chief Officer)

Others were grateful for the consideration and understanding of partners. For some participants this took the form of gestures such as offering cups of tea when they returned home, while two participants recalled their appreciation of being 'left alone' (P08) by their wives in the aftermath of their experiences.

While much of the daily routine of the prison has been observed to resemble the activities of a household (Crawley, 2004a), the death of a prisoner appeared to bring the 'abnormality' of prison work into focus for participants. The contrast between the perceived 'normality' of the home and the 'abnormality' of the events in the prison served to emphasise the distinction between participants' work and personal lives:

> The prison is sort of an abnormal environment; it's not a normal environment. And when something like that happens it makes it even more abnormal. So your children are a great comfort. Home is a great safe place.
> (P14, Assistant Chief Officer)

In this way, participants not only found support in their familial relationships, but also the activities and pastimes of their personal lives. One participant described his enjoyment of 'day-to-day problems' as they represented a welcome contrast to his experiences of deaths and other incidents:

> It's not normal to go into work and see somebody slash somebody or somebody hanging from a window or whatever; that's not normal life. A normal life is, as we all get them, the day-to-day problems. And sometimes, I quite enjoy dealing with them. This sounds really stupid, and my wife loves it, but I love ironing [laughing] because I find it really relaxing. And I'd sit there and iron all day, much to her delight! [laughing] I would stand there and iron everything in two baskets of washing, because it's just the way that I relax and switch off. But it's a coping skill. Now I also like cleaning my shoes, that's just a coping mechanism. It just simplifies your whole life.
> (P04, Governor)

Others referred to leisure activities such as football, cycling and running as a means of 'blowing off steam' (P17) following a death in custody. Three participants also mentioned socialising with friends as helpful coping mechanism, while one participant reported his religious faith as supportive.

8.4.2.3 A Journey between Two Worlds

Over time, prison officers learn to maintain boundaries between their work and home environments, hoping to diminish the impact of events in the prison on their personal lives (Kauffman, 1988). Crawley (2004a, p. 245) highlights the officer uniform as the threshold between officers' work and home lives, describing the ritual of removing the uniform upon the completion of a shift as 'a cleansing process' that prepares prison staff for re-entry into their personal lives. While participants in the current study strived to avoid any possible contamination of their personal lives arising from their encounters with deaths in custody, the routine of removing the officer uniform did not emerge as significant in this context. Instead, the realms of work and home were demarcated by the passage between them. The journey from work to home was transformative; the experience of the death in custody was 'left behind' (P01) or 'compartmentalised' (P11) and participants began to prepare themselves to return to their personal lives. A number of participants identified landmarks along their route home as the boundaries between the two worlds, places where they felt their thoughts shifting from the incident to their personal lives. One participant, with experience of several deaths during her time in the Prison Service, explained:

> I know when I worked in [the prison], it was the motorway. Do you know the toll bridge? [*Yeah*] On the way home it was 'shut off', and on the way back it was, 'shut on'. So it wasn't a conscious thing that I did, but it was something I was aware of. I would click into prison officer mode the minute I would go through the toll bridge. The minute I'd hit the booth and the barriers move, I'm now in prison officer mode. And then on the way home, bang, I'm back into mammy mode. [*So are you coming back to your home life?*] Yeah. And it's not a conscious thing. It's just something that I'm aware of. And I tend to do it now when I hit the airport. It's nearly like a switch that goes on; you've processed what's happened that day on your little drive up the road.
> (P14, Assistant Chief Officer)

Another participant described similarly 'shutting off' as he passed a particular junction on the road home, remarking that he found it helpful in the aftermath of deaths and other major incidents.

This process 'leaving work behind' on the journey home was acknowledged as helpful in coping and moving on in the aftermath of a death in custody. Many participants pointed to their capacity to maintain a firm separation between their experiences at work and their home lives as an important factor in reducing the impact of their encounter with a death in custody. One participant, who regularly cycled home, remarked that his journey home after a shift during which he responded to a self-inflicted death in custody was 'as much a therapy as an exercise' (P01), explaining that 'the sadness of [the prison] was left behind because the bike looked after it'. Another participant also reflected on the value of dealing with incidents on the journey home: 'I live sixty miles from [the prison]. Normally by the time I'm home I have the steering wheel beat up and I've everything sorted and I've dealt with it' (P15).

8.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter highlighted the enduring impact of participants' involvement in a death in custody in both the professional and personal realms. Continuing the theme of a shifting focus in the aftermath of a prisoner's death, as described in the previous chapter, this chapter commenced with a focus on the lived experience of accountability for prisoner deaths, exploring participants' experiences and perceptions of internal and external investigations for deaths in custody. Next, the chapter considered the impact of involvement with a death in custody, noting how participants' experiences not only

affected their practice, but also their personal lives. The chapter concluded with an examination of participants' engagement with support, and observed how participants constructed networks of emotional resources, both inside and outside the prison, based upon their needs. The implications of the findings presented in chapters six, seven and eight are considered in the next chapter.

CHAPTER NINE

DISCUSSION

9.1 Introduction

Chapters six, seven and eight presented and analysed the research findings under three organising themes: the response process and the short- and long-term aftermath of a prisoner's death. This chapter moves this discussion forward to deepen the interpretation of the research data, synthesising the findings presented across these three chapters to propose four major themes emerging from this study. These themes were developed and refined with regard to the central aims of the thesis, which emphasised participants' experiences of prisoners' deaths, their emotional responses to these incidents and the nature of their engagement in support and coping in the aftermath. Each of these themes is considered below, further contextualising the analysis presented in the previous chapters in relation to the wider extant literature, as advised by Braun and Clarke (2006). The first theme focuses on blame, and seeks to develop the discussion of accountability presented in chapter eight. Here, participants' perspectives on blame are unravelled further, considering the implications for institutional learning and participants' affiliation to the Irish Prison Service. A proposed typology of blame for deaths in custody is also outlined. Next, the impact of participants' risk-oriented outlook on deaths in custody on their perspectives on prisoners is explored. A progression of the analysis outlined in chapter seven, this theme observes the role of participants' perceptions of liability risks associated with deaths in custody in shaping staff-prisoner relationships. While risk of liability arising from a prisoner's death offers a new perspective on traditional 'us v them'

narratives on staff perspectives on prisoners, it is not without contradiction or ambiguity. The third theme explores vulnerability in prison work, observing the lack of space within prisons for engagement with vulnerability in the aftermath of a prisoner's death. The consequences of vulnerability being squeezed out beyond the prison walls are also considered, with particular focus on how this conceals post-incident vulnerabilities and traumas. Finally, this chapter concludes with a consideration of how the research findings across the three previous chapters confirm and develop understandings of the occupational cultures of prison staff. The particular contributions of the current study to this extant scholarship are discussed, focusing on professionalism, resistance to change and experience.

9.2 Untangling a Perceived Culture of Blame for Deaths in Custody

As discussed in chapters seven and eight, participants' concerns regarding blame and personal responsibility were strong themes in their accounts of both the immediate and longer-term aftermath of a prisoners' death. In the time following a death in custody, a significant shift in focus occurred, as participants' attentions pivoted from the death to focus on the impact of the incident in an institutional and individual context. The overwhelming concern here was personal liability, both in the immediate aftermath of a death and throughout the ensuing investigative processes. Liability was viewed through a personal lens, with participants' concerns focused on the potential consequences of a prisoner's death that would have significant impact in their personal lives, such as the loss of salary increments. Participants' concerns in this context were markedly different to feelings of guilt, which were experienced in minimal intensity by a very small number in the cohort. Here, the focus turned inward, as participants' attentions became

increasingly self-referential. For many, this inward-looking approach to accountability emerged from their experiences of the internal and external investigative process, which were decried as failure-focused and compared to a 'witch hunt' (P16) by one participant. Participants' perceptions regarding the priorities of Irish Prison Service headquarters in the time following a death were also formative in this context. It is submitted that participants' perceptions regarding a 'blame culture' within the internal and external investigative processes, the Irish Prison Service more broadly, point to a lack of organisational affiliation among participants and deficiencies in post-incident institutional and organisational learning, as well as the existence of a typology of blame for prisoner deaths dependent on the cause and nature of death.

9.2.1 Blame and a Lack of Affiliation to the Irish Prison Service

It was argued in chapter eight that participants' experiences of the internal investigative process, the locus of which was viewed as residing at Headquarters level, illustrated a degree of distance in the relationship between prison-based staff and the Irish Prison Service as an organisation. Further evidence of a lack of organisational affiliation among participants is seen in their desire to mitigate their exposure to personal liability following a prisoner's death and their concerns regarding 'self-preservation'. In their exploration of prisoner grievance procedures in California, Calavita and Jenness (2014) observe that staff who processed and adjudicated grievances and appeals saw their work as integral in safeguarding their institution and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation from legal liability. In performing their administrative role in the accountability process for prisoner complaints, they viewed themselves as representatives of their prison and the Department. The authors note that this outlook shaped staff

approaches to the paperwork associated with their roles. It was a common practice to submit detailed and lengthy statements regarding grievance decisions, motivated by a desire to 'justify' (2014, p. 145) their responses should they be called into question in legal proceedings. While the majority of the 23 staff interviewed by Calavita and Jenness occupied roles directly related to grievance adjudication, it remains noteworthy that these findings sit in marked contrast to those of the current study, which is sited in a prison system that sees the perceived burden of paperwork, and subsequent concerns regarding blame, spread across a range of staff grades. Here, participants' perceptions of an organisational logic of blame saw them view accountability mechanisms for deaths in custody with much suspicion. Rather than seeing themselves as representatives of the Irish Prison Service when contributing to investigations, participants' concerns focused on 'self-preservation' and personal consequences, as noted in chapters seven and eight. These perspectives may aid in understanding officer grade participants' preference for minimal detail in their post-incident reports.

Moreover, while staff in Calavita and Jenness' research sought to limit their organisation's exposure to litigation when performing their duties, none of the participants in the current study reported a similar desire to protect the Irish Prison Service from legal action when contributing to investigations into prisoner deaths. Indeed, the possibility of litigation taken by prisoners' families was only briefly mentioned by one governor participant. Although the slow growth of prison litigation in Ireland relative to other jurisdictions may be relevant in explaining participants' lack of concern regarding legal proceedings (Irish Penal Reform Trust, 2016), their contributions in this context also point to a weak sense of affiliation to the Irish Prison Service among the cohort. Participants did not report the same loyalty to their organisation as described by staff in

Calavita and Jenness' research. This finding is supported by the extant literature on prison work, wherein relationships between prison-based staff and senior management are characterised by a lack of trust and alienation (Kauffman, 1988; Liebling et al., 2011). While the research findings suggest that participants enjoyed a strong professional identity and solidarity with colleagues, many participants, including governors, were cynical about Irish Prison Service senior management in a broader context also:

> This particular administration [in the Irish Prison Service] has a kind of bias against the prison staff, from governors down. They don't rate us; they don't rate our experience or the job we do. And I don't think they have a great understanding of the job we do and they don't really want to know. So their attitude is 'we run the Prison Service'. So there's a tension there, you know.
> (P07, Governor)
>
> IPS is the most defunct rabble I've ever come across.
> (P09, Assistant Chief Officer)

It must also be questioned whether participants' perceptions of the internal investigations into deaths in custody as failure-focused contributed to dissociation between participants and the Irish Prison Service. Indeed, as Whitty (2011, p. 126) observes, the rise of risk in the penal realm has seen governance increasingly oriented around 'avoidance of failure', in addition to the advent of performance measurement. The death of a prisoner, an individual whom the staff, institution and system were tasked with keeping in custody, may be seen as among the ultimate failure of the prison authorities. It appears that a drive to avoid failure at headquarters level of the Irish Prison Service, as viewed by participants, has permeated the ranks of staff on the floor, affecting not only their orientations towards accountability mechanisms, but also their sense of belonging to the Irish Prison Service.

9.2.2 The Impact of a Perceived 'Blame Culture' on Institutional Learning Following Deaths in Custody

Participants' perceptions regarding the existence of a 'blame culture' within the Irish Prison Service and some of the external investigative processes for deaths in custody must also be considered in the context of individual and institutional learning. Chapter six reflects upon participants' preferences for mastering the practicalities of responding to deaths and other major incidents, noting that on-the-job learning was favoured over classroom-based learning at an individual level. Much of this learning took place in an informal context, and some participants argued that experiential learning should be further incorporated into Irish Prison Service training programmes. That these narratives reveal an openness to learning from experiences in an individual context sits in marked contrast with the absence of accounts of participation in institutional or service-level learning throughout the interviews. It is here that the impact of participants' understanding of the Irish Prison Service and external oversight as failure-focused comes sharply into focus.

This point is perhaps best considered in the context of the governor grade participants' contributions. Writing about senior management responsibility for ensuring institutional learning following a prisoner's death, the Inspector of Prisons (2014a) instructs that Governors and senior management staff are tasked with ensuring that recommendations arising from his investigations into prisoner deaths are implemented. He further states that he 'would consider it a serious matter if published recommendations, having been made in one case, were not universally followed in all prisons' (Inspector of Prisons, 2014a, p. 16). These remarks, in addition to the inclusion of detailed recommendations in

each individual investigation report, suggest an expectation that institutional and organisational learning should occur, where relevant, following every death in custody. The potential for institutional learning arising from narrative verdicts at inquests has also been noted (Coles and Shaw, 2012). It is interesting to consider these perspectives in the context of governor participants' views on recommendations from inquest juries. As noted in chapter eight, governor participants reported frustration with these recommendations, which, as one participant explained, often lacked operational feasibility and were difficult to implement. In this way, recommendations were not viewed through a lens of learning, but rather seen as creating additional work for managers, who fought 'rearguard actions' (P10) against their complete implementation. This attitude may be understood with reference to governor grade participants' wariness about accountability and blame for prisoner deaths in custody. In this way, the focus on blame in the aftermath of a prisoner's death may potentially eclipse opportunities for institutional learning at management level.

More broadly, the emergence of blame as a strong theme across the entire cohort may point to a siloed culture, at all grades, that is focused on being 'caught out' rather than welcoming institutional and service-wide change in the aftermath of a prisoner's death. This is an especially pertinent consideration given the recent commitment in the Irish Prison Service *Strategic Plan 2016-2018* (2016b, p. 41) to continuing learning and improvement through openness and 'welcoming external ideas'. This undertaking sits in striking contrast to participants' views regarding failure-focused internal and external investigations for deaths in custody. The extant literature on organisational learning is relevant here. While the undertaking of the Irish Prison Service is welcome, Argyris (1977, p. 121) advises that the nature of organisational learning is determined by the

'ecology' or culture of the organisation. He further suggests that if a culture values the reinforcement of existing norms and assumptions, it is unlikely that learning, and thus change, may take place among staff 'on the ground'. Senge (1990) additionally observes that fostering a shared vision for learning among staff is of critical importance for a successful learning organisation. Efforts in this context include the creation of an environment where it is safe to both learn and unlearn (Schein and Coutu, 2002), characterised by 'openness, learning from mistakes, risk-taking and experimentation' (Leech et al., 2013, p. 253). The interest in operational debriefing, as described in chapter six, certainly suggests an appetite among some participants for a safe environment in which institutional learning from experiences could take place in a collaborative context in the aftermath of deaths. It appears however that participants may feel that the weight of perceived failure-focused investigative processes is too oppressive to support dialogues about learning without blame. Further research that considers a broader context beyond deaths in custody is necessary to fully interrogate the learning culture among staff in the Irish Prison Service.

9.2.3 Recognising Good Performance within a Perceived Culture of Blame for Deaths in Custody

In addition to stifling institutional learning, the existence of a 'blame culture', as perceived by participants, was viewed as translating into poor recognition for good performance and outcomes in an organisational context. A strong consensus emerged within the participant cohort, including those currently in governor grades, that recognition for positive outcomes (i.e. near miss situations that had been prevented by staff action) and good responses to deaths was not prioritised by the Irish Prison Service.

Many pointed to the failure-focused nature of the internal investigations to bolster these assertions. In this way, success was measured, at an organisational level, in a negative manner: 'We're measured by our failures rather than by our successes' (P15); 'There's no pat on the back from management to say, 'Look you did a good job there' […] You don't get any praise' (P05). A recent assessment of the organisational culture of the Irish Prison Service conducted by the Inspector of Prisons observed a similarly negative estimation of success among staff, and noted, 'There is a perception among many staff that if they fail in any way in their duty they will be called to account but that good performance is rarely recognised' (Inspector of Prisons, 2015a, p. 68).

Poor recognition of good performance in the prevention of deaths emerged not only as an outcome of an organisational logic of blame, but also as an antecedent. Identifying and evaluating good performance is often difficult for prison authorities, as exceptional staff performance typically means that routines run smoothly and continue as normal (Liebling, 2015). In cases of deaths in custody and 'near misses' however, successes may be more easily measured, particularly in cases of suicide attempts and drug overdoses that do not result in death. Participants' contributions in this context thus also suggest that the perception of a 'blame culture' may be strengthened by the Irish Prison Service's reluctance to recognise good outcomes. Moreover, perceptions regarding limited appreciation of successful prevention can be considered in the context of the impact of blame on the lack of affiliation to the Irish Prison Service as an organisation across the cohort, as well as participants' attitudes regarding institutional learning. It is submitted that poor recognition for their work, as seen by participants, serves not only to reinforce their views of blame culture, but also their orientations towards the Irish Prison Service in the aftermath of a death in custody.

9.2.4 Towards a Typology of Blame for Deaths in Custody

Chapter seven of this thesis discussed participants' perspectives on the personal consequences of deaths in custody, noting that their concerns in this context emerged most strongly in discussions of suicides and drug overdoses. While staff practice can be called into question regardless of the nature and circumstances of a death, self-inflicted and drug-related deaths were seen as the largest threats to participants in this context. Their perspectives suggest that perceptions of blame for deaths in custody exist on scale, classified into a typology depending on the nature and cause of the prisoner's death.

The undercurrent of blame felt throughout the investigative processes appeared to rise more sharply in cases of suicides and drug overdoses. This attitude appeared to emerge from participants' perspectives on staff roles in the prevention of deaths in custody, with drug overdoses and suicides viewed as more difficult to prevent, and thus riskier than homicides and natural deaths. While suicide prevention is considered in the extant literature on staff encounters with self-inflicted deaths and self-harm (Liebling, 1992; Liebling and Tait, 2006; Liebling, 2007; Ludlow et al., 2015), little light is shed upon prison staff perspectives on their obligations in this context. Cell checks were seen as the primary suicide prevention obligation for staff, and participants believed that a self-inflicted death or suicide attempt would bring their performance in this context sharply into focus, thus increasing their exposure to blame and liability. Indeed, concerns have repeatedly been raised by both domestic and international oversight bodies about cell checks. Recent years have seen both the Inspector of Prisons (2014a, 2016b, 2016c) and

Committee for the Prevention of Torture (2011, 2015) highlight deficiencies in this regard.

While a number of participants also acknowledged the practical challenges in obstructing the flow of illegal drugs into prison in the context of overdose prevention, individual responsibility regarding drug-related deaths did not appear to cause as much apprehension as suicides among the cohort. Although they remained wary of the prospect of being found negligent or liable following a drug-related death, participants' accounts of investigations into drug-related deaths suggested a perception that staff actions were not as incisively probed during investigations into these deaths as they were in cases of suicide. Participants' anxieties regarding financial consequences following a finding of liability, such as the loss of salary increments, appeared to focus on failures in the context of suicide prevention, rather than the prevention of overdoses. In this way, while both causes of death were viewed as risky in personal context, suicides surpass drug-related deaths in participants' concerns, believed to attract greater investigative scrutiny and thus more likely to endanger salaries and job security.

Cases of homicide also ranked lower among participants' concerns. As noted in chapter six, those with experiences of homicides did not cite them among the most memorable of their encounters with deaths in custody. While homicides may be more objectively dangerous and were viewed as attracting greater investigative attention than drug overdoses, they were not seen as posing the same professional threats as suicides and drug overdoses. The significance of police involvement in the investigation of these incidents may be relevant in this context. Participants' experiences of the investigative process following homicides were somewhat different to their encounters with other causes of

death. In contrast to other types of deaths, wherein the Garda investigation may be concluded shortly after the prisoner's death, police inquiries into homicides were significantly broader in scope. Other external investigations are also adjourned pending the completion of ongoing investigations and any resulting criminal proceedings. Section 25 of the *Coroners Act 1962* provides for the adjournment of inquests in these circumstances. Each of the homicides described by participants occurred prior to the introduction of Inspector of Prisons investigations in 2012. Analysis presented in chapter eight reported that the Gardaí did not elicit the same apprehension and suspicion as the Irish Prison Service and Inspector of Prisons investigations. Thus, while there was significant investigative scrutiny of homicides, participants also felt more comfortable working with the Gardaí, seeing themselves as part of the same 'uniformed services' (P07), and therefore sharing similar working styles and professional cultures (Liebling, 2000; Crawley, 2004a; Arnold et al., 2007; Liebling et al., 2011).

This thesis has previously discussed participants' perceptions of their dual status during the internal investigative process as both contributors and subjects of Irish Prison Service inquiries into deaths in custody. In contrast, the conscientious approach taken to the preservation and transfer of evidence in Garda investigations described by those governor grade participants who reported experiences of homicide suggest that these participants may view the process as cooperative rather than adversarial. That these police investigations were focused on the identification and apprehension of a perpetrator, who in all cases reported by participants was another prisoner, is also relevant. As participants described, in the aftermath of each of these homicides, a perpetrator was swiftly identified, which may have served to mitigate any concerns among these participants

regarding their exposure to liability, and thus locating homicides further down the scale of blame for deaths in custody.

Finally, natural causes deaths did not prompt concerns regarding blame and investigative scrutiny among the five participants who reported experiences of such incidents. Accordingly, these deaths rank lowest within the proposed typology of blame for prisoner deaths.

The proposed typology is illustrated in Figure 9.1 below.

Participants' perceptions regarding accountability bodies' scrutiny of death

		HIGH	LOW
Participants' perceptions regarding likelihood of blame	HIGH	Suicide	Drug-related Death
	LOW	Homicide	Natural Causes Death

Figure 9.1 Proposed Typology of Blame for Deaths in Custody

9.3 Deaths and Risk: Exploring the Impact of a Risk-oriented Outlook on Deaths in Custody on Participants' Perspectives on Prisoners

The findings of the current study offer insights on staff perspectives on prisoners as a potential source of risk in the context of responding to deaths and prevention work. Just

as participants' perceptions of 'blame culture' in the context of prisoner deaths provide a valuable lens for analysis of organisational affiliation and institutional learning, their concerns regarding the professional and financial risks associated with liability for deaths in custody also shed light on their outlook on prisoners. Discussions of risk in the extant literature on prisoner deaths in custody largely focus on staff roles in risk reduction and suicide prevention (Liebling, 1992; Daniel, 2006; Liebling, 2007; Ludlow et al., 2015), rather than the professional and financial risks described by participants. Moreover, literature addressing broader perspectives on risk in prisons has tended to concentrate on prisoners' views of staff power through the lens of personal risk (Liebling, 2011) or deliberations of the existential risks and emotional pains associated with imprisonment (Cohen and Taylor, 1972; Crewe, 2011a; Crewe et al., 2014). Participants' experiences of prisoner deaths thus provide a useful prism through which the role of staff perspectives on personal liability risk in shaping their orientations towards prisoners, in both an individual and collective context, can be understood.

9.3.1 Risk: A New Perspective on 'Us v Them'?

There now exists a growing body of literature dedicated to exploring the 'structured conflict' (Jacobs and Kraft, 1978, p. 305) embedded in staff-prisoner relationships. While contemporary scholarship in this context has moved beyond traditional descriptions of prison staff as autocratic and domineering figures to more nuanced accounts of the relational dimensions of prison work (Arnold, 2016), some tensions persist between staff and prisoners, which may bolster an 'us v them' mentality among staff and prisoners (Crawley, 2004a; Liebling et al., 2011). Research with prison staff in the United Kingdom (Crawley, 2004a) and United States (Calavita and Jenness, 2014) notes strong themes of

cynicism and resentment among staff regarding expansions in prisoners' rights in these jurisdictions. Similarly, many participants' dissatisfaction with the accountability processes not only affected their outlook on Irish Prison Service headquarters, but also their orientations towards prisoners. The weight of a perceived failure-focused investigative process also served to direct their attentions towards prisoners as a source of professional risk. It is worthy of note at this juncture that the tasks of body handling and dealing with bodily fluids, while also spoken about in the context of risk, did not appear to have as significant an impact on participants' orientations to prisoners as a group. Moreover, participants' accounts of their experiences and perspectives indicate that the perceived risks to their job security and salaries were viewed as much more sinister and pervasive than the public health risks associated with body handling.

Chapter seven detailed participants' concerns regarding the personal consequences of a prisoner's death. For many participants, their involvement in responding to a death was evaluated with an inward-looking approach, studying the incident with regard to their exposure to personal liability and possible negative professional and financial outcomes, such as the loss of salary increments. These perspectives suggest a strong perception among participants regarding deaths in custody, and more broadly prisoners, as a source of personal liability risk. Moreover, participants' accounts in this context indicate that their perspectives on risk not only originate from their own encounters with prisoner fatalities, but that this outlook additionally becomes embedded among staff through processes of peer observation and education. Thus, participants' understanding of dealing with a death in custody as a task that may pose significant risks to their job security and livelihood was bolstered by an outlook on prisoners as risky promoted among staff in Irish prisons. Once again, suicides and drug overdoses were considered high-risk

incidents in this context. As noted previously, participants' contributions point to the role of the deceased in suicides and drug overdoses as significant here. In particular, some suicides were viewed as the result of a 'determined effort' (Ludlow et al., 2015, p. 24) by prisoners to end their own lives. Accordingly, prisoners' autonomous engagement with their bodies, through drug use or the desire to end their own lives, was understood to pose risks to participants that reached far beyond the prison walls. Similar views are found in the few extant memoirs written by former Irish Prison staff (Bray, 2008; Lonergan, 2010). In a passage echoing participants' concerns, Lonergan (2010, p. 93), then Governor of Mountjoy Prison, recalls a number of self-inflicted deaths in the mid-1980s, remarking that if further suicides had occurred, he was certain that his position 'would have been on the line'.

In this way, participants' understanding of the risks associated with responding to prison deaths and undertaking prevention work not only saw them become wary of the consequences of involvement in these duties, but also cast a shadow over their perspectives on prisoners in a collective context. Exploration of participants' anxieties in this regard thus reveals the relevance of risk in shaping staff experiences of the 'us v them' paradigm in staff-prisoner relationships. Their contributions also suggest the prominence of risk in prison governance in Ireland, as staff conduct and perspectives often embody the priorities of the regime in which they work (Liebling et al., 2011).

9.3.2 Unravelling the Contradictory Nature of Participants' Perspectives on Risk

In elucidating their concerns regarding risk and deaths in custody, participants tended to view prisoners as a category or group, with little acknowledgement of individual

difference. Similar perspectives are found in international research, particularly in research on prisoner grievances by Calavita and Jenness (2014). In congruence with the findings of the current study, the authors observe that prison staff charged with handling prisoner grievances 'painted with a broad brush' when speaking about prisoners, applying perceptions regarding character deficiencies formed when handling individual cases to all prisoners (Calavita and Jenness, 2014, p. 103). While participants used a similar 'broad brush' when directly discussing liability risks and prisoner deaths, analysis of their contributions in their entirety reveals interesting contradictions in their narratives regarding their attitudes to prisoners.

These contradictions suggest that the role of risk in shaping participants' perspectives on prisoners is not without nuance. Indeed, many of those participants who espoused views of prisoners as risky in a collective context also offered accounts of individual interactions with prisoners in which risk did not appear as a guiding concern. In contrast, some of these instances seemed to emanate from kindness, understanding and compassion, and above all, a recognition of the humanity of prisoners. Multiple examples of such events are found throughout the cohort, including among those who appeared to be most concerned about risk. Some stories were directly related to prevention, such as the participant who read a letter to a prisoner who was unable to read, and who subsequently disclosed that the suicidal thoughts that he was experiencing had been forestalled by having a letter from his spouse read to him by the participant. Similarly, others described carrying cigarettes to offer to recently committed prisoners, as well as instances where regulations were overlooked to allow vulnerable prisoners an additional phone call.

More broadly, many participants spoke positively about their relationships with individual prisoners, including those whose deaths they had been involved with, expressing interest in their wellbeing, post-release plans and families. Similarly, some participants' discussion of the prisoner suicides that they encountered as 'wasted lives' also appear to be somewhat at odds with their stated perceptions of prisoners' deaths as a real or anticipated source of personal liability risk. In these accounts, prisoners are seen as individuals, and their humanity is acknowledged. In contrast, participants' concerns about prisoner deaths as risky in the context of personal liability appeared to be most strongly ignited in the context of controversies or questions regarding their practice, particularly whether cell checks were performed at appropriate intervals. Thus, in moments of conflict or stress, the individuality and humanity of the prisoner was forgotten, and in some cases, participants came to view prisoners as a collective through the lens of the particulars of these incidents.

The apparent contradictory nature of participants' accounts regarding prisoner deaths and risk, and indeed prisoners as risky in a collective context, points to contradictions embedded within staff attitudes to prisoners in Irish prisons. Moreover, participants' perspectives in this regard also demonstrate the ambiguous and 'sticky' (Crewe, 2009, p. 105) nature of staff-prisoner relationships in Ireland, wherein closeness and distance are simultaneously encouraged by policies and the prison authorities. In the context of deaths in custody, prevention work pushed participants into intimate engagement with prisoners on an individual level, while their concerns regarding liability risks, as well as their outlook on oversight of deaths, fostered caution regarding prisoners as a group. Much of the work on staff-prisoner relationships considers the variety of conflicts that persist between prisoners, with a particular focus on the relational dimensions of power

(Liebling, 2004; Crewe, 2009, 2011b). The relevance of liability risk in staff-prisoner relationships remains yet unexplored in this expanding body of literature. While an in-depth analysis of the nature and quality of staff-prisoner relationships in Irish prisons remains beyond the scope of the current study, these findings suggest that staff perspectives on risk, and indeed the contradictory narratives within these perspectives, may be a worthwhile avenue for future research within this growing area.

9.4 Vulnerability in Prison Work

The three preceding chapters exploring participants' experiences of deaths in custody examine a range of themes, moving from participants' descriptions of the operational response to prisoners' deaths to the emotional and existential challenges of handling a sudden death in prison. In addition to blame and risk, these narratives are also connected by a strong thread of vulnerability. Prison work is laden with vulnerabilities, ranging from physical and operational vulnerabilities to those of a mental and emotional texture. These vulnerabilities are considered, to varying extents, in the extant literature on the working lives of prison staff, including discussions of staff perspectives on the threat of physical assault (Liebling et al., 2011), emotion management and performance (Crawley, 2004b) and psychological trauma (Borrill et al., 2004; Wright et al., 2006). Although the focus of this thesis remains concentrated on staff experiences of deaths in custody, the research findings contribute to understandings of vulnerabilities in prison work in a broader context, as further light is shed upon the nature of these vulnerabilities, the spaces they occupy, and staff engagement with them both within and beyond the prison walls.

9.4.1 Prison: A Place for Vulnerability?

In addition to providing insight into their narratives and perspectives on responding to deaths in custody, participants' accounts of their experiences of prisoner fatalities also reveal a range of vulnerabilities woven throughout these encounters. These included vulnerabilities that emerged directly from the deceased, such as the public health risks of body handling and bodily fluids, as well as from other prisoners, which encompassed participants' concerns regarding operational resilience and continuity of routine. Vulnerabilities may also have temporal definitions, such those expressed by participants regarding cell checks during night shifts. Other vulnerabilities were emotional and psychological in nature, with sometimes enduring effects. While the nature and extent of vulnerability varied among the cohort, a consistent finding was that the prison was not an appropriate setting for engagement with or expressions of these vulnerabilities. Rather, participants' narratives reveal how vulnerabilities experienced by staff, before, during and after a prisoner's death, are minimised and pushed out of prisons.

In many cases, suppressing vulnerability was viewed as an operational necessity, particularly during the emergency response process. Participants actively engaged in strategies believed to protect against feelings such as fear and uncertainty, which threatened to compromise their professional performance. In this way, approaches such as 'working on autopilot' and 'kicking into gear' were not only helpful in a practical context, but also served as insulation against unwelcome vulnerabilities that may surface during the emergency response to a death. Similarly, the cultural expectations that shaped participants' approaches to dealing with deaths, such as the importance of participating in the collective response to incidents (Kauffman, 1988), also promoted the necessity of

resisting vulnerability inside the prison. Moreover, the strong consensus among participants regarding the lack of space and time for emotional vulnerability during and after the response to a death, coupled with the commitment to operational resilience in the immediate aftermath also indicates that there is little room within the prison for staff to display or engage with vulnerabilities. In this way, cultural expectations and professional feeling rules (Hochschild, 1983) were not only a powerful force in participants' operational decision-making, engagement with colleagues and self-presentation, but also served to reinforce the lack of space for vulnerability when dealing with deaths.

Just as responses to deaths were evaluated with reference to possible exposure to blame and liability risk, participants also assessed their own practice and the overall success of a response in the context of the successful containment of vulnerabilities. While some experiences and tasks brought vulnerabilities sharply into focus, such as night shifts and body handling, the knowledge of what was at stake appeared as sufficient motivation for participants to toe the line. This is seen in participants' discussions of night shifts and deaths, wherein some reflected upon the physical and psychological vulnerabilities ushered in by night time in prisons. The conflict between the 'fear of the spyhole' (P06) and heightened awareness during night shifts following experiences of suicide and self-harm and the consensus regarding the need for resilience and continued commitment to the professional obligation to check cells demonstrates participants' understanding of the limited space for vulnerability inside the prison.

Chapter seven notes that for some, the exclusion of vulnerability in prison appeared to be so deeply embedded that they could not fathom displaying or talking about vulnerability,

of any kind, with colleagues in the aftermath of a death. Fears related to reputation and peer pressure, as well as indifference towards prisoners, were cited by most in this context, thus suggesting the relevance of the primary facets of prison staff culture, such as masculinity (Sim, 1994; Snow and McHugh, 2002; Crawley, 2004a), insularity (Kauffman, 1988; Crawley, 2004a) and the structured conflict of staff-prisoner relationships (Jacobs and Kraft, 1978), in shaping staff perspectives in this context. That many spoke with satisfaction and pride regarding their abilities to respond automatically, prioritise the staff group and remain stoic and emotionally detached during and after the response to a prisoner's death suggests that participants have bought into, to varying degrees, the necessity of keeping vulnerabilities contained when inside the prison.

9.4.2 Squeezing Vulnerability Out: The Hidden Traumas of Death Work in Prisons

The expectations and norms regarding visible vulnerability within the prison walls created limited avenues for emotional expression in the aftermath of a prisoner's death. As discussed in chapter seven, these norms pushed participants towards emotional displays that projected resilience and an ability to 'get on with the job', such as humour, detachment and indifference. Emotions that betrayed these expectations and boundaries, thus suggesting the presence of post-incident vulnerabilities, were considered unacceptable following a death in custody. These cultural expectations and norms also extended to participants' perspectives on engagement with workplace support. Informal social support between colleagues, which could at times see the loosening of feeling rules and expectations to enable participants and their colleagues to engage in philanthropic emotion management (Bolton, 2005), was also similarly regulated. In this way, vulnerability was pushed out of many spaces in the prison, particularly communal settings

such as staff messes. While the Chief Officer and Governor grade participants occasionally found space for vulnerability in more secluded areas, such as offices on management corridors, in many cases, the lack of space for engagement with vulnerability led to the emotional effects of participants' experiences being squeezed out beyond the boundaries of the prison, invading the personal realm.

Chapter eight explores the physical, emotional and psychological impacts of involvement with the response to a death in custody. Although participants' experiences altered aspects of their professional practice and awareness, their encounters with prisoner deaths appeared to leave a more enduring impression in their personal lives. The traumas reported by participants, including flashbacks, sleep disturbances, difficulties viewing representations of suicide in television and film, and altered relationships with materials associated with the death, were all experienced in the home. Accordingly, these traumas remained hidden from the view of the prison, evading the attention of colleagues, local management, Irish Prison Service headquarters, and at times, participants themselves. Bennett (2016, p. 166) identifies similar 'hidden injuries' in his exploration of the working lives of prison managers, observing that the cultural pressures to resist taking sick absence not only reinforced the importance of professionalism and machismo among prison managers, but also served to conceal alienation and loss of professional identity as well as ill-health.

These injuries and traumas are not only pushed out and hidden as a result of the 'silence' (Knight, 2014, p. 173) imposed by professional feeling rules and cultural norms, but also participants' perceptions regarding organisational priorities. Many participants described deficiencies with post-incident support provision, including confidentiality and access.

Recent changes to staff support, namely the introduction of the Staff Support Officer role, while welcomed, were felt to be incomplete or superficial, a nod in the direction of progress without the translation of these developments into meaningful change for participants. Moreover, there appeared to be a perception among participants of all grades that the Irish Prison Service was unconcerned with staff wellbeing, prioritising investigative and monitoring obligations over support for staff vulnerability and trauma. Thus, most staff were reluctant or sceptical regarding engagement with formal workplace support, leading to vulnerabilities and traumas becoming further concealed, and sometimes spilling over into the home (Crawley, 2002; Lambert et al., 2015).

This subsequent 'prison spill-over' (Crawley, 2002, p. 278; Lambert et al., 2015) caused frustration or distress for some participants. As discussed in chapter eight, participants attempted to resist invasion of their vulnerabilities through a variety of strategies, including refraining from talking about their experiences of prisoner deaths with family members and friends and staying longer in work to allow the incident to 'sit in the job' (P07). The rationale for this approach arose out of a desire to shield family and friends from 'vicarious contamination' (Crawley, 2004a, p. 242) as a result of their experiences of deaths in custody. In this way, while the emotional and psychological pains and traumas reported by participants remained hidden from the attentions of the prison and Irish Prison Service headquarters, so too did the impact of these intrusions on their loved ones.

9.4.3 Managing Emotional Vulnerability in Prison Work

Overall, the management of emotional vulnerabilities emerged as among the most challenging and intricate tasks across the cohort. The research findings illuminate these challenges, highlighting the individual and collective contexts of emotion management in prison work, and their spatial, processual and temporal facets. In addition to Hochschild's (1983) concepts of emotional labour and feeling rules, this thesis incorporates more recent ideas on emotion in the workplace to explore emotion management in prison work through the lens of staff encounters with deaths in custody. These include Bolton's (2005) typology of emotion management, Korczynski's (2003) notion of communities of coping and Knight's (2014) arguments regarding emotional resources.

Utilising this theoretical literature, this thesis demonstrates how prison staff engage in differing forms of emotion management and presentation both inside and outside the prison. In considering the spatial contexts of emotion management in aftermath of a death in custody, this thesis develops the extant scholarship on emotion management in prison work, and in particular builds upon the work of Crawley (2002, 2004a) and Lambert et al. (2015) by offering contemporary and rich insights into the impact of experiences at work on staff engagement with their emotions at home. Moreover, the research findings indicate that while feeling rules and shared expectations regarding emotion management in the prison act to push individual emotional vulnerability out beyond the boundaries of the prison, there is limited space for emotional support at home. In both arenas, participants described engaging in emotional labour, albeit motivated by differing concerns. Within the prison, surface acting (Hochschild 1983) was necessary for those who may feel sad or anxious to protect reputations and relationships with colleagues.

While staff were similarly inclined to not talk about their emotions at home, this was driven by a desire to safeguard their homes and family members from being contaminated by their experiences at work.

The research findings also illustrate the processual and temporal contexts of the management of emotional vulnerability during and after prisoner deaths in custody. The three findings chapters explore participants' accounts of emotion management and presentation during the emergency response to prisoner deaths and in the immediate and long-term aftermath of these incidents, highlighting the shifting emotional practices and preoccupations of staff through the passage of procedures and time. This analysis was supported by the theoretical basis of the study, wherein concepts such as Hochschild's (1983) feeling rules, Bolton's (2005) philanthropic emotion management and Korczynksi's (2003) communities of coping illuminated the changing nature of staff engagement with emotional vulnerabilities. Emotion management begins as an internalised individual process during emergency responses to deaths in custody, with emotional labour used to maintain an appearance of professional competence and detachment. In the aftermath of these incidents, emotion management becomes an increasingly collective act as participants navigate feeling rules to deal with their post-incident emotional vulnerabilities and find collegial support.

This thesis additionally adds depth to understandings of the management of emotional vulnerabilities among prison staff by exploring the complexities of feeling rules in prison work. The findings demonstrate the intricate nature of the regulations governing emotional expression, which oblige staff to tread a fine line when communicating vulnerabilities. In describing chatting about their encounters with prisoner deaths over a

cup of tea or offering words of encouragement to a colleague, participants' accounts illustrate how they work within these shared parameters, which promote detachment and emotional resilience, to channel emotional support and care into culturally acceptable forms.

9.5 Illuminating Prison Staff Culture

There now exists a growing body of international literature on the working lives and traditions of prison staff, the findings of which suggest that insularity, solidarity, machismo and the nature of staff-prisoner relationships are formative aspects of occupational culture in prisons (Kauffman, 1988; Crawley, 2004a; Liebling et al., 2011; Bennett, 2016). This surge in academic interest in prison staff culture has not been mirrored in Ireland however, and accordingly little research has emerged that provides similarly robust insight into the experiences, traditions and perspectives of those working in Irish prisons. The theoretical basis of the current study, particularly its grounding in Bourdieu's theory of social practice, in addition to the extant scholarship on occupational cultures in prison work, not only facilitates analysis of participants' experiences of prisoner deaths in custody, but also sheds light upon cultural expectations in prison work in Ireland and contributes to international scholarship on prison staff cultures.

Moreover, the centrality of Bourdieu's theory of practice in the theoretical foundation of the study has enabled the analysis to move beyond identification of previously discussed facets of prison staff culture to illuminate additional constituent elements of the occupational culture or 'working personality' (Skolnick 1996; Crawley 2004a) of the cohort. The concepts of habitus, field and capital have been applied to the analysis of participants' experiences of prisoner deaths to both elucidate individual practice in the

context of deaths in custody, as well as how this practice is shaped by participants' group membership and activity in the fields in which they are situated.

In particular, Bourdieu's concept of habitus was valuable in shedding light on how individual practices were patterned and shared across the participant cohort, and in unravelling the differences and contradictions therein. As discussed earlier in this chapter, shared sensibilities were observed regarding blame, risk and vulnerability, wherein participants of various grades were united in their perspectives on 'blame culture', the liability risks associated with prisoner deaths and professional expectations regarding the management and performance of emotion. While consensus on these issues was identified in a broad context, deeper exploration highlighted differences in perspectives relative to participants' capital and position in both the occupational group and wider penal field, thus illustrating the 'malleability' (Wacquant 2016, p. 68) of participants' habitus. Bourdieu (2000, p. 161) observes that habitus may open to modification, with dispositions subject to 'permanent revision' based on new experiences and the social structures by which they were generated. For example, the organisational logic of blame highlighted by most participants as a touchstone in their views on accountability appeared to have divergent effects on their operational reporting practices depending on their grade. Those in officer grades preferred to write brief reports, believing these to limit their potential exposure to blame. Frustrated by this approach, governors would utilise their management power to seek greater detail, concerned that they would be called to account for officers' short statements at an organisational level, and that their management practices may be viewed unfavourably by those in headquarters. For these participants, their promotion to governor grades prompted a revision in their cognitive dispositions regarding 'blame culture'; they remained steadfast in their belief regarding an

organisational logic of blame, but augmented their practice regarding operational statements in accordance with their altered position and capital within the organisation.

Habitus was combined with Bourdieu's field theory to explore their confluence in determining staff sensibilities, traditions and practices through the lens of encounters with prisoner deaths in custody. A field shapes and modifies the habitus of its agents, continually moulding their dispositions as they become embedded within its domain (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). The research findings illustrate the impacts of participants' experiences of prisoner deaths on their practices and perspectives in both their work and home lives, describing the transformative effects of death work on their habitus. Field was thus a useful theoretical device in the current study as it facilitated deeper understanding of the motivations for participants' actions and perspectives, as well as how these dispositions have been formed and altered by their position within the Irish penal field. Additionally, the concept of field also aided in the identification of activity external to participants that has been internalised into practices and preferences. As will be discussed below, this was valuable in understanding how and why participants' perceptions of professionalism have evolved, in addition to their attitudes to service-level developments in accountability and oversight. Additionally, explorations of participants' attitudes to these field-level activities, as well as the agents from whom they originated, served to shed light on participants' position within the penal field and their relationships with some of the other agents or groups of agents therein.

Utilising Bourdieu's theory of practice, a number of features of the occupational culture or 'working personality' (Skolnick, 1996; Crawley, 2004a) of the cohort are identified, combining with their position within the penal field to shape their habitus. The sections

below highlight the role of professionalism, resistance to change and experience as instrumental in shaping or altering participants' practices and sensibilities. The nature of these aspects, as well as how they are affected by struggles within the Irish penal field and intersecting political and legal fields (Page, 2013), are discussed below. Following this, the contribution of the thesis findings to understandings of prison staff culture will be discussed.

9.5.1 Professionalism

Participants' accounts of their experiences of responding to prisoner deaths reveal a number of shared priorities, including responding automatically and collectively, maintaining emotional detachment and neutrality during emergency response procedures, and preserving operational continuity and individual resilience in the aftermath of an incident. While each of these features are motivated by a range of concerns, including occupational obligations and the duty of care owed to prisoners, impression management (Goffman, 1959) and emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983), and a desire to resist exposure to blame and risk, they are also collectively clustered around professionalism, serving as 'instrumental aspects' (Bennett, 2016, p. 127) in participants' perspectives on professionalism in prison work. Additionally, the emotional aspects of professionalism are underlined by participants' acceptance of and commitment to professional feeling rules, as well as their interactions with other prisoners and deceased prisoners' families in the aftermath of deaths. As discussed in chapter seven, these exchanges are aligned with presentational rather than philanthropic emotion management (Bolton, 2005), motivated by participants' perceptions of professional and societal expectations, and

undertaken in an effort to moderate the 'culture of blame' that was also seen as permeating prisoners and their families.

That professionalism was woven throughout participants' accounts of dealing with deaths in custody, emerging in their descriptions of the response process, as well as the immediate and long-term aftermath of these incidents, suggests its integral location within their habitus, composed of a set of dispositions that were learned and assimilated over time. The relevance of professionalism to participants' habitus is not only seen in its constituent aspects, but also in the conflicts that emerged around it (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Both DiIulio (1987) and Crawley (2004a) note the challenges of professionalism in prison officer work. Additionally, recent research from Bennett (2016) on the working lives of prison managers in England underlines how increased bureaucracy following the advent of managerialism led to conflicts between the fulfilment of performance targets and the professional values of honesty and integrity. Similar conflicts are seen in the current study, embedded in participants' views on expansions in accountability for deaths in custody. Officer grade participants' preference for minimal content in operational reports highlights a friction between the desire to minimise professional liability in an individual context and the professional obligation on all staff to contribute to investigations into deaths in custody. Conflict is also evident in the perspectives, as elucidated by some participants, regarding cell checks and prevention work.

Analysis of these conflicts also demonstrates how changes in the Irish penal field, in the context of developments in accountability and oversight, have been internalised by participants and translated into practice. Page (2011) argues the importance of not only

exploring how changes within and around the penal field shape systemic developments, but also how these affect practice, as well as the subjective orientation of penal agents to their practices. Accordingly, officer grade participants' cautious approach regarding their written contributions to investigations may be understood not only with regard to a lack of trust and affiliation at an organisational level, but also through the lens of recent activities in external oversight of prisons and changes to accountability for deaths in custody. Inspector of Prisons investigations into prisoner deaths, which represented a significant change to accountability for deaths in custody, were introduced in 2012, just two years prior to the commencement of data collection. As noted in chapter eight, while most of the cohort did not have experience of participating in an Inspector of Prisons investigation at the time of interviews, the Inspector's new role in this context was cited by many participants as bringing increased focus and pressure on staff operational reports. This may have prompted wariness among participants regarding the content of their own reports. More broadly, a number of significant deaths have occurred in the past decade that have thrown a spotlighted on staff practices. Most notable among these is the killing of Gary Douch by another prisoner in Mountjoy prison in 2006, the events of which were subject to a lengthy examination by a Commission of Investigation. The final report of the Commission of Investigation highlighted significant deficiencies in staff implementation of policies and regulations among the systemic failures that attributed to this death (McMorrow, 2014). These events, and the ensuing criticism of staff practice in the context of prisoner deaths, were mentioned by some participants as a source of dissatisfaction and frustration, with some feeling that their commitment to professionalism and diligence in their roles had been overshadowed by recent commentary. In this way, participants' awareness of and perspectives on these issues

suggest that activity in the Irish penal field gives depth to adaptations in their habitus in the context of professionalism.

9.5.2 Resistance to Change

In addition to professionalism, the research findings also suggest resistance to change as another instrumental feature of participants' 'working personality' or habitus. This is evidenced in participants' attitudes to policies and procedures, and, to a lesser degree, their outlook on changes in accountability for deaths in custody. Chapter six outlines participants' perspectives on policies, procedures and training, observing wariness and scepticism among the cohort regarding existing and potential developments in this area. Similar observations have been made regarding probation staff, wherein Robinson et al. (2014, p. 136) describe a culture among frontline staff that is 'stubbornly cohesive and/or resistant to change'. Like professionalism, participants' aversion to additional procedures can be understood with reference to the 'histories, hierarchies and cultural traditions' (Lerman and Page, 2012, p. 510) of the Irish penal field, in which stagnation, informality and a policy vacuum persisted for many decades (O'Donnell, 2008; Rogan, 2011). Recent developments in the wider penal field regarding deaths in custody appeared to be perceived by participants as exerting unwelcome pressure upon their practice, directly or indirectly introducing changes that were viewed as unnecessary or incompatible with their everyday activities. These changes may also have created new struggles for participants within the penal field, altering their 'feel for the game' (Bourdieu, 1980) and causing discomfort in their professional habitus. In this context, it is noteworthy that eleven of the currently serving participants had over twenty years of service at the time of interview, thus suggesting that their habitus may have been formed during the earlier

period of stagnation and inactivity within the Irish penal field, cementing a disposition that is resistant to recent policy and regulatory change in the handling of deaths in custody.

Additionally, Garland (2001) advises that professional cultures are relevant to understandings of the relationship between penal agents and penal culture. As noted previously, participants placed a high value on their own experience and that of their colleagues, preferring to learn from one another rather than formal policies and training. While this outlook bolstered their solidarity as a professional group, it also affected their attitudes to the introduction of policies and regulations within the prison system. Participants felt that many existing policies and procedures failed to take account of their practical experiences, and were rankled by what they perceived as a proliferation of policies, both in the context of deaths in custody and more broadly, that sought to augment or correct their practice. Indeed, in recent years there has been intensive policy activity within and around the Irish prison system. Currently, there are almost twenty 'open access' policies available on the Irish Prison Service website, with the oldest introduced in 2012. Recent years have also seen significant changes to regimes with the introduction of the Incentivised Regimes Policy[1], which was bemoaned by both governor and officer participants as a source of further formalisation and rules. Additionally, in 2016, the Irish Prison Service entered a second cycle of long-term strategic planning with the publication of its 2016-2018 strategic plan (Irish Prison Service, 2016b), which seeks to build upon the progress and activities of the previous 2012-2015 plan (Irish Prison Service, 2012b).

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[1] Introduced in 2012, the Incentivised Regimes Policy provides for a differentiation of privileges across three levels (basic, standard and enhanced) between prisoners according to their level of engagement with services and quality of behaviour. It is mandatory for all prisoners.

Accordingly, most were hesitant or sceptical about the introduction of further administrative regulation to their roles with regard to prisoner deaths and more generally. Moreover, participants' preference for experiential learning in favour of guidance from policies, regulations and training devised and introduced by other agents operating both within the penal field (e.g. Irish Prison Service headquarters, Department of Justice) and beyond (e.g. members of the Oireachtas[2]), not only supported staff solidarity, but also strengthened insularity, further distancing them from these agents. The insulating nature of participants' perspectives on policy activity, further regulation and formal training thus suggests a habitus that is resistant to administrative developments that aim to change their practice. With limited capital available within the penal field, staff are not always able to successfully resist the introduction or operation of unwelcome policies and regulation, instead pursuing illegitimate means to give effect to their resistance. This is seen in the innovative approaches (Crewe, 2009) and 'creative compliance' (Crewe and Liebling, 2015, p. 8) undertaken by both officer and governor grade participants in the context of paperwork and policy implementation.

Further analysis of participants' attitudes in this context reveals a divergence in the perspectives of officer grade participants and governor participants. While both groups shared the same wariness, scepticism and ultimately resistance to new policies and regulations, officer grade participants' concerns focused on the impact of policy and regulatory change on their daily activities. In contrast, governor grade participants were apprehensive about the effective implementation of additional rules and policies: 'Over a weekend or week you can write a policy. But it may take a year to make it actually work' (P10). Governors, as 'translators and transmitters of penal policy' (Liebling and Crewe,

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[2] National parliament of Ireland.

2013, p. 283) appeared to be more sensitive than officer grade participants to changes in the broader political and policy climate (Liebling, 2008b). This may be understood in the context of governors' positions as conduits, inside the prison, for much of the activities occurring within the penal field and intersecting political and legal fields (Page, 2013). With regard to prisoner deaths in custody, this role expanded beyond translating Irish Prison Service policies, Standard Operating Procedures and prison legislation into meaningful practice for their staff, to take in the activities of other agents, including Coroner's Court and Inspector of Prisons recommendations. Governors' resistance to implementing these recommendations suggests further evidence of a habitus that is not only resistant to institutional learning, as discussed above, but also to giving effect to institutional or organisational change more broadly.

9.5.3 Experience as Cultural Capital

Chapter six underlines participants' perspectives on experiential and reflective learning in the context of deaths in custody, detailing the high value that many in the cohort placed upon on-the-job experience over formal training and policies. Participants described how experiences were shared among colleagues, serving as education and preparation for those who were in the early stages of their careers or who had not yet encountered a prisoner death in the course of their duties. The exchange of experiences through storytelling and group reflection was not just instructive however, this process also facilitated the demonstration of knowledge and competence within the staff group, thus aiding participants and their colleagues in the accumulation of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1980). Accordingly, stories about encounters with deaths were also 'badges of honour' (P07), establishing the storyteller as a skilled and dominant agent among colleagues.

In this way, evaluating colleagues' experiences, either in-person or from second-hand accounts, emerged as an accessible method for appraisal of their practices. The nature and quality of an individual's experiences also established their reputation among colleagues, offering insight into their capabilities, resilience and trustworthiness. As discussed previously, governor participants placed particular importance on this cultural capital, harshly assessing management colleagues who lacked the operational experience of dealing with deaths and other major incidents that came with time spent 'on the beat' in lower grades. Those with the 'right' kind of experiences were judged more favourably, and could amass cultural capital through offering their experiences and perspectives to less-experienced staff. Moreover, sharing experiences and 'war stories' about their encounters with deaths in custody and other incidents not only cemented participants' position and sense of belonging among their colleagues, but also bolstered group solidarity and contributed to the creation of a shared identity and habitus vis-à-vis on-the-job experience.

9.5.4 Beyond the Irish Context: Developing Understandings of Prison Work

The thesis findings regarding the sensibilities, traditions and practices of the participant cohort also have relevance beyond the Irish context. In addition to shedding light on some instrumental aspects of an Irish prison staff habitus, this study also develops existing knowledge of prison staff culture more broadly.

As discussed in previous chapters, a strong narrative of self-preservation and risk-based reasoning was identified in participants' accounts of the aftermath of prisoner deaths.

Shared beliefs about a culture of blame imbued in the investigative mechanisms for deaths in custody promoted an inward-looking approach to the outcomes of these incidents, prompting staff to view prisoners through a lens of financial and professional risk. While contradictions were identified within this narrative, wherein participants' accounts of individual interactions with prisoners demonstrated kindness, understanding and compassion, the extent to which deaths in custody were discussed with reference to occupational and financial security remains striking.

Moreover, that many participants described learning of these risks from more experienced colleagues during initial training and familiarisation, and that those in supervisory roles disclosed that they would often emphasise the 'avoidance of failure' (Whitty, 2011, p. 126) with their staff, suggest the significance of risks of this nature in acculturation in prison work. Previous research acknowledges the prominence of security-focused education during recruit prison officer training (Crawley, 2004a; Arnold et al., 2007), with Arnold (2008) arguing that the emphasis on prisoners as a security risk shapes officers' relationships with prisoners by promoting suspicion, social distance and cynicism. Similarly, just as the focus on security leads to mistrust of prisoners, a feature which has been identified as central in occupational cultures and identity in prison work (Crawley, 2004a; Arnold, 2016), views regarding prisoners as potential threats to staff salaries and job security foster similar distance between staff and prisoners. While such sensibilities also bolster staff solidarity, offering further depth to the 'structured conflict' (Jacobs and Kraft, 1978) in staff-prisoner relationships, they may also promote more individualised cultures, with risk-based rationales shaping individual prevention and emergency response practices, motivated by staff concerns about the outcomes of incidents in a personal context, rather than at a group or institutional level. Thus, in

addition to potentially proving fruitful in explorations of staff-prisoner relationships, as noted earlier in this chapter, staff perspectives on financial and professional risk may also be valuable in broadening knowledge on 'what it means to be a prison officer' (Arnold, 2016, p. 265).

Participants' discourses on common sense, experience and informality offer further insight into the nature and constitution of occupational cultures in prison work. Common sense and the value of experience emerged as strong threads in participants' discussions of their attitudes to emergency response procedures, prevention practices and accountability mechanisms for deaths in custody. Many viewed common sense as a valuable skill or instinct, developed as their service and experiences in the job progressed and diversified. While research indicates that staff regard common sense as an important feature of a 'good' prison officer (Crawley, 2004a), tensions frequently emerge between formal policies and common sense in staff practice (Liebling, 2008a; Liebling et al. 2011). Indeed, participants often deployed common sense as a rationale for resisting policy and training interventions for responding to prisoner deaths, believing that senior management and headquarters staff, policymakers and legislators were undervaluing their experience-laden knowledge and 'jailcraft'. Many in the cohort were particularly rankled by policies that increased their administrative duties or those that sought to reconstruct existing 'common sense approaches' or place new demands on their practices and objectives. While rebuttals to these measures varied, with some invoking arguments of efficiency when discussing increases in paperwork, and others highlighting a common sense approach as producing more humane outcomes for prisoners when reflecting upon cell check procedures, all were united in a shared commitment to common sense and experience-informed practice.

In this way, staff views about common sense, informality and experience are influential in bringing colleagues together, bolstering not only staff solidarity, but also strengthening the staff group against the perceived interference of other agents in the penal field, including senior management and policymakers. These shared perspectives, while useful in producing camaraderie and unified responses to incidents (Kauffman, 1988; Liebling et al., 2011), may also promote cultures among staff that disregard urgent systemic or institutional deficiencies that require policy and procedural changes. With broad consensus now existing about the primary features of occupational cultures in prison work, scholarship should continue to explore these features in greater detail, examining the complexities and contradictions produced within, as well as their relationship to shared sensibilities such as those regarding common sense, informality and experience.

Additionally, by exploring how emotions are experienced, managed and performed by staff who encounter prisoner deaths, this study builds upon existing knowledge of emotions in prison work, as well as the shared sensibilities and traditions that shape the emotional lives of prison staff. In particular, the research findings illuminate two important aspects of emotional communication among prison staff: how staff understand their own emotions and how they suppress or indirectly relate these emotions to one another in line with masculine gender norms.

As noted in this chapter and previous chapters, the research findings reveal how shared expectations regarding emotion management promote the necessity of concealing post-incident vulnerabilities inside and outside the prison. In so doing, these findings also illuminate the complexities and contradictions in the ways that staff engage with their

emotions, wherein they are obliged to translate unacceptable emotional responses to prisoner deaths into performances that adhere to feeling rules that prioritise detachment, stoicism and an ability to 'get on with the job'. Beyond functioning as adaptive and protective mechanisms to enable prison staff to cope with their experiences at work (Crawley 2004a; Arnold, 2005; Nylander et al., 2011), these emotional processes also illustrate the nature and order of prison staff cultures. This is seen in the contradictions additionally evident in the ways that participants spoke about their emotions and vulnerabilities throughout the interviews. Arnold (2016, p. 275) observes that prison officers are often reluctant to talk about their emotions, commonly insisting that they 'don't really feel anything' while simultaneously acknowledging emotions through language of minimisation and denial. Some participants strongly insisted that were unaffected by their encounters with death, but later described forms of trauma, such as flashbacks and trouble sleeping. Similarly, many highlighted deficiencies in post-incident support, arguing that colleagues in need of care may be ignored or discouraged from accessing existing services, while also insisting that they had never seen a colleague become upset in the aftermath of a death, and indeed could not fathom a circumstance where such an incident may happen within this culture. It is in these complexities and contradictions that future scholarship on staff cultures should locate itself, endeavouring not only to explore the nature of emotion management and performance in prison work, but also how cultural expectations regarding emotion affect staff perceptions and recollections of their own feelings.

Writing about research with male prisoners, Crewe (2014, p. 396) argues that the lack of analyses of the emotional dynamics of homosocial relationships between men in prisons remains a 'striking absence' in prison sociology. Much of the literature, he asserts,

focuses on the machismo of the environment, and the subsequent inclination for prisoners to adopt 'masks' or 'fronts' that conceal their emotions (Crewe, 2006). Similar discussions of the enduring role of masculinity in emotion performance are found in the scholarship on the working lives and cultures of prison staff. Crawley (2004a, p. 132) describes 'a long-standing cultural expectation' that officers (both male and female) will suppress emotions regarded as 'non-masculine', such as anxiety, fear and compassion, masking these with resilience, courage and authoritativeness.

Crewe (2014, p. 394) observes that such approaches do not fully consider the 'underlying emotional dynamics that shape relationships between men'. In exploring participants' emotional responses to prisoner deaths, the current study attempts to illuminate these underlying emotional dynamics between prison staff, describing the flow of these emotions between colleagues during and after these incidents. With 16 of the 17 participants being male, and most describing interactions with male colleagues, these findings have particular relevance for the nature of male homosocial relations (Lipman-Blumen, 1976) in prison work. The research findings detail various forms of indirect emotional expression between these participants and their male colleagues in the aftermath of prisoner deaths in custody. The sharing of 'war stories' about encounters with difficult incidents not only affirm status and cultural capital among colleagues, but are also a safe format in which comfort and empathy can be indirectly offered to those who have experienced a death in custody. Similarly, black humour exchanged following a prisoner's death facilitates indirect emotional communication between staff in public spaces, wherein their feelings about the incident are channelled through the linguistic and social indirectness (Kiesling, 2005) of 'black humour therapy' (P10). Implicit expressions of care and intimacy are also seen in non-verbal exchanges, such as patting the shoulder

or putting an arm around a colleague who had dealt with a distressing death. Participants' appreciation for these forms of informal support, as well as the commitment to reciprocity professed by some in the cohort, suggest similar 'potent emotional bonds' between male colleagues as those observed by Crewe (2014, p. 399) in his discussion of flows of masculine intimacy between male prisoners. Moreover, that these moments of intimacy were largely minimised by male participants, played down as 'chats over tea' or 'banter', indicates their function in reinforcing masculine gender norms within prison staff culture. While a full account of homosociality in prison work is beyond the scope of the current study, further research is necessary to more robustly interrogate how emotional intimacy and distance between prison staff are mediated through gender norms.

9.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter considered the four major themes to emerge from the current study. It sought to develop the analysis presented in chapters six, seven and eight, exploring these topics in the context of the relevant literature and theoretical basis of the study. Beginning with blame, discussion focused on how participants' experiences and perspectives in this regard shed light on a hierarchy of blame for deaths in custody, as well as connections between blame and institutional learning and organisational affiliation. Following this, the chapter moved to explore the at times ambiguous role of liability risk as a new lens for understanding staff attitudes to prisoners. Vulnerability in prison work was then considered, with a focus on how post-incident vulnerabilities may be pushed out of prisons to invade participants' personal lives. Finally, the research findings across chapters six, seven and eight were synthesised in the context of the occupational culture in prisons. This included a number of observations regarding the nature of the 'working

personality' or habitus of participants, as well as how this habitus was affected by developments and struggles within the Irish penal field and beyond. The next chapter considers the implications of the study's findings for policy and service provision, as well as criminological knowledge and future research.

CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSION

10.1 Introduction

This chapter brings the thesis to a conclusion, considering the implications of the research findings for both policy and future research. It commences with a discussion of the possible outcomes of the thesis for policy and practice, offering suggestions for future directions in policymaking informed by the analysis presented herein. Following this, recommendations for future studies are outlined, accompanied by a discussion of the role of further research in expanding understandings of the themes considered in this study, as well as promoting the policy changes proposed in the previous section. Finally, this chapter concludes with a synopsis of the main conclusions that have arisen from this study.

10.2 Implications and Recommendations for Policy

The aims and objectives of the current study necessitated an in-depth exploration of the experiences and perspectives of prison staff regarding prisoner deaths in custody, utilising a qualitative methodology. While the research findings do not enjoy the same generalisability as found in quantitative studies, their potential to influence penal policy and practice in both an Irish and international context is bolstered by the study's commitment to understanding the 'nuances, motivations, attitudes and feelings'

(Braggins and Talbot, 2003, p. 11) of the participants, as well as the exploratory focus of the research and under-researched nature of the study topic. Liebling (2014, p. 3) highlights the value of qualitative studies of prison life that operationalise concepts from 'the ground up', observing:

> It is often the case that exploratory, innovative, and curiosity-driven research is, in the end, of most value to policy and practice, precisely because it avoids the narrow limits set by 'working assumptions' or policy needs, and it follows leads originating in 'the real world' (this has also been true of other prison research projects conducted 'off the policy agenda').

Accordingly, this section considers the policy implications to emerge from the current study. Recommendations for practice and future policymaking are underlined, informed by the analysis of participant interviews presented in chapters six through nine.

A number of recommendations are proposed regarding staff training. Chapter six reports participants' experiences of staff training for responding to prisoner deaths, with some describing limited instruction regarding ligature removal practices during their initial training while others indicated that they received no instruction on relevant procedures. Improvements in training provision are thus strongly recommended in this context. Although many participants highlighted the value of learning 'as you go along' (P01), it is imperative that staff are appropriately trained in the technical aspects of responding to deaths, such as the correct use of a ligature knife. Staff education on deaths in custody should also include the human rights principles that underpin their work in this regard. This is particularly important in prevention work; training programmes should cover the 'ethical context' (Coyle, 2009, p. 24) of prevention procedures, as well as the technical aspects. Consideration should also be given to the provision of continuing training for prevention and death work as 'a requirement which continues from the moment of first

recruitment to that of final retirement' (Coyle, 2009, p. 25). Participants' accounts indicated that programmes were quite limited in this context. This recommendation echoes that of Rule 75(3) of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, which instructs prison authorities to ensure the continuous provision of in-service training to maintain and improve staff knowledge and capacities.

Participants' perspectives on training additionally highlight a strong preference among the cohort for experiential and reflective learning, utilising their own experiences and those of their colleagues. Many felt that these approaches were inadequately catered for within training programmes, both at recruit stage and as part of continuing professional development. As a result, those who engaged in post-incident reflection did so in an informal context, individually or with colleagues. It is therefore a welcome development that there is now an optional module on reflective practice on the Higher Certificate in Custodial Care that will be delivered to all recruit prison officers from 2017 onwards as part of their initial training (Irish Prison Service, 2016a). Further potential for improvement remains however, particularly as participants' contributions indicate that post-incident reflective and experiential learning is poorly facilitated across the organisation. Those who engaged in reflection or sought to 'learn from experiences' in an informal context found their efforts to be positive and constructive, thus suggesting that the implementation of initiatives such as critical incident debriefs would be beneficial. Moreover, the provision of a safe space in which operational responses to deaths and other major incidents can be discussed by staff would not only aid reflective practice, but also offer avenues for discussion of any emotions arising from these incidents (Mackie, 2009; Knight, 2014). Additionally, critical incident debriefs and similar initiatives should function in tandem with accountability mechanisms for deaths

in custody. Such an approach would promote post-incident institutional learning and potentially mitigate participants' perceptions regarding accountability and blame.

In addition to critical incident debriefs, the Irish Prison Service should consider adopting an open and consistent staff disclosure process, wherein staff could report operational errors to line management. This should particularly focus on low risk incidents, such as 'no harm' and near miss events, rather than adverse events like deaths in custody. Accordingly, this process should also be viewed as an opportunity for institutional and organisational learning, with a view to avoiding recurrence or escalation of the reported errors, rather than as an avenue for apportioning blame. Open disclosure processes are used in health care systems in a number of jurisdictions, including Ireland. Guidance could be sought from the current national policy on open disclosure for Irish health care staff (Health Service Executive, 2013). Empirical evaluations of these processes suggest that their successful implementation requires significant organisational commitment, with a particular focus on supportive cultures and staff-management relationships (Manser and Staender, 2005; Sorensen et al., 2008). The introduction of similar procedures may promote a 'duty of candour' among staff regarding prisoner deaths, as recommended in the recent findings of an independent review into self-inflicted deaths among 18-24 years olds in custody in England and Wales (Harris Review, 2015, p. 13). Fostering open and supportive communication between officers, local management and headquarters staff regarding mistakes and unexpected outcomes may also increase trust throughout the organisation. Improving trust between these groups will not only help staff to feel more secure in their operational decision-making, it will also contribute to dismantling 'blame culture' within the Irish Prison Service and mitigating staff concerns regarding liability risks of prisoner deaths.

Attention must also be paid to the potential for institutional learning arising from external oversight. Governors have a particularly important role to play in this context, owing to their position as disseminators and enactors of policy (Liebling and Crewe, 2013). As highlighted previously, governor grade participants viewed recommendations from external investigations into deaths in custody as having little regard for the operational realities of prison governance. Accordingly, these recommendations were greeted with resistance, with some participants describing their efforts to augment or avoid their implementation. It may also be the case that governors may transmit these attitudes to their staff, shaping institutional attitudes regarding post-incident learning and the value of external investigations into deaths. Effective implementation of external recommendations could be improved by encouraging communication between governors and external oversight bodies regarding the operationalisation of these recommendations. Existing avenues of communication could be utilised for Inspector of Prisons recommendations, while informal arrangements could be made at a local level regarding Coroner's Courts. Approaches such as these would ensure that the recent commitment in the Irish Prison Service strategic plan to openness regarding 'external ideas' (Irish Prison Service, 2016b, p. 41) is effectively discharged.

An additional recommendation emerges regarding the recognition of good staff performance. As discussed in the previous chapter, participants believed that an organisational emphasis on blame precluded adequate recognition of their performance, particularly regarding appraisals of effective staff intervention in near miss incidents. The research findings align with those in the Inspector of Prisons' (2015a) report on the organisational culture of the Irish Prison Service, wherein greater recognition of good

performance by individual members of staff was recommended. This study endorses this recommendation, and further advises the Irish Prison Service to seek to move beyond recognition of exceptional acts of bravery, heroism or merit, as is currently provided for in its Merit Award programme, to comprehensive appreciation, at both institutional and organisational levels, of ordinary or routine practices that yield positive outcomes. While exceptional performance demands formal recognition, it is equally important to ensure that the mundane and less visible acts, such as the 'kind word', 'flash of humour' or 'moment of insight' (Hay and Sparks, 1991, p. 7) offered by staff to prisoners that prevent self-harm or suicide, are appropriately identified and appreciated. While participants' accounts suggest that both informal and formal procedures would be welcomed, the expansion of current formal processes to encompass these less visible practices would send a particularly strong message to staff that their contributions, no matter how small, are valued by the Irish Prison Service. At an organisational level, the Merit Award programme could be broadened to provide for this. Recognition of good performance and positive outcomes could also be incorporated into the performance management process. Local management should also appraise positive outcomes and performances in the aftermath of incidents. Approaches such as these would moderate perceptions of a 'blame culture', as failure and liability would no longer be the only yardsticks by which staff feel that their work is measured. Greater recognition of prevention work and other positive outcomes may also improve staff-management and staff-headquarters relationships, concomitantly enhancing organisational affiliation among staff 'on the ground'.

Improved provision must also be made for the emotional needs of staff in the aftermath of a prisoner's death. Chapter eight considered the impacts of participants' encounters with deaths in custody and their engagement with post-incident workplace support. The

research findings indicate that prison staff experience similar traumas to those reported by professionals for whom death work is a 'critical component' of their roles (Chan and Tin, 2012, p. 899). Perspectives on Irish Prison Service post-incident support provision were offered by many in the cohort. While the introduction of Staff Support Officers was praised by some, problems regarding access and confidentiality emerged during interviews. Access to support varied between institutions, dependent on local management priorities and attitudes. Moreover, engagement with post-incident support was also frustrated by occupational 'feeling rules' (Hochschild, 1983) and expectations regarding emotion management. Additionally, participants of all grades felt that staff wellbeing was not an organisational priority, eclipsed by concerns regarding accountability. Participants' contributions thus suggest issues at both institutional and organisational levels, wherein post-incident vulnerabilities were pushed out beyond the boundaries of the prison, invading the personal lives of some in the cohort. Accordingly, a cohesive and robust approach to post-incident staff support that addresses the emotional needs for staff of all grades (including governors) is strongly recommended. The past year has seen the Irish Prison Service enter a second phase of long-term strategic planning, with staff support positioned as one of four key strategic actions in its strategic plan for 2016-2018 (Irish Prison Service, 2016b). While the plan underlines a commitment to improvements in supporting staff experiencing critical incident stress and work-related illnesses as among its priorities in this regard, none of the proposed reforms include provision for incorporating staff experiences and views. It is highly recommended that improvements to staff support, both those envisaged in the strategic plan and those suggested by the findings of the current study, are informed by consultation with staff. In addition, any measures introduced in this context should consider the potential weight of professional 'feeling rules' and cultural expectations regarding emotion and masculinity,

which appeared to have a stigmatising effect on engagement with 'Sad Stories Officers' and psychological support. Again, critical incident debriefing would be a valuable addition to the existing support provision, particularly given its focus on operational issues and appraisal of staff performance, in addition to emotional issues.

More broadly, participants' perspectives on the process of responding to prisoner deaths, in addition to their views on accountability, prevention and workplace support, suggest a shared perception that policy change occurs with little consideration of staff experiences and knowledge. As discussed in the previous chapter, this outlook was shaped by participants' views on the priorities of Irish Prison Service headquarters, as well as a collective resistance to change, informed by their attitudes to policy activity in the penal field. While some divergence was found between officer and governor grade participants' attitudes regarding the value and impact of policies and rules, there was a strong consensus that policy was drafted at a distance. 'Creative compliance' (Crewe and Liebling, 2015, p. 8) with policies or resistance regarding their effective implementation thus appeared to emanate from a lack of inclusion and consultation. Indeed, the possibility of contributing to policy change was cited by many in the cohort as a rationale for their participation in the current study. It is therefore recommended that the experiences and perspectives of prison staff should be utilised in future penal policymaking. The Irish Prison Service should seek to consult with staff regarding policy changes, ensuring that staff have a voice in decisions that directly affect their working lives. Staff views could be collected in-person (e.g. focus groups, question and answer sessions) or utilising surveys and other avenues that facilitate staff input on procedural or organisational change. Additionally, engagement with staff in this context should be ongoing, rather than confined to design stages. While this is particularly important at an organisational

level, provision should also be made for staff consultation regarding changes introduced by other actors in the Irish penal field, such as the Department of Justice. Chapter eight reports that a number of participants were dissatisfied with the introduction of Inspector of Prisons investigations into deaths in custody in 2012, frustrated by the operational pressures of these investigations. In providing avenues for staff perspectives to be heard and incorporated into policy and administrative changes, such changes may be more effectively implemented on prison landings. Moreover, staff may view future organisational and systemic change more positively, as well as feeling more committed to the Irish Prison Service.

10.3 Recommendations for Future Research

In addition to recommendations for policy, the research findings also highlight a number of issues that merit further empirical attention. This section outlines some directions for future research, discussing the role that later studies can play not only in broadening knowledge about the working lives of prison staff and deaths in custody, but also in encouraging some of the changes detailed in the previous section. It is hoped that later work will build upon the findings presented in this thesis and the suggestions outlined below, to offer further insight into the phenomena studied.

The current study sought to build upon existing research by offering the first account of prison staff encounters with prisoner deaths by examining causes of death in addition to that of suicide. Future research could elect to focus on one or more of the themes identified in this exploratory study, with greater variety in demographics or a different cohort, such as prison chaplains. Additionally, as the current study was cross-sectional in

design, it may also prove valuable to utilise a longitudinal approach in future studies of death work in prisons. A recent study by Walker (2015) suggests that prison officers' work-related stress and ill-health develops over time. Accordingly, it may be useful to collect data on staff experiences of deaths at multiple intervals, to aid deeper understanding of the themes outlined in the previous chapters, particularly in the context of the emotional impact of deaths and engagement with support. The research findings could also be used to inform the design of future quantitative instruments to assess experiences of prisoner deaths among prison staff.

Future research could also focus on other major incidents in prison, such as assaults, riots, hostage situations and fires. Many participants referenced their experiences of the other incidents during interviews, with some noting that these were equally, if not more, impactful in their lives at work and home. While the antecedents of these incidents, such as staff-prisoner relationships and the use of power and discretion, are considered within the extant literature on prison work and prison life, research exploring staff experiences of these incidents is similarly limited. Later projects could follow the research design adopted in the current study and draw from the reflections presented in the methodology chapter.

In addition, the research findings regarding accountability and blame also suggest a number of avenues for future scholarship in these arenas. Chapter eight describes participants' experiences of the different investigative mechanisms for deaths in custody, noting their particular dissatisfaction with the internal and Inspector of Prisons procedures. Chapter nine develops this analysis by proposing a typology of blame for deaths in custody, in which differences in perspectives depending on the cause of death

and source of the investigation are observed. Further research is necessary to unravel these differences in experiences and perspectives, and would be useful in guiding future policy directions in investigation and oversight of prisoner deaths. Participants' accounts in this context also highlight the potential for studies of staff experiences and perspectives on prison accountability in a broader context. Later studies could expand upon the findings in this thesis by exploring the operation of prison oversight among a number of cohorts, both within and beyond the prison walls. The views of prisoners, as well as those of staff in prisons, headquarters, inspectorates, police services, coroner's courts, and other agencies involved in prison oversight could be collected to deepen understandings of the sensibilities and practices that shape the operation of prison accountability.

Future studies could seek to explore the relevance of staff perspectives on personal liability risk in staff-prisoner relationships. The findings of the current study indicate that participants' views on the financial risks associated with prisoner deaths shaped their outlook on prisoners in a collective context, offering a new prism for understanding the 'us v them' paradigm in staff-prisoner relationships. Further analysis underlined the contradictions within participants' narratives however, and future research could focus on drawing out the nuances within staff perspectives on professional risks and prisoners. Looking beyond deaths in custody, the nature and quality of relationships in Irish prisons warrant increased empirical attention. The potential for future studies in this context is vast, owing to the paucity of research on life in Irish prisons. Future research focused on staff-prisoner relationships, staff-management relationships and peer relationships could yield valuable findings on myriad issues, including the use of power, order, emotion management and performance, oversight, policy implementation and change management.

A number of additional recommendations for future research also emerge from the findings on emotion and support in the aftermath of deaths in custody. This study found that post-incident vulnerabilities are pushed out beyond the boundaries of the prison, owing to the limited avenues for formal and informal engagement with these issues. While there was strong commitment among the cohort to the professional feeling rules that governed informal exchanges and emotional display between colleagues in the aftermath of a prisoner's death, many were dissatisfied with the formal post-incident support offered by the Irish Prison Service. Participants highlighted access, confidentiality and follow-up reviews as particularly lacking in this context. Further evaluations of these perspectives would not only shed additional light on how workplace support is perceived by Irish prison staff, but also offer possible directions for future critical incident support initiatives. Future research could also examine sources of support in participants' personal lives, focusing both on post-incident support and assistance with work-related stress in broader context. Like officers in Crawley's (2002) research, some participants found direct support from spouses in the aftermath of their encounters with prisoner deaths. A larger number appeared to derive comfort from simply being at home, highlighting the role of participants' home lives as 'safe havens' from their experiences at work. Others reported the reparative nature of the journey between work and home. It would thus be interesting to explore sources of support outside the prison beyond familial or social relationships, to encompass other ways in which life outside the prison offers succour to prison staff.

10.4 Conclusion

Guided by three research questions, this thesis aimed to explore prison officers' experiences of deaths in custody, their emotional responses to these incidents, and their engagement with support in the aftermath. The current study builds upon earlier research by Borrill et al. (2004), Wright et al. (2006) and Ludlow et al. (2015) as it provides the first account of prison staff encounters with prisoner deaths that considers staff experiences of all causes of death, rather than focusing solely on prisoner suicide. Moreover, this thesis contributes to the under-researched area of prison staff experiences of deaths in custody by offering a comprehensive picture of the chronology of staff encounters with deaths, following their stories from emergency response through to long-term aftermath. In doing so, it moves beyond the brief discussions of emotion and support seen in previous studies to illuminate the emotional texture of encountering a death in custody. The findings demonstrate that while the death of a prisoner requires a robust operational response to attend to the emergency and ensure continuity in the prison routine, it can also have significant reverberations beyond the incident and its immediate aftermath.

The research findings also shed light on the nature and quality of relationships in Irish prisons, including those between staff and prisoners, staff and headquarters personnel, and those in officer grades and governor grades. This thesis can therefore contribute to wider debate on relationships in the Irish prison system, offering findings that may inform future research on life in Irish prisons. In exploring participants' experiences of deaths in custody, this thesis highlights the relevance of staff perspectives on liability and blame in shaping these relationships, while also unravelling the nuances within participants'

narratives on these issues. Regarding staff-prisoner relationships, the findings strongly suggest that staff view prisoners through both individual and collective lenses, with their attitudes altered accordingly. In the context of deaths in custody, analysis of these divergent perspectives yields valuable insights on staff views of the liability risks arising from their obligations to prevent deaths, as well as their interactions with prisoners. While prisoners were viewed collectively as presenting risks to participants' livelihoods and job security, moments of understanding and kindness with individual prisoners also emerged during interviews.

Additionally, participants' experiences of accountability mechanisms for prisoner deaths reveal their perceptions of an organisational culture of blame, which promoted distance between staff 'on the ground' and those working at Irish Prison Service headquarters. Moreover, participants' perceptions of 'blame culture' also highlighted conflict between officer and governor grade participants. Those in officer grades were reluctant to offer comprehensive operational reports on their role in the response to a prisoner's death, hoping to insulate themselves against blame and liability, but to the dissatisfaction of governor grade participants. Once again however, participants' perceptions of 'blame culture' is at the centre of this conflict, with attitudes on both sides informed by a shared view of the failure-focused nature of accountability for prisoner deaths. Overall, participants' perspectives regarding risk and blame appeared to exert significant weight in these relationships, encouraging an inward-looking perspective among the cohort regarding prevention and accountability. A significant negative implication of these findings is that prevention and accountability were not regarded by the cohort as legal or human rights issues, or indeed opportunities for learning, with participants' attentions instead focused on their exposure to individual blame and liability. These findings can

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inform future analysis and discussion of prevention and accountability in the Irish prison system and beyond.

In addition, this thesis contends that a death in custody calls upon officers and governors not only to manage the incident, but also their own emotional reactions and vulnerabilities. As noted in earlier chapters, the extant literature on prison staff encounters with deaths in custody offers limited insights into how emotions are experienced, managed and performed by staff who deal with these incidents. The research presented herein has sought to move beyond this existing scholarship, and to explore more fully the emotional texture of death work in prisons. In doing so, this thesis finds that the norms of collaboration and assistance identified as central tenets of staff solidarity within the extant prison work literature (Kauffman, 1988; Liebling et al., 2011) direct staff to manage their emotional display while also managing their role in the operational response to the incident, motivated by an awareness that their colleagues are relying upon them to remain emotionally detached regardless of the nature of the prisoner's death. In the aftermath of prisoner deaths, professional 'feeling rules' (Hochschild, 1983) prescribe engagement with felt emotions, promoting detachment and depersonalisation and placing spatial and temporal regulations on displays of humour and empathy. Above all, these shared expectations regarding emotion management promote the necessity of concealing post-incident vulnerabilities inside the prison. Accordingly, this thesis concludes that the implications of involvement with a death in custody can often find life beyond the boundaries of the prison walls, pushed out by cultural expectations and a weak workplace support provision, and thus remaining hidden from the gaze of the prison authorities. Participants' accounts of the multifarious negative impressions left by their encounters

with prisoner deaths in their personal lives suggest that the current staff support provision merits immediate and focused attention from the Irish Prison Service.

In addition to shedding light on staff experiences of prisoner deaths in custody, the research findings also resonate with the broader scholarship on the occupational cultures and traditions of prison staff. As prison work research continues to flourish, this thesis confirms the existence of cultural expectations seen in extant international research in an Irish context, while also illuminating expectations and sensibilities that have remained unexplored within this literature. As discussed previously, evidence of solidarity and insularity are found in participants' accounts of prisoner deaths, defining both their practice and emotional display when dealing with these incidents. Moreover, professionalism, resistance to change and experience additionally emerge as features of participants' 'working personality' (Skolnick, 1966; Crawley, 2004a) or habitus (Bourdieu, 1977), shaped by both professional sensibilities and activity within the Irish penal field and related political and legal fields. These findings not only open a window into Irish prison staff culture and attitudes, but also demonstrate the continued relevance of the theories of Bourdieu and Hochschild to understandings of prison work, which provide a valuable prism for unravelling the relational nature of the expectations, mentalities and traditions shared by those who work in prisons. Additionally, in exploring participants' experiences of and orientations to deaths in custody relative to activity in the Irish penal field, this thesis contributes to extant understandings of relationships between penal culture and penal agents, as outlined in chapter two.

Above all, this study sought to provide an in-depth analysis of Irish prison staff experiences of dealing with the death of a prisoner, elucidating both the operational and

emotional texture of these events. It is hoped that the findings presented herein have fulfilled this objective, and that further research will continue to build upon these observations to advance the relevant literature and provide future directions for penal policy. Moreover, this thesis arrives at its conclusion at a time when research activity in and around Irish prisons has begun to thrive. As this scholarship develops, it is important that researchers seeking to explore the narratives, sensibilities and traditions of those inside Irish prisons continue to provide avenues for staff to tell their stories.

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APPENDIX A: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

GUIDE FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

INTRODUCTION CHECKLIST

Thank you for participating	
Confidentiality	
Ask permission to audio record interview	
Transcription and data storage	
Voluntary participation	
Brief outline of purpose of interview and research	
Brief outline of the structure of our interview	
Emphasise free to stop the interview at any time	
Any further questions? Happy to continue?	
Consent form	
Demographic Questionnaire	

SECTION ONE: EXPERIENCES OF PRISONER FATALITIES

1.1 Recalling experience

Tell me about an experience of dealing with the death of a prisoner while at work
If you have more than one, let's begin with the most memorable for you
Probes:
- When did this death take place?
- Where? What prison?
- What was your job at the time?
- Why is this death memorable?

Nature/cause of death – follow-up questions	
Suicide - Perspectives on dealing with suicide and self-harm? - Role in prevention? - Attitude re deceased?	**Natural causes** - Nature of death? - Prisoner's age? - Working with elderly prisoners? - Prisoners with long-term/serious illnesses?
Drugs - Experience of dealing with drug use? - Attitudes re drug use? - Drug use and feelings of safety?	**Violent deaths** - Thinking on prison violence? - Effect on your work? - Feelings of safety? - Views of other prisoners?

1.2 Operational Response

Can you describe the operational response to this prisoner's death?
Probe:
- Detail on tasks, colleagues, atmosphere, continuation of story
- How would you characterise this response?
- Is this what usually happens in your experience?
- What is supposed to happen in these situations? (Standard Operating Procedures)
- What do you think of these procedures?
- With long-term and retired:
    - Were things always done this way?
    - Can you describe any changes that have occurred in officers' duties when dealing with a death?

What was your role in particular?
Probe:
- Detail on tasks
- How did you feel about doing this?

Were other officers or other prison staff involved in responding to this death?

1.3 Investigations

Did you contribute to any investigation into the prisoner's death?
Probe:
- What kind of investigation?
- What did you do? (i.e. halfsheets, oral evidence, etc.)
- How did you find that particular experience?
- What do you think about this investigative process overall?

1.4 Staff-prisoner issues

Deceased prisoner
What kind of relationship did you have with the deceased prisoner?

Other prisoners
Where were the other prisoners while you were responding to the death?
Probe:
- Were other prisoners aware of what was going on while you were responding to death?
- Did you have to deal with other prisoners during the response?
- What was it like to deal with this death while other prisoners were nearby?
- Did you talk with other prisoners after the death?

Did your experience of this death affect your interactions with or attitudes to other prisoners?
Probe:
- Yes/No – why?
- Yes – in what way?
- What about your approach to similar situations following this incident?

1.5 Preparedness

How prepared did you feel to deal with this death when it occurred?

When did you first become aware that you may have to deal with a prisoner's death while at work?
- Looking back to when you first signed up to become an officer, was this type of work something you had anticipated?
- How did/do you feel about the prospect of dealing with another death in the future?

1.6 Training

Have you ever received any training for how to handle a death in custody?

YES	NO
• Can you describe the nature of this training? • What sorts of things did it include? • Was there anything it didn't cover that you think it should? • What did you think about this training? • Did you use what you learned when responding to this death? • How did training affect your attitude to dealing with inmate deaths?	• How do you feel about this? • What specific tasks would you like/have liked training on? • How do you think training may have affected your actions during this incident? • What effect do you think training might have had on your overall experience of responding to this prisoner's death?

1.7 Multiple experiences

What about any other experiences of dealing with deaths in custody?
Probe:
- Review relevant questions above
- What makes the first death we talked about the most memorable for you?
- Impact of earlier experiences of later deaths in custody?

1.8 Perception of job

Has your experience(s) affected how you feel about your job in any way?
Probe:
- How?
- Why do you think that is?

SECTION TWO: EMOTIONAL RESPONSES TO PRISONER DEATHS

2.1 General questions

What was the atmosphere or mood like in the prison after this death?

What about the atmosphere or mood between you and your colleagues in the aftermath?
Probe:
- How were things when you were back in the mess or other staff areas?
- What kinds of things did you talk about?

When did you feel things shifted back to normal?
Probe:
- What made things feel normal again?

2.2 Participant emotional responses

Tell me how you felt about the prisoner's death and your role in dealing with it?

How did you feel after this prisoner's death?
Probe:
- More detail, examples, etc.
- How did you find the experience of dealing with the deceased's body?
- How did you feel when the response was over?
- How did you feel when you left work?
- What was your first day back in work following this death like?
- What was it like the next time you passed the area in the prison where the death had occurred?

How do you think your experiences of dealing with inmate deaths have affected you overall?

Do you think other officers have experienced this too?

2.3 Communicating emotion

How did you express these feelings?

Did you tell or show anyone at work that you were feeling _____?
Probe:
- Why did you choose to show/not show your colleagues?
- If different:
  - Why?
  - What do you think would have happened if you told someone how you felt?
  - Can you think of a situation where you might communicate these feelings?
    - Why/why not?
  - Have you experienced your colleagues doing the same/different?
  - Is that how it is normally?

How would you view someone who became visibly _____ about a prisoner's death?

What kinds of things do you feel you can't say to your colleagues after a prisoner's death? What is completely off limits or beyond the pale?
Probe:
- Wing/landing
- Shift
- Amongst staff at this grade
- Staff of this age/generation
- Prison
- Across the Service
- Gender – Is this a bloke thing generally? Does this apply in regular life too?

IF TOPIC ARISES

2.4 Humour

Can you give me an example of what was said?
Probe:
- Where?
- Who else there?

How would you describe this type of humour?

How do you feel about it?

What do you think others might think about it?

SECTION THREE: SUPPORT IN THE AFTERMATH OF A PRISONER FATALITY

3.1 Support in aftermath

What kinds of things did you find helpful following your experience of this death in custody?
Probe:
- Did you talk about your experience with anyone?
  - o Who?
  - o Why?
  - o Was this useful/helpful?
- Helpful activity?

Personal Life	Support from peers/colleagues
Family members, friends, hobbies, activities, etc. Yes: • Nature of the support? • How did you find experience of this support? No: • Why?	Inside and outside prison Yes: • Nature of support? • With who? • Location – inside or outside prison? • Reciprocal? • Are colleagues helpful? No: • Why?
Occupational Support from IPS/Civil Service	**External Support**
Yes: • Nature of support • Access • How did you find experience of this support? No: • Why?	Any other support we haven't spoken about yet? e.g. counselling outside work Yes: • Nature of support • Access • How did you find experience of this support? No: • Why?

Were there any other things that you found helpful or supportive after your experience(s)?

3.2 Overall perception of support

How do you feel overall about the support you engaged in?
Probe:
- Why did you choose this source(s)?

What do you think is the best way to provide support for staff at work?
Probe:
- Why?
- What do you think about the current workplace supports for staff who deal with deaths?
- What changes would you make?

3.3 Role of management in post-incident support

Can you describe the role of management in your engagement with support?

If yes	If no role
- What did they do? - What did you think about their involvement? - Was this an important issue for you?	- What do you think about this? - Would this have been an important issue for you?

What role do you think management should have in support for officers in the aftermath of a prisoner's death?

Overall perception of management in this context – how are they doing on this?

3.4 Role of trade union in support

What about the trade union, were they involved at all?

If yes	If no role
- What did they do? - What did you think about their involvement? - Was this an important issue for you?	- What do you think about this? - Would this have been an important issue for you?

What role do you think the trade union should have in support for officers in the aftermath of a prisoner's death?

Overall perception of trade union in this context – how are they doing on this?

SECTION FOUR: CONCLUDING QUESTIONS

What do you think is the best approach to handling a death in custody?
Probe:
- Can you give me an example of what you think is a really good response to a prisoner's death?
- If you were asked to write a brand new policy or Standard Operating Procedure, what would you include?

Why did you decide to participate in this study?

Do you have any questions about the research?

Is there anything else that you would like to say?

FINAL CHECKLIST

Contact details	
Information sheet	
Snowballing	
Receive transcript Email: ☐ Post: ☐	Yes / No
Receive summary document of findings Email: ☐ Post: ☐	Yes / No
Receive copy of final thesis Email: ☐ Post: ☐	Yes / No
Final thank you	

APPENDIX B: DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARTICIPANTS

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

For Researcher's use	
PARTICIPANT NUMBER:	DATE OF INTERVIEW:

Instructions for Participants:

This questionnaire is divided into two sections:

1. Your general demographic information
2. Information about your time as a prison officer

The questions in section 1 are based on 2011 Census questions. This is information is being collected to inform analysis of your interview contributions. You are free to decline to answer any of these questions.

SECTION ONE: GENERAL INFORMATION

GENDER

Male	
Female	

AGE

18 – 29	
30 – 39	
40 – 49	
50 – 59	
60 – 69	
70+	

MARITAL STATUS

Single (never married)	
Married (first marriage)	
Re-married (following widowhood)	
Re-married (following divorce/annulment)	
Separated (including deserted)	
Divorced	
Widowed	

CHILDREN

Yes	
No	

ETHNICITY

White Irish	
Irish	
Irish Traveller	
Any other White background	
Black or Black Irish	
African	
Any other Black background	
Asian or Asian Irish	
Chinese	
Any other Asian background	
Other, including mixed background	
Specify below:	

EDUCATION/TRAINING

What is the highest level of education/training (full-time or part-time) which you have completed to date?

No formal education/training	
Primary education	
Lower secondary	
Upper secondary	
Technical or vocational	
Advanced certificate/completed apprenticeship	
Higher certificate	
Ordinary bachelor degree or national diploma	
Honours bachelor degree/professional qualification	
Postgraduate diploma or degree	
Doctorate (PhD) or higher	

SECTION TWO: SERVICE AS A PRISON OFFICER

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Currently serving	
Retired	

In what year did you join the Prison Service?   _____

If **currently serving**, please provide your **current grade**:

_____

If **retired**, please provide your **year of retirement** and your **grade when you retired**:

Year of retirement: _____

Grade at retirement: _____

HOW MANY PRISONS HAVE YOU WORKED IN?

Location:

INSTITUTION	✓	NUMBER OF YEARS	APPROXIMATE TIME PERIOD
Arbour Hill			
Castlerea			
Cloverhill			
Cork			
Dóchas Centre			
Limerick			
Loughan House			
Midlands			
Mountjoy			
Portlaoise			
Shelton Abbey			
St. Patrick's Institution			
Training Unit			
Wheatfield			
Other Specify below:			

APPENDIX C: ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR PILOT PARTICIPANTS

I would like to ask you some additional questions about the interview process and any overall thoughts that you may have about this research. I am very grateful for any opinions or suggestions for improvement that you may have.

1. Was the purpose of the study clearly explained before the interview?

2. Were you satisfied with the text of the consent form?

3. Did you understand that your participation in this study is completely voluntary and that you are free to withdraw at any time for any reason?

4. Was the demographic questionnaire easy to complete?

5. Were you happy to answer the questions on the questionnaire?

6. Did you understand that you were free to decline to answer any question on the demographic questionnaire or during the interview?

7. What did you think about the topics and questions that we covered?

8. Is there anything that was missed that should be included?

9. Are there any 'off limits' topics or questions?

10. Did any of the questions annoy or upset you?

11. How did you feel about the use of the audio recorder?

12. How did you feel about the length of the interview?

13. Do you have any other comments or suggestions to make regarding the interviews or the study overall?

IRISH RESEARCH COUNCIL
An Chomhairle um Thaighde in Éirinn

DUBLIN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
INSTITIÚID TEICNEOLAÍOCHT ÁTHA CLIATH

D·I·T

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS NEEDED

Do you have experience of dealing with a death in custody?

Participants are sought for a research study exploring Irish prison officers' experiences of prisoner fatalities. The purpose of this research is to provide an account of Irish prison officers' experiences of prisoner fatalities, and to contribute to existing knowledge on the topics of prison officer culture and deaths in custody.

This research is being undertaken by Colette Barry, a PhD researcher at the School of Social Sciences and Law, Dublin Institute of Technology.

Are you eligible?
- You must **currently work or have previously worked** as a prison officer in the Irish Prison Service (officers of **all grades** are eligible);
- You must have **experience of dealing with a death in custody**.

What will you be asked to do?
- If you decide to participate you will be invited to attend an <u>interview</u> about your experiences of deaths in custody.
- Interviews entail a time commitment of approximately 2 hours. Light refreshments (tea/coffee and biscuits) will be provided.
- Interviews will be recorded using an audio recording device. You will need to sign a consent form before the interview.
- **Your contribution will be completely confidential.**
- Participation in this study is ***completely voluntary*** and you can change your mind about taking part at <u>any time</u>.

If you are interested in participating in this research study or would like more information about this research, please contact Colette Barry, PhD Researcher:

Colette Barry, PhD Researcher Dublin Institute of Technology	**Phone:**	**01 402 4268**
	Email:	**colette.barry@mydit.ie**

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Death and the prison officer: A study of Irish prison officers' experiences of prisoner fatalities

Introduction

My name is Colette Barry. I am a PhD researcher at Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT). I would like to invite you to participate in a research study about Irish prison officers' experiences of prisoner fatalities.

PLEASE READ THE INFORMATION BELOW CAREFULLY BEFORE YOU DECIDE WHETHER TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY. YOU ARE FREE TO DISCUSS THIS INFORMATION FURTHER WITH ME OR ANYONE ELSE, SHOULD YOU WISH TO DO SO.

The purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to provide an account of Irish prison officers' experiences of prisoner fatalities, and to contribute to existing knowledge on the topics of prison officer culture and deaths in custody. This is a doctoral research study. This study does not entail a formal evaluation of any previous or existing policies or procedures within the Irish Prison Service.

Do I have to meet any specific criteria to be included in the study?

Yes, in order to be included in the study you will have to meet the following selection criteria:

- You must **currently work or have previously worked as a prison officer** in the Irish Prison Service (current staff of all grades are eligible, but must have previous experience of working as a prison officer)
- You must have **experience of dealing with a prisoner fatality** in the course of your duties. (If you are unsure about your experience but wish to participate, you can contact me for clarification and to discuss this further)

Additionally, if you have suffered from a mental health issue, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, as a result of your experience of dealing with a prisoner death (or indeed any other experiences at work) you are advised to consider whether you will have access to appropriate means of support prior to your participation in the study to assist you in dealing with any issues that arise as a result of your participation. If you have any

questions or concerns relating to this, you can contact me to discuss these in strictest confidence.

What will I have to do if I choose to participate in the study?

All participants in this study will be interviewed about their experiences of deaths in custody. If you decide that you would like to take part in the study, you can contact me for further information and to arrange a date for an interview. You will need to sign a consent form before we proceed to interview. All interviews will be recorded using an audio recording device. All data used in this study will be anonymised.

In the interview, we will talk about your experiences of prisoner fatalities during your work as a prison officer, how you felt afterwards, and any contact with support services you may have had.

Where will the interviews take place?

Interviews will be held at DIT campuses in Dublin, the Irish Prison Service College, Portlaoise, or Limerick Prison. If these locations do not suit for any reason an alternative location can be arranged for your convenience and satisfaction. Please contact me to discuss further.

When will the interviews take place?

Interviews will be arranged at a time of your convenience.

How long will the interview process be?

The interviews will entail a time commitment of approximately 1.5-2 hours. Light refreshments will be offered. You will be free to take a break during the interview, if you wish to do so.

What topics/issues will be discussed at the interview?

The interviews will proceed as follows: We will begin with some brief general questions about your demographic details and your service as a prison officer (the general demographic questions are based on the 2011 census questions). From there, the interview will be ordered into three distinct areas. In the first section I will invite you to recall your experiences of dealing with a prisoner fatality in the course of your duties as a prison officer. The second section of the interview will be focused on how you felt in the aftermath. In the final part of the interview we will talk about your experiences, if any, of support in the aftermath of a prisoner fatality, and any perceptions or opinions of support you may have. You are free to decline to answer any question during our interview and you will not have to give a reason for this. You will be free to stop the interview at any time, to take a break or to request that the interview cease altogether.

What if I decide that I do not wish to participate in the study?

Participation in this study is _**completely voluntary**_. If you decide that you do not wish to participate you do not have to provide a reason and you will receive no further contact from me.

What if I change my mind about taking part in the study?

You are free to change your mind about taking part in this study at any time. If you do decide to participate in this study, but then wish to withdraw at a later date for any reason, you can notify me and I will destroy any data you have contributed to the study.

Alternatively, if you decide at this stage not to participate, but later change your mind, you can contact me to seek to arrange this.

Will my contribution to this study be confidential?

Yes, any information you give me in the course of this study will be kept confidentially.

There are limited exceptions to confidentiality that I am obliged to make you aware of. In certain research studies, it is the researcher's ethical responsibility to report situations of child abuse, child neglect, or any life-threatening situation to appropriate authorities, e.g. the Gardaí or HSE. However, I am not seeking this type of information in our study nor will you be asked questions about these issues.

In addition, I will also be obliged to make a disclosure in the case of potential serious psychological distress, e.g. the risk of self-harm. If, after the interview, I feel that your health and safety is at immediate risk because of something you disclosed about how you are feeling, I will be obliged to immediately report this to the PhD supervisor, Dr Mary Rogan, Dublin Institute of Technology, who will independently manage this situation on a case by case basis with a view to arranging the appropriate assistance, including possible police contact.

All data used in this study will be anonymised. Your name will not be used in this study. The interview will be recorded using an audio recording device. Your formal permission will be sought for this before the commencement of the interview. This recording will be confidential and will not have your name on it. The audio recording of your interview will be transcribed. I will be the only person transcribing the audio recordings. Your name and any other identifying information will not appear on the interview transcripts.

Transcripts from your interview may be reviewed and discussed at one-to-one supervision meetings with the PhD supervisor, Dr Mary Rogan, Dublin Institute of Technology. Your name will not appear on these. This study will also be examined by two academic examiners upon its completion. These examiners will be entitled to review the interview transcripts, should they request them. Once again, your name and any other identifying information will not appear on these transcripts.

All data used in this study will be <u>anonymised</u>. Your contributions will be presented in the final written study in a way that will not allow you to be identified individually. The final draft of the study will be comprehensively reviewed to ensure that your identity is fully protected. A copy of your transcript will be made available to you for review, should you wish. You will be free to raise any questions or issues regarding the confidentiality of your contribution. If you have any questions or are concerned about anything in this regard, I will arrange for us to review your transcript and a draft of the study together, and you can decide on the course of action you wish to take.

Where will my information be stored and presented?

All information relating to your contribution to the study will be securely stored. Electronic data will be stored on an encrypted database on a password-protected computer to which only I can access. Any physical information will be stored in a locked cabinet in a locked office. The audio recording of your interview will be transcribed. I will be the only person transcribing the audio recordings.

The results of the study will be written up in a doctoral thesis. Your contributions will be presented in this thesis in a way that will not allow you to be identified individually. You will not be named and any information from your interview which could identify you will be removed. The final draft of the study will be comprehensively reviewed to ensure that your identity is fully protected. I also hope to present findings from the study at conferences and in academic texts. Research findings will also be shared with the Irish Prison Service and Prison Officers' Association. This may include anonymised quotes your interview, with all identifying information removed.

Are there any possible drawbacks to taking part in this study?

I am interested in hearing about your experiences and perceptions on the topic of prisoner fatalities. This is a sensitive topic and you must be aware that this study does not involve the provision of any counselling or treatment. Talking about your experiences of prisoner deaths may be upsetting or troubling. Please bear this in mind when deciding whether or not to participate in this study. If you do decide to participate, you can choose to stop the interview and/or withdraw from the study at any time for any reason.

Will I be paid for taking part?

You will not be paid or receive any compensation for your participation in this study. Your accounts of your experiences and perceptions will however contribute to understandings of prison officer work and deaths in custody, two subjects on which currently very little is known.

What if I have questions or comments after the interview?

You are free to contact me at any time after you have taken part in an interview if you have any further questions or comments or would like further information about the study. A copy of your interview transcript will be sent to you within eight weeks following the interview, should you wish to receive it. You can also opt to receive a summary document of the research findings and/or a copy of the final thesis.

What if I become upset after the interview?

This study deals with a sensitive topic: prisoner fatalities. If, after participating in the study, you become upset and need help immediately to deal with your feelings, it is very important that you seek assistance immediately. At the conclusion of our interview, I will provide you with a list of contacts should you need to speak to someone.

How do I proceed if I wish to participate in the study?

If you decide to participate in this study, you can contact me (details below) with any further questions you may have and we can seek to arrange an interview. Please read and think about this information contained in this sheet before you decide to participate in the study.

THANK YOU FOR READING THIS

If you are interested in participating in this research study or would like more information about this research, please contact Colette Barry, PhD Researcher:

Colette Barry, PhD Researcher	**Phone:**	**01 402 4268**
Dublin Institute of Technology		
	Email:	**colette.barry@mydit.ie**

APPENDIX F: CONSENT FORM

Researcher's Name: COLETTE BARRY	Title: MS
Faculty/School/Department: School of Social Sciences and Law	

Title of Study:

Death and the prison officer: A study of Irish prison officers' experiences of prisoner fatalities

To be completed by the: interviewee

Have you been fully informed/read the information sheet about this study?	YES/NO
Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study?	YES/NO
Have you received satisfactory answers to all your questions?	YES/NO
Have you received enough information about this study and any associated health and safety implications if applicable?	YES/NO
Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from this study?	

- at any time
- without giving a reason for withdrawing
- without affecting your future relationship with the Institute   YES/NO

Do you agree to take part in this study the results of which are likely to be published? YES/NO

Have you been informed that this consent form shall be kept in the confidence of the researcher?   YES/NO

Signed_____ Date _____

Name in Block Letters _____

Signature of Researcher _____ Date _____

1. Initial themes generated during third phase of thematic analysis

Causes of Deaths
- Natural Causes
- Memorable
- Drug-related
- Homicide
- Suicide

Response - process
- Night
- 'Working on autopilot'
- First aid
- Prevention
- Bodily fluids
- Attitudes to policy
- Dangerous bodies
- Collective response
- Learning from experiences

'Back to business'
- Removal of body from the prison
- 'Getting on with the job'
- Consequences of the death
- Other prisoners
- Personal consequences

Investigations

- Inspector of Prisons
- Inquest
- Gardaí
- 'Blame culture'
- Paperwork
- IPS investigation

Emotional responses

- Neutral/no response
- Sadness
- Anger
- Guilt/regret
- Empathy
- Questioning/self-blame

Managing Emotion

- 'Getting on with the job'
- Identity
- Detachment
- Humour
- Masculinity
- Collective response

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'Dwelling on it'

Passing by a cell

Checking cells

Impact of experiences

Impact in personal life

Impact on practice

Support for Governors

Peer support

Access

Support at work

Engagement

Perspectives on support

'Leaving work behind'

Activities/hobbies

Support in personal life

Journey home

Social life

Family members

2. Refinements following fourth phase of analysis

```
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │  Switching focus in │
                    │  immediate aftermath│
                    └─────────────────────┘
              ╱                              ╲
   ┌──────────────────┐          ┌──────────────────┐
   │ 'Back to business'│          │    Personal      │
   └──────────────────┘          │  consequences    │
    ╱      │       ╲             └──────────────────┘
                                    ╱          ╲
┌──────────┐  │  ┌──────────┐   ┌───────┐  ┌───────┐
│ Removal  │     │'Getting on│  │ Blame │  │ Risks │
│ of body  │     │with the job'│ └───────┘  └───────┘
└──────────┘     └──────────┘
          ┌──────────┐
          │  Other   │
          │ prisoners│
          └──────────┘
```

```
                                    ┌──────────────────┐
                                    │  'Blame culture' │
                                    └──────────────────┘
                                   ╱
              ┌─────────────────────┐
              │ Accountability – lived│──────┌──────────┐
              │      experience       │      │ Paperwork│
              └─────────────────────┘      └──────────┘
                          ╲
                 ┌──────────────────────┐
                 │ External investigations│
                 └──────────────────────┘
                   ╱          │          ╲
         ┌──────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐  ┌────────┐
         │ Inquests │  │Inspector of Prisons│ │ Gardaí │
         └──────────┘  └──────────────────┘  └────────┘
```

```
                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │ 'Getting on with the job' │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
                                 │
        ┌──────────────────┐   ╭─────────────────╮   ┌────────────┐
        │ Collective response │──│ Managing emotion │──│ Detachment │
        └──────────────────┘   │  – during response │  └────────────┘
                 │              ╰─────────────────╯
        ┌──────────────────┐            │
        │  Expectations of  │   ┌──────────────────┐
        │    colleagues     │   │  Professionalism  │
        └──────────────────┘   └──────────────────┘
```

'Getting on with the job'

Collective response — Managing emotion – during response — Detachment

Expectations of colleagues

Professionalism

Expectations/'feeling rules'

Humour — Managing emotion – immediate aftermath — Empathy

Identity

Masculinity/bravado

Detached/no response

Questioning/self-blame

Sadness

Emotional responses

Guilt

Anger

```
                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │   Impact of experiences  │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
                       │                    │
              ┌─────────────┐        ┌─────────────┐
              │  Working    │        │  Personal   │
              │  lives      │        │  lives      │
              └─────────────┘        └─────────────┘
                 │       │
        ┌─────────────┐ ┌─────────────┐
        │ Passing by  │ │ Impact on   │
        │ a cell      │ │ practice    │
        └─────────────┘ └─────────────┘
```

```
                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │   Support in aftermath   │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
                       │                    │
              ┌─────────────┐        ┌─────────────┐
              │ Support at  │        │ Support at  │
              │ home        │        │ work        │
              └─────────────┘        └─────────────┘
             │      │      │            │         │
   ┌────────┐ ┌────────┐ ┌────────┐ ┌──────────┐ ┌──────────┐
   │Leaving │ │Journey │ │Family  │ │Formal    │ │Peer –    │
   │work    │ │        │ │        │ │workplace │ │informal  │
   │behind  │ │        │ │        │ │support   │ │          │
   └────────┘ └────────┘ └────────┘ └──────────┘ └──────────┘
```

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3. Final thematic maps following fifth phase of analysis

```
                                    ┌─────────────────┐
                                    │   Operational   │
                              ┌─────►│    resilience   │
                              │      └─────────────────┘
              ┌──────────────────┐
              │    Switching     │
              │    priorities    │
              └──────────────────┘  ┌─────────────────┐
                              │      │                 │
                              └─────►│  Consequences   │
                                     └─────────────────┘

┌────────────────┐    ┌──────────────────┐
│ Shifting focus:│    │    Emotional     │
│   Immediate    │────│    responses     │
│aftermath of    │    └──────────────────┘
│    deaths      │                          ┌─────────────────┐
└────────────────┘                          │  Feeling rules  │
                                       ┌────►└─────────────────┘
                                       │
                     ┌──────────────────┐  ┌─────────────────┐
                     │Managing emotion  ├──►│  Masculinity    │
                     └──────────────────┘  └─────────────────┘
                                       │    ┌─────────────────┐
                                       ├───►│    Humour       │
                                       │    └─────────────────┘
                                       │    ┌─────────────────┐
                                       └───►│    Empathy      │
                                            └─────────────────┘
```

```
                                              ┌──────────────────┐
                                              │    Paperwork     │
                                              └──────────────────┘
                          ┌──────────────────┐┌──────────────────┐
                          │  Accountability  ││  'Blame culture' │
                          └──────────────────┘│      in IPS      │
                                              └──────────────────┘
                                              ┌──────────────────┐
                                              │     External     │
                                              │  investigations  │
                                              └──────────────────┘

┌──────────────┐         ┌──────────────────┐┌──────────────────┐
│  Beyond the  │         │    Impact of     ││  Working lives   │
│  immediate   │─────────│   experiences    │└──────────────────┘
│  aftermath   │         └──────────────────┘┌──────────────────┐
└──────────────┘                             │  Personal lives  │
                                              └──────────────────┘

                                              ┌──────────────────┐
                                              │ Support at work  │
                          ┌──────────────────┐└──────────────────┘
                          │     Support      │┌──────────────────┐
                          └──────────────────┘│   Support in     │
                                              │  personal lives  │
                                              └──────────────────┘
```

APPENDIX H: SUPPORT CONTACT INFORMATION SHEET GIVEN TO PARTICIPANTS AFTER INTERVIEW

SUPPORT CONTACT INFORMATION SHEET

Local Counselling Services

Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy
The Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy provide a database of individuals and organisations offering counselling services across Ireland.
Website: www.irish-counselling.ie

General Practitioners

Irish College of General Practitioners
The Irish College of General Practitioners provide a database of general practitioners across Ireland.
Website: www.icgp.ie/go/find_a_gp

Telephone Helplines

Samaritans: 1850 60 90 90 (Mon – Sun 24 hours)

Aware: 1890 303 302 (Mon – Sun 10.00am – 10.00pm)

Shine: 1890 621 631 (Mon – Fri 9.00am – 4.00pm)

Console: 1800 201 890 (Freephone Mon – Sun 24 hours)

Text Support

Dublin Samaritans: 087 260 9090

Online Support

Confidential Email Support
Samaritans: jo@samaritans.org

Aware: wecanhelp@aware.ie

Shine: phil@shineonline.ie

Turn2me
Turn2me is an online mental health community providing peer and professional support to people in distress. Website: www.turn2me.org

Your Mental Health
Your Mental Health is a HSE website developed as part of the **'Your Mental Health'** awareness campaign, which aims to improve awareness and understanding of mental health and wellbeing in Ireland.
Website: www.yourmentalhealth.ie
Mental Health Support Organisations

Samaritans
Samaritans are available 24 hours a day to provide confidential emotional support for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those which may lead to suicide.
Helpline: 1850 60 90 90 (Mon – Sun 24 hours)
Email support: jo@samaritans.org
Text message support (Dublin Samaritans): 087 260 9090
Website: www.samaritans.org www.dublinsamaritans.ie

Aware
Aware provide face-to-face, phone and online support for individuals who are experiencing mild to moderate depression, as well as friends and families who are concerned for a loved one.
Helpline: 1890 303 302 (Mon – Sun 10.00am – 10.00pm)
Email support: wecanhelp@aware.ie
Website: www.aware.ie

Shine
Shine is a national organisation dedicated to upholding the rights and addressing the needs of all those affected by mental ill health, through the promotion and provision of high-quality services and working to ensure the continual enhancement of the quality of life of the people it serves.
Information helpline: 1890 621 631 (Mon – Fri 9.00am – 4.00pm)
Email support: phil@shineonline.ie
Website: www.shineonline.ie

GROW
Grow is a mental health organisation which helps people who have suffered, or are suffering, from mental health problems.
Infoline: 1890 474 474
Website: www.grow.ie

Pieta House
Pieta House provides a free, therapeutic approach to people who are in suicidal distress and those who engage in self-harm.
Phone: 01 6010000 (Head Office)
Website: www.pieta.ie

Bereavement Support

Console
Console provides helpline, group and counselling support to people in suicidal crisis and those bereaved by suicide.
Helpline: 1800 201 890 (Freephone Mon – Sun 24 hours)
Website: www.console.ie

The Bereavement Counselling Service
The Bereavement Counselling Service offers support and counselling to assist individuals who are dealing with bereavement.
Phone: 01 8391766 (Mon – Fri 9.00am – 1.00pm)
Website: www.bereavementireland.com

Bethany Bereavement Support Group
The **Bethany Bereavement Support Group** is a network of voluntary parish based support groups around the country, aiming to help the bereaved and grieving.
Website: www.bethany.ie

Further information on organisations providing bereavement counselling and support in your local area can be found at www.fsa.ie/selected-by-service/bereavement-counsellingsupport

Employment Support

Irish Prison Service Employee Assistance Programme
The Irish Prison Service Employee Assistance Programme provides a confidential service offering information and support to staff members facing personal or professional difficulties. A network of Staff Support Officers provide information and support at a local level across each of the 14 prisons in Ireland.
Contact: Staff Support Officer in your prison

Civil Service Employee Assistance Service
The Civil Service Employee Assistance Service is an element of the Human Resources structure within the Civil Service providing a wide range of confidential supports to staff and management of the Civil Service designed to assist employees in managing work and life challenges. **This service is available to both serving and retired civil servants, including serving and retired prison officers.**
Phone: 0761 000030
Email: cseas@per.gov.ie
Website: www.cseas.per.gov.ie

Prison Officers' Association
The Prison Officers' Association represents the interests of Prison Officers in the Republic of Ireland.
Phone: 01 662 5495
Email: admin@poa.ie
Website: www.poa.ie

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

Barry, C. (2017) 'You just get on with the job': Prison staff experiences of deaths in custody in the Irish Prison Service, *Prison Service Journal*, 230: 53-60.

Barry, C. (2013) Forgotten of neglected? The prison officer in existing penal research and the case for Irish explorations of prison work, *University College Cork Centre for Criminal Justice and Human Rights Legal Research Working Paper Series*, No. 5.