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What is good prison leadership? The development of a psychological framework for senior prison leadership

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2020

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of Professional Doctorate in
Occupational and Business Psychology (DOBPsych)

Acknowledgements

This Professional Doctorate has been an incredible journey and I could not have done it without the help, support and encouragement of so many along the way.

With huge gratitude and thanks first to my amazing supervisors Dr. Rachel Lewis and Dr. Jo Yarker. I know that this journey would not have been possible without their generosity of time, support, guidance, expertise and knowledge.

Secondly, I am immensely appreciative and thankful to all those who participated in my empirical study. They generously gave their time and provided me with such richness in their experiences and insights without which the study would not be what it is. Also to my employer Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) who have supported my work. With special thanks to Michael Spurr, who recently moved on from his post as Chief Executive Officer of HMPPS for his feedback on early drafts, encouragement and great wealth of knowledge of the sector which helped me to as I was at the final stages to crystallise my thinking and better refine the writing up of my empirical study.

I am so lucky to have been part of such an incredible cohort of fellow Professional Doctoral colleagues. They have made this journey special, my thanks to all of them with whom I feel a real connection and closeness and who have been there when I have needed advice or information; Alan, Anna, Claire, Donna, Emma, Hazel, Rob and Roy. With genuine thanks to Claire for her proof-reading on this thesis.

Finally, I want to thank my family: my parents, sister and brother for their support, encouragement, understanding and most especially for their patience during these three years.

Abstract

Prisons are, in many countries, the most powerful expression of the countries power and England and Wales alone oversees the incarceration of over 80,000 prisoners. The management and oversight of prisons requires high quality leadership. This thesis is comprised of two papers that together provide unique insights into prison leadership. The first paper presents a systematic review of research in which prison leadership has been studied in order to understand how prison leadership is defined. More specifically, to examine what is known about the role of a prison leader, the competencies, duties, knowledge and quality requirements of a prison leader and what impact good prison leadership can have. Of the 4,305 papers identified, only eight papers met the inclusion criteria. No clear definition of prison leadership emerged from the review highlighting an urgent need for further research if there is to be a better understanding for the selection, training and development of prison leaders to manage the complex challenges of leading prisons in the 21st century. The second paper presents a qualitative study, exploring the expectations of prison leadership and the formation of a framework of good prison leadership applicable to all senior prison leaders. 15 semi-structured interviews were conducted with a sample of unique subject matter experts, all former prison governors comprised of current and previous line managers of governors and senior prison leaders in command of the organisation. Thereby ensuring the framework was informed by the lived experiences of the men and women who have accomplished the role of leading a prison and successfully progressed beyond it. Following an inductive thematic analysis five overarching themes were established using an iterative process. The study proposes an empirical and interwoven psychological framework that consists of individual values, individual behaviours, prison organisational and management tasks, prison as a total institution and political astuteness. This framework moves beyond previous research by proposing a more complex and dynamic approach with interacting components. All five dimensions are proposed to be required for good leadership. The framework describes the expectations of prison leaders for the current realities of today, understanding that the leadership will be both influenced and impacted by external factors. As well as this the findings provide a framework to guide the recruitment, assessment, development and training of prison leaders while also offering important insights for long-term leadership strategy and policy decisions.

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Prison Leadership: A Systematic Literature Review

Abstract

The nature of prisons has dramatically changed over recent decades, reflecting changes in offender composition and populations and in the purpose of prisons. High quality leadership is required to ensure that prison leaders are able to manage a multitude of demands. This paper aims to review the findings of research in which prison leadership had been studied, in order to better define good prison leadership. A systematic search methodology identified eight papers, three from the United Kingdom, three from the United States of America and two from Belgium that explored the subject of prison leadership from three perspectives: (1) the role of a prison leader, (2) the competencies, knowledge and qualities requirements of a prison leader, and (3) the impact of good prison leadership, employing both qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches. The review found some homogeneity across the countries in relation to leadership expectations however, due to the low number of studies, their variable quality, and lack of convergence in methodological approach, no clear definition of good prison leadership emerged. Findings highlight an urgent need for further research if there is to be a better understanding how best to select, train and develop prison leaders to manage the complex challenges of leading today's prisons.

Key Words: Prison Leaders; Leadership; Competencies; Systematic Literature Review

Introduction

Prisons are unique, fragile, moral, uncertain and volatile environments, with far reaching consequences that yield and exercise considerable power and influence, depriving individuals of one of their most basic human rights – liberty. In countries without the death penalty, they are the most extreme expression of power. As such, much is required of those who lead these powerful institutions. The purpose and justification for imprisonment has evolved over the years, still the prison environment remains one of great ambiguity in terms of its purposes (Bryans, 2012) falling to prison leaders to interpret and deliver on the aims, purpose and goals of imprisonment. The United Kingdom's (UK) main prison provider Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) defines the role of prison as ultimately to "carry out sentences given by the courts, in custody and the community, and to rehabilitate people in their care through education and employment" (HMPPS, 2019a) and is perhaps universal in its aspiration. The United States of America's (USA) Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) defines it similarly "we protect public safety by

ensuring that federal offenders serve their sentences of imprisonment in facilities that are safe, humane, cost-efficient, and appropriately secure, and provide re-entry programming to ensure their successful return to the community” (BOP, 2019a). For a selection of official declarations of purpose see O’Donnell (2016). Although variously defined, these are far reaching and diverse goals for leaders of these institutions to achieve with ever evolving prisoner populations and priorities.

The prison population in England and Wales has grown rapidly from a low of 40,600 in December 1992 (Pym, 1996), doubling by 2008 and by the end of October 2019, the population in England and Wales was 83,795 (HMPPS, 2019b). A similar increase in prison populations has also been seen across Europe and the United States of America (USA). The USA jail and prison¹ population exceeded two million inmates for the first time in 2002 and currently stands at 2,162,400 (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2018). In the last 50 years, in a context of falling crime rates, the rate of imprisonment in the USA has increased by more than 500% (The Sentencing Project, 2019) and it is estimated that there are over 11 million people incarcerated worldwide (The World Prison Brief, 2018).

To support and manage this incarceration, there are over 28,231 operational prison staff in HMPPS (HMPPS, 2019c), 35,512 staff in the USA’s Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP, 2019b) and an estimated 450,000 USA correctional officers and jailers (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016). According to Coyle (2002, p.10), these prison staff are “a forgotten group of public servants, largely unrecognised in the criminal justice sector”. They carry out their duties away from the public view and in the same way as the people ‘locked up’ they are hidden behind high prison walls. That said, given the scale of imprisonment globally, and the recognised importance of leadership throughout other areas of the public, private and third sector, the leadership of prisons and the requirements of the prison leaders responsible for these prisons should be considered a significant priority for all governments. However, despite the important role played by prison leaders, there is little consensus in what good prison leadership looks like. Specifically, there is limited understanding of the competency and behavioural characteristics of prison leaders (for exceptions, see Bryans & Wilson, 1998; Bryans, 2007; Coyle, 2002; Crewe & Liebling, 2015; Dilulio, 1987, 1991). This is in stark contrast for example, to the volume of studies aiding our understanding of private sector CEOs (for example, Agle, Nagarajan, Sonnenfeld, & Srinivasan,

¹ US prisons are typically operated or overseen by the state and federal governments and only hold people convicted and sentenced for their crimes. US jails are typically owned and operated by municipalities or counties with the funds supporting them coming from the local jurisdictions in which they exist. These municipal and county jails hold people who have not been convicted or sentenced.

2006; Colbert, Kristof-Brown, Bradley & Barrick, 2008; Lieberman & O'Connor, 1972; Giberson, Resick, Dickson, Mitchelson, Randall, & Clark, 2009; Waldman, Ramirez, House & Puranam, 2001; Wang, Tsui, & Xin, 2011).

Prison Leadership

The difficulties faced by prison leaders has been raised a number of times over the years in government reviews citing the challenges raised by competing objectives, a lack of clarity of purpose, and the blurring of policy and administration (The Woolf Report, 1991; The Lygo Report, 1991; The Woodcock Report, 1994; The Learmont, 1995). Lygo (1991, p.2) described the Prison Service of England and Wales as “the most complex organisation and its problems some of the most intractable...” he had encountered. A Prison leader’s (in this case prison leader to refer to any term covering the person in charge of an individual prison, for example, Governor or Governing Governor for Europe, Superintendent or Warden for USA) role as seen from internal documents is to “provide leadership, vision and strategic direction for an establishment². They hold overall accountability for ensuring it is secure and operationally stable, whilst maintaining decency and compliance with performance measures and targets”. In addition to these strategic aims, the job is “an operational one with line management responsibilities” (HMPPS, 2019d). The Federal Bureau of Prisons (USA) states prison leaders are “... responsible for the overall management of the correctional³ facility, including administrative services, safety and security, and the program of support services” (BOP, 2008). Individual prison leaders have the tough social and moral responsibility of managing these progressively more multifaceted institutions.

Carlen’s (2002) research on prison leaders asked ‘what governs the governors?’ Her research indicates that they are governed by an organisational imperative to maintain a secure prison; a strong moral purpose relating to a variety of ideals such as crime reduction, running a ‘decent establishment’ and rehabilitation; and a professional desire to comply with the constantly changing requirements of their organisation. Yet they feel constrained by budgetary limits. She concluded they are not supported by any clear leadership about the plethora of un-prioritised and at times opposed objectives and policy directives. Her recommendations for addressing this are about the focus on a rebalancing of professionalism and managerialism, allowing prison leaders to be able to deploy their professional expertise more effectively.

² Another term for prison or jail (from UK definition)

³ Another term for prison or jail (from US definition)

Due to the nature of the work and the environment in which it is carried out, prison leaders have been described (not for the first time) as being *sui generis* - unique and special (Bryans & Wilson, 1998) and prison leadership or prison management is a topic that has been explored in book chapters, often in great detail (for example, Bennett, Crewe, & Wahidin, 2008, 2012; Bennett, 2015; Bryans & Wilson, 1998; Bryans, 2007; Coyle, 2000; Dilulio, 1987; Liebling, 2004; Liebling, 2010 and Liebling & Crewe, 2012). Bennett (2015), for example, in *The Working Lives of Prison Managers* addresses key aspects of prison management, including how individuals become prison managers. He also examines important aspects of individual agency, including ways in which self-regulation of values, identity and emotion, discretion, resistance and the use of power have become part of the required professional skill-set of prison managers. Crewe and Liebling (2015) acknowledge the difficulty in answering the question of what makes a 'good' prison leader. They propose that good prison leaders are not only those who are who are successful within the organisation, since the organisation may have blind spots and biases and the definition of 'good' might depend on the particular needs and culture of a prison. Liebling, assisted by Arnold (2004) argued as part of a wider study of the moral performance of prisons that good prison leaders are not necessarily successful in any prison and instead there is a complex 'prison-leadership fit', where different prisons require different styles at different stages in their development, supporting the later argument that context is important. Moreover, Liebling and Crewe (2016) found that the strengths and weaknesses of prisons are often reflected in the character and values of their prison leaders and certain values almost always emerged in their research: those of concern for the humane and careful use of power, a strong work ethic, a dislike for corruption and the abuse of power, and competitive pride in 'performance'. However, they also note that not all prison leaders are alike; their analysis showed some clearly identifiable professional styles representing different value structures but also linking to different outcomes, priorities and effectiveness.

Beyond Prison Leadership

Looking beyond prison leadership, the wider leadership literature base suggests that 'good leadership' in other organisational settings is equally difficult to define yet leadership is a fundamental component for the success of all organisations. Leadership is one of the most comprehensively researched and written about social influence processes in the behavioural sciences (Bennis, 1959). In 1978 James Burns declared that "leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth" a situation that radically improved in the 1990s (Van Wart, 2003). Similarly, Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003) argue that a universally acceptable definition for leadership is practically impossible and will hinder new ideas and creative ways of thinking. A view echoed by Bass (2000; 2008) who argues that the search for a single

definition of leadership is pointless. It is an understatement to say leadership is complex and often ill-understood. Rost (1993) discovered 221 different definitions and conceptions of leadership and Chapman (1984, p.182) designated “there is no complete and universally applicable explanation of leadership” a statement concurred by Alimo-Metcalfe and Lawler (2001) who noted that the concept of leadership was nebulous and ill-defined in the 30 organisations they studied.

Although there are many leadership theories, a number of reviews over the years have sought to categorise them, for example, see House and Aditya (1997). Avolio, Reichard, Hannah, Walumbwa and Chan (2009) propose two broad categories: traditional leadership and newer leadership theories. By ‘traditional,’ they refer to theories that dominated leadership research up to the late 1970s, including behavioural and contingency approaches to leadership (Yukl, 2002, 2006). By ‘newer’ they refer to theories that have dominated leadership research in the 1980s and going forward, including charismatic, inspirational, transformational and visionary leadership (Bass, 1998; Bryman, 1992; Peterson & Hunt, 1997). For a detailed history see Bass and Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership (Bass, 1990) or for more recent reviews of current theories and future directions see Avolio, Walumbwa and Weber (2009); Antonakis and Day (2018); Harrison (2018) or House and Aditya (1997). Alternatively, a more detailed approach can be seen when examining the evolution of leadership.

Five principal stages to the development of leadership theory have been proposed (for a comprehensive critical review see Alimo-Metcalfe, 2013 p.15-47). In Stage One, the ‘trait’ theories (for example, Terman, 1904), dominated. However, following reviews (for example, Stogdill, 1948) that there were few, if any, traits that were universally associated with leader effectiveness, researchers started to look for alternative explanations. Yet a few decades later there was renewed interest in the role of personal traits with the emergence of models such as the ‘transformational leadership’ model (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Bass & Riggio, 2006) and the ‘charismatic leadership’ model (House, 1977; Conger & Kanungo, 1987, 1998). Stage Two encompasses the ‘behavioural’ approach which moved away from the characteristics of leaders to how they behaved in relation to influencing others. During this period over 30 models were developed but no consistent patterns emerged. While this stage was valuable in broadening the focus of leadership to include how leaders act in relation to their subordinates and followers, it did not succeed in identifying a universal style that would be effective in most situations. Stage Three, saw the emergence of the ‘situational’ and ‘contingency’ approaches which towards the later years of the 1960s emphasised the importance of a range of variables when selecting an appropriate leadership style in any situation stressing that flexibility

of approach is key. One such theory was the leader-member exchange (LMX) which emerged from the vertical-linkage dyad model (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975). Stage Four, saw the 'new paradigm models' of 'charismatic–inspirational models' and 'heroic' leadership. The models that were developed emphasised different aspects of "neo-charismatic" leadership (House & Aditya, 1997), including 'charisma' (Conger, 1989, 1999; Conger & Kanungo, 1998; House, 1977), 'vision' (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Sashkin, 1988; Tichy & Devanna, 1986), 'transformational' and 'transactional' (Bass, 1985, 1998; Kouzes & Posner, 1987). Stage Five describes post-heroic models of leadership, the most notable of which is 'servant leadership' which conceives of leadership in terms of integrity, selfless service to others, and power sharing (Greenleaf, 1970; 1996). New notions of leadership have evolved to emphasise the ethical behaviour of leaders, while growing attention is being paid to the conceptualisation of leadership as a social process, that it is dynamic and fluid. Leadership is increasingly regarded as not being about 'doing to' others, but about what emerges from the way people 'do with' others. That is, how we work with and relate to each other, as colleagues. These include models of 'ethical' (Brown, Treviño & Harrison, 2005; Brown & Treviño, 2006; Treviño, Brown & Hartman, 2003), 'authentic' (Avolio, Gardner, & Walumbwa, 2007; Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumbwa, 2005) and 'distributed' (Gronn, 2000, 2008; Spillane, 2006) leadership.

Rationale for the Present Study

Reflecting on the development of leadership theory it is difficult to see where these have been considered in the context of prison leadership. There appears to be very little assimilation of prison leadership research with established leadership theories developed and tested in other public and private sector settings. The research into prisons seems to have been conducted in a void with little consideration of wider learnings. This study aims to examine the findings of research in which prison leadership had been studied, in order to better define good prison leadership. This is important for three reasons.

First, the role of context is influential and therefore while there is little apparent integration of wider leadership theories within the prison leadership literature, these models may or may not be appropriate given the unique context afforded by prisons and the requirements of the prison leader's role. Bryman (1992) argues that effective leadership by individuals is an interaction of the individual with their context and can apply to a wider range of important areas for instance, purpose, organisation, structure, culture, opportunities and levels of discretion (Baliga & Hunt

1988). This view is endorsed by others who have criticised leadership constructs for not adequately recognising the context in which they are embedded (Bass, 1990; Rost, 1991; Yukl, 2002). Following, Antonakis, Cianciolo and Sternberg (2004) suggest that the context in which leadership is enacted is key to its understanding and there have been further calls to integrate context into the study of leadership (Lowe & Gardner, 2000). There is now a large body of research presenting leadership as a highly complex interaction between the leader and the social and organisational environment (Fiedler, 1996). From the contextual school of leadership's perspective (see Shamir & Howell, 1999; Zaccaro & Klimoski, 2001), contextual factors are seen to give rise to, or inhibit, certain leadership behaviours, therefore it is crucial to understand the contextual factors in which leadership or expectations of leaders is embedded. This idea is supported by Zenger and Folkman (2009) who found compelling evidence that effective leadership practices are specific to an organisation and not all leaders who are successful in one will be successful in another. The importance of context with regards to leadership has been recognised in sector specific leadership reviews such as the police (Pearson-Goff & Herrington, 2013) and in health care services (Reichenpfader, Carlford, & Nilsen, 2015). While there are shared aspects of the role, within these contexts leadership itself differs. This study aims to examine the role of a leader within the context of prisons.

Second, within the wider literature, leadership has been shown to be a critical factor in determining organisational success or failure (Dawson, 1996), with significant impact on a range of employee and organisational outcomes. For example, specific leadership approaches have long since been linked to range of outcomes including job satisfaction (for example, Berson & Linton, 2005; Bryman, 1992; Dunham-Taylor 2000; McNeese-Smith, 1997; Morrison, Jones, & Fuller, 1997; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990), organisational health (for example, Bass & Avolio 1994), wellbeing (for example, Nielsen, Randall, Yarker, & Brenner, 2008; Nielsen, Yarker, Bernner, Randall, & Borg, 2008) as well as gains in performance (for example, Bass, 1990; Judge & Piccolo 2004; Keller, 2006; MacKenzie, Podsakoff, & Rich, 2001; Wang, Oh, Courtright, & Colbert, 2011), productivity (Irvine & Evans, 1995) and safety (for example, Clarke, 2013). A better understanding of the impact of prison leadership on prison officer (employee) and prison (organisational) outcomes may helpfully inform the ways that prison leaders can be supported to lead.

Third, without a common understanding of what constitutes good prison leadership, like any organisation, prisons are less likely to recruit those with the personality traits and attributes they desire, or to develop the behaviours and capabilities they expect to achieve their desired

outcomes. A clear and agreed definition of prison leadership regarding the competencies, knowledge and qualities associated is needed if we are to support prison leaders achieve success.

This brief review advocates the importance of understanding the expectations and requirements of prison leaders. As with any organisation, the importance of the role of the leader is one that is conceptually understood if not fully defined and its meaning can be different depending on the circumstances, context or people. Leadership requires more than simply holding a role however given the nature and environment of prisons it is highly likely that for staff, the head of the prison will be seen as the leader by virtue of the formal position they hold. However, to be able to recruit, provide the right support, development and training for leaders, there needs to be a strong understanding of the competency, knowledge and qualities expected, if not demanded, of them. The environment is hugely challenging and many prison leaders feel insufficiently prepared for their roles (McCampbell, 2002), therefore understanding more about what is expected of prison leaders is essential for prison leaders to thrive and deliver.

To date, there has been no systematic review that focuses on prison leadership. This study fills this gap in understanding. The aim is the review the findings of research in which prison leadership had been studied, in order to better define good prison leadership. Specifically, the evidence has been reviewed in light of the following questions:

- i. What is the role of a prison leader?
- ii. What are the competencies, duties, knowledge and quality requirements of a prison leader?
- iii. What is the impact of good prison leadership?

Method

In conducting this review, the systematic approach as outlined in Briner and Denyer (2012) and as applied by Robertson, Cooper, Sarkar and Curran (2015), was adopted; one that is replicable and transparent in its approach providing a clear audit trail of decision-making for inclusion and exclusion.

Search Strategy

In April 2018, a computerised literature search was conducted using three databases: Business Source Premier (EBSCO), ABI/INFORM and SCOPUS – V.4 (Elsevier), in addition individual searches were also completed of three journals: Prison Service Journal, British Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice Matters. The search terms were as follows: (prison* (for prisons, prisoner, prisoners) OR jail* (for jails, jailers) OR gaol* (for gaols, gaolers) OR penal OR penitentiary) AND (leader* (for leaders, lead, leadership) OR manager* (for managers) OR management OR governor* (for governors, governing governor, governorship, govern, governance)). Only results published in English and since 1950 were sought. This date was chosen as the authors were aware of a report from the UK Home Office that was published in 1958 which described the role and duties of prison leaders. In addition, results were subject to other specific exclusion and inclusion criteria (see Table 1). However due to the nature of the search databases and journals different strategies needed to be utilised. For SCOPUS – V.4 (Elsevier) it was not possible to set date parameters only to tick ‘all years’, however the year was then reviewed as part of the title sift. For two of the subject relevant journals: Prison Service Journal a hand-searching sift was completed (see Snape, Meads, Bagnall, Tregaskis, Mansfield, & MacLennan, 2017) which involved the sift being done manually by reviewing the contents page of each journal issue for relevant articles within the date parameters and using the search terms, in addition this journal was only available back to 2010 and therefore only 2010-2018 volumes were reviewed. For Criminal Justice Matters this was only published from June 1989 volume 1 to September 2015 volume 102 and therefore all volumes were reviewed. Duplicate results were removed before the title sift process was conducted. A digital dropbox was used to store and manage the yielded studies and the flow diagram in Figure 1 sets out the literature retrieval and selection process.

Prison Leadership: a systematic review – Flow diagram

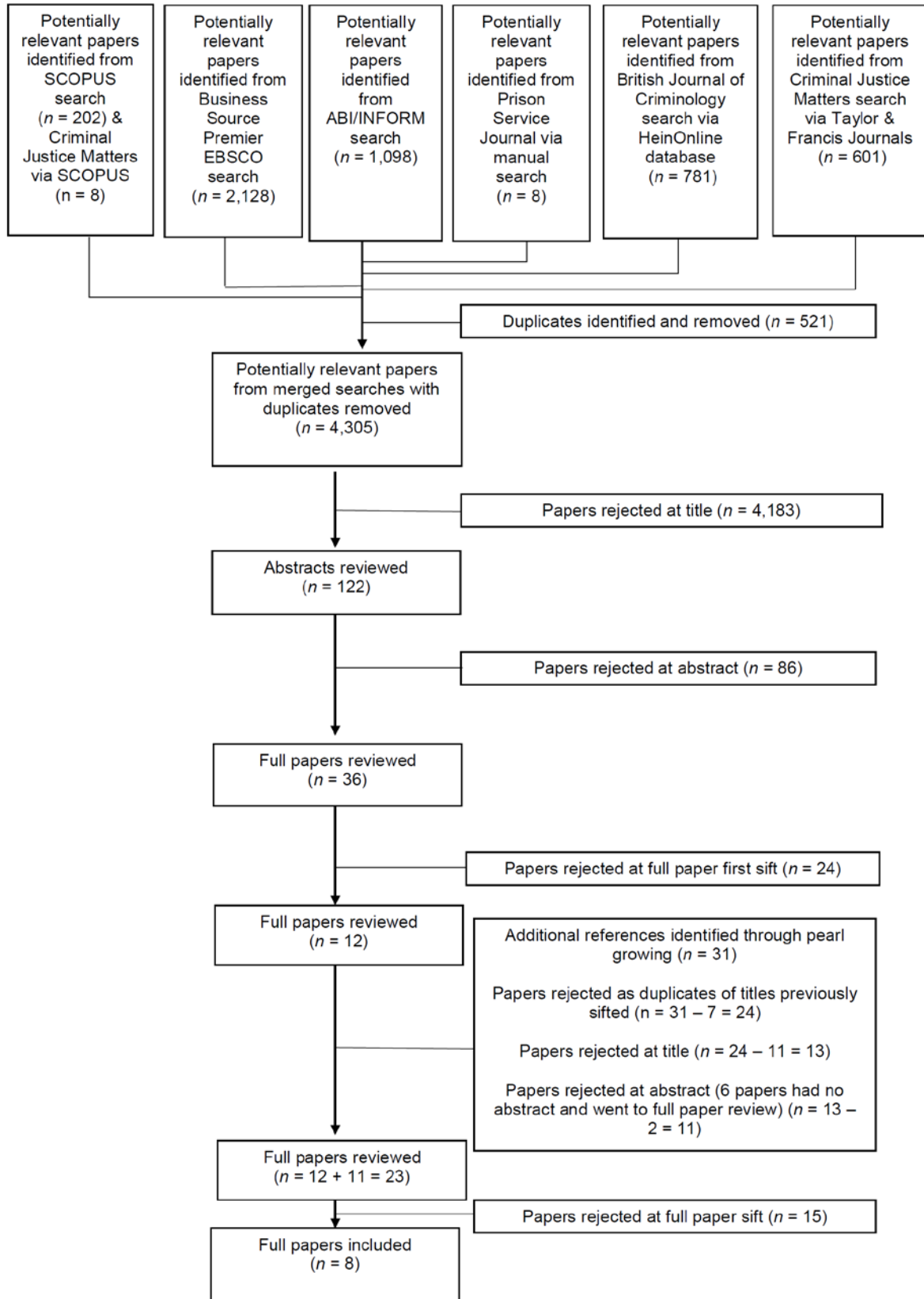


Figure 1. Flow diagram of the literature retrieval and selection process

Selection Criteria

To be included, papers had to meet at least two criteria. First that the workplace was a closed or secure penal institution (i.e. a prison) and secondly that it was about the leader(s) of that institution. Papers were selected for inclusion based on an adapted version of the SPIO framework: Study design, Participants, Interventions and Outcomes adapted from other systematic review papers (for example, Robertson, Cooper, Sarkar, & Curran, 2015). SPIO is a variation on PICOs (Population, Interventions, Comparison, and Outcomes; Richardson, Wilson, Nishikawa, & Hayward, 1995). However, this review did not limit the search to interventions and captured information from cross-sectional designs. Papers were included if they were published in peer reviewed journals and published after 1950. The reason for the exclusion of the intervention inclusion and exclusion criteria is that the study design inclusion criteria included non-empirical research as well as a range of methodologies which meant that papers could be included that would not have any interventions. This yielded 4,826 results which reduced to 4,305 once duplicates were removed. The full inclusion and exclusion criteria are at Table 1.

Table 1. SPO inclusion and exclusion criteria

	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Study design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Empirical and non-empirical research - Qualitative and quantitative design - English language - Peer reviewed journals - Published 1950 to 2018 - Leadership-based - Workplace related 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Government reports - PhD theses - Grey literature - Books/book chapters - Non-leadership based - Not focused on prison workplace context
Participant population including organisation type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prison as a workplace - Leadership of/within a prison at a senior level - Prison leaders - Governors/Wardens/Superintendents - Individual focus - Public (government run) prisons - Private prisons - Secure institutions e.g. foreign national and secure homes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prison officers - Prison staff not in the overall leadership position
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Models of staff prison leadership - Prison leadership framework - Prison leadership definition - Prison leadership competencies - Prison leadership performance - Prison leadership training/development - Prison leadership evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Topic specific rather than overall leadership e.g. health leadership - System or organisation wide focus - Secure hospitals - Prisoner leadership models, frameworks, definitions, approaches

Selection of Papers for Inclusion

Following the removal of duplications, the titles retrieved by the literature searches were reviewed for relevance using broad inclusion criteria (i.e. prison management, prison governance, prison leaders) by two reviewers, discrepancies were adjudicated by a third member of the research team. For those titles that met this broad criteria abstracts were sought out. The abstracts were then reviewed for relevance using the same broad inclusion criteria and for those abstracts that appeared to meet this, full papers were sought. All relevant papers were then screened using the SPO criteria; two researchers independently carried out the sift from titles to abstracts to full papers with a third researcher providing adjudication at each stage when discrepancies or points of disagreement arose. In addition, a 'pearl-growing' process was undertaken to ensure that all available and relevant evidence was included. For this process the references of the full papers were reviewed for any extra relevant papers and through this process an additional set of titles were identified for inclusion. These additional papers were then subjected to the same sifting process from title to abstract through to full paper as the original full paper sample (for further details see Donaldson-Feilder, Lewis & Yarker, 2019). The results of the systematic literature search and the additional search yielded eight retained papers for inclusion.

Quality Appraisal

As described by Briner and Denyer (2012) and adapted from Petticrew and Roberts (2006) there are a number of steps that are essential to the successful execution of a systematic review, including to "critically appraise the studies by assessing the study quality determined in relation to the review question" (p.125). This is a crucial stage and by doing this and applying the pre-designed quality criteria in relation to the review question potential biases can be avoided. This involves principles such as 'what instrument or scale or criteria will be used to assess quality?', 'how many reviewers will assess study quality?', 'how will the reviewers resolve disagreements?' and 'how will the quality data be used?' However, given the nature of this systematic literature review it was felt that quality appraisal as described above was not appropriate in its entirety due to the inclusion criteria comprising both empirical and non-empirical research and qualitative and quantitative designs resulting in a lack of homogeneity on which to base the quality appraisal. Further, in seeking to explore the different models and impressions of leadership that have been posited, as opposed to coming to any conclusion or recommendation based on a value judgement about that leadership, quality appraisal again does not apply. Nevertheless, the papers were

viewed where appropriate using an adapted and shortened version of the methodology set out in Snape et al. (2017), who provide two checklists for assessing the quality: one for one for qualitative and the other for quantitative evidence.

Data Extraction

Each full paper was reviewed at this point against the inclusion and exclusion criteria and the relevant data were extracted for analysis. The data extracted included information on the study design and methodology, the details of the participant population, the interventions or measures undertaken, the data collected and the outcomes reported in each paper.

Data Synthesis

As the results of the literature search and data extraction yielded only a small number of retained heterogeneous papers (n = 8), a quantitative meta-analysis would not provide useful results. Instead an explanatory synthesis was conducted and findings are presented in a narrative format.

Results

The search of databases retrieved 4,826 records, which were reduced to 4,305 once duplicates were removed. Following broad and narrow screening, eight papers were considered suitable for inclusion in the review: Atkin-Plunk, C. A. and Armstrong, G. S. (2013), Bryans, S. (2000), Davies, W. and Burgess, P. W. (1988), Dubois, C. (2018), Jacobs, J. B. and Olitsky, E. (2004), Kennes, P. and De Voorde, R. V. (2015), Ruddell, R. and Norris, T. (2008) and Wilson, D. (2000). All eight papers appeared in peer-reviewed journals. Table 2 provides a summary of the study and participant population characteristics of these eight papers, and each of these areas is considered in turn below.

Study Characteristics

Country of Origin

Of the eight studies, all were based exclusively in western countries, and each exclusively in one country: three were conducted in the United Kingdom (Bryans, 2000; Davies & Burgess, 1988; Wilson, 2000), three were conducted in the United States of America (Atkin-Plunk & Armstrong, 2013; Jacobs & Olitsky, 2004; Ruddell & Norris, 2008) and two were conducted in Belgium (Dubois, 2018; Kennes & De Voorde, 2015).

Methodological Approach

There was a variation in terms of the design of the studies across the eight papers; three were non-empirical narrative analyses (Jacobs & Olitsky, 2004, Kennes & De Voorde, 2015, Wilson, 2000), five were empirical; of these three used a quantitative approach (Atkin-Plunk & Armstrong, 2013; Bryans, 2000, Davies & Burgess, 1988), one used a qualitative approach (Ruddell & Norris, 2008) and one used a mixed methods approach (Dubois, 2018).

Data Collection

Two studies used individual participant questionnaires to gather demographic information (Atkin-Plunk & Armstrong, 2013; Bryans, 2000). Atkin-Plunk & Armstrong (2013) collected information on: gender, race, age, education level, and type and length of prior work experience from serving wardens across 29 different institutions. The second (Bryans, 2000) collected information on: gender, age, formal education, length of tenure, previous careers and entry route from serving governors of publically managed prisons. Bryans (2000) also sought to review the competencies and describe the competence areas needed to govern effectively.

Two studies specified the number of years over which they were conducted; they were over a time period of seven and four years respectively (Davies & Burgess, 1988; Dubois, 2018) and Davies et al. (1988) was longitudinal in nature, using the arrival and departure dates of the four governors in post over a seven-year period and anecdotal reflections and the other (Dubois, 2018)

used semi-structured interviews as well as a range of different official documents and notes taken during observation of the work of four governors as methods of data collected over a four-year period.

One study used a job analysis technique and storyboard method – Developing a Curriculum (DACUM) exercise to collect data (Ruddell & Norris, 2008), three were non-empirical narrative analyses (Jacobs & Olitsky, 2004; Kennes & De Voorde, 2015; Wilson, 2000). Two studies were statistical analyses of data (Atkin-Plunk & Armstrong, 2013; Davies & Burgess, 1988). Two studies involved data collection at just one-time point (Atkin-Plunk & Armstrong, 2013; Bryans, 2000) and two studies involved data collection at multiple time points (Davies & Burgess, 1988; Dubois, 2018).

Table 2. Summary of study and participant characteristics

KEY: N/A – Not Applicable / N/S – Not Specified / DV – Dependent Variable / IV – Independent Variable / Quant – Quantitative / Qual – Qualitative

Paper	Study characteristics				Participant population characteristics						
Author(s) & Year	Country of origin	Methodological approach	Data collection	Measures	Sample size	Gender (% male) and Ethnicity (% White)	Age (years)	Level of education	Organisational / prison tenure (years)	Study question aim	Occupational setting / level
Atkin-Plunk, C. A. & Armstrong, G. S. (2013)	USA	Quant (empirical)	Survey & Participant characteristics questionnaire	DV: Job stress – 6 items (Armstrong & Griffin 2004) IV: Leadership – 9 items MLQ 5X-Short, Self (Bass & Avolio, 2004)	103	77.2% and 66%	\bar{x} = 49 range 28 – 64	71.8% bachelor's degree or higher	\bar{x} = 24 range 7 – 37	To understand the potential protective factor of leadership style against a prison warden's experience of job stress, this study explores the varying levels of an effective leadership style	Serving wardens from 29 different institutions

										called transformational leadership as relating to levels of prison warden job stress	
Bryans, S. (2000)	UK	Quant (empirical)	Participant characteristics questionnaire & Review and comparison of existing competency frameworks	N/A	98	88% and N/S	47% over 50 & 5% younger than 41	44% bachelor's degree & 6% master's degree	69% over 20 & 48% govern ing more than 5 years	What are the characteristics of prison governors in the UK and what competencies do they require to govern effectively?	Serving governors of publicly managed prisons in England & Wales, Autumn 1997

Paper	Study characteristics				Participant population characteristics						
Davies, W & Burgess, P. W. (1988)	UK	Quant (empirical)	The arrival /departure dates of the four governors in post during that time	Discipline reports filed for each month over seven years	4	100% and N/S	N/S	N/S	N/S	Does the management regime instituted by the governor of a local prison have an effect on either the incident of disruptive behaviour, its recording, or both?	Serving governors
Dubois, C. (2018)	Belgium	Mixed (empirical analysis using both quantitative & qualitative measures)	50 semi-structured interviews & a range of different official documents as well as various notes taken over a period of eight days observing the work of 4	N/A	50	N/S and N/S	N/S	N/S	N/S	What happens when prison governors have to deal with some ethical dilemmas caused by proliferating inscriptions, where neither 'epistemic' nor 'technical'	40 prison governors from 5 different French speaking institutions 6 executives of central

prison governor,
data collected
over **four** years:
2012-2016

Two analytical
concepts used:
- 'phronetic
practices'
(Nonaka &
Takeuchi,
2011);
- 'enacted
knowledge'
(Freeman &
Sturdy, 2015)

knowledge is
available?

administration
and 4
governors who
had retired
less than 10
years ago

Paper	Study characteristics				Participant population characteristics						
Jacobs, J. B. & Olitsky, E. (2004)	USA	Narrative analysis (non-empirical)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A and N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	What are the obstacles (and potential solutions) to recruitment, development, promotion and retention of correctional leaders?	N/A
Kennes, P. & De Voorde, R. V. (2015)	Belgium	Narrative analysis (non-empirical)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A and N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	What is the result of the implementation of managerialist techniques and its impact on prison governors' leadership?	N/A

Ruddell, R & Norris, T. (2008)	USA	Qual (empirical)	Job analysis technique and storyboard method – Developing a Curriculum (DACUM)	N/A	6-8	N/S and N/S	N/S	N/S	Combined tenure of 72 years as wardens	What type of duties do wardens carry out, and how have these duties changed over time?	Serving wardens
Wilson, D. (2000)	UK	Narrative analysis (non-empirical)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A and N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	What is the changing role of the governor?	N/A

Measures

Two of the eight studies sought to measure outcomes quantitatively. Although both studies sought to establish the effectiveness of leadership, one measured the potential protective factor of transformational leadership against the experiences of job stress (Atkin-Plunk & Armstrong, 2013) and the other the impact of leadership on either the incidence of disruptive behaviour, its recording, or both (Davies & Burgess, 1988). Atkin-Plunk and Armstrong (2013) used two measures seeking an organisationally wide view and achieved participation from across 29 different prisons; for leadership, nine questions from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ 5X-Short, Self). This was used to measure the extent to which participants perceived that they exhibited transformational leadership skills taken from Bass and Avolio (2004) and for job stress, six items previously used by Armstrong and Griffin (2004) in correctional officer job stress research. Davies et al. (1988) used the number of discipline reports filed for each month over seven years as their measure of the impact of the leadership of each governor at one prison. Both therefore were quantitative in nature, one was subjective self-reporting measures and the other used discipline reporting data to measure the impact of leadership.

Participant Population Characteristics

As shown in table 2, there was also considerable variation across the studies in terms of the nature and volume of participation. Participant populations varied from 6 to 103 participants (five of the eight studies). Reviewing the two studies that used a survey/questionnaire approach, this involved 103 participants (with a 44.2% response rate) (Atkin-Plunk & Armstrong, 2013) and the other study 98 participants (with a 77% response rate) (Bryans, 2000). The one study that used semi-structured interviews in addition to other data (Dubois, 2018) consisted of 50 interviews with 40 participants over a four-year period. The remaining two papers involved eight participants or fewer.

Only two of the eight studies (Atkin-Plunk & Armstrong, 2013; Bryans, 2000) provided participant population characteristics beyond simply the total number of participants. Across these two studies 82.6% were men and both of these studies included information on the age of their participants, in the first the mean age was 49, with a range of 28 – 64 years of age (Atkin-Plunk & Armstrong, 2013), in the second study (Bryans, 2000) 47% of participants were over 50 years

of age and only 5% were younger than 41 years of age. The data on age was presented differently across both papers.

There were differences across the papers in the terminology used to describe prison leadership. The European papers: United Kingdom and Belgium refer to the leader of a prison as 'prison governor' or 'governor' (Bryans, 2000; Davies & Burgess, 1988; Dubois, 2018; Kennes & De Voorde, 2015; Wilson, 2000), in addition Bryans (2000) and Kennes and De Voorde (2015) also refer to them as 'governing governor'. In addition, for one Belgian paper (Dubois, 2018) the role of the prison governor was expanded to include members of the Belgian Prison Management Teams who as well as being called 'prison governors' fulfil another role; therefore, in Belgian prisons there is not just one governor for each prison but the number is determined by the size of the institution. In the three United States of America papers studies, reference to the leader of a prison was as 'jail warden' or 'warden' (Jacobs & Olitsky, 2004), 'prison warden' or 'warden' (Atkin-Plunk & Armstrong, 2013; Ruddell & Norris, 2008). In addition, Ruddell et al. (2008) also referred to them as 'superintendent' and noted that in the past they will have also been called 'guards'.

Prison Leader: Role

Three papers reviewed the topic of governors in prisons, one as them as policymakers (Dubois, 2018), another looking at the impact of new public management on their leadership (Kennes & De Voorde, 2015) and the third on the changing nature of their role (Wilson, 2000).

Dubois' (2018) paper shows how the rise of policy inscriptions for Belgian prisons has paradoxically led to sharper need of Belgian prison leaders for practical or 'phronetic' knowledge. The paper did not explore what prison leadership is or the components that make it up, nor look to measure prison leadership however it did discuss some of the responsibilities of prison leaders. These include running prisons 'within the limits of the law and budget', and the challenges facing Belgian prison leaders such as an increase in managerial and legal regulations over the past 15 years citing among others Kennes and De Voorde's (2015) paper, one that is part of this systematic review. However, what it added is a look into what prison leaders are required to do on a daily basis – make decisions that can have far reaching consequences and therefore looked at the ethics of some of these decisions when faced with situations where there is no clear right answer or response. The paper takes as a basic assumption that knowledge is a central ingredient

of prison leaders' practices, especially as they use it to navigate the many ethical dilemmas they face.

Many scholars have highlighted the relevance of knowledge as a key concept to analyse work practices in public policy, administration and organisation studies (Freeman 2007; Laws & Hajer 2006; Raadschelders 2008; Wagenaar 2004; Weick 1988), Dubois asks the question 'but what is knowledge?' and goes on to answer that an Aristotelian typology distinguishes between three forms of knowledge: *episteme*, 'a universally valid scientific knowledge'; *techne*, 'a skill-based technical know-how'; and *phronesis*, or 'know-what-should-be-done' (Nonaka & Takeuchi 2011). Dubois' argument is that the prison leaders' profession is structured around some specific types of phronetic or practical – enacted – knowledge and that with the increase of inscribed knowledge there is a greater need for them in dealing with 'ethical dilemmas' – that is, uncertain and ambiguous events and reach a particular decision to use their phronetic practices to help solve these conflicts.

Kennes and De Voorde's (2015) paper looks at the impact of New Public Management (NPM) (which Bryans and Dubois also reference) on the leadership tasks of Belgian prison leaders. Rather than exploring leadership tasks, the authors focus on the leader's role in creating an operational plan or policy for their prison, as well as needing to translate the strategic vision of the central administration into operational goals for his or her prison. They also distinguish between management (what prison leaders have always had to do) and 'managerialism' which "encompasses a pragmatic, technologically-supported, and quantification oriented political construction that has subjected the police, courts, probation, and prisons to a regime of efficiency and value-for-money, performance targets and auditing, quality of service and consumer responsiveness" (Loader & Sparks, 2002, p.88). That which according to penologists confines professionals to narrow sets of formal tasks and prevents them "from gaining full comprehension of the overall strategy and the ultimate goals of the organisation" (Cheliotis, 2012, p. 249). Finally, they discuss the lack of what Liebling and Crewe (2013) call 'moral language' in the era of New Public Management where an emphasis on quantification, resource and process management has been prioritised over humane aspects of imprisonment, sentiments also echoed by Wilson (2000).

Wilson's (2000) paper is an examination of what he deems to be the changing nature and role of the prison leader in England and Wales at the time from conversations with two serving prison

leaders as well as his observations and own experiences as a former prison leader. Although he did not explicitly look at the competencies required to lead a prison he did describe what he considers to be a move away from governing to management, predicated by greater devolution of responsibilities and a greater focus on areas such as business planning and budgets (as referenced by his referral of an accountant present in a meeting he had with a prison leader). He suggests this was a distraction, a watering down, a taking away from more important elements of a role and that the people in those roles he describes as being *sui generis* - unique and special. He also discussed Andrew Rutherford's (1994) three credos of punishment, efficiency and rehabilitation that at their heart are concerned with the values that a person brings to the job. The first credo relates to a powerful dislike and moral condemnation of offenders; the second, is concerned with a desire to dispose of the tasks at hand as smoothly and efficiently as possible; and the third credo is characterised by an empathy with offenders and an optimism about the work that could be done. It is this third credo of prison leader that Wilson (2000) believes has become less visible, the person who sees their value in pushing forward how the prison works and operates by looking at the broad picture, turning a punitive structure into one that is positive. He sees this as why he considers prison leaders to be unique and special – that to do the role you need to understand the nature of prison and penal culture and to understand offenders and prison, however he believes that this aspect is being lost and therefore as a result prison leaders are changing, becoming more managerialist.

Prison Leader: Competencies, Duties, Knowledge and Qualities

As shown in table 3, across most of the papers there is a level of agreement in what is considered either necessary for prison leaders or what is simply understood to be part of the role with respect to the competencies and duties, however there is less agreement or reference to the knowledge areas or qualities necessary. The key expectations are also represented pictorially at figure 2. Not all papers sought to describe all of the competencies, duties, knowledge or quality requirements of prison leaders, however all papers mention at least some of them. Only two papers explicitly sought to understand and establish what competencies or duties are required to lead prisons effectively (Bryans, 2000; Ruddell & Norris, 2008). In addition, Ruddell et al., (2008) looked at how they may have changed over a time period of 20 years (from 1988 to 2000) and one paper in describing the importance of prison leadership (Jacobs & Olitsky, 2004) set out a list of qualities and characteristics. Others reviewed the topic of leadership through various lenses (Atkin-Plunk & Armstrong, 2013; Davies & Burgess, 1988; Dubois, 2018; Kennes & De Voorde, 2015; Wilson, 2000). Four consistent themes emerged from the papers: prison management

(mentioned by all papers), general management (mentioned by all papers), followed by incident management (mentioned by six out of the eight papers) and stakeholder management (mentioned by six out of the eight papers). To a lesser extent there was agreement on the knowledge area of: penology, criminology and prison law (mentioned by three out of the eight papers) and for the quality of being charismatic and inspiring, and bringing out the best in others (mentioned by four out of the eight papers).

Although Davies and Burgess (1988) did not explicitly describe the management style, anecdotally the qualities reported as key by colleagues and direct reports for the prison leader with the fewest monthly discipline reports filed were: a) flexibility with staff, b) participative (establishing committees and meetings), c) charismatic and d) likeable (both with staff and offenders).

In the UK, Bryans' (2000) paper explored in depth both the characteristics of prison leaders in England and Wales and the competence and competencies they require to lead effectively. His paper takes us through the role and authority of the prison leader as well as a detailed look at who is leading publicly managed prisons based on a questionnaire sent to each prison leader in the autumn of 1997 (see table 2 for a summary of the results). Bryans (2000) recognised that other authors such as Boyatzis (1982) have attempted to identify a generic set of competencies that are indicative of superior organisational performance and are interchangeable throughout a variety of different organisations. As well as the Management Charter Institute (MCI) which has produced an integrated model of personal competency for all managers. However, in searching existing generic competency frameworks external to the Prison Service in England and Wales the one he focuses on is that of the Industrial Relations Services (IRS) which in 1996 had surveyed 76 private and public sector competency frameworks. This is then summarised as 14 most frequently identified managerial competencies that he compared in tabular form to the Prison Service in England and Wales one which at the time was a framework of 12 core competencies applicable to all staff (systematic approach, planning and reviewing, organising and empowering, team playing and networking, team building and liaison, motivation and commitment, communicating clearly, problem solving and continuous improvement, and leadership and decision making).

Bryans (2000) found similarity across the competencies that the IRS survey found, and identified three additional prison-specific competencies in their core competency framework that were not

found in the survey; security awareness, concern for prisoner care and rehabilitation orientation. Bryans (2000) also postured that prison leaders require underpinning knowledge and skills if they are going to demonstrate competence and goes on to argue that this consists of four distinct areas: i) prison management ii) general management, iii) incident command and iv) public sector management, echoing the themes identified in this review.

Taking general management first which he says as a result of the political pressure for change, the 1980s witnessed the importation of a number of management techniques new to the Prison Service in England and Wales and it has been argued that behind these changes lay the rise of a new set of key managerial ideas, beliefs and behaviours and grouped together have become known as New Public Management (NPM). NPM also features in Wilson's (2000) (although not explicitly), Kennes and De Voorde's (2015) and Dubois' (2018) papers'. The strategy behind NPM has been identified by Raine and Willson (1997) as consisting of three elements: i) cash limits and emphasis on efficiency to engender a more financially aware and prudent approach; ii) greater standardisation in policies and practices to curb the autonomy of the professionals and reduce their idiosyncrasies; and iii) reorganisation into stronger hierarchies, supported by target setting and performance monitoring to effect greater control and to sharpen accountability. Bryans defines public sector management as the distinctive features and requirements of managing in the public sector which includes constitutional, political, legal and stakeholder elements. Incident command is the ability to respond to a range of possible incidents that can occur in prisons, the difference between this and management being that command is predominantly directive. The management of an incident can be risky, complex, dynamic and time sensitive, defined as "command mode' when 'the 'normal' running of the prison is suspended, where by all decisions and actions are 'led' from a central point. Incident command mode occurs because something out of the 'norm' happens, or may happen, which forces us to react differently" (HMPPS, 2014). Flin (1996) points out that incident command is 'the need for a perceptible change in leadership style'. The final distinct area of demonstrating competence is one that is unique to the environment and that of being a prison leader – prison management and one that Bryans says is the most difficult to define. However, he goes on to say that one of the key facets is the ability to balance security, control and justice as outlined by Woolf (1991) in his report on prison disturbances. What Bryans' paper does not do is assess how effective the competence areas he identifies as being critical to the role are.

In the USA Ruddell and Norris (2008) reported a different approach, working with current high-performing prison leader incumbents (with a combined total of 72 years as prison leaders)

developed a brief job description. They identified duties and tasks associated with each duty, and sequenced and prioritised them, supported by the original competency profile produced in 1988 using a job analysis technique and storyboard method – Developing a Curriculum (DACUM). What Ruddell et al. (2008) showed was that despite a gap of two decades, there were similarities in the job duties, but a change in the priority of them. The 2008 competency profile listed nine competencies in order of priority: administer safety and security*, manage human resources*, manage critical incidents*, manage the budget*, foster a healthy institutional environment*, preside over the physical plant*, administer public relations, maintain professional competence, execute strategic planning process and a final catch all, other tasks as assigned, in 1988 there were 12 competencies. In the paper each of the main duties (those marked with an asterisk) were broken down into six tasks each. The order of priority from 1988 to 2008 differed with security moving up to first position from sixth, interestingly the management of critical incidents is an addition and did not feature in 1988 however this may be more about terminology as ‘manage security processes’, ‘manage emergencies’ and ‘manage inmates’ did feature and incident management could be considered a combination of all three. This is a different approach from Bryans (2000) who did not seek to establish or update the competencies but compared those that exist with external ones as well as adding to the list with four areas of competence.

Ruddell and Norris also discuss how the expectations of prison leaders have been recorded as far back as 1932 (Root, 1932) and how although the description of core duties of prison leaders is largely unchanged, the focus to date has shifted towards ensuring the safety and security of the community, staff and inmates. They support assertions from the other authors of papers (for example, Bryans, 2000; Kennes and De Voorde, 2015) that a broad range of knowledge, skills and abilities are required to govern and although they do not explicitly refer to NPM there are echoes of it in reference to diminishing budgets, compliance with performance standards and operating in highly political and complex environments.

Jacobs and Olitsky (2004) focused on three areas of prison leadership that they call correctional leadership: i) the crucial importance of correctional leadership, ii) recruiting, developing and retaining correctional leaders and iii) investing in correctional leadership. Their outline of professional prison leadership describes a need for intelligent, competent and inspiring prison leadership which for them is combination of competencies and duties. Such as the ability to utilise court interventions as opportunities to improve the prison’s physical plant and administration, strong organisational management skills, an ability to translate strategy into vision, a base expertise in human resources, personnel management (recognising and dealing with the

legitimate inmate complaints and concerns), labour relations and public administration, being conversant and comfortable with public accounting and budgeting, communicating constructively with the community and courts, prison law, maintenance and operation of the mechanical penal infrastructure, public relations and legislative politics (lobbying effectively with the legislature). In addition, they also outline the key knowledge areas, such as being well-educated in penology, criminology, correctional law, sociology of organisations, sociology of poverty, African-American studies, Latino studies and psychology and finally a solid grounding in the scholarly and popular literature on leadership. They also state that prison leaders require intelligence, which they describe as being highly motivated, humanistic, mature, reflective and innovative, able to relate well with others, inspiring and able to bring out the best in their staff and offender population.

They go further than both Bryans (2000) and Ruddell and Norris (2008) in their expectations of prison leaders and what they deem they require; theirs' is a combination of intelligence, competencies, characteristics and qualities. They acknowledge that it is quite a list but that it is also one of the most difficult jobs there is; where staff are in physical danger, stress is high and morale is low. In addition, theirs' is the only paper that states that prison leaders should be well-educated in penology, criminology, prison law, leadership and a number of other areas. However, they do recognise that a prison cannot be effectively managed by just one person, no matter how good they are and that it about both the ability to empower and recruit.

Table 3: Comparison of key expectations of prison leaders (notes to support table below)

Studies	Competencies and Duties					Knowledge Areas					Qualities				
	Prison Management	Incident Management	Stakeholder Management	General Management	Professional Self Development	Penology, Criminology and Prison Law	Sociology of organisations and sociology of poverty	African-American and Latino studies	Psychology	Academic and popular literature on leadership	Intelligent	Charismatic, inspiring, brings out the best in others	Flexible, listens, participative and reflective	Innovative	Self-motivated
Atkin-Plunk, C. A. & Armstrong, G. S. (2013)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						✓				
*Bryans, S. (2000)	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓					✓	✓			
Davies, W & Burgess, P. W. (1988)	✓	✓		✓											
Dubois, C. (2018)	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓									
*Jacobs, J. B. & Olitsky, E. (2004)	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kennes, P. & De Voorde, R. V. (2015)	✓	✓	✓	✓							✓				
*Ruddell, R & Norris, T. (2008)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓										
Wilson, D. (2000)	✓			✓											
Tally	8	6	6	8	2	3	1	1	1	1	1	4	2	1	1

Table 3 notes

Similar/highly related items grouped together under summarised headings

Prison Management: Concerned with the safety and security, technical knowledge of compliance with policy and procedures as well as ensuring the best environment and care for offenders including the physical operation of the prison and rehabilitation

Incident Management: Ensure readiness for, and implementation of, appropriate responses to any possible unplanned incidents that can occur (such as disturbances, riots, escapes, protests)

Stakeholder Management: Ability to engage and handle governmental, legal and political elements, including all other stakeholder engagement (outward facing and internally facing)

General Management: Human Resources, finances, staff and teams, strategy and vision, communication, problem solving and decision making

Professional Self Development: Seek professional development opportunities, mentoring, partner with academia, exemplify leadership qualities and employ best practice

Papers marked with an asterisk explicitly sought to describe the requirements of prison leadership. The other papers reference the requirements to varying degrees as the purpose of these papers was not to outline the composition of prison leadership, for example Atkin-Plunk and Armstrong (2013) refer to the Ruddell and Norris' (2008) paper and Kennes and De Voorde (2015) refer to Jacobs and Olitsky's (2004) when listing the requirements of prison leaders, in addition to other qualities or requirements.



Figure 2. Key expectations of Prison Leaders from the eight papers

Prison Leader: Impact

Two papers directly looked at leadership in a measurable form, both seeking to establish the impact of leadership in prisons on separate topics, in the case of Davies and Burgess (1988) it was the disruptive behaviour of offenders and for Atkin-Plunk and Armstrong (2013) it was job stress. Both papers showed positively the importance of leadership on their respective areas; Davies et al.'s (1988) results supported the view that a particular prison leader's management style may be important in influencing levels of disruptive behaviour in the prison. Even once potential factors such as prison population were accounted for the result was still significant ($\chi^2=36.74$, $df=3$, $p >0.001$) and Atkin-Plunk et al. (2013) demonstrated that prison leaders who perceived that they exhibited transformational leadership skills experienced significantly lower job stress ($-.24$, $p<0.05$).

Davies and Burgess' (1988) paper discussed the influence that a management regime, and in turn, the head of that regime – the prison leader can have. They presented evidence to support the suggestion that the management regime instituted by the leader of a prison has a strong effect upon the reporting and/or use of disciplinary measures for the disruptive behaviour of offenders. They demonstrated this by analysing the number of discipline reports filed for each month over seven years (the longest available period for which data was available) and the arrival and departure dates of the four prison leaders in post during that time. Using the chi-squared test, the number of reports that could be expected during each period were calculated. The differences between the numbers of discipline reports filed proved significant at the $p > 0.001$ level ($\chi^2=63.92$, $df=3$). They also tested the hypothesis to see if this effect was due not to different prison leaders' management styles but simply to an increasing trend to break prison rules over the seven-year period. This was tested by comparing data gathered from the terms of office of the two longest-standing prison leaders (accounting between them for 84.5% of the seven years under study). If there was a trend towards increase regardless of prison leader, the second half of each prison leader's administrative term should have seen more reports filed than the first half, the results did not support this. There were no significant differences in numbers of reports filed during the first and second halves of the term in office for either prison leader. Although only focused on one element of the role, this study suggested that under one particular prison leader for which they had the most data, consistently fewer reports were filed per month within the prison, therefore suggesting that the prison leader can have a large impact on their prison.

Atkin-Plunk and Armstrong's (2013) paper looked to understand the potential protective factor of leadership against a prison leader's experience of job stress and explored the extent to which varying levels of transformational leadership could be related to a more positive work experience and levels of job stress. Their focus was on prison leader's job stress and transformational leadership, with the primary aim of identifying the potential impacts of a range of factors on job stress; the purpose of the paper was not to define leadership or prison leadership. There were statistically significant correlations below the .05 significant level between job stress and transformational leadership, prison capacity and employee trust, based on the variables included. Prison leaders who perceived that they exhibited transformational leadership skills experienced significantly lower job stress. With both of these papers, the only two quantitative studies, statistically significant positive associations were found between leadership style and the outcomes measured.

Discussion

The purpose of this systematic literature review was for the first time to provide an overview and synthesis of the current literature on prison leadership. The aim was to assemble the prison leadership evidence, in order to better define good prison leadership. Specifically, looking at the role of a prison leader, the competencies, duties, knowledge and qualities of a prison leader and the impact of good prison leadership. The findings from this review, drawn from a diverse body of research, offers some insights but also reveal a number of methodological issues in the research and shines a light on the limited rigour in this area of study.

Eight studies were identified by the systematic search, selection and extraction process. Each constitute a diverse body of research, with varied aims, measures and outcomes. The quality of the papers included is variable, their individualistic nature, methodological limitations and lack of homogeneity of how the topic has been reviewed make it difficult to draw finite conclusions. Nonetheless, there is evidence from the studies of some of the requirements of prison leadership; what prison leaders are expected to do and demonstrate, explicitly explored in three of the eight papers and also what prison leadership impacts on, and is impacted by, explored in the other five papers; these studies thus offer quantitative and qualitative insights into an understudied topic. Yet interestingly, only one of the papers (Atkin-Plunk & Armstrong, 2013) drew on an established leadership model, transformational leadership.

Although this literature review is limited to eight papers, it is evident that defining prison leadership is not straightforward. Taking prisons out of it for a moment, leadership is a complex phenomenon, there are many theories and models but no precise definition. Stogdill (1974) argued that there are almost as many different definitions of leadership as there are people who have attempted to define the concept. Fleishman, Mumford, Zaccaro, Levin, Korotkin and Hein (1991) state that in the past 60 years, as many as 65 different classification systems have been developed to define the dimensions of leadership and yet more recently research has recognised that it is less about definition of an individual characteristic or difference. Furthermore, Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003) argue that a universally acceptable definition of leadership is practically impossible and would hinder new ideas but rather leadership is depicted in various models as dyadic, shared, relational, strategic, global, and a complex social dynamic (Avolio, 2007; Yukl, 2006). However, as the context in which leadership is displayed is important, it follows that a framework for good prison leadership may help to guide leadership within the prison context. Yet, this review suggests that there is little research from which to draw conclusions relating to what constitutes good prison leadership. Although attempts have been made to characterise its composition, the added value perhaps does not come from a definition but a detailed look at its structure and the implications for this. In his ethnographic study of American prison managers, Dilulio (1991) concluded that “there is no one theory of organizational leadership ... and certainly no management formula that guarantees success” (p.54; see also Dilulio, 1987) suggesting that prison leaders are not likely to act uniformly but instead are diverse in their values and approaches.

In this study we examined the evidence in light of three specific questions relating to the role, the competencies and impact of good prison leadership. These are discussed here.

What is the role of a prison leader?

Dubois (2018) explained how Belgian prison leaders were experiencing more ethical dilemmas due to a rise in policy expectations and therefore were making more discretionary decisions based on *phronesis*, or practical know-what-should-be-done knowledge. Kennes and De Voorde (2015) explored the impact of New Public Management on the leadership of Belgian prison leaders. They concluded that by each prison leader having to translate the strategic vision of the central administration into operational goals there was a higher managerial control from above. In the final paper about the impact of, or on, prison leadership, Wilson (2000) examined what he deemed to be the changing nature and role of the prison leader in England and Wales. One that was

moving away from 'governing' to simply being 'another manager' and what made the role unique and the people who have performed this role unique was being lost.

What is evident is that change is an ever present reality, and prisons are not exempt, meaning a focus on efficiencies, cost reductions and processes rather than outcomes. Yet this is not historically what prison leaders have been recruited to do, not what their role is seen to be therefore it is important to recognise the limits of 'managerialism' in the context of prisons. There is a greater need to be change ready, flexible and responsive.

What are the competencies, duties, knowledge and quality requirements of a prison leader?

None of the studies explored the formation of a single definition of prison leadership but rather some defined or explored the elements that make up leadership i.e. the competencies, duties, knowledge and qualities required (Bryans, 2000; Jacobs & Olitsky, 2004; Ruddell & Norris, 2008) and others explored outcomes that are impacted by, or impact on, the leadership of prisons.

To be successful, Wright (2000) states that prison executives will need a unique set of characteristics as they move into the 21st century: political savvy, knowledge of sound prison practice and prison operations (that has not changed, nor will it ever), a global perspective, a forward looking perspective, critical analysis skills, system management skills, strong people skills, integrity and enthusiasm. The leadership of prisons is about people and decisions about the treatments of human beings and therefore the greater the understanding of those leading prisons of this the better.

What the research does show is that there is a uniqueness to the competencies and duties of prison leadership, highlighted by all eight papers, that of the institution itself – prison management. The other elements deemed critical to leadership are evident and just as necessary in other organisations and industries; general management, stakeholder management and although more common in crisis driven organisations such as the military, police, fire and health care services, incident management too is key which although not unique to prisons the type of incident management is. There are however missing elements from the papers, if for example we

take Yukl's (2012) taxonomy of leadership behaviour that contains four meta-categories and 15 associated components there is no mention of change management (advocating or envisioning it) as supported by Zenger and Folkman (2009) who include leading change in their list of 16 competencies that separated the top ten percent of all leaders from the rest.

One of the strengths of this study was the inclusion of research conducted globally. This inclusion contributed to a high number of expectations of prison leaders but also presented an opportunity to compare the body of prison leadership research (see table 3). Three papers explored and defined the characteristics deemed necessary to lead prisons (Bryans, 2000; Jacobs & Olitsky, 2004; Ruddell & Norris, 2008), two papers were from the USA and one from the UK however there were strong parallels across all of them. Of some concern is the lack of discussion in the papers of whether there is any or an agreement within the field of what the expectations of prison leaders are either nationally or internationally.

Neither Bryans nor Ruddell and Norris' papers assessed how effective the competence areas or competencies were. The Prison Service in England and Wales has since then added, in addition to other competencies 'acting with integrity'. Interestingly, none of the eight papers mention integrity which given the environment would seem paramount and is reflected in Liebling and Crewe's (2016) research. They in exploring the strengths and weaknesses of prisons were often reflective of the character and values of prison leaders, with integrity coming through strongly.

Jacobs and Olitsky (2004) in focusing on the importance of recruitment, development and retention of prison leaders outlined a list of 32 expectations, including knowledge areas, competencies and qualities going further than both Bryans (2000) and Ruddell and Norris (2008) in their expectations of prison leaders. Their paper is a 'call to arms' paper for prisons in the USA. However, there was no agreement across these three papers on the knowledge areas or quality requirements. Together, these findings provide some evidence that prison leadership can be defined due to a level of agreement across the papers, yet no single paper included all of the competencies, duties, qualities and knowledge areas deemed necessary from the papers collectively. For instance, Bryans' (2000) paper did not cover qualities and Ruddell and Norris' (2008) paper was a snapshot and only focused on duties and therefore comparisons are somewhat limited across the three as the scope of the papers differ, showing the need to review all elements relevant to prison leadership not just focusing on one or even two aspects. It is only Jacobs and Olitsky's (2004) paper that discussed all of the required elements of prison leadership.

According to Hartley and Hinksman (2003), the increasing literature on competencies has created some ambiguities in the field. There are variations in how the term competency is used and understood. There are some who refer to competency to represent a function or task that must be performed (as done by Ruddell and Norris, 2008); others use it to refer to the skills and personal characteristics that enable somebody to perform a task or function (as done by Bryans, 2000 and Jacobs & Olitsky, 2004). Ultimately it can be considered a combination of all: performance, tasks, characteristics, abilities, skill, behaviours and attitudes. There is also the organisational competence which is the core competencies that the organisation deems necessary or key to them. In addition, the strategic context is clearly valuable in understanding competencies in terms of the skills and capabilities of individuals and how they apply to the organisation. Given that only three papers set out to discuss this and only two set out to determine it, it shows as Bryans (2000) and Wilson (2000) have described it, that the context i.e. prison management is indeed 'sui generis' – unique and special.

Even within the unique context the priorities are ever changing, for example, Ruddell and Norris (2008) compared the original 1988 competency profile to the 2008 profile and the focus had shifted to a greater importance on safety and security and less on strategy and stakeholder management.

What is the impact of good prison leadership?

Only two of the studies included measures of leadership or management, the measures and constructs were different for each paper, neither had a common dependent variable or a common validated scale. One was a self-report measure (Atkin-Plunk & Armstrong, 2013) and the other used quantitative data (Davies & Burgess, 1988). Both showed a significant positive impact of prison leadership on job-related stress in one study (Atkin-Plunk & Armstrong, 2013) and the reporting of offender disruptive behaviour in the other (Davies & Burgess, 1988). Neither study directly explored the consequences of prison leadership on staff, one did for offenders (Davies & Burgess, 1988). The other explored the outcome of leadership on levels of job-related stress for prison leaders (Atkin-Plunk & Armstrong, 2013). Atkin-Plunk et al.'s (2013) was the only paper to both measure leadership and provide leadership definitions (not prison leadership per se but generic leadership). They adopted a model of leadership – transformational leadership, using a

definition consistent with the measure they employed and was designed by authors of the definition (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 2004).

What these two papers demonstrate is that prison leadership is likely to have an impact. However, the extent, and to what it has an impact on, is limited as these two papers only chose to measure two factors that prison leadership can impact (stress and offender disruptive behaviour). There remains more scope to investigate the impact of prison leadership not only on the individuals themselves but their staff and the offenders. This is a topic that as recognised earlier and by others is one that is understudied (for example, Bryans, 2000; Jacobs & Olitsky, 2004), whilst also crucial to determining success. It is clear from the introduction that prisons are places that exercise considerable power, this power can be both positive and disruptive and therefore the scope of impact a prison leader has is vast. The areas in which prison leaders theoretically would have an impact are staff well-being and safety, staff engagement and productivity, reducing reoffending and rehabilitation. One of the key purposes of prisons, often overshadowed by safety and security concerns is to rehabilitate people in their care, the impact of this alone given the recidivism rates both in the UK⁴ and USA⁵ is enormous but not an area that this paper was targeting at and therefore very little on impact has been captured.

Given that the USA and UK competencies research is now over 10 and 20 years old respectively there is a clear argument to consolidate the information and use the insights from across the literature to update the research and build a more complete and current picture of prison leadership. There is no doubt the realities within this context continue to evolve with sentencing laws, extremism, gangs, greater use of technology (both as an enabler and hindrance), the increasing complexities and prevalence of drugs and a greater focus rehabilitation and external scrutiny (see for example, Bryans, 2007; Jewkes, Bennett & Crewe, 2016) therefore even though the context may be unique the requirements of prison leaders may well have changed and there is a question as to whether the captured expectations of prison leaders really reflect their current realities given how old some of the papers are.

⁴ Adults released from custody or court orders in the UK have a proven reoffending rate of 37.8%. For adults released from custodial sentences of less than 12 months have a proven reoffending rate of 64.4% <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/proven-reoffending-statistics-april-to-june-2017>

⁵ Based on a sample of 404,638 prisoners released in 2005 across 30 states in the USA 49.7% had either a parole or probation violation or an arrest for a new offense within 3 years that led to imprisonment, and 55.1% had a parole or probation violation or an arrest that led to imprisonment within 5 years.

In addition to the age of the papers, surprisingly, only one of the papers (Atkin-Plunk & Armstrong, 2013) drew on an established leadership model, transformational leadership. Considering only one leadership theory has been utilised in all of the papers this highlights a gap in the research into prison leadership. As demonstrated earlier there are numerous leadership theories, models and approaches however what is missing is a review of prison leadership through the lens or lenses of leadership models to fully understand it. As highlighted by Hunt and Dodge (2001), if the effects of varying leadership styles are to be better understood the research design will either need to hold organisational variables constant and explore for leadership effects or to explore the interactions there is a need to incorporate organisational variables and leadership dimensions.

Strengths, Limitations and Future Research

It is reported that systematic reviews never provide 'answers' (Briner, Denyer, & Rousseau, 2009) but what they are intended to do is report as truthfully as possible what is known and not know about the questions chosen to be addressed in the review by adhering to a set of core principles, being: systematic, transparent, replicable and summarising. This paper has set out to achieve that and in addition make recommendations for further research.

Strengths

The strengths of this review are its broad inclusion criteria and the fact that it is international allowing the reader to compare. It is unlikely there will be a universal definition and it can be difficult to make absolute comparisons between countries as political, legal and regulatory rules and cultural environments vary, however the nature of the industry remains the same, comparisons need to be understood as broadly rather than specifically true. The definitive characteristics of prisons are constant across cultures, legal systems, and political regimes (Giallombardo 1966, p.2). Further research is necessary to develop a more in-depth understanding of the positive ways that the prison system and individual prisons can benefit from their leaders in order to provide a more coherent and applicable evidence base to support the understanding of prison leadership. As described by Hunt and Dodge (2001) leadership studies are unlikely to be of any additive value until they take into account organisational variables.

Limitations

Prison leaders all over the world share the same profession but carry out their duties in different cultural settings with differing priorities, circumstances, expectations and offender populations making it difficult to generalise if there are real differences in the expectations of prison leaders, especially given the western ideological focus of the papers found. The main limitation of the research reported in this study is the shortage of papers defining, examining or evaluating prison leadership, indicating a need for further systematic research in this area. However, there was some consistency across countries with regards to the components that make up prison leadership and therefore opportunities to apply and test this further.

Another limitation of this study is the sampling procedure; the study did not consider books, book chapters, unpublished articles and dissertations which were excluded by the eligibility criteria, and the decision to focus on empirical data. Many articles reviewed in the scoping phase were thought pieces rather than empirical studies. For instance, more has been published on this field in books, often in great detail (for example, Bennett, 2015; Bryans & Wilson, 1998; Bryans, 2007; Coyle, 2002, 2005; Dilulio, 1987; Liebling, 2004; Liebling, 2010 & Liebling & Crewe, 2012), however this would have made replicability challenging, if not impossible given the volume of text. In addition, papers not in the English language may have excluded relevant studies. Or if titles that were about the subject but did not include the words from the inclusion criteria (for example, Crewe & Liebling, 2015) or the word correction (for corrections, correctional) as part of the original search terms another word for prison or jail.

Finally, no global picture emerged from this study, all studies were conducted within Western Europe and the United States of America. There was no research from Australia, the Middle East, the Far East, African or Canadian prisons, nor Eastern Europe captured, so although they were international they were in total from only three countries. A potential void in the literature still exists to understand this from a fully global perspective and for countries to learn from each other. Indeed, Bass (1990) pointed out that the recent advent of leadership as a discipline has focused on a Western, US centric, post-industrial approach. In this data set, approximately 40% of the studies were conducted in the USA.

While there is an extensive body of research on workplace leadership: the typologies, antecedents and outcomes of leadership, the number of published studies that have examined prison leadership is negligible and of limited quality and rigour. Nearly all eight papers referenced a lack of, or low levels of research in this field. This review helps to shine a light on the dearth of literature in the prison sector. Given the significant challenges, both facing prisons themselves and the wider role prisons play in stabilising our society, it is high time that the dynamics of leadership are studied from a contextual perspective.

Future Research

It has been said that “we know much less about how leaders make organizations effective than how leaders are perceived” (Dinh, Lord, Gardner, Meuser, Liden & Hu, 2014). There is a need for further robust research to understand more about the dynamics of prison leadership, what does it truly consist of and what is the impact. In moving forward, there is need to identify the full extent of the requirements of prison leaders and developing a framework will be a step in overcoming this for prisons. This could provide a clear business case and yield rich information to provide an evidence-based strategy to improve the attraction, selection, assessment and appointment of prison leaders; guide the professional development, training and support of prison leaders, preparing them to the benefit of not just the individual person or prison but for the future of the organisation as a whole; and provide a platform for the evaluation of prison leadership and the development of a consistent approach. Rigour in evaluation methods is key to understanding content, process and outcomes issues (Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm, McKee, 2014).

This review highlights the breadth of approaches as a limitation to the conclusions we are able to draw. In better defining good prison leadership, we would be able to examine differences across individual prison leaders as well as how prison leaders operate in different prison contexts nationally and across the globe. Moving forward, it is vital that future research uses comparative designs to assess the utility of prison leadership and explores whether there is benefit in demonstrating consistency in terms of how prison leadership is defined, conceptualised, developed, and assessed.

Conclusion

In summary, eight papers across three different countries from 1988 to 2018 were reviewed. Surprisingly a paucity of research was found however the findings of this review suggest that there is some consensus as to what the characteristics of prison leadership are although it is also evident that these are not complete or up to date. Four key areas emerged as important for prison leadership: prison management, general management, incident management and, stakeholder management. Importantly in this systematic review most of what has emerged about the characteristics of prison leadership stems from research that is based on perceptions (albeit it from those with knowledge of the field) or small sample sizes, rather than objective measures with none of the papers looking to evaluate prison leadership. Of course objectively measuring effective leadership is incredibly difficult. At this stage, then, and despite the work on the topic to date there is still not a complete understanding of what determines successful prison leadership.

More than 100 years of leadership research has led to many paradigm shifts (Antonakis & Day, 2018). Leadership is not just a person, behaviour or outcome and remains a universal topic of interest. The same can be said of prisons. However, less frequent is the consideration of prisons and leadership together. Prison leaders have the ability to have a profound impact on their institutions and given the number of prison leaders there are should this not continue to be a topic of debate and research? If a leadership style does not match the needs of the organisation, regardless of the good intentions of the leader it is likely to be an unsuccessful experience for both the leader and organisation and in this context the impact can have huge ramifications to many lives.

Running prisons is demanding and complex, it matters who leads our prisons and we should care. Empirical studies of prison leadership or management are few and far between, despite the fact that the role of prison leaders in shaping the quality of life in prison is crucial. Prison leaders wield considerable personal power, their abilities, interpretations of their role, personal style and the knowledge and values they bring to it, influence life and people's lives in a prison to a very significant extent.

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The Development of a Psychological Framework for Senior Prison Leadership

Abstract

Prisons continue to be the most regularly used form of punishment by depriving people of their freedom. While a large body of academic and practitioner literature concurs as to the importance of the outcomes and impact of good leadership at work our understanding of leadership within the context of prisons is limited. This qualitative study explored the expectations using semi-structured interviews of 15 subject matter experts to develop a framework of good prison leadership i.e. the leadership required by those in charge of individual prisons. These subject matter experts, who have both lead individual prisons and held commanding and strategic roles across the Prison Service in England and Wales, offer a unique perspective having successfully navigated their progression within and outside the organisation. Five overarching themes were established using an inductive, iterative thematic analysis. These were: individual values, individual behaviours, prison organisational and management tasks, prison as a total institution and political astuteness. This practical and interwoven psychological framework moves beyond previous research describing static competencies, values or typologies to propose a dynamic approach with interacting components all of which are deemed necessary for good prison leadership. This study highlights the expectations placed on prison leaders and discusses the framework in light of the challenging realities of the present day, where constantly changing societal and political factors both influence their decisions and impact on their success.

Keywords: Prison Leadership; Senior Prison Leader; Prison Governor; Thematic Analysis

Introduction

Prisons at their core are one set of people depriving another set of people of their liberty. In countries without the death penalty it is the severest sanction of punishment a court can impose. Incarceration is there to remove someone from the community, to incapacitate, deter criminality, seek retribution and in many countries to reform and rehabilitate. Research into the use of imprisonment over time and in different countries has failed to demonstrate any positive correlation between increasing the rate of imprisonment and reducing the rate of crime (Morris & Rothman, 1995) yet it prevails in the criminal justice system as the main instrument of societal

punishment. The prison population in England and Wales was 83,795 at the end of October 2019 (HMPPS, 2019a), a figure that is more than double what it was nearly 30 years ago. Additionally, the World Prison Brief estimates that there are likely over 11 million prisoners worldwide (The World Prison Brief, 2018). Prison therefore continues to be the predominant arsenal of the penal landscape and “whether a prison (or a prison system) is safe, humane ..., on the one hand, or violent ..., unproductive, ... may depend mainly on the character of its prison governance” (Dilulio, 1987, p. 99). Despite the amount of social and academic interest in prisons, it is only relatively recently that more attention has been directed to understanding both the people who lead and manage within prisons (for example, see Bennett, Crewe & Wahidin, 2012; Bryans & Wilson, 1998; Bryans, 2007; Carlen, 2002; Coyle, 2002; Liebling & Arnold, 2004; Liebling & Crewe, 2016). Yet still little is known about our expectations of the individuals who lead prisons on our behalf. This is surprising given the profound sociological, economic and political implications of the activities of prison leaders. This study aims to address this gap in our understanding.

The Context of Prison Leadership in England and Wales

Prison leaders or Governing Governors as they are better known in England and Wales, are at the top of the hierarchy in every prison. They are the gatekeepers, the guardians, the custodians of those in prison, both staff and offenders. They are an influential group within the criminal justice sector with responsibility for a truly all day, all night, every day, all year, 24 hours, 365 days a year service, who on behalf of society must enforce the state’s most severe penalty. A role that has been described by Bryans (2012) as “vested with a certain amount of mythology, symbolism and power” (p.225). There are 106 public sector prisons (HMPPS, 2019b) with 106 senior prison leaders in England and Wales as part of Her Majesty’s Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) whose role as shown by internal documents it is to “provide leadership, vision and strategic direction for an establishment⁶, holding overall accountability for ensuring it is secure and operationally stable, whilst maintaining decency and compliance with performance measures and targets” (HMPPS, 2019c).

In addition to this, prison leaders significantly impact the prison environment in which they lead. There have been many quotes over the years that attest to this; “it hardly needs saying that the most important person in any prison is the governor” (Advisory Council on the Penal System,

⁶ Another term for prison

1968) or “the individual who heads up a prison, can shape the organisation in ways that help to determine the quality of prison life” (Dilulio, 1987 p.189).

The term ‘Governor’ although first introduced in 1556 was not synonymous at that time with the prison leader. It was not until 1839 when it received official endorsement and was recognised that a governor’s primary task was to maintain the safe custody of prisoners and to ensure that adequate control was exercised within the prison. This included numerous administrative tasks and record keeping. From here the role continued to evolve and by the early 1960s was considered a more managerial one.

During the 1980s the role of the governor was becoming more complex due in part to issues with overcrowding and staff shortages, and by the 1990s governors were facing a period of great change with an unprecedented rise in the prison population and the consequences of a number of riots and escapes. This culminated in a radical reorganisation of management structures and a move from central management to the devolution for functions connected with the management of the prison. This was in part prompted by the findings of the judicial inquiry into prison disturbances following the riots of 1990s, the biggest being the 25 days of rioting at Strangeways prison in April 1990 (Woolf & Tumim, 1991). In addition, from the 1980s onwards wider management developments saw the emergence of ‘managerialism’, a move towards large hierarchical organisations monitoring and controlling the behaviour of employees through competition, quantification, target setting and the use of technology. The influence on prison management was seen through the introduction of performance targets, audits and rating systems which were approaches taken directly from the commercial sector and were part of a broader international trend across public administration known as ‘New Public Management’ (NPM) (Hood, 1991; Bennett, 2015a). NPM saw the success of organisations judged against measurable outputs rather than intangible outcomes (Garland, 1996) and where the individuality of leaders was largely regarded as a weakness to the delivery of pragmatic penal policy agendas (Cheliotis, 2006). A further aspect of the development of managerialism was the intensification of control and the erosion of professional discretion resulting in attempts to develop managers as corporate citizens. With this rise of managerialism an adapted version has emerged within the circumstances of prisons described as ‘prison managerialism’ (Bennett, 2015b).

Leadership in Prisons

Due to the nature of the work and the environment in which it is carried out prison leaders have been described (not for the first time) as being *sui generis* - unique and special (Bryans & Wilson, 1998). Studies have separately placed a focus on the competencies, values and typologies of prison leaders across the globe.

Prison Leader: Competencies - Behaviours, Knowledge and Skills

In studying prison governors in England and Wales it has been suggested that there is a distinct 'prison management competence' that is different from general leadership or management (Bryans, 2000). He postured that prison leaders require behavioural competencies, knowledge and skills to govern effectively. These were defined as the 12 organisational competencies applicable to all staff and knowledge and skills in four distinct areas of competence: i) prison management ii) general management, iii) incident command and iv) public sector management. It has also been recognised by others that prison management requires a high degree of professional skill and awareness. For example, Coyle (2012) stated that managing prisons requires "a defined set of skills, some of which are common to general management and some of which are peculiar to prisons" (p.232). The Scottish Prison Service has identified four key elements in prison management: administrative, financial, human resources (covering both staff and prisoners) and operational and they agreed that although the first three of these elements are common to all forms of management the operational element is the only one that is unique to the prison setting (Coyle, 2002).

In his review into the changes to prison administration and thereby the evolution of decision making of prison executives since 1975 in the United States of America (USA), Wright (2000) interviewed 10 senior prison leaders. He found that prison administration has changed dramatically during the last quarter of the 20th century and to be successful prison executives will need a unique set of characteristics as they move into the 21st century. These are political savvy, knowledge of sound prison practice and prison operations (that has not changed, nor will it ever), a global perspective, a forward looking perspective, critical analysis skills, system management skills, strong people skills, integrity and enthusiasm. Also in the USA Ruddell and Norris (2008) working with high-performing prison leader incumbents developed a profile of nine competencies in order of priority: administer safety and security, managing human resources, managing critical

incidents, managing the budget, fostering a healthy institutional environment, presiding over the physical plant, administering public relations, maintaining professional competence, and executing a strategic planning process. Furthermore, in the USA, McCampbell (2002) states that leading a prison requires more than just understanding the operational elements and a guide has been produced for newly appointed prison leaders to support them in their first year, covering a range of topics including culture, environment, budgets and human resources. Others in the USA have outlined a need for intelligent, competent and inspiring prison leadership, which is a combination of competencies, academic knowledge, duties and intelligence (Jacobs & Olitsky, 2004). They go further than both Bryans (2000) and Ruddell and Norris (2008) in their expectations of prison leaders and what they deem they require, acknowledging that it is quite a list but that it is also one of the most difficult jobs there is. Others have approached this from the perspective of the required values or the classification of existing prison leaders rather than the competency requirements.

Woodruffe (1990, 1991) argues that competencies should be the common language of the human resource system that enables organisations to match people against the resources it needs. That is, those behaviours a person must display in order to perform the tasks of a job with competence and Hogan and Warrenfeltz (2003) state that every existing competency model can be captured within their domain model. Their model identifies four domains: (a) intrapersonal skills, (b) interpersonal skills, (c) business skills and (d) leadership skills. They state that intrapersonal skills develop first (in earlier life); then interpersonal skills are developed (throughout the teenage years); business skills develop when a person enters the workforce; and leadership skills develop last.

Prison Leader: Values

In his seminal work on criminal justice professionals comprising 28 interviews conducted in the early stages of NPM development in criminal justice, Andrew Rutherford (1994) argued that there are three clusters of values that a person brings to the job or 'credos' that shape individual practice: punishment, efficiency and rehabilitation. He stated that these views were often shaped by early experiences, for example family, religion, education, training and professional development and that they could alter or crystallise when entering the work arena. The first credo relates to a powerfully held dislike and moral condemnation of offenders; the second concerns a desire to dispose of the tasks at hand as smoothly and efficiently as possible; and the third credo

is characterised by an empathy with offenders and an optimism about the constructive work that could be done. He noted that this second credo of managerialism was becoming the dominant one particularly in prisons, at the cost of moral concerns. This has been echoed by Wilson (2000) who described the third credo of leader becoming less visible and a rise of the managerialist governor. Liebling, assisted by Arnold (2004) further extended this work to include a fourth credo she named effectiveness.

Coyle (2002) says the best managed prison systems are likely to be those which have a clear understanding of their objectives, mission and values. However, this clarity is not always present. Carlen (2002) described an environment in which governors were not supported by any clear leadership, instead were required to navigate a plethora of un-prioritised and at times opposing objectives and policy directives being sent their way. In addition, penal policies by a number of successive governments plus an age of managerialism have eroded the power of the governors to govern professionally with clearly defined standards and they are now operating within narrower and less flexible parameters. She detailed that the reports from current governors are that the organisation has failed to provide them with any clear leadership. Yet as spoken by the 2019 Perrie Award winner Michael Spurr, CB at the annual Perrie Lectures, the reality is that there will always be a multitude of purposes, issues, tensions and conflicts. Governors need to provide a continuity of leadership, clarity and vision regardless. It is governor's job to hold that (Spurr, 2019).

Prison Leader: Typologies

Bryans (2007) examined the changing role and work of prison leaders, charting their historical evolution and contemporary developments. The primary fieldwork being interviews with 42 serving governors and 10 stakeholders between 1998-2000. He identified four ideal types of prison governor, taking a similar approach to research and analysis as a previous study of police chief constables (Reiner 1991). He identified first, 'general managers' those that came from a working class background, typically joined via a 'fast-track scheme'. They tended to have a degree that was managerial rather than vocational and were focussed on their own personal career. They also had little concern about a moral mission of reforming offenders but instead were focused on ensuring performance was achieved. Second, 'chief officers' those that came from a working class background, were less likely to have a formal education on joining, were working their way up through the ranks with a management style based on their operational experience.

Their focus was on the daily running of the prison, providing high visibility but they tended to get involved in the minutiae. Third 'liberal idealists' those that came from a middle class background, inclined to have a vocation and joined with a sense of calling and desire to rehabilitate. They were engaged in a longer term perspective and wider criminal justice sector than the short term management of performance. Fourth, 'conforming mavericks' a mix of the other three types but distinct as a group as they challenged the status quo, were innovative and pushed boundaries yet conformed with the majority of conventional targets where needed. They tended to be charismatic individualists but because they pushed boundaries were the ones most likely vulnerable to criticism and likely leaving due to disillusionment. However, Bryans also recognised that no one governor would fit the totality of an ideal type and most are likely to be an amalgamation of types.

Moreover, Liebling and Crewe (2012; 2016) as part of a long-term research piece on working practices and typologies of governors, drawing on over 130 interviews found that the strengths and weaknesses of prisons are often reflected in the character and values of their prison leaders and certain values almost always emerged in their research: concern for the humane and careful use of power; a strong work ethic, a dislike for corruption and the abuse of power and competitive pride in 'performance'. They also found that the reasons why governors chose the career path they did was the opportunity to make a difference. Through their research they were able to identify six types of governors or governing styles yet reiterated the views of Rutherford (1994) and Bryans (2007) that in general, the prevalent or most rewarded style was that of 'strong official performance' and 'managing risk' over 'creative rehabilitation'. However, they also note that not all prison leaders are alike, their analysis showed some clearly identifiable professional styles representing different value structures, that linked to different outcomes, priorities and effectiveness. They are 'highly skilled operational', 'performance-plus', 'entrepreneurs', 'liberals', 'moral dualists' and finally 'the alienated' who had recently left or were leaving.

Liebling and Crewe (2012; 2016) similarly to Bryans (2007) concluded that they are no 'ideal' types in the sense that individuals may be on the edges of a type, or one may be a subset of another. In addition, Liebling, assisted by Arnold (2004) argued as part of a wider study into the moral performance of prisons that good prison leaders are not necessarily successful in any prison and instead there is a complex 'prison-leadership fit', where different prisons require different styles at different stages in their development, supporting the later argument that context is significant.

Bennett (2012) describes prison management as a complex set of negotiations, an approach that recognises the many and multi variety of stresses and pressures that are impacting, and impacted on, prison managers and that there is both an individual and collective response to that. He has raised whether there is value in focussing on these 'ideal types' if they do not reflect the reality but are instead constructs and that they pose a risk in trying to impose a neat typology of 'fixed' types on 'a world comprised of tense and complex social relations'. Nonetheless, Bryans (2007) indicated a clear trend in the shifting balance between the ideal types with the number of 'chief officers' growing alongside the advance of NPM.

Summary of Findings to Date

The role and requirements of prison leadership has been discussed and studied from different perspectives, whether that be competencies, values or typologies and this interchange of concepts has had significant implications for researchers and practitioners who examine, measure and apply such constructs in the workplace. Taken together this demonstrates that to succeed as a prison leader requires more than just the ability to perform a list of tasks or competencies, however having different ways of examining the subject has also highlighted that there is no consensus on the requirements nor expectations of prison leaders nor on how many 'types' of prison leaders there are.

In an effort to gain clarity, Choudhary, Lewis and Yarker (2019, under review) in a recent systematic literature review (SLR) of the prison leadership literature published in peer reviewed journals, reviewed the evidence for (i) the role requirements of a prison leader, (ii) the competencies, duties, knowledge and quality expectations of a prison leader and (iii) the impact of good prison leadership and in doing so identified a very limited number of papers (eight) across three different countries from 1988 to 2018. The SLR found that (i) the role of a prison leader was discussed either in terms of ethical dilemmas due to a rise in policy expectations (Dubois, 2018), the requirement to translate the strategic vision of the central administration into operational goals (Kennes & De Voorde, 2015) or a changing role away from one of 'governing' to simply being 'another manager' (Wilson, 2000). Ultimately the review identified that the role of prison leader has been approached from narrow viewpoints, designed to address one particular question or issue therefore no study has yet examined the role requirements in full. While there is some consensus regarding (ii) the competencies, duties knowledge and quality expectations of a prison leader (explicitly explored in three of the eight papers) in relation to four key competence areas:

prison management, incident management, stakeholder management and general management as well as some areas of knowledge and qualities, but there is little consensus across these. On the final area of (iii) the impact of good prison leadership only two of the studies included measures of leadership or management and both showed a significant positive impact of prison leadership on job-related stress in one study (Atkin-Plunk & Armstrong, 2013) and the reporting of offender disruptive behaviour in the other (Davies & Burgess, 1988). Only one of the papers (Atkin-Plunk & Armstrong, 2013) drew on an established leadership model, transformational leadership. Much of the research identified earlier did not appear in the SLR, the one exception being Bryans (2000).

Limitations of Prison Leadership Research

As identified by Choudhary et al., (2019) only a few number of studies have specifically examined prison leadership. Of the eight papers identified in their systematic review, all referred to the lack of research in this field. Furthermore, the research that does exist is limited in the following ways: there is scant published research on this subject of senior prison leadership; there is no clear framework of what good prison leadership consists of, instead a range of conceptual viewpoints of the competencies, values or types exists and finally, most of what has emerged about the characteristics of prison leadership stems from research that is based on the perceptions of prison leader incumbents. While this is not an uncommon way to review leadership, it does mean that much of what we understand of good prison leadership is from the eye of the beholder, offering a bottom up perspective.

Looking at the past 25 years of published empirical research the perspectives of leadership judgements have been mainly from the view of either subordinates (45%) or self-reports (18%). The perspectives least represented in findings are those of either peer or supervisor rated leadership (Hiller, DeChurch, Murase & Doty, 2011) yet studies has shown that self-assessments of performance are not aligned to the ratings of others (subordinates, line managers or peers). Harris and Schaubroeck (1988) conducted a meta-analysis of correlations between supervisor, peer and self-ratings. They found self-ratings to be higher, on average than supervisor or peer ratings and relatively low agreement between supervisor ratings and self-ratings (mean correlation .35) as well as low agreement between peer ratings and self-ratings (mean correlation .36) demonstrating the importance of a perspective that is not only that of the individual. Further studies have supported their conclusion that self-ratings are affected by egocentric biases (see Conway & Huffcutt, 1997). In other words, we are not very good at evaluating ourselves or seeing

ourselves as others see us (Yammarino & Atwater, 1997) and therefore this research is unique and goes beyond previous research by taking in viewpoints that are not of current incumbents. To date previous published studies on prison leaders have always included the perspective of prison leaders themselves as well as other staff. Yet research has shown that individuals are not very good at evaluating themselves similarly to others or objective criteria (Harris & Schaubroeck, 1988). As such what is considered good prison leadership at this level may not match that of more senior leaders. Given the multitude of interested parties, stakeholders, wider staff groups and community partners involved in the Prison Service, there is need to look beyond the perspective of just the incumbents and subordinates and yet more specifically, there is a need to understand what good prison leadership looks like to those who have a broader understanding of the impact of the role.

There is naturally subjectivity in the terminology of 'good' prison leadership which is why that question was posed to the participants rather than an empirical study to 'measure it'. As highlighted by Crewe and Liebling (2015) in their work with governors, the difficulty in answering it is that it is far from easy to know what 'good' is. Good prison leaders are not simply those who are successful within the organisation, since the organisation may have blind spots and biases. Furthermore, the definition of 'good' may depend on the particular needs and culture of an establishment, as much as the qualities of its leader.

Leadership and the Importance of Context

Leadership is a driving force in the organisation of individuals, teams, and entire organisations (Kaiser, Hogan & Craig, 2008), it enables individuals to be successful and organisations to achieve goals. It has also been described as "perhaps the single most important issue in the human sciences" (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005). There is a wide array of literature on the theory and practice of leadership; more than 100 years of leadership research has led to many paradigm shifts (Antonakis & Day, 2018), for instance that leadership is not just a person, behaviour or outcome and it remains a universal topic of interest.

Bass and Stogdill (Bass, 1990) offer an in-depth look at the multitude of leadership theories from which prison leadership could draw. Or, alternatively for more recent reviews of current theories and future directions work by Avolio, Walumbwa and Weber (2009); Day and Antonakis (2013) and Harrison (2018) offer new insights. One such theory is transactional/transformational leadership; leadership is both transformational and transactional depending on the needs of the

situation (Bass 1985; Burns 1978). Transformational leaders are those who can create a vision for the future and inspire whereas transactional leaders by contrast focus on the task at hand, the immediate. Through a combination of vision, appealing group goals, high standards, intellectual stimulation, role modelling, and relationships, transformational leaders are believed to inspire and enhance the performance of their followers (Bass, 1985; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990). Another theory is that of authentic leadership, Luthans and Avolio (2003, p. 243) defined it as “a process that draws from both positive psychological capacities and a highly developed organizational context, which results in both greater self-awareness and self-regulated positive behaviours on the part of leaders and associates, fostering positive self-development”. The four factors that cover the components of authentic leadership are: balanced processing, internalised moral perspective, relational transparency, and self-awareness. Studies have shown that the effectiveness of transformational leadership varies by the situational context, for example, it can be more effective when applied to smaller, privately held firms than complex organisations based on its outreach effect with members of the organisation (Ling, Simsek, Lubatkin & Veiga, 2008). Both transformational and authentic leadership have associated measures yet there is little or no evidence of these being used within a prison context and given the samples used to develop and test the frameworks (i.e. largely office based and within healthcare), it is unlikely that these are sufficient on their own in explaining good prison leadership.

According to Hunt and Dodge (2001) leadership studies are unlikely to be of any added value until they take into account organisational variables and most completely ignore the context in which leadership is enacted. Therefore, organisational researchers need to pay greater attention to leadership models and leadership researchers need to pay greater attention to organisational models. Pettigrew and Whipp make a similar point when they write “leadership is acutely context sensitive...” (1991, p. 165). There is now a large body of research showing leadership to be a highly complex interaction between the leader and the social and organisational environment (Fiedler, 1996) therefore it is crucial to understand the contextual factors in which leadership or expectations of leaders is embedded. This is supported by Zenger and Folkman (2009) who found compelling evidence that effective leadership practices are specific to an organisation and not all leaders who are successful in one will be successful in another. If a leadership approach does not match the needs of the organisation, regardless of the good intentions of the leader it is likely to be an unsuccessful experience for both the leader and organisation and in this context of prison the impact can have huge ramifications to many lives. This, together with the findings that leadership has been shown to be a critical factor in determining organisational success or failure (Dawson, 1996) and can have significant impact on a range of employee and organisational

outcomes, it is then surprising that despite the profound impact that prison leaders are able to have on their institutions, comparatively little research exists on them.

It is with these learnings from wider leadership research that, we propose that a clear understanding of the expectations of prison leaders will provide us with means to influence and impact the prison leadership pipeline at a very early stage. Why is all of this important? Research has and continues to demonstrate that leadership is a key, if not critical, factor in determining organisation success or failure with impact on both the people and the organisation. For example, specific leadership approaches have long since been linked to range of outcomes such as job satisfaction (for example, Berson & Linton 2005; Bryman, 1992; Dunham-Taylor 2000; McNeese-Smith, 1997; Morrison, Jones & Fuller, 1997; Podsakoff et al., 1990), organisational health (for example, Bass & Avolio 1994) as well as gains in performance (for example, Bass, 1990; Judge & Piccolo 2004; Keller 2006; MacKenzie, Podsakoff & Rich, 2001; Wang, Tsui & Xin, 2011) and productivity (Irvine & Evans, 1995). More specifically this has been replicated in prisons research which has highlighted the impact that managers have on staff. For example, a study of 89 prison officers in a UK prison found that managers could be a source of stress for them (Launey & Fielding 1989, see also Schaufeli & Peeters 2000). Then there are also the sociological economic and political implications of the activities of prison leaders. Only recently did the Prime Minister order an urgent review into sentencing and announced significant extra funding to create an additional 10,000 prison places (Ministry of Justice, 2019a). Such changes to imprisonment are likely to affect the internal management and will impact prison leaders in numerous ways. Finally, a better understanding of the expectations of good prison leadership may helpfully inform the ways that prison leaders can be supported to lead.

The Current Study

The aim of this study is to develop a framework of good prison leadership. Using a qualitative approach to explore the lived experiences and perspectives of former individual prison leaders: current and previous line managers of prison leaders, the very senior prison leaders in command of the organisation and subject matter experts. Having identified the main limitations of existing research, this research extends previous research and contributes uniquely to the literature in three ways.

First, this research is concerned not with prison officers or all grades of prison staff but the senior leaders of prisons, identifying them as a distinct occupational group and in doing so recognising

the distinct reality of this role. Having once been labelled the 'invisible ghosts of penality' prison officers have experienced an upward momentum of attention and it has been said this claim now applies much more to prison governors (Crewe & Liebling, 2015). Governors play a pivotal role in shaping the ethos of a prison (Coyle, 2012) yet it is not clear what is expected of them.

Second, rather than aim to classify different types of prison leadership, this study aims to identify whether a framework of good prison leadership exists that can apply to all senior prison leaders.

Third, the framework is drawn from the informed perspective of those who have completed the role and successfully progressed beyond it, that is the leadership levels above that of senior prison leaders. No research has looked at this specifically from this vantage point.

Ontological and Epistemological Stance

This researcher's theoretical stance is based on critical realism (Parker, 1992; Willig, 2001), the understanding that the world is experienced as an objective reality but through a subjective lens. The participant communicates their subjective experience to the researcher through their own lens which distorts reality and the researcher in turn interprets this through their own subjective lens. Thus, it is important to acknowledge that we all have our own positions and values in relation to research and critical realism acknowledges the tension between objective reality and individual different subjective perspectives. The intent of the current study is to recognise the participants' experiences from their point of view as they are told to the researcher during the interviews and then interpreted by the researcher through their own lens.

In addition, as a long term employee of the organisation where the majority of the participants work the lead researcher came at this analysis with some prior knowledge of the subject under study and acknowledged the inevitability of there being some initial thoughts prior to the formal analysis percolating as highlighted by Ely, Vinz, Downing and Anzul (1997). It has previously been noted that with prison research it is vital to understand the position from which the research is written (Sparks, Bottoms & Hay, 1996) in order to appreciate the power relationships between researcher and participant. This raises the 'outsider/insider' topic where the external researcher perspective is considered optimal for it is seen as being objective, while internal researchers, who potentially possess deeper insights about the people, place, and events, are believed to hold a biased position that complicates their ability to observe and interpret. However, scholars (Banks,

1998; Merton, 1978; Naples, 1996) have argued that the outsider-insider distinction is a false dichotomy since outsiders and insiders have to contend with similar methodological issues around positionality, a researcher's sense of self, and the situated knowledge she/he possesses as a result of her/his location in the social order. As a result, qualitative researchers, whether outsiders or insiders, cannot be assured that their observations and interpretations are not affected by their various identities or positionalities, in addition the assumptions about insider positionality are theoretical, supported by little empirical evidence (Chavez, 2008). Chavez's (2008) review of the literature on insider research does however set out a list of advantages and disadvantages of this type of study, including as an insider both an expediency of access to participants and an expediency of rapport, however disadvantages include for example, an overreliance on status or familiarity.

It is important to acknowledge that this researcher like all others will be influenced by their own preconceptions that are difficult to eradicate and so this study adopts a critical realist and insider perspective. The identified themes are therefore the author's own interpretations of the participants' elucidations and are open to different interpretations by others.

Method

Design

The method chosen enabled the researcher to utilise the opinions and views of experienced practitioners in the profession, those who had at some stage in their career executed the role of prison governor and are still connected to the field and had influence. Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) was selected as the focus of the study as it is the United Kingdom's largest employer of prison leaders leading 106 of the 121 prisons in England and Wales. There are a range of formal ethical frameworks available to assist with research, here ethical approval to conduct the study was granted by Kingston University London Ethics Committee and the British Psychological Society (BPS) rules of conduct were adhered to.

Participants

A purposive sampling approach was used in which the researcher relied on her own extensive experience in, and knowledge of, HMPPS when choosing who to approach to participate in the

study, thereby using a non-random selection of participants. In addition, participants also recommended other possible participants. This was chosen as the most appropriate sampling technique as a pre-requisite was that participants had to have governed at least one prison and were still involved in the penal industry whether internally in HMPPS, externally or through privately run prisons. Although this approach is limited by non-random sampling and the bias in identifying the participants may hinder the ability to draw inferences about a population, it is appropriate for use in qualitative research where the research does not aim to generate results that will be used to create generalisations pertaining to the entire population but rather a specific population and the individuals with specific experience or knowledge can usefully inform the research question (Etikan, Musa & Alkassin, 2016). This involved the identification and selection of individuals using the researcher's knowledge with the pre-requisite characteristics. From the various purposive sampling methods, total population and expert sampling was considered the two most appropriate, however expert was chosen as the study's intended sample were experts in the field, deemed so both for their academic knowledge as might be considered the definition for an 'expert' but also, and perhaps more importantly, for their practical knowledge and experiences of the role of prison leader where they are among a limited number of people who could contribute. It is also considered a positive tool to use when investigating new areas of research. Total population sampling was considered but not used as it is aimed at ensuring that all possible participants (the entire population that meet the criteria) are included and by excluding any it would be incomplete. This was deemed unnecessary due to the volume of participants that could be included; also it is appropriate where the sample is relatively small, in addition that sample outside of HMPPS were not known and for those that were known there was limited, or no direct access to them.

When considering when to stop collecting data Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006) found in a set of 60 interviews that saturation occurred within 12 interviews, with broader themes apparent after six. They concluded that factors such as heterogeneity of the sample will affect how many interviews are required, but concluded that "for most research enterprises [...] in which the aim is to understand common perceptions and experiences among a group of relatively homogeneous individuals, twelve interviews should suffice" (p. 79). Other studies have found different and higher saturation points (for example, Francis, Johnston, Robertson, Glidewell, Entwistle, Eccles, & Grimshaw, 2010; Wright, Maloney, & Feblowitz, 2011). There is no straightforward point at which to stop and saturation will vary research to research, for this study saturation was reached at 15 interviews. In addition, the bigger the sample, the greater the risk of failing to do justice to the complexity and nuance contained within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2016), the intention being to avoid this.

All participants with the exception of two were recruited through a direct email from the researcher requesting their participation, and all those initially contacted agreed to take part. An additional four were contacted on the recommendation of the original sample, the two who responded and took part were the exception to the initial direct email and two did not respond or were unavailable during the required time period. A total of 15 (nine men and six women) participated. Given the small population size, along with high visibility of this group within the sector, demographic characteristics captured are presented as a summary to preserve participants' anonymity. These were the informed gatekeepers; the most senior leaders in the public sector prison industry, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the Directors and the Deputy Directors including line managers of prison leaders (Prison Group Directors), line managers of PGDs, internal prison researchers, industry supporters and advocates, private prison experts, as well as other significant industry figures. Without exception, all who had all themselves been in role as leader of a prison.

Age was captured in brackets and ranged from 18-24 to 75+ but only the 34-44 to 55-64 age brackets were utilised. The last time participants lead a prison was captured in two year brackets from 0-2 years ago to 12+ years. The majority of the participants were aged 45-54 (53.3%) and there was no majority in when they last lead a prison; two participants had been leading prisons recently (0-2 years), four lead a prison 3-5 years ago, three last led a prison 6-8 years ago, three also last led a prison 9-11 years ago and three last led a prison 12+ years ago. Most joined the organisation via a graduate scheme (66.7%), three joined as a prison officer, three joined via a cross-hierarchical scheme designed to bring in talent from other parts of the organisation into the operational line and one declared 'other' as their method of joining. All participants identified their ethnicity as White. Although not representative of the wider population, this lack of ethnic diversity is reflective of the population occupying senior positions within HMPPS. See table 2 for a breakdown of information captured. None of the interviewees received any remuneration for their participation. All were working in England and Wales and were employed by or had been employed by at some point in their career, at what is now Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS).

Procedure

Participants took part in face-to-face, semi-structured, individual research interviews that explored prison leadership. The purpose being to generate the main qualities and facets through the exploration of lived experiences, the questions reflected this by being open-ended, focusing on what the main requirements were as well as why they were important. This area of focus arose

from the findings of the systematic literature review on prison leadership which demonstrated a lack of research and cohesion around what prison leadership is (Choudhary et al., 2019). The results of this review also informed the design of the interview questions. This semi-structured approach with open-ended questions was taken to ensure a level of consistency of approach across all of the interviews, while retaining a degree of flexibility that allowed for probing responses in greater depth when appropriate. In addition, as the researcher had knowledge of the organisation this aided a reflexive approach which acknowledged the researcher in the research process. This blended approach of both structure and exploration was adopted to ensure that the interviews elicited diverse and rich sets of information. The questions were piloted before the interviews began with internal stakeholders who were not part of the sample as well as discussed with a supervisor.

Participants received an email in advance of their interview containing an information sheet, a pre-interview questionnaire and a consent form (appendix 1-3). The information sheet outlined the purpose of the research, the nature of their participation, how to withdraw and what would happen to the information they provided. At this stage the consent form was for information only, and was reviewed at the beginning of the interview and then completed. This provided written informed consent for their interview to be audio recorded and for the information collected to be used anonymously. Although the research was being completed by a HMPPS senior manager, all participants both internally and externally were of a higher seniority and therefore there were no issues with them being susceptible to power differentials during the interview. The one form that required completion was either returned electronically or given to the researcher on the day of the interview – the pre-interview questionnaire. At the end of the interview the participants were asked if they had anything further to add or any final reflections or observations they had not had an opportunity to share as well as ask any questions of their own.

All interviews were conducted at a location chosen by the participant which was either the office location of either the researcher or interviewee. Each was recorded and varied from 42 minutes to one hour and 23 minutes. Prior to analysis the recordings were labelled in interview order with date, for example, interview 1 111218. These were then transcribed by a professional transcription service to give a verbatim account. The transcripts were then checked and formatted for analysis and labelled interview 1 – interview 15.

Analysis

Qualitative research requires rigorous and methodical methods to create useful results and ensure that they continue to be a valued paradigm of inquiry. It is a methodology that is intended to generate knowledge grounded in human experience (Sandelowski, 2004) and is particularly useful when researching novel phenomena (Bachman & Schutt, 2012) and gives sensitivity to context (Bryman, Stephens & Campo, 1996). In addition, any data analysis conducted in a systematic approach can be transparently communicated to others (Malterud, 2001; Sandelowski, 1995). Within this, thematic analysis is a relevant qualitative research method, consequently an inductive thematic analysis process was applied based on the guidelines for thematic analysis as described by Braun and Clarke (2006). Although some authors, for example, Boyatzis (1998) have argued that thematic analysis is a tool used to assist with analysis rather than a specific method in its own right; others have disagreed (Braun & Clarke, 2006; King, 2004; Leininger, 1992; Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017; Thorne, 2000) stating that if completed well a rigorous thematic analysis can produce trustworthy and insightful findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This analysis methodology was chosen for its ability to identify, analyse and report themes within data. After initial familiarisation with a number of analytical approaches that could have been appropriate and then and in discussions with a third supervisor, the approach to use inductive thematic analysis was confirmed. Inductive thematic analysis was most appropriate through the theoretical freedom and flexibility it provides allowing for a potentially complete yet complex account of data.

There are a number of explicit decisions to be made with thematic analysis. An inductive approach to thematic analysis means the themes are strongly linked to the data themselves (Patton, 1990), that the process of coding is bereft of a pre-existing coding frame and that the literature is not engaged with in the early stages of analysis. This was appropriate rather than theoretical thematic analysis which is guided by a theoretical or analytical position requires engagement with the literature prior to analysis. Another decision is the 'level' at which the themes are identified, in this case the focus was on identifying themes at a latent level from a constructionist perspective as it does not require any pre-existing theoretical framework to be used as a basis for exploration and data gathering. Another methodology that was considered was Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) however as IPA is theoretically grounded and wed to a phenomenological epistemology (Smith & Osborn 2003) it was not deemed suitable.

With qualitative research and in particular thematic analysis Nowell, Norris, White and Moules (2017) argue that it is the individual researcher's responsibility to assure its rigour and trustworthiness, that it is a pragmatic choice for researchers concerned with the acceptability and usefulness of their research and this can be achieved by following the trustworthiness criteria (credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, audit trails and reflexivity) created by Lincoln and Guba (1985). The trustworthiness criteria were reflected on and the steps along with actions taken are outlined in table 1.

Having discussed the merits of 'insider/outsider' researcher earlier and acknowledging that there is some prior knowledge of the data, the main disadvantages to insider research were regularly reflected on throughout the research process. The analysis was recursive in nature and all steps were repeated in an iterative and reflective process over time until the final set of themes were recognised and understood. This back and forth between the phases is a process encouraged by Braun and Clarke (2006).

Table 1. Establishing Trustworthiness During Each Phase of Thematic Analysis

Phases of Thematic Analysis	Means of Establishing Trustworthiness
<p>1. Familiarisation: All recordings were listened to while checking for accuracy of the transcripts which also allowed for familiarisation with the data. In addition, all transcripts were printed and hard copies read and then re-read while searching for and highlighting initial key points of interest</p>	<p>Prolonged engagement with the data Documented thoughts about potential codes/themes Stored raw data in an organised way Kept records of all data field notes, transcripts and reflective journal</p>
<p>2. Initial Coding: Initial list of ideas about the data that were of interest relating to the research topic were captured through the analysis software tool NVivo</p>	<p>Discussion with members of research team Audit trail of code generation Reflective journal</p>
<p>3. Emergent Themes: Following the initial coding a refocus on the analysis at a broader level to search for themes within codes, to review and check coherence and how they might combine into overarching themes across the data set</p>	<p>Mind mapped (diagramming) to make sense of theme connections Kept detailed notes as themes develop Reflective journal</p>
<p>4. Theme Reviewing: Refining the themes, re-reading the transcripts and ensuring distinction and cohesion</p>	<p>Discussion with members of research team Themes and subthemes were vetted by research team</p>
<p>5. Definition of Themes: Definition and refinement of themes</p>	<p>Research team consensus on themes Documentation of theme naming process</p>
<p>6. Final Review and Report production: The story of the data</p>	<p>Member checking Described process of coding and analysis in sufficient details Copious descriptions of context Report on reasons for theoretical, methodological, and analytical choices throughout the entire study Reflective journal</p>

Table 2. Participant demographics

Gender	Male	9
	Female	6
Age Bracket	35-44 years old	4
	45-54 years old	8
	55-64 years old	3
	65-74 years old	0
Ethnicity	White	15
	Other	0
Last time Governed	0-2 years ago	2
	3-5 years ago	4
	6-8 years ago	4
	9-11 years ago	3
	12+ years ago	3
Years worked in HMPPS	0-4 years	1
	5-9 years	1
	10-14 years	0
	15-19 years	3
	20-24 years	4
	25+ years	6
Method of joining HMPPS	Prison Officer	3
	Graduate Scheme	10
	Cross-Hierarchical Scheme	1
	Other	1

Findings

Introducing the Dynamic Framework and Themes

Five main themes were identified in the analysis: *individual values, individual behaviours, prison organisational and management tasks, prison as a total institution and political astuteness*. This can be seen in table 3 and as a prospective conceptual framework at figure 1 each with a number of sub themes ranging from two to four outlined in tables 4-8. These were deemed sufficient to account for the great richness of data that was captured whilst at the same time remaining confident that the meanings were preserved. However rather than fully discrete themes the data suggests some overlap and a dynamic framework with interacting components whereby the different themes feed into and affect one another, impacting how they come across in the behaviours visible to others. Good prison leadership is achieved when all five components are in place and there is synergy between them and where *individual values* are a central component of the framework. If the values identified are not driving the prison leader's behaviours, then it does not matter how they action the other elements of the framework, they will not achieve good prison leadership.

They describe the expectations of prison leaders from a pragmatic perspective that takes into account the reality of prison leadership in the UK today, understanding that the leadership will be both influenced and impacted by external factors, rather than a generic leadership model or an ideal world view of prison leadership. It is worth noting that although the themes are discussed separately below it was found throughout the findings that the themes and sub-themes are not fully independent of each other. They are not intended to be seen as fully discrete but connected and ultimately for good prison leadership all need to be present. There are occasions within the interviews where elements of what participants were referring to could fit into or be connected to more than one sub-theme and where these dualities and overlap are present those inter-relationships are highlighted and explored. Themes are presented, discussed and summarised individually.

Table 3. Themes, overall summary description and sub themes

Final themes	Overall summary description	Sub themes
1. Individual Values	A pro-social values based belief system and identity grown and shared through intent and action	Justice
		Moral Responsibility
		Caring
2. Individual Behaviours	A consciousness and personal belief in relation to both having and role modelling key behaviours and standards with genuine conviction through interactions with others	People Connectivity
		Resilience
		Courage
		Authenticity
3. Prison Organisational and Management Tasks	An ability to effectively and efficiently manage and facilitate the 'business' side whilst communicating and collaborating both internally and externally	Business Planning: Budget, Resources and Contract Management
		Communication: Stakeholder and Partnership Relationship Management
		Communication: Vision and Strategy
4. Prison as a Total Institution	A mindfulness and understanding that imprisonment is a loss of liberty and this brings acute power imbalances that hold inherent risks, while also ensuring 'operational grip' is maintained	The Dynamic
		Operational Grip
		Power of Presence
		Culture
5. Political Astuteness	A good insight into the ministerial politics, the subsequent impact and the ability to appropriately lead within this context	Understanding
		Impact

Theme 1: Individual Values

Table 4. Individual values theme and sub themes

Final theme	Overall summary description	Sub themes
Individual Values	A pro-social values based belief system and identity grown and shared through intent and action	Justice
		Moral Responsibility
		Caring

This first theme, which was at the absolute core of what was spoken about during the interviews and as such has been depicted at the centre in the framework (figure 1). It is a belief system and identity that is based upon believing in others, hope in their ability to change, having high standards and a sense of purpose and professionalism. All of these, although essential to this theme are not complete without the ability to share these values with others *“it’s what you do”* (interview 2) in terms of both how prison leaders think and their intention to show this through their actions.

Through the interviews it was clear that there were a number of strong values required to be a good prison leader. For example, having pride in public service and understanding the value of public service so that they inform decision making such as *“you are providing a service to the public ... it’s an important role to carry out, it’s an important role for society”* (interview 7) and *“there needs to be values around public service”* (interview 10). Although relevant overall it was not strong enough to be considered a sub theme of individual values. For others there was an underlying religious dimension to their values, again important to understanding how values are formed and can influence working lives. This was however not included as it was not what was expected of prison leaders. Rutherford (1994) in his work based on interviews with criminal justice professionals (discussed earlier) argued that those three clusters of views that shape individual practice are often influenced by early experiences, for example family, religion, education, training and professional development. He also said that they could alter or indeed become concrete when entering the work place which is reflected in some of the interviews here, where a number of participants spoke about the impact of religion and upbringing on their values. Such as *“I’m a person of religious faith and ... mercy is an important aspect... If you want to receive it, you need to be prepared to give it”* (interview 3) and *“I’m not religious at all but I was brought up in a family*

where my mother was a very active churchgoer. ... so there are values around treating other people as you'd wanted to be treated yourself. Values around tolerance. Values around fairness and there were values around what was acceptable morally and sort of behaviours and what was expected from yourself and expected from others. I probably came from a place before I joined where some of the values that sort of were perhaps later defined and aligned with my job, they were already in existence. Probably the fact that I did join the job and the reasons for joining the job were around actually helping, helping people. Helping people change and I think I also had quite a strong sense of, probably the majority of people are decent people and can do decent things, and actually most people are savable” (interview 7). Another participant spoke about their values being shaped by their early years “... it draws upon my own personal biography. So my values, my individual values are very much shaped by my own background, my own experiences. So that very much shapes my idea of the world ... so my approach is to be honest with people and open and transparent with people to create a harmonious team” (interview 1).

One interviewee highlighted the detrimental impact within a prison of not knowing the values that are held by a leader: “... an absence of values really, so didn't set a vision or didn't kind of say what his values were. So there was no sense in the prison of how you should or shouldn't behave, what that governor did or didn't expect ... If you're not very clear about this is the kind of place I want staff to work in and prisoners to live in, then the risk is those who have more negative values and see prison as a place where it should be more one of punishment...” (interview 11).

These values are not the only value expectations the participants have of those demonstrating good prison leadership but they are the ones that occurred strongest and are at a minimum necessary to be a good leader in the unique environment of prisons. Those values of *justice, moral responsibility and caring*.

Justice

The foundational sub theme of individual values is that of justice. This sub theme is about the concepts of hope, fairness, justness, decency, legitimacy, purpose and helping others, both in everyday life and in particular in terms of their application to working in prisons. Participants spoke about a prison leader's need for an intrinsic belief in the ability of people to change. A sense of

hope in the potential for human growth and a desire to help people achieve this growth and change was described by one senior leader “... you do need to have a belief in the ability of people to change. I think you need to have a rehabilitative orientation and I think you need to be able to promote that [and] ... forgiveness at a societal level but there’s also a personal value and conviction about the fact that’s legitimate and proper” (interview 10) and “treating individuals with care and decency” (interview 4). An optimism that is based on a desire of doing the right thing and an expectation of positive outcomes, in this instance making prisons a better place “you should still have hope in prisons, both the staff and prisoners” (interview 5) and “... you can invest some hope in it for people as well ...” (interview 10). One participant summed it up as “treating other people as you’d wanted to be treated yourself” (interview 7). Another participant went further and described it as:

“in prisons, legitimacy and fairness is critical. It’s critical in most relationships, and most organisations ... how people are treated matters, ... we’ve talked about, you treat prisoners as if that prisoner was your son or your daughter or your brother or your sister. Actually, that’s not a bad mantra for how you treat anyone. Treat people with decency, the classic bit about treat people how you would wish to be treated yourself, demonstrate respect, and that doesn’t mean don’t challenge unacceptable things, it’s quite the opposite of that. It means do challenge unacceptable things, don’t accept poor behaviour, but actually do that in a way that is always respectful and is always honest, and those values are values that are universal” (interview 2).

It is also a belief in knowing what the right thing to do is, that said participants were clear that this was not a blind belief in people but rather understanding that sometimes people in prison do not deserve very much at all but regardless of this they are human and that there are standards of behaviours that they should be shown. This sub theme is also about the need for a sense of conviction in forgiveness, realising and understanding its importance and a focus on rehabilitation as described below:

“... forgiveness is such a kind of key theme for prisoners, both in terms of being forgiven for the harm that they have caused but inevitably needing to forgive those who had done great harm to them cos the prison population is just full of people who’ve been sinned against as well as sinning” (interview 14).

Participants spoke about prisons leaders requiring an optimism in their belief in justice based on a desire of doing the right thing with an expectation of positive outcomes, remaining un-cynical, hope that people can change and be rehabilitated and belief in making prisons a better place. Many participants quoted needing to have hope, instilling hope and investing hope “... here is

something very strong around hope ... instil that ... sense of hope and value in people” (interview 5).

Moral Responsibility

Prisons, with their unique role of depriving people of their liberty and exercising control, thereby create an unbalanced power dynamic. This lack of balance creates an inescapable inherent moral dimension to be conscious of and this sub theme was described as the need for effective prison leaders to behave in ways that demonstrate they understand that there is a weight and seriousness to the role. In addition, that despite the crimes that have been committed they need to ensure that the people in their care are done right by. Prison leaders must be prepared to behave and make decisions through a moral lens, and focus on the person aspects rather than the performance aspects when needed. This is about everyone not just prisoners. Summarised during interview 10 as *“you need to have some kind of frame of reference which isn't just a set of targets that are in your business plan, but actually a grounding to something more profound”* as well as during interview 3 *“...you must be prepared to sacrifice the performance for the good of the institution and the people in the institution if there's something that overrides that, ... whether it's about ... a humanitarian decision to send somebody to a parent's funeral for instance ... so making organisational decisions that are values-based and taking responsibility for those”*.

Participants also spoke about honesty alongside an uncompromising approach in an adherence to strong moral principles and actions as described by one senior leader during interview 10:

“I've got to carry this out with a degree of integrity, and I've got to be true to myself, and that might sometimes be quite uncomfortable because it runs counter to what other people might be doing. So if we all as individuals all wait for everyone else to do their job right before we start doing our job right, actually nobody would ever do the job right would they? And there's something about integrity and personal standards in that”.

Prison leaders need to exercise the power the role holds but do so with a sense of what is right. With this resolution at the heart of the role behaving in ways that demonstrate a strong moral compass, upholding standards and having the bravery to take action when necessary. One senior leader summed up moral responsibility as:

“Working in prisons is tough and it's easy to make compromises all the time in order to have a slightly less tough day ... but if you're in the habit of doing that, then what happens is you lose your moral authority bit by bit ... then when things

are really difficult ... you're floundering. So a governor needs to be very clear about what's right and wrong so that you're making it easier for the next level down and the next level down after that to avoid making those kind of expedient trade-offs as part of everyday life. ... Sometimes people in prison don't deserve very much at all, but because they are humans and cos you are human that calls for a standard of behaviour from you irrespective of whether they're mirroring your standard of behaviour. So there's something about the moral high ground ..." (interview 3).

It was clear that good prison leaders are expected to display and role model moral awareness to their staff and across the prison. This should be reflected in the way they treat their staff and prisoners. To be viewed in this way prison leaders must engage in certain behaviours and make decisions based upon a range of factors but with moral principles at their core.

Caring

Ultimately participants spoke about the fundamental need for kindness, compassion, respect and empathy for staff and prisoners alike *"I think there are definitely values around empathy and care and that's for the people in your charge and the people who work for you as well"* (interview 10) as well as the risks of not caring or becoming desensitised as described during interview 14 *"... empathy I mean I think that ability to say what would it feel like for me applies in loads of situations? ... it obviously applies when you think about prisoners and the real risk that you lose it but, you know, prison is such a conditioning environment that you stop seeing what it's like to share a cell with someone. You stop seeing what it's like to be unable to sleep at night; you stop seeing what it's like to only see your family once a month in a public place for an hour and a half, being watched by CCTV and, you know, a hundred other prisoners."*

Participants were questioned on whether prison leadership will look different in the future from what they had described during the interviews. With some discussion on the uncertainty of the future and some possible changes to technical knowledge at the end there was consensus that the core does not change, especially with regards to the values and leadership expectations *"having the right values to lead people is never gonna change"* (interview 13). While prisons retain their core role of locking people up then what is required of prison leaders remains stable and leaders should never be forgot the complexity and coercive nature of prisons, *"... understanding*

the dynamic of human interaction in a closed institution” (interview 2). One participant summed it up as:

“I do think at the end of the day, speaking sort of 28 years in, I don't really think what we're trying to achieve has fundamentally changed in that time. I think what changes is the means by which you try to deliver it. These fundamentals about leadership and about what's required, what the underpinning values are, then some of the fundamental about how you operate in respect of the moral compass and the operational grip. Fundamentally, I don't think that has changed or is going to change cos I think a prison will still be this total institution that incarcerates lots of people” (interview 10).

Overall as discussed earlier acknowledging and understanding the context in which leadership is enacted is key. This was captured during one of the interviews:

“... if I try to operate without any understanding or any accommodation of the context in which I worked, it would be a disaster, and it would be unsuccessful, and I wouldn't be able to affect change. So if I wasn't able to connect with those people that I work with, if I wasn't able to motivate them in order to understand ... to get people to reflect the values that are important to me, and then if I had no appreciation of the accountability structures, then it wouldn't work. So I've got to accommodate those things. I've got to kind of work with the realities of the organisational structure” (interview 1).

Theme 2: Individual Behaviours

Table 5. Individual behaviours theme and sub themes

Final theme	Overall summary description	Sub themes
Individual Behaviours	A consciousness and personal belief in relation to both having and role modelling key behaviours and standards with genuine conviction through interactions with others	People Connectivity
		Resilience
		Courage
		Authenticity

This theme examines the prison leader as an individual; their ability to be conscious of both what they should be bringing to the role and what the role requires of them. Participants were clear

about the significance of these behaviours for good prison leadership. They were also clear with all of the leadership behaviours they spoke about that prison leaders either needing to have them, having them or continuing to develop and build them and also role modelling them so others see their importance.

The following quote by one senior leader sums up simply the human side of prison leadership and what they consider to be some innate qualities a person must have “... *it is that ability to engage with people, to be able to have a degree of understanding of how people operate, and critically to be prepared to stand up, often in difficult circumstances where there is and has been conflict, and significant human emotion, and be prepared with courage to be able to stand in the middle of that and retain a moral authority*” (interview 2).

People Connectivity

This sub theme related to being supportive of others; recognising them, rewarding them, caring about them and allowing room for growth and learning, described by one participant as “*so those people that I work with, I try to nurture them, I try to use kind of all those things I've talked about, role modelling, recognising, rewarding, providing feedback. So the way that I would want to see them develop is some people who look at their work as a human experience. That's what they find rewarding in their work, that's what they find meaningful in their work*” (interview 1). Also “*understanding the strengths of the people that you lead is another facet of good leadership*” (interview 6).

It was spoken about as engagement and communication; the ability to engage across boundaries, at all levels, talk to people, lead them, inspire them, understand them, hold them to account, and give them the opportunity to trust in the prison leader. It is also about the expectations others will have in a prison leader, that the prison leader will behave honestly and honourably and with fairness and equality. One senior leader described it simply as needing to have “... *a clarity about your expectations of people as a leader ...*” (interview 10). Another spoke about how people are the focus of the organisation, “*80% of our budget goes on people. It makes the world go round, we are a people business and so it shouldn't come to any surprise if we think that one of the*

biggest facets of a good leader in this organisation should be about people management and leadership ... it's all about people" (interview 13).

It is worth noting that the staff group (both directly employed and contracted) of prisons is very large and a full staff meeting or briefing at the larger prisons can mean addressing up to 200 staff at any one time out of a possible 800 staff. This highlights the direct and immediate impact a prison leader can have and why people connectivity is so vital. This prominence of the people element and requirement of the role for a prison leader was emphasised by one interviewee as *"... some people are just not as comfortable operating in a very highly charged emotional people-based dynamic, and you can't avoid that in prisons. If you can't engage with large numbers of people, if you feel uncomfortable with lots of noise and potential for conflict, from staff and from prisoners actually, you'll struggle to lead in that environment ..."* (interview 2).

Resilience

Participants described how resilience is important for good prison leadership. While different aspects of resilience were discussed, they were all related to the prison context; specifically, the ability to make, and deal with the making of tough decisions, dealing with, and addressing conflict. One interviewee described this conflict in relation to understanding the unique dynamic that is created in prisons *"... prisons by their nature mean there is conflict. It is an environment that is always at risk, that there is a dynamic that always has many more prisoners than staff. Any change puts a threat to the dynamic between staff and prisoners, that frightens people."* (interview 2).

They also spoke of the importance of leaders not becoming too resilient as to stop noticing anymore and simply accepting, suggesting too much resilience could lead to an ability to turn a blind eye to what is going on such as this quote demonstrates *"... so you've got to be very resilient about what success looks like and what you will and won't tolerate ... becom[ing] a bit too resilient can spill over into not noticing anymore and just accepting ... you've got to be resilient, but you can't become blind in that resilience, you've still got to be touched by what we do ..."* (interview 9).

It was clear from the interviews that resilience is a process that prison leaders need to understand and develop or continue to build in order to be successful in the role. Prisons can be toxic and therefore prison leaders need to be able to cope and adjust, role model this approach, and encourage and develop it in their staff in order to sustain well-being. One interviewee described: *“governing now is more challenging than it's ever been and so you've got to have resilience otherwise you just crumble, ... it would eat you up and make you ill ... you've got to be able to engage your team and deliver through them otherwise, you know, however good a governor you are, if you can't do that there's always gonna be a limit to your achievements ...”* (interview 11).

Courage

This sub theme is described by the participants as, whilst remaining respectful, having the ability and strength to be honest, but more importantly take action and do the right thing (also linked to the previous sub theme of resilience and making tough decisions). Such as challenging unacceptable behaviour and having tough conversations, as said during interview 11 *“... having that innate courage to make the difficult decisions, however difficult they were, if they were the right ones and not ... take the easy option.”* It is also described as the courage to keep going, to keep persevering in what are exceptional work conditions and circumstances. One senior leader described this as *“... critically to be prepared to stand up, often in difficult circumstances where there is and has been conflict, and significant human emotion, and be prepared with courage to be able to stand in the middle of that and retain a moral authority...”* (interview 2).

Authenticity

Participants described a requirement for prison leaders to behave authentically, demonstrating an approach to leadership that is consistent, legitimate and open and in that prison leaders needing to true to oneself by finding their own voice and style in order to be able to sustain their approach *“... have the courage of my convictions to say, this is the leader I am and I'm going to be authentic with it”* (interview 11); *“... to bring a sense of my individuality into the role”* (interview 1); *“recognising your own strengths and weaknesses”* (interview 15) and *“being congruent with who you are, being visible, being clear about what your ambition is and what you stand for because both with a staff group and prisoner groups they will very quickly pick up if you're not being consistent in what you're saying and how you're behaving and what you're doing”* (interview

6). Others participants described what they understood to be authentic leadership and expected of prison leaders through what they had observed *“in terms of the best examples, that for me has been about leaders who I’ve watched or had the opportunity to work for who are true, fair, authentic in terms of they really are who they are, not trying to be someone else and they’re also realistic”* (interview 13). Good prison leaders were described as those who are aware of how they think and behave and are ultimately perceived by others as being genuine as well as their rhetoric being consistent what they believe and with their actions. For example, one interviewee reflected on their personal style and that awareness of self and the impact for them in behaving authentically *“I don’t think I was good at sort of always being out and about in the prison ... and those were sort of weaknesses in my personal performance ... but ... that’s ... about authenticity, ... personally I’m off the scale on introspection, so that was never gonna be something that I could do naturally. So you had to discipline yourself to do some of it”* (interview 14).

It was clear from the interviews that participants were passionate about this sub theme. Of the requirement for prison leaders to have integrity by being credible, behaving consistently, building a strong foundation of trustworthiness, being fair in decision making, all of this they saw as the practice of authenticity. Being honest, transparent and consistent such as *“... do the right thing whatever the cost, don’t hide anything, no cover-ups, no spin, no trying to look better than we are. Being authentic and being ... consistent and credible. Honest, but a clear purpose to everything and a seriousness to it all ... those are the ... elements of what I’d mean by integrity”* (interview 12). Also ensuring that actions follow any talk about doing the right thing *“there’s an integrity to making sure that actions follow rhetoric. So it’s not enough to say it, you need to make sure it’s also true, and there’s something as well about being honest about what’s really happening”* (interview 12).

All of this links closely to a number of the other sub themes that have emerged as key to good prison leadership, one that is still to be discussed, namely the dynamic, moral responsibility, people connectivity, resilience and courage. Authenticity is about the internal matching what is said and done externally. For a leader to be truly authentic but also successful in the role there is an expected consistency between a prison leader’s values and their subsequent behaviours. The quote below bridges the space between the behaviours of authenticity and values of justice, moral responsibility and caring:

“So the kind of positive is those people who just I guess were able to have their own authentic way of being and, you know, just clearly carried their sense of

mission and of moral purpose and it was just obvious to anybody that spoke to them what motivated them to want to be doing what they were doing. And that's always I think very impactful and just combine that with an ability to talk to people, and there are lots of examples of people that were very good at combining those things. Being authentic and being kind of consistent and credible. Honest, but a clear purpose to everything and a seriousness to it all" (interview 12).

As this quote demonstrates the expectation of authenticity from prison leaders is that of their purpose and values manifesting through their behaviour.

Theme 3: Prison Organisational and Management Tasks

Table 6. Prison organisation and management tasks theme and sub themes

Final theme	Overall summary description	Sub themes
Prison Organisational and Management Tasks	An ability to effectively and efficiently manage and facilitate the 'business' side whilst communicating and collaborating both internally and externally	Business Planning: Budget, Resources and Contract Management
		Communication: Stakeholder and Partnership Relationship Management
		Communication: Vision and Strategy

From the interviews the following were deemed the primary underpinning management tasks necessary to effectively and efficiently ensure the success of the 'business' side of the role. They were not considered specific to prisons but seen as common to most, if not all, leadership roles. They were not considered to be the foundation to prison leadership but nonetheless important, as observed by one interviewee *"you have to pick people who are comfortable with a job that has that moral worth and then, of course, you have to pick people who can also cope with the day to day requirements of it, the managing money, managing people, understanding performance measures, representational work, working in a big organisation, that's common to any number of other professions"* (interview 14).

Although prison organisational and management tasks have emerged as an important component of prison leadership, it was also evident from the interviews that prison leadership is much more than the management tasks alone ('what they do') and themes one and two focus much more on the 'how' through the expected values and behaviours. One participant talked about it as *"it's the kind of straight-forward management stuff ... making sure that you're managing your budget, that you're doing your workforce planning, that you've got your risk registers ... I kind of think that's the most teachable part, because it's system and process ... whilst you can do the management bit and you can almost feign competence, and it is arguably the more easy to get right, the leadership bit I don't think you can feign. You can fool some people, but you can't fool them all of the time"* (interview 8).

Business Planning: Budget, Resources and Contract Management

Participants spoke about prison leaders who due to an increasing rate of change require an understanding of, and commitment to, budget management, resource management and contract management. It was clear this was not the most laudable aspect of the job but at the same time was necessary and getting it wrong would have a detrimental impact. It is not about leaders training to become the experts, rather this sub theme is about understanding that prison leaders need to know these areas enough to be able to ask the intelligent questions, as opposed to fully submerging themselves. The task therefore is to engage with the people whose job it is to support and guide, for example Finance Business Partners or HR Business Partners. When participants spoke about this sub theme it was not one that they spend a lot of time on, rather they got across

its need but focused considerably more on the other themes. This is illustrated in the following quotation from interview 2:

“There are loads of other obvious things you need to do in terms of budget management, resource management, and use of organisational skills, influencing skills, working with people outside the organisation to ensure that prisons actually are making use of opportunities in the wider community, and not become so closed, but the fundamental factor of how a prison operates is that dynamic between staff and prisoners, and good governors get that, and that's what makes them most effective.”

Communication: Stakeholder and Partnership Relationship Management

Participants shared the need for prison leaders to effectively build relationships with stakeholders and partners, and also understand how valuable they are for the prison. They proposed that behalf of the prison, a prison leader has something to offer. It is not just stakeholders or partners helping them but the prison leader building, nurturing and maintaining genuine two-way relationships, described by one participant as *“... stakeholder engagement, you know, the use of power, the use of influence rather than authority is becoming increasingly important for governors”* (interview 7) and how this has changed over time *“the kind of scale of policy and partnership stuff that we really need to be able to deal with effectively really in a way that probably wasn't around say kind of ten to 15 years ago”* (interview 5). This was both within the organisation (including wider government) but also and sometimes perhaps more importantly externally, for example, with local authorities, NHS, police, and local media, focussing on ensuring that others understand the prison and its position in the community. Good prison leaders are then able to extract some benefits from these relationships and where appropriate get investment. There was also a recognition that prison leaders need to be better skilled at this in order to get the best out of those partnerships, contracts and agreements. One interviewee described it as that acknowledgment by prison leaders that they are not solely in control as they may have previously been and therefore needing to accept these changes and that they should be engaging others for the betterment of the prison *“governors just need to say, ... I'm not in control of everything but I am accountable for everything, which means I've just gotta be ready to influence and make friends and understand other people's agendas and work to other people's objectives as well as my own if I'm going to do what I think needs doing”* (interview 14).

In addition, as one direct line manager of prison leaders put it *“I need them to be absolutely keyed into external stakeholders ... I need them to be talking to stakeholder groups ... because all of these relationships are really important to how we do business, and how we create the right kind of environment to do business in ...”* (interview 4). In addition, another participant described it as *“I think the other defining attribute of being a really good prison governor ... is can you really interact with the other wider services in your locality that is gonna get you something to make a difference to those prisoners? You know, can you work with the local police, can you work with the local health authority ... to really influence that local policy so that you get something different, and you do some real partnership working with them at that level. That is tricky and requires a skill set you're often not really exposed to until you're a governor”* (interview 9).

Overall this sub theme was captured during one interview where building and making the most of stakeholder and partnership relationships was described as *“understanding the landscape ... understand exactly how all these people fit together, and how you as a prison can play a part in how this wider set of arrangements work together, and it's being bold enough really to step up to those tables and say, you know, I deserve a spot here, this prison's an important part of the strategic aim of what you're trying to achieve in this local area ... what is the strategic benefit for both ... there are a lot of benefits out there and dare I say it, there is money, ... in particular where they can invest in you”* (interview 9).

Communication: Vision and Strategy

Many participants described how good prison leadership means being able to create a vision. Not just holding that vision personally but being able to clearly articulate it and in doing so enable it to be realised. Good leaders are able to communicate why they are expecting staff to turn up to work every day in a way that will gain buy-in and engagement and will create hope. One interviewee described it as *“... getting people to rally around, make it meaningful to them in whatever walk of life they happen to be in in the prison and recognising the value of their contribution”* (interview 15). Participants spoke about prison leaders needing to know that the vision is more than just its content, that by investing in a vision, prison leaders are ultimately creating and preserving the space for moving a prison forward.

Participants spoke of how although creating a vision is important prison leaders also need to create, translate and deliver a strategy; how the vision is going to be brought to life and sustained “... *good leadership is translating the complex into something that’s understood*” (interview 6). They spoke about the need for good prison leaders to understand that ‘bigger picture’ prison and organisational view to inform the approach, formulation, coordination and implementation of a strategy. This was where participants spoke about prisons leaders needing to know what direction they wish to take the prison, what decisions, actions and activities are required, and linking to the earlier sub theme of business planning, what resources and budget are needed to fulfil those goals and achieve the desired outcomes. It is again more than the maintenance and steady state of keeping the prison ticking over, it is as described by one participant “... *moving people willingly to where they might not have gone on their own*” (interview 3) and by another as “... *one of the marks of being a really good prison governor is that you have to create some space for moving forward. ... it's really difficult to preserve some space for keeping moving strategically forward, and that I think is the mark of a governor which defines it over any other role ...*” (interview 9). These actions give those who are below, above and outside the hierarchy the confidence in a prison leader’s ability to progress and better things, as well as the ability to step out of the detail whilst still understanding that the details are important. The ability to consider the detail and the bigger picture is also important in the sub theme of *operational grip* which is to follow.

Theme 4: Prison as a Total Institution

Table 7. Prison as a total institution theme and sub themes

Final theme	Overall summary description	Sub themes
Prison as a Total Institution	A mindfulness and understanding that imprisonment is a loss of liberty and this brings acute power imbalances that hold inherent risks, while also ensuring ‘operational grip’ is maintained	The Dynamic
		Operational Grip
		Power of Presence
		Culture

This was a recurring theme noted by all participants, and offers a sharp reminder that ultimately prison is like no other organisation. It is an environment that is unique, and this is be

acknowledged and kept at the forefront of any discussion of leadership expectations. Each prison is a total institution, one that is harmful, has power, can be coercive, and has its own cultures and challenges, and successful leadership means truly understanding and managing this. This quotation captures the essence of this theme *“the role of prison governor is a unique one in that you’re depriving someone of their liberty, and there is a huge amount of responsibility that goes alongside that. ... you need to understand that, and you need to understand not only the legal context but the ... moral context for that and can carry that quite heavily really, and be able to articulate that to different audiences, be it the prisoners themselves, or be it to staff”* (interview 4).

The Dynamic

Participants were very clear that prisons are harmful places; they strip people of opportunity and hold people there against their will. Imprisonment is a loss of liberty and autonomy for those held there and good prison leaders not only need to be aware of this but be fully accepting of it. One interviewee said *“... as a prison governor ... the power and balance between prisoner and us, as representing the system if you want, is very unbalanced and I think good prison leadership requires an acknowledgement of that and an understanding of that dynamic”* (interview 7). Good prison leaders must understand this dynamic (and not hide from it) that operates between those who are charged with control (staff) over the lives of others (prisoners) as well as senior staff over more junior ones *“it is understanding the people dynamic in a coercive institution. If there's anything about governors and leadership in our environment that's unique, it is that. It is the one thing that is different to everywhere else”* (interview 2) and *“there is a positional authority that you have to be incredibly mindful of”* (interview 8).

Participants conveyed that this is a dynamic that needs to be constantly managed and thus order maintained, knowing that the dynamic contains power (power the prison leader holds over others (staff and prisoners) as the leader of the institution and power that staff hold over prisoners) and that this power has risks, that it can be abused and that things can go wrong. This is also strongly linked with the sub theme of ‘culture’ and that the dynamic exists no matter what the culture is and no matter how good the culture is. Good culture hopefully helps you to be attuned to what is going on however the dynamic of power imbalances remains which needs constant attention and managing to maintain control. As one interviewee said *“... you can't hide the fact that in prison people are there not because they want to be there, but because they've been sent there, and*

actually they're kept there against their will. ... We have put, as a society, guardians over prisoners ... when you put people in power over others, ... [that] has to be ... understood and managed, and that power relationship can be corrupted" (interview 2). In addition, during this same interview the senior leader spoke about what some of these risks are such as *"how staff can be led into, good people can be led into doing bad things"* (interview 2) and as such it is the presence and actions of a prison leader that are critical. For other participants it was that acknowledgement to self about the power that the role holds *"for me there's something about exposing myself to some of the painfulness of what I do and some of the harm that I inflict is actually really important because I do carry power and, you know, if I'm not aware of that, then I think it's really dangerous"* (interview 1).

This sub theme therefore is not only about the inherent and implicit nature of the dynamic and the associated impacts including the potential risks but also the explicit awareness of the changes cultural and otherwise that could influence this dynamic. These could be the changing culture that is later discussed due to the altering prisoner population, the demographic makeup of those men and women incarcerated and how a vast number of prisoners continue to be relatively young men and the impact this was having and would continue to have on the dynamic *"so we're seeing a generation of very young men coming in on extraordinary sentences, and I think that is going to greatly change the dynamic within the prison system and will greatly change the relationships that [those] men have with staff"* (interview 8). To be efficacious, prison leaders need to recognise both the implicit and explicit dynamics that are the nature of prisons, some that are in-built simply because of what prisons are and represent and will always be there and others that are shifting as prisons evolve.

Overall as summarised by one interviewee this sub theme is understanding that *"prisons can be very charged places, and therefore you've got to have a very clear understanding of the risks of running a coercive institution and that's why I still believe you cannot run a prison without understanding that dynamic"* (interview 2).

Operational Grip

Operational grip signifies a rather unique element (in a unique environment) that is distinctive and individual to running and leading prisons. It is that vital ability to keep an eye on the detail, a virtual tight hold, know what is happening at all times and be on top of it but knowing you cannot do this alone. This was described in one interview as *“... a good leader is someone who can consistently understand the detail but rise above it in order to see the bigger picture and by consistently I mean almost every day ... the ability to step out of the detail but understand the detail is critical”* (interview 13). This detail was for other participants described in terms of data and although operational grip is possible through the interrogation and application of data and resource management it is not sufficient, linking closely with the next sub theme ‘power of presence’ without which operational grip is not possible in full as described during interview 11 *“I think you have a better real sense [when you] talk to people and listen and see for yourself what is going on rather than just your oversight or understanding of the prison being based on what you see in performance data”*. Another participant described it as *“... to be really effective you ... need to be able understand data, but critically turn it into something real and with effect”* (interview 12) and *“there is a massive risk that you start to think that you can actually know what’s going on by looking at dashboards on a computer”* (interview 14).

It was also described by others as a way to ensure that things do not go wrong thereby having operational grip being a preventative measure or on-going awareness. One participant, a direct line manager of prison leaders, described this as *“I need my governors to not be managing the crisis, but be on top of their prisons, so crises don’t emerge”* (interview 4). Participants spoke about how prison leaders need to make themselves aware of what is going on within their establishments that makes a difference to staff and prisoners, such as difficulties with a particular prisoner complaint or knowing details about staff that are not necessarily work related. These are not details a traditional leader, for example a CEO would typically get involved with, nor are they the most important aspect of keeping a prison running on a practical basis, but these are quite central to the prison leader’s ability to run the prison successfully. At times during the interviews it was almost an element that was taken to be intrinsically understood by those in and around prisons needing little elaboration. An example described in one interview where the governor did not have a ‘grip’ on their establishment was *“I walked into one of my prisons and the first cell I went to was covered head to foot in graffiti. Now that says to me that’s not a prison that’s got a grip of the basics”* (interview 4). This operational grip that participants spoke about is there to

ensure that this understanding of the details allows then for an environment that is stable, balanced and ultimately controlled so that it can progress, summarised by one interviewee as “*so when I was talking about getting the fundamentals right and creating the right operating environment, having a clean, decent environment is creating the right operating environment in which to be hopeful and visionary*” (interview 4), but also that it is not just a personal responsibility but people at all levels need to understand why it matters.

In a similar way to the conversations around business planning: budget, resources and contract management it almost felt that there was this expectation of an implied understanding of what operational grip was and its necessity and therefore participants highlighted it but quickly moved on. There are many quotes that can be used to describe this, one that sums it up well is “*...it can never be the case that a leader in a prison, if they want to lead a prison well, can turn a blind eye to anything*” (interview 2).

Power of Presence

This sub theme emerged as the importance of the requirement for a physical presence and the need for, and impact of, personal interactions. “*Real visibility, out and about, really visible around the prison to both staff and prisoners*” (interview 15). However it is more than simply being visible. It is also about knowing that as a prison leader you are always ‘on’ and that your presence, your mood and your attitude have a powerful impact on others. As said during interview 14 “*... visibility ... comes for nothing in prisons you get that whether you want it or not because as soon as you walk through the gate and you pick up your set of keys ... you are being watched. So, you know, if you walk through the gate looking miserable or you don't wanna be there that's noticed. So I think there is something about leadership in prison which is being comfortable with that.*” This was echoed in many of the other interviews where participants spoke of the importance of this visibility and the temperament of the prison leader “*... the individual at the top can have a massive effect on the mood of that institution*” (interview 9) as well as the importance simply of what the prison leader says and how much this can impact on others “*... never underestimate the importance of the role of the governor. I've learnt never ever underestimate the impact of everything the governor says and does and the messages that sends out, how critical they are, and how important they are particularly actually in the early days when you're establishing a relationship as a governor and the first impressions people take of you*” (interview 11). During the same

interview the participant shared the negative impact of this, observing from their experiences *“because of the nature of prison it is a unique environment and there needs to be those very clear structures ... consistency, ... standards, [staff and prisoners] need to know where they stand. So some days you'd come in and [the governor] would be in a great mood and it would be all laughing and joking, other days he'd come in and be in a foul mood and shouting and swearing, and you can't ... as a leader you can't be emotional like that. I think it's fine sometimes to show your emotions but in an appropriate way that doesn't upset or undermine your role as a leader”*.

One senior leader spoke about the practicalities of being visible to both staff and prisoners *“so when I was a governor, people would have said I was around the prison all of the time. That wasn't true. It's just that I was very careful about where I went and when I went, so that people thought I was around the prison all of the time.”* They also spoke about the reality of this *“you can't be about all the time, you can't see everything that's going on”* (interview 2) and therefore how you manage this and make time for it is part of the power of presence. They also shared how they did this *“so I used to routinely go onto a wing every lunchtime, and taste a meal on a wing when the prisoners were eating it, in front of them, not the same wing, so that people would see me at times when lots of people were about. I would choose to come in early in the morning on occasions, not all the time. So there was not a time at the prison, early in the morning, late in the evening, at night, where at some point, I wasn't there. I used to have a little chart that I made myself, cover where I was going in. That's practically working out why your presence is important, so that people can see that you're about, even though you're not about all the time. So if you accept the principle that says presence is important, you can then teach how you actually make that a practical reality”*.

The key delineation between these two sub themes of power of presence and people connectivity is one is at a macro level and the other at a micro level. Power of presence is concerned with the whole, everyone and all from a broader wide lens perspective whereas people connectivity is at a person, one to one, narrow, granular and personal level.

The interrelationship with presence and the sub theme of dynamic including power within this theme came up when participants spoke about adjudications⁷ and about the care and separation

⁷ If a prisoner breaks a prison rule, they can be charged with an offence and will have to attend a hearing within the prison, commonly known as an adjudication.

unit⁸ within prisons (commonly referred to as the seg or segregation unit) and the importance for prison leaders to both know what was happening there (operational grip) but also being present (power of presence). One participant described it as *“you’re very much on show and the segregation unit is the place where, you know, your power is greatest”* (interview 14) another as *“I always made sure I did adjudications ... Why? Because actually, that’s a really symbolic thing in a prison, and actually you get a temperature about what’s going on when staff are bringing people before you, and the segregation unit requires a presence from governors all of the time. You don’t have to be there all day or every day, but you need to be there enough to understand where the temperature is, and it sends a very big message and how staff can be led into, good people can be led into doing bad things, and your presence and your actions are critical to preventing them.”* (interview 2).

Culture

As stressed by the participants there is no one *“overarching singular prison culture”* (interview 10) and *“it’s not like an organisation has a fixed culture, it’s not an artefact. It’s not like you describe a culture and that’s exactly what it is, it’s a battle of ideas* (interview 1). This sub theme concentrates on the role of prison leaders truly appreciating that prisons have a range of their own local/individual cultures. Participants spoke about culture as being particular to each institution; distinctive and deep, shaped by history, architecture, type and function of the prison, staff, management, hierarchy, unions, prisoners as well as external factors such as the economic and political climate.

Participants also mentioned the culture at times shaping the prison leader and the need for their role as prisons leaders to appreciate that the culture needs shaping, setting, influencing, nudging, moving forward and an acknowledgement that any prison leader is unlikely to fully change the culture of a prison (in part due to short tenure of prison leaders in post per prison). Interviewees however agreed that their focus should remain on ensuring they have a positive influence and impact on it while in role *“... the culture shouldn’t define your leadership. The leadership should define the culture”* (interview 9). The role of the prison leader is knowing how and what messages

⁸ The official term for the solitary confinement unit.

to send to ensure staff understand the culture that they are trying to create, shape, develop, maintain and embed as well as the culture they want staff to be passing on to prisoners.

This impact of the culture on the working environment and so the importance of the role the prison leader plays in culture was also discussed, for example during interview 4:

“... this organisation needs people who are willing to come in every day, and be difficult, and talk about standards, and talk about change, and be challenging because it slips back really easily, and it can become a negative culture of control really, really easily, and that's because the power dynamics in prisons are ... really finely tuned ... so if you allow that imbalance to come, whether that's the staff or the prisoners, you create an environment that is ... a bit brutal ... at the best of times I think, but you create an environment that's even more brutalising and dangerous and damaging, and that's not the business we're in. We're in the business of holding people safely, and hopefully, we're rehabilitating them.”

This was echoed in other interviews where there was also an awareness from participants about the harm that the culture can have as well as good *“you can have prison cultures that can be uncaring of prisoners, that can lack a rehabilitative orientation, that can be preoccupied with order and control to the exclusion of anything else. I think you can have cultures that are rooted in what maximises staff comfort and minimises staff discomfort in a way that's inappropriate. I think you can have cultures that are also very positive, very rehabilitation orientated, and typically they also have quite a pronounced sort of sense of professionalism and that it does include being respectful, upholding decency and using that as a foundation for effective professional relationships which allow you then to achieve all the objectives more effectively, or allows you to have order and control. It allows you to be secure; it allows you to be rehabilitative because you've got that kind of foundation”* (interview 10). As well as a culture that is not about moving forward *“there was a whole team and culture of, it's alright we don't need to be pushing any boundaries. You know, steady shift, keep it running. It wasn't a bad prison [but] there was nothing to inspire”* (interview 15). For others the culture was a positive one *“that staff culture was really positive because they wanted to be led and they were led, and they wanted to be loved and they were loved. And they wanted to perform well, and they did. So that was a joy. There was no pain in any of that culture”* (interview 6).

In addition, acknowledging the role offenders play and ultimately the purpose of prison leaders in positively progressing the culture as demonstrated by this quote:

“In a closed institution where your role is actually to manage prisoners, who themselves have a culture, whose culture will actually affect how they interact with each other, and how they interact with staff, and therefore it is absolutely key to how you lead and run a prison, and the aim is to develop, positive, progressive, rehabilitative cultures. Important that we have rehabilitative and culture together, and that doesn't mean a culture that doesn't recognise that there is an inherent conflict, that there is a necessary coercion, that there is a requirement to deliver a sentence of the court, which says you must stay here against your will, but there is a recognition that in doing that, that damages individuals, that actually creates risks to them and to staff, that therefore treating people with respect, humanity, decency, is critical to how we actually run a prison fairly, legitimately, and therefore minimise the risk to staff in safety terms, and minimise the risk of disorder” (interview 2).

Participants also spoke about changes to language, the need to change the language and prison leaders recognising and understanding the importance of language. During one interview the conversation turned to how the language around, for example, how prisoners are addressed has progressed and is more positive but whether this is having a real impact or not *“so, you know, we use the [appropriate] language, but does it actually mean anything in real terms for the lived experience of the men [prisoners] and people that work in prisons” (interview 8)*. During another interview a senior leader spoke of knowing that cultures are evolving positively when the language not only changes but you hear it being played back to you *“effective leadership will fundamentally adapt the tone of a prison, will move the culture on in a positive way, you see it in staff talking a different way. I know now that a governor is impacting somewhere ... when you hear your stories been played back to you ... but there's something that happens in the ... language of prison that sort of changes ... that kind of culture and language stuff is really important ... about how places begin to look and feel is really different” (interview 5)*.

Overall there was a recognition of the importance in recognising, acknowledging and positively participating in prison culture as a leader in this environment in order to develop and progress. This can be seen as linking back to the earlier discussion on the sub themes of communication: stakeholder and partnership relationship management and communication: vision and strategy and moving the prison forward and not just maintaining the status quo.

Theme 5: Political Astuteness

Table 8. Politics astuteness theme and sub themes

Final theme	Overall summary description	Sub themes
Political Astuteness	A good insight into the ministerial politics, the subsequent impact and the ability to appropriately lead within this context	Understanding
		Impact

Given that prisons are there to serve the public, it is inevitable that the prison system will be affected sometimes significantly by the inherently social and political climate in which it resides. This theme is about good prison leaders acknowledging and understanding the governmental authority and ministerial politics and subsequently operationalising this understanding to impact on their prisons, with two sub themes: *understanding* and *impact*.

Participants articulately described reasons why this is an important context setting and overarching theme and a requirement for good prison leadership, for example, as one interviewee stated “... *at the end of the day this is a profession, we spend a lot of public money, we are accountable to ministers, we’re accountable to the public ...*” (interview 5). They were clear that they and future prison leaders work in a world where the politics and ministers cannot nor should not be ignored or negated “...*I’m not one of those people who say, if it wasn’t for ministers, because actually the reality is there is ministers, ...we have to get on with that*” (interview 5) however that good prison leadership is about understanding and managing this “...*so there’s something about maybe how to operate ... effectively ... to engage with that [political] world and influence it for the better ...*” (interview 10) and that although it at times is a distraction, being a successful prison leader means the politics should not be allowed to derail and take a prison off course from its purpose as this quotation captures “*you need to be able to lead staff in a way that is reflective of changing ministerial priorities and pressures ... but actually fundamentally we’re trying to build a prison system that is resilient to, receptive to ministerial influence but is also resilient to endless changes of direction ... you have to have something that grounds the system, ... you have to have something of what our purpose is at the end of the day to make our places kinder, safer, more decent*” (interview 5).

Understanding

Participants identified that having an understanding of the politics was central to good prison leadership in practice. This understanding included not operating in a vacuum or ignoring what goes on at the ministerial centre and believing that it does not affect you as a prison leader. Rather, having a good political sense, that allows you to truly understand the decisions you make and their political implications, is important. As captured during one interview “... *political awareness is quite helpful to at least understand when you’re doing something which, you know, might cause you some difficulties*” (interview 14). As well as being able to translate this to staff as summarised by one interviewee “...*to be able to explain to prison staff why something is happening... is critical and if you’re not messaging it in the right way, it doesn’t always land and a good leader would do that well*” (interview 13). Other participants described it as “*political nous*” (interview 4), this ability to understand the political context in which you work being imperative.

In addition, some participants articulated the difference in staff who had worked at headquarters, that is those who have worked away from, and in an environment outside of just the prison surroundings. Those individuals who have had exposure to a different setting, albeit still linked to prisons but that experience of the wider organisation and therefore their ability to understand the politics compared with those who has not. Interviewees were able to see a difference in how those prison leaders that have had that exposure and learnt from it operated. As one interviewee explained their ability to operate well in this complex environment came from having taken on roles outside of being a prison leader and completing a role working alongside ministers. A position most would not have an opportunity to do, a role even further removed from simply one in headquarters, however this gave them a true understanding of how things are from both perspectives within the one organisation and thereby the ability to be successful “... *what has defined me particularly as a leader is the combination of operational roles with the juxtaposition of doing things at the very centre, ... I think there is a real lack of understanding between those two positions all the way through operational organisations*” (interview 9). These ‘two positions’ being what ministers believe the organisation is and should be doing and what prison leaders believe the organisation is and should be doing. From this theme also emerged a perception that the current cadre of prison leaders lacked political astuteness. This was linked to staff not having had an opportunity to complete roles outside of working in and leading prisons. Thus making the

point that this is an important part of the career journey, to have a period of time outside of working in a prison to be a more rounded and effective prison leader.

Impact

Building on the first sub theme of understanding, this sub theme refers to the ability to operate in a ministerial setting. This at times is unstable and results in constant changes but nonetheless is the reality. Thus prison leaders need to know this, understand it and manage the inherent risks that this can and does create. All while maintaining high levels of personal integrity. Participants spoke about the ever-increasing levels of political accountability, scrutiny and the increased requirements for engagement that prison leaders are obliged to partake in and how this will continue in the future. There was also a recognition that prison leaders are facing difficulties and pressures, captured here during interview 10 *“...a lot of discontinuity and changes of policy direction, ... [will] make it much more difficult for leadership at prison level”* and therefore good prison leaders need to *“operate ... effectively ... to engage with that world and influence it for the better ...”*

This was also clearly linked to a revolving door of policy initiatives and changes of direction with changing Secretaries of State and Ministers which led at times to an incoherence, discontinuity and relentlessness which participants did not see dissipating any time soon. Leading within this context of uncertainty was seen therefore as a key requirement of prison leadership now and in the future. From the first Member of Parliament (MP) Secretary of State for Justice in 2007 to the current one there have been eight in this period of 12 years with five in the past five years, highlighting the levels of change prison leaders have been experiencing. Participants described the importance of knowing how to operate in order to not become overwhelmed or overly distracted by the politics, yet not ignoring or disengaging from them but rather being receptive to ministerial influence and resilient and to the interminable changes in direction. This was neatly summarised as *“... negotiating with ministers who changed and had lots of other priorities, and I think governors just need to say, well actually, I’m not in control of everything but I am accountable for everything ... and understand other people’s agendas and work to other people’s objectives as well as [their] own if [they are] going to do what ... needs doing”* (interview 14). Impact is about accepting this reality of ever increasing ministerial input, being responsive and engaged with, and to it, and then using sound judgement when framing decisions *“... it’s the nature of working closely*

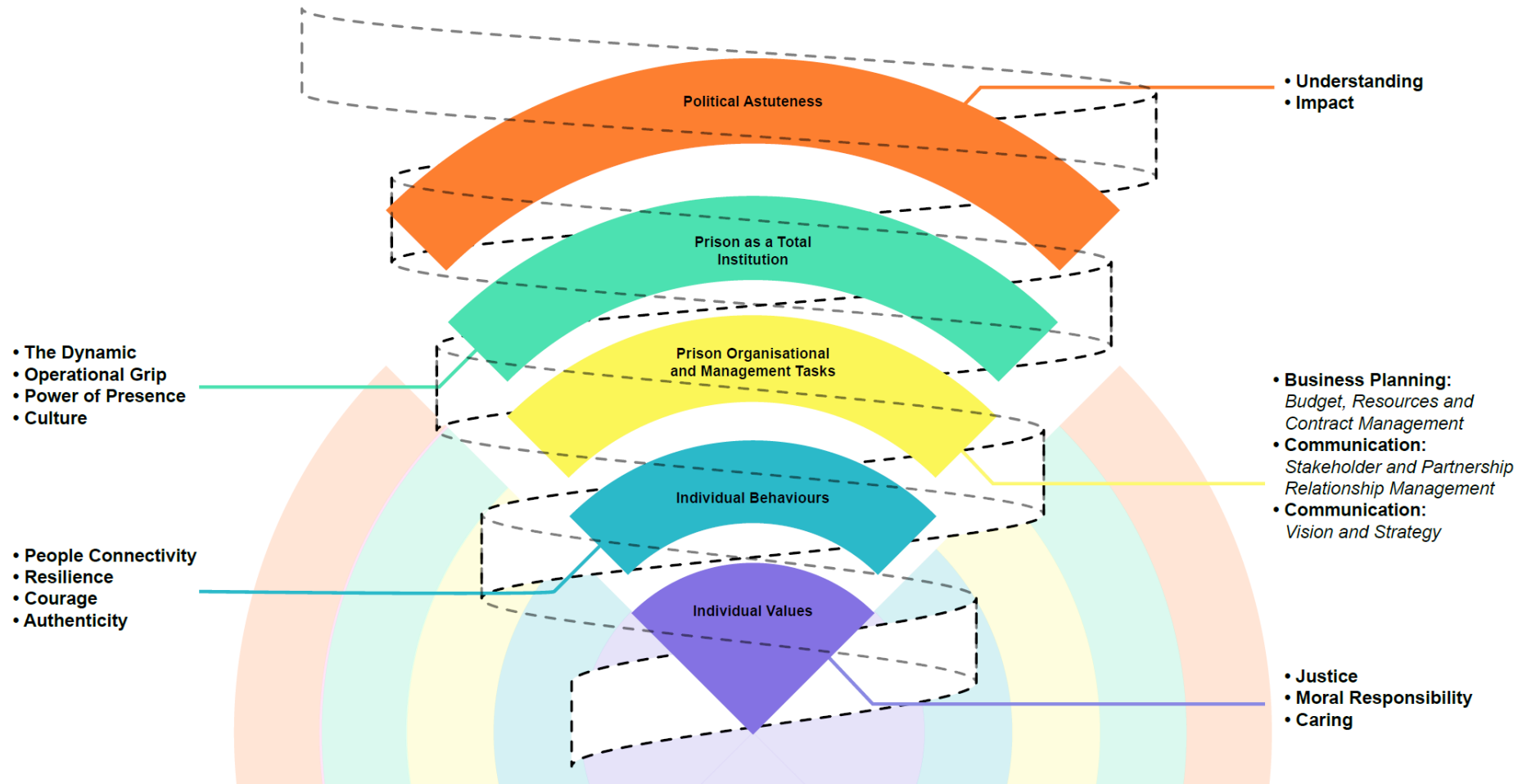
with democratically elected politicians that you have to judge whether what you're doing is right or not" (interview 12).

A number of participants spoke of the frustration incurred by the lack of stable leadership from politicians. With five Secretaries of State for Justice in five years, this created risks where operational decisions are made by those who fundamentally do not understand the organisation. This was strongly conveyed by one interviewee *"...the one thing that doesn't change in prison is the fact that you've got prisoners and you've got staff, and ... there's a coercive relationship, and therefore leadership has got to address that, ... if you have someone who ... doesn't get that dynamic, then there is a real risk about... what might look like straightforward things to introduce, risks the dynamic being disturbed dangerously, and that's got to be really quite carefully understood. It's [the case] ... when you get ministerial policies that look presentationally good, but don't understand the dynamic and the risk... there is a real threat ..."* (interview 2).

Overall there was consensus that to be a good prison leader you need to be driven and committed; committed in the knowledge that the prison system is significantly influenced by ministerial politics. Sound decisions and judgements need to be made with this knowledge, and prison leaders need to embrace this to the degree that the policies support the purposes of prisons. Yet at the same time the political direction should not be allowed to overwhelm and derail the system.

In total five themes each with a set of sub themes was identified leading to the creation of a framework for good prison leadership presented in figure 1. As can be seen at figure 1 theme one, *individual values* are at the centre representing that values are essential to the framework and are the foundation on which good prison leadership is built. In addition, the framework is dynamic and therefore each of the themes feed into and affect one another, determining how prison leadership is enacted.

Figure 1. A psychological framework for senior prison leadership



Discussion

Leadership matters. Prisons represent a loss of liberty. Both of these statements are unlikely to be disputed yet together they have been an understudied area of penal life. Through thematic analysis the findings of this study present an empirical and psychological framework that articulates the dynamic requirements of good prison leadership. The components identified are: *individual values, individual behaviours, prison organisational and management tasks, prison as a total institution and political astuteness.*

This study builds on previous research by both adding to, and shining a light on, the limited contribution of research in this area through examining what we know about prison leadership from a broader perspective in an empirical way. The findings from this research are unique in four ways.

First, it extends the research in the breadth of its coverage. It aims to describe all of the components for good prison leadership through empirically grounded research, rather than focussing on one element such as behaviours or values. For example, Bryans (2000) argues that there are four areas senior prison leaders need to be competent in yet it is not clear from where these competence areas are drawn, they seem to be based on his own knowledge, experience and existing research of prisons rather than grounded purely in data and independent evidence. Another example, Ruddell and Norris (2008) used a job analysis technique and storyboard methodology to develop a profile of nine competencies, again this does not look at the requirements for good prison leadership from the broadest perspective nor reflect on whether this will remain the same in the future rather focusing on a comparison to a previously identified list of 12 competencies. Other research (for example, Wright, 2000; Jacobs & Olitsky, 2004) goes further in the expectations of prison leaders but are not empirically grounded. Other researchers (for example, Bryans, 2007; Liebling & Crewe, 2012; 2016) have identified typologies of governors yet again although useful in understanding the current population these do not tell us about the expectations of senior prison leaders in achieving good prison leadership. There is also a recognition that what a prison might require from its leaders will depend on the development stage that prison is at (Liebling & Crewe, 2012; 2016).

Second, this study draws from a unique sample. It draws upon those who have previously held the role and have progressed beyond it into more senior positions. These people are considered

experts in the field, for their knowledge and for all their applied, real-world, hands on experiences of the role. This differs from previous research, that may have included some of this sample but has always also included current incumbents (for example, Bryans, 2000; Liebling & Crewe, 2012, 2016; Ruddell & Norris, 2008; Wright, 2000). This is important for a number of reasons: this group are in an exceptional position to not only highlight the expectations of the role from their lived experience, having held the role themselves, but also from their experiences of line managing prison leaders, being responsible for setting the strategic direction for prisons and for leading in a range of other more senior and strategic roles within the prison service. Therefore, they have had the exposure to what is required of the role from a number of alternative positions and are able to bring a richness to their reflections that acknowledges and appreciates the roles they hold outside of leading individual prisons.

Third, previous studies that have set out expectations have done so with little or no attention to 'how' good prison leadership is achieved. This study moves beyond a competency model or a list of criteria of what is needed by identifying the five components required for good prison leadership that reflects the realities and practicalities of the role and workplace, not just the aspirational components. Importantly, it includes how good prison leaders consider the broader political and social system in which they operate.

Fourth, unlike other frameworks or models that tend to be static, this framework is dynamic. The framework is intended to work from the centre upwards and outwards (figure 1). When all five are in place, informing one another and outwardly displayed, good prison leadership is enacted and evident. *Individual values* (theme one) are at the core of the model, they are at the heart of good prison leadership and are within an individual's gift, control or innate sense of being. Without these individual values true success is not possible. These need to be present for the *individual behaviours* (theme two) to be enacted through the belief in the values and shown to others in an authentic way. Together, these enable *prison organisational and management tasks* (theme three) to be executed successfully. However, without being able to execute the organisational and management tasks successfully, it is difficult to truly focus on the environment of *prison as a total institution* (theme four) and to apply *political astuteness* (theme five). As you move up through the themes and layers of the framework, less and less is in your direct control and sphere of influence and the more engagement, collaboration and contact with others is needed. Importantly, the individual values determine the lens throughout which a prison leader views the prison as a total institution and the political landscape. Thereby making the model truly dynamic and integrated.

The themes identified in this study both extend and echo previous research. Examining the framework from its dynamic perspective, theme one 'individual values' communicates those pro-social values and beliefs that are fundamental to possess and share with others and necessary to be a good leader, especially in the unique environment of prisons. Through the interviews it was clear that there were a number of strong values required, this is not to say that these are the only values held by the participants nor the only value expectations they had of those demonstrating good prison leadership but they are the ones that occurred strongest; those being 'justice', 'moral responsibility' and 'caring'. What was clear from the interviews is that these values are at the core of the expectations of prison leaders and are needed to guide behaviours in order that the other expectations of prison leaders are understood and enacted appropriately. This supports previous research and brings together theme one and the sub-theme of 'authenticity' from theme two, that authentic leaders are guided by explicit and conscious values that enable them to operate at higher levels of moral integrity (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). In addition, Howell and Avolio (1992) suggested that authentic leaders have moral standards or values that emphasize the collective interests of their groups or organisations within a greater society. In addition, staff (and offenders) when considering a leader's behaviour are likely to recognise if there is a gap between what a leader promotes as their values and their behaviours (Avolio, Kahai, & Dodge, 2000). These inconsistencies in a leader's behaviour can result in breakdown of trust which can eventually block the leader's efforts to initiate any positive change in the leader/follower relationship (May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004). According to Howell and Avolio (1992), leaders with strong integrity are characterised by an internal consistency which supports them in acting in harmony with values that respect the rights and interests of others. Internal consistency includes experiencing emotions that are consistent with self-transcendent values (universal values, such as social justice, equality and broadmindedness and benevolent values, such as honesty, loyalty and responsibility). When leaders are committed to self-transcendent values and act on them without emotional conflict, their actions will be more consistent and authentic.

Although the review of the literature on values yields a large number of definitions, Schwartz and Bilsky (1987) generated a conceptual definition of values that incorporated five features that they found were common to most of those definitions in the relevant literature. Values (a) are concepts or beliefs, (b) pertain to desirable end states or behaviours, (c) transcend specific situations, (d) guide selection or evaluation of behaviour and events, and (e) are ordered by relative importance. These characteristics however do not tell us much about the contents of values and they went on

to generate a typology of seven motivational content domains of values: enjoyment, security, achievement, self-direction, restrictive-conformity, pro-social, and maturity which are a combination of individual, collective and mixed values. Important for good prison leadership is not the need for all seven motivational values but those in the pro-social and maturity domains, demonstrating that the value requirements in this environment are focused not on the values of enjoyment (pleasure, emotional gratification), security (safety and harmony) and restrictive-conformity (restraint of actions likely to harm others). For prison leadership security and not doing harm is a job role requirement rather than a value and is featured as part of 'prison as a total institution' theme, achievement (personal success), self-direction (independent thought and action) which again is featured as part of the themes but rather than a value features more during individual behaviours. The two that map pro-social (active protection or enhancement of the welfare of others) and maturity (understanding and acceptance of others) which make sense given the environment as to why they would be the essential values for prison leadership.

Theme two 'individual behaviours' describes those standards and crucial behaviours that are required both personally but also to be role modelled and shared with others, and continued to be developed and built so others see their importance. This theme examines the prison leader as an individual; their ability to be conscious of both what they should be bringing to the role and what the role requires of them. Participants were clear about the significance of these behaviours for good prison leadership.

One of the sub themes identified during theme two was 'resilience' and there was one quote during the interviews that sums up the natural state of prisons that was also referenced earlier "*... prisons by their nature mean there is conflict. It is an environment that is always at risk, that there is a dynamic that always has many more prisoners than staff ...that frightens people*" (interview 2) and therefore prison is a place where staff and leaders are on constant alert. It was very clear that resilience is a process that prison leaders need to understand and develop or continue to develop in order to be successful in the role.

Prisons can be stubbornly toxic and therefore prison leaders need to be able to cope and adjust, role model this and encourage and develop it in their staff too in a way that they sustain well-being, in addition to not becoming so resilient they are blind to what is going on around them. There were many phrases used to describe resilience, such as 'succeeding when faced with adversity', 'tenacity', 'sticking with it' and 'keeping going'. The way in which participants in this

study described resilience most aptly supports that of the need for psychological resilience and the ability to develop and grow one's own resilience. There was a real focus by participants not only on the importance of its need but the detrimental impact prisons can have on a prison leader is lacking in resilience. Although there are many definitions of resilience (see Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013 or Robertson, Cooper, Sarkar, & Curran, 2015 for a table of definitions of resilience), most definitions are based around two main notions of hardship and positive adaptation. De Terte and Stephens (2014) define psychological resilience as the ability to mentally or emotionally cope with a crisis or to return to pre-crisis status quickly. As previously discussed the context in which leadership occurs is important and how participants identified resilience reinforces the importance of contextualising employee resilience at work, and framing it as a capability that can be developed over time and as a function of person-organisation exchanges (Robertson, Cooper, Sarkar, & Curran, 2015) and also to support well-being which fits well with another definition of resilience as 'a process to harness resources in order to sustain well-being' (Panter-Brick & Leckman, 2013). Other which might be fitting in this context is Bonanno's (2004) definition as 'healthy functioning after a highly adverse event', although this is more about isolated and potentially highly disruptive events whereas in prison as discussed these are more likely to be frequent occurrences.

Another way resilience has been looked at is specifically through the work lens, career resilience has been defined as a person's resistance to career disruption in a less than optimal environment and the ability to handle poor working conditions while one is aware that these conditions exist (O'Leary, 1998). In essence, the resilient leader acts with courage about convictions in spite of the risks (Patterson & Patterson, 2001). All of these definitions support what has been described as resilience by the participants and fits well with that of a prison leader given the political and physical environments they work in. There was not only one way of thinking about resilience, nor one type of scenario in which its need would be evident rather that there are multiple ways to be resilient, and sometimes resilience is achieved by means that are not fully adaptive under normal circumstances.

Another sub theme of 'individual behaviours' was 'authenticity' which has its roots in Greek philosophy (to thine own self be true). Participants spoke passionately about the value of integrity as a requirement of prison leadership, especially given the environment. That need to be legitimate and open as well as self-aware and true to one's own voice which is consistent with the literature of authenticity. Harter (2002) stipulates that to be considered authentic thoughts and feelings must be consistent with actions, thereby linked closely to a number of the other sub

themes that have emerged as key to good prison leadership, namely 'moral responsibility', 'resilience', and a values based approach including 'caring'. Authentic leadership is defined in large part by the evidence of morality in how leaders validate and influence their decisions and the decisions of others. Reflected in the interviews is that in order to demonstrate authenticity, leaders need to ensure that their actions are consistent with both what they say and aligned with what they do, and in doing so they build and maintain a strength of trust and integrity, both were incredibly important elements of authenticity for participants when describing good prison leadership. Taylor (1991) maintained that authenticity is about discovering and expressing oneself, being true to oneself which although was evident during the interviews and being self-aware so that you were then able to behaviour authentically it was more than just being true to oneself but also being legitimate, fair, realistic and always conscious of the environment. Being an authentic leader is linked closely with another sub theme 'moral responsibility', authentic leaders are moral agents who take ownership of, and therefore moral responsibility for the end results of their actions as well as the actions of their followers.

The analysis showed the weight of moral responsibility and seriousness that prison leadership necessitates, that balance between having responsibility for those deprived of their liberty and within that ensuing period exercising a necessary control that is morally just. It was clear prison leaders need to understand and appreciate this. They must be prepared to make decisions through a moral lens and treat people accordingly, therefore understanding that they are distinct sub themes but that there is an interplay between the sub themes of 'moral responsibility' and 'authenticity'. That there is an unescapable moral dimension to the exercising of this kind of power over others, the requirement but also unspoken understanding that people should be treated fairly was an essential part of this. Being treated fairly had been shown to affect job attitudes, such as satisfaction, commitment and organisational outcomes (Dailey & Kirk, 1992; Koh & Boo, 2001). To be viewed as a leader who understands their moral responsibility leaders must engage in certain behaviours and make decisions based upon moral principles which is more important in this occupation than most where circumstances of death are an unavoidable and foreseeable part of the role as demonstrated by the following quote "... where you find the moral authority to be in a leadership position where death may result ... you examine your leadership ... [on] whether or not you are doing the best job you can" (interview 14). This is echoed in research focused on prisoners, where it was found that prison life really is all about relationships; that moral and emotional climates can be identified; they matter, they differ, and they lead to different outcomes (Liebling, 2006).

As described earlier the different themes are at times entwined, none more so than between themes two (individual behaviours) and one (individual values) where there are interwoven aspects within theme one moral responsibility and within theme two of authenticity. Also with authenticity and values where without values such as justice being courageous and authentic is without purpose. In particular courage as a sub theme is one that could have sat either in values or behaviours, at times it was viewed as a value, an innate sense of courage and valuing courage in oneself. However, it sits in behaviours as ultimately participants discussed courage within the context of displaying or exercising of courage. In this sense, it was the behaviour of demonstrating courage and taking courageous action that was key. Therefore, for a leader to be truly authentic there is also an expected consistency between leader values and behaviours. This complex positioning of courage has also been reflected in wider research relating to values held and displayed behaviours (for example, Schwartz, 1992).

Theme three 'prison organisational and management tasks' are those responsibilities that emerged as requirements in order to effectively and efficiently run the prison. Those management tasks that were deemed necessary to ensure the successful operations of a prison. Essentially the commercial and corporate aspects of the role that would be required of most, if not all, leaders in order to support daily functioning. The findings were unsurprising in that all leadership roles will have a management tasks element, the technical knowledge needed to manage the budget, oversee contracts, communicate with staff, stakeholders and partners are all standard management tasks. Whether they are considered management responsibilities or simply a part of the leadership role will depend on what perspective this is viewed from however the outcomes support the literature on the requirements of management tasks at work.

They are the type of tasks that will exist in most organisational competency frameworks, and although configured under prison organisational and management tasks they can be described as those responsibilities required for running an organisation, that is a mix of transactional tasks, such as budget management and the more transformational tasks such as vision setting and communicating with stakeholders and partners. This is in line with the view that leadership is both transformational and transactional depending on the needs of the situation (Bass 1985; Burns 1978) and that the best of leaders typically display *both* transformational and transactional leadership, as evidenced by the positive correlations between ratings of these two leadership styles (Bass & Avolio, 1993). Transformational leaders being those who can create a vision for the future and persuade others to work towards a collective purpose and inspire (also relevant to theme two and the sub theme of 'people connectivity') whereas transactional by contrast focuses

on the task at hand, the immediate. Yet some of the more practical or information orientated aspects of 'prison organisational and management tasks' such as business planning: budget, resources and contract management resonate with situational leadership. In general, that effective leadership requires a rational understanding of the situation and an appropriate response and Situational Leadership Theory (SLT) in particular which evolved from a task-oriented versus people-oriented leadership continuum (Bass, 2008; Conger, 2011; Graeff, 1997; Lorsch, 2010). The continuum represents the extent that the leader focuses on the required tasks or focuses on their relationships with their followers. This somewhat blurring of the responsibilities under management tasks is aligned with how historically management was initially considered from the perspective of the 'general manager' and what they would be required to do to ensure the success of a business. These tasks were classified into five all-encompassing categories of namely planning, organising, command, coordination and control (Fayol, 1916 cited in Nienaber, 2010) constituting the primary tasks of management, with communication, motivation and decision-making seen as secondary management tasks, all evident in the sub themes identified. At the time, the terms 'manager' and 'leader' were used interchangeably to indicate the person with ultimate responsibility. Yukl (1998) describes leadership and management as different (but interrelated) concepts. Others distinguish the difference between the roles a leader and a manager play; that a leader is willingly followed, whereas a manager may have to rely on formal power to accomplish goals (Barnard, 1938 cited in Armandi, Oppedisano & Sherman, 2003).

Following on from this and moving up to the next level in on the framework (see figure 1) theme four 'prison as a total institution' describes the empathetic understanding of the realities of prison which brings with it real power inequalities present and thereby risks, all of which needs to be balanced and 'operational grip' upheld. The term 'total institution' was made popular by sociologist Erving Goffman when he presented his paper 'On the Characteristics of Total Institutions' in 1957 at a symposium on preventative and social psychiatry. He described their encompassing character as "symbolized by the barrier to social intercourse with the outside that is often built right into the physical plant: locked doors, high walls, barbed wire, cliffs and water, open terrain, and so forth" (Goffman, 1957). He outlined five types of total institutions in his paper, one of which was institutions such as prisons. At that time, he described them as not concerned with the welfares on those incarcerated but rather the focus being on protecting the public against intentional dangers.

During the interviews participants likened prisons and sub theme 'the dynamic' to schools and secure hospitals as the closest comparators, in that they are also closed institutions which hold

risks of power abuses and coercion if the dynamic is not understood. Even then participants said that neither schools nor secure hospitals were the same. An example of the dynamic perhaps being understood but ignored or mistreated was when the world was shocked as the photographs displaying abuse of prisoners by American soldiers in Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq emerged. What was additionally alarming was that several has been employed in civilian life as prison officers and although it can perhaps be assumed they understood the precarious instability of the dynamic they chose instead to breach it displaying a loss of morality (O'Donnell, 2016). The implication here is that this and other episodes could occur in prisons too if the importance of 'the dynamic' and 'operational grip' is forgotten.

The dynamic nature of the framework is important here as it is more than not forgetting 'the dynamic' or 'operational grip' it is these along with the individual values of theme one and individual behaviours of theme two demonstrating the interconnected nature of the framework. Coyle (2002) likened prisons with the most humane atmosphere and positive culture, as those with the most visible leadership supporting the view participants raised that culture is a key part of prison leadership. Although Mears (2012) states that prison culture remains notoriously difficult to define and measure yet in periods of large scale change prison culture alone deserves substantial erudite examination.

The sub theme 'operational grip' signifies a rather unique element that is distinctive to running and leading prisons. One that was somewhat expected to be implicitly understood and was evidenced by the examples participants gave of what it did not look like or when there was a lack of grip rather than what it was when successful. An interwoven but separate part of operational grip that was highlighted as vital is the ability to successfully respond to and manage incidents. Both when they arise and as an on-going endeavour to ensure an absence of incidents if possible. The importance of this is highlighted by internal documents; successfully managing a prison incident(s) is a mandatory part of the selection process to lead a prison in England and Wales (HMPPS, 2018). It has been said that the ultimate goal of all prison staff is to manage a facility in such a way that emergencies are prevented. However, despite best efforts, there are times when it is not possible to control the actions of others (Freeman, 1996). It is also worth pointing out that this is typically under time pressures with risks to either staff, prisoners or infrastructure. In addition, Murray (1994) underlines that "the exercise of command at an operational incident is complex. Incident commanders must realise the responsibilities faced, recognise authority possessed, assess the situation, make decisions and take action which meets the expectations of all those who serve". This definition can easily apply to other sectors and interestingly there is

an increasing expectation to take command also being placed on senior managers in other professions too (Flin, 1996).

The responsibility for taking command is part of the role of leading in prisons but it is not unique to prisons. It is common to emergency professionals, such as the fire and rescue service, police and military in their respective fields. Successful incident command is rarely recognised; it is only where it goes wrong that an interest is taken. For example, Lord Justice Woolf's review into the riot at HMP Manchester in 1990 concluded that the reason why the disturbance developed so rapidly was due to the "inept handling at the early stages of the disturbance" (Woolf & Tumim, 1991). In other sectors this is also seen, for example the review into Hillsborough stadium disaster resulting in the deaths of the 96 victims recognised that there were failures by all of the emergency services with important flaws at each stage and as a result, rescue and recovery efforts were affected by lack of leadership, coordination, prioritisation of casualties and equipment (Hillsborough Independent Panel, 2012). The present study found that incidents were spoken about with a sense of inevitability and degree of realism. That these occurrences are not uncommon yet concentrate the morality of prisons and this connects back to theme one.

The term rehabilitative came up on occasions under 'culture' but also under theme one of individual values. In HMPPS, the phrase 'Rehabilitative Culture' has been gaining traction over the last few years. In the prison context this is about people being given opportunities to change; exploring the reasons why crimes have been committed and behavioural change through the ability to change thinking and help find better ways of living (see Mann, Fitzalan Howard & Tew, 2018). They state that rehabilitative culture is found most strongly in the relationships between the staff of a prison and those in their care and that a safe and decent prison is not automatically rehabilitative. This also links to sub themes of justice and caring in individual values, that a rehabilitative culture requires a shared belief in the ability of people to change and with this hope.

Theme five 'political astuteness' narrates the perspicacity of ministerial politics associated with prisons. One of this study's key findings is the importance of this theme overall to the success and achievement of good prison leadership. It was well-accepted and discussed by the participants as was the need to not only understand but the engage with the political sphere surrounding prisons. All public sector employees should be aware of the political setting in which they work, yet it does not govern working lives to the same degree that it can for prison leaders and therefore they require a greater insight and understanding than most. The United Kingdom

working on the Westminster Model of government means that decisions taken by Ministers are implemented by a neutral Civil Service where civil servants are accountable to Ministers. Civil servants are expected to carry out their role with “dedication and a commitment to the Civil Service and its core values: integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality” (Government UK, 2015). The ‘impartiality’ value is “acting solely according to the merits of the case and serving equally well governments of different political persuasions” including acting in a way which retains the confidence of ministers, as well as not allowing personal political views to determine any advice given or actions taken (Government UK, 2015). The ‘impartiality’ value and specifically the references to political impartiality is closely linked with elements of the fifth theme of political astuteness and the understanding of this value and the realities of working in the public domain, with prison leaders needing to understand and embrace that politics are an inescapable element of their position. Hartley, Alford, Hughes and Yates (2013) state that public managers are subject to the authority of governments, yet at the same time are expected to exercise ‘neutral competence’, executing policies and offering unbiased advice and therefore amid such tensions, political astuteness is increasingly necessary for success.

In addition, there are some parallels between how participants described the current reality of politics and some of the key principles of procedural justice, “the degree to which someone perceives people in authority to apply processes or make decisions about them in a fair and just way” (HMPPS, 2019d). Treating people with respect, making unbiased decisions and interpreting and applying rules consistently and transparently, giving people a voice and hearing their concerns and experiences and showing and encouraging trust are all key principles of procedural justice (HMPPS, 2019d). In a climate in which changes of leadership (five Secretaries of State in the past five years) and subsequent changes in policy initiatives and direction (see for example, the recent House of Commons Justice Committee report on Prison Governance looking at whether plans for long-term positive change are in place, House of Commons Justice Committee, 2019) have been continuous, participants reflected that prison leaders have not been provided with the consistency and given the consideration that they warrant. Consequently, it is proposed that prison leaders may be experiencing feelings of procedural injustice.

The research into procedural justice shows that if enacted, it has a beneficial effect on offenders both in prison and those on probation in the community (for example, see Beijersbergen, Dirkzwager, & Nieuwbeerta, 2016; Gladfelter, Lantz, & Ruback, 2018; Jackson, Tyler, Bradford, Taylor & Shiner, 2010). In addition, a study found that when staff perceived they were treated positively by management (procedural justice) this was associated with higher job satisfaction ratings, greater job commitment, lower burnout rates and stress levels and staff being more

supportive of prisoner rehabilitation (and less supportive of punishment) as well as feeling safer at work (Fitzalan Howard & Wakeling, 2019).

Although procedural justice was not explicitly discussed as part of the theme of political astuteness it is interesting to see how the current political climate has surfaced some references to procedural injustice with some parallels and relationships between the ideas, an area which would be an interesting avenue to explore further with prison leaders. Greater political astuteness, could, within this current climate, increase the likelihood of perceptions of procedural injustice.

Not emerging as a distinct theme, discussions about change were however a recurring topic throughout the interviews and subsequent thematic analysis, emerging as part of numerous themes. Change arose as part of 'political astuteness' and the 'endless changes of direction'. It was directed at understanding that even though there are what might feel like regular policy changes, the core purpose of prisons and their dynamic does not change. Change was also frequently mentioned when discussing the theme 'prison as a total institution' with different focusses. Understanding how cultures can be changed, the importance of influencing culture change and again the changes towards a greater focus on the required 'prison organisational and management tasks'. It also arose during the theme 'individual behaviours' in relation to the need for resilience given the unique environment that holds a constant threat of change unsettling the relationship between staff and prisoners, as well as in 'individual values' and the belief in justice and hope in the abilities of people to change. And yet none of this comes as any real surprise as according to Burnes (2004), change is an ever-present feature of organisational life, both at an operational and strategic level. Therefore, due to the importance of organisational change, its management is becoming a highly required managerial skill (Senior, 2002).

A Unique Framework

The five themes expressed by the participants provide a framework that captures all of the varied elements required for good prison leadership. In terms of other leadership theories these five themes do not map or align with one single model or theory. This framework is a unique combination and integration of competencies and behaviours, tasks, actions, values and the organisational and political context. It does however overlap or encompass a number of difference theories and models, the main ones, which have already been referenced are transformational

leadership (Bass 1985), authentic leadership (Luthans & Avolio, 2003) and the other is the domain model of competencies (Hogan & Warrenfeltz, 2003).

Three of the themes identified in this study can be said to map across to The Domain Model of Competencies (Hogan & Warrenfeltz, 2003), the two themes which do not are the two that are context specific; themes four and five. Woodruffe (1990, 1991) argued that competencies should be the common language of the human resource system that enables organisations to match people against the resources it needs. That is those behaviours a person must display in order to perform the tasks of a job with competence and Hogan and Warrenfeltz (2003) state that every existing competency model can be captured within the domain model, yet this study found that prison leadership is more than simply competencies. They state that intrapersonal skills develop first (in earlier life); then interpersonal skills are developed (throughout the teenage years); business skills develop when a person enters the workforce; and leadership skills develop last. They go on to discuss the hierarchical nature of the model, the increasing trainability, with intrapersonal skills being hard to train and leadership skills being the easiest to train. Although this study was not about the personalities of good prison leaders but what are the requirements of good prison leadership, Judge, Bono, Ilies, and Gerhardt (2002) in their meta-analysis on the links between personality and leadership demonstrated that all five personality dimensions (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism) were related to overall leadership, with true correlations of .24 or greater for each, except for Agreeableness (.08). Hogan and Kaiser (2005) demonstrate by putting various studies together that (a) personality predicts leadership style (who we are determines how we lead), (b) leadership style predicts employee attitudes and team functioning, and (c) attitudes and team functioning predict organisational performance.

Taken together these five themes confirm that there is more to prison leadership than just competencies, knowledge, duties or qualities that were previously identified from a recent review of the prison leadership literature published in peer reviewed journals (Choudhary et al., 2019) but rather is a combination of contextual factors such as politics and the environment, organisational and management tasks, behaviours and values. The review of existing competency profiles and conceptualisations of prison leadership, found that they were not sufficiently orientated in the broader aspects of leadership and are much more task or competency orientated rather than behavioural or values driven. Existing profiles or frameworks (such as Ruddell & Norris, 2008 in USA) provide static conceptualisations that are not adequately inclusive of the wider issues at play, although beneficial in giving a detailed look into the

competency requirements they are more internally focussed to the individual prison and not sufficiently outward looking. Others (Bryans, 2000 in UK) look at these factors but do not bring them together to form an applied model or framework but rather a narrative about 'The Competent Governor'. Whilst competencies and knowledge did arise they were split between the different themes, some of the qualities previously found (Choudhary et al., 2019) did not emerge, rather more importantly values arose as vital.

This study, through the lived experiences and expertise of its participants, proposes a framework that is a combination and integration of competencies and behaviours, tasks, actions and values demonstrating interconnectedness. It does not discount individual differences or the nuances of how different people may approach the role but rather this framework emerges entirely and empirically from the perspective of leaders who have successfully performed as prison leaders. It therefore comprises the vital elements required for success in the role rather than, for example, being a generic blueprint based on generalised leadership competencies.

This research adds to current theory by developing our understanding of the interactions between practical and psychological determinants. This study developed an empirical and psychological framework that can be used as the foundation for subsequent actions and research to better recruit prison leaders of the future and assess and develop current and future prison leaders.

Strengths and Limitations

In addition to the methodological rigour one of the key strengths of this study was the participants. To address the question of 'what is good prison leadership?', this study interviewed the informed gatekeepers; leaders with the strategic responsibility to appoint, train, develop, nurture and grow current and future prison leaders. Without exception, all have been in role as leader of a prison and were thereby able to share a deeper understanding of the components of good prison leadership through the exploration of their lived experiences. These individuals have all been successful in the role and progressed up beyond it into a wide range of more senior roles, the majority an otherwise difficult group to access – the top of Her Majesty's Prison Service in England and Wales. This research therefore makes a unique contribution by providing a detailed analysis from interviews grounded in a participant sample, rich in tenure, expertise, experiences and insights (280 plus minimum years in total of time served in the organisation between them, see table 1) designed to explore in detail the factors that constitute good prison leadership, why and their relevance for the future.

While this study provides new insights into prison leadership expectations there are some limitations to be noted. Although the sample was of participants who had worked in both public and private sector prisons, the majority of participants were those who had only worked in the public sector and caution should be applied before generalising to other prison systems, particularly to private prisons. Since the early 1990s, British governments have issued contracts to private companies for both the construction and running of prisons. These private companies are commercial businesses with financial penalties for failure to meet performance targets which is not the case for public sector prisons. It could be hypothesised that the expectations of prison leaders may therefore differ in that context, for example, the fifth theme of political astuteness is unlikely to apply in quite the same way. This is not to say it is not relevant but significantly less so and less about ministerial politics although other politics may come into play instead, whereas other themes may take greater prominence such as prison organisational and management skills. For example, private sector prisons are businesses and therefore there is unlikely to be the tolerance to being overspent as there might be in the public sector, instead consequences where there is not the protection of a larger organisation for budgets. Bryans (2000) posits that private sector management does not contain a close equivalent to the role of politicians as it does in public sector management. That said the nature of the prison industry remains the same, and so comparisons need to be understood as broadly rather than specifically true, as the definitive characteristics of prisons are constant across cultures, legal systems, and political regimes (Giallombardo 1966, p.2).

Gender was well represented with female participants making up 40% of the sample yet another limitation was that there was no ethnic diversity in the sample. That said, this is a true and current reflection of the senior leadership environment within the prison system as there are no non White senior leaders who have led prisons and progressed above this currently in HMPPS. Although male and female participants were included the research, specific implications by gender were not explored as the aim of the study was a broader one about the expectations of prison leadership. However, if this was a weighted framework being presented with potential differences in the emphases of the different themes, gender variances would be importance to consider because gender differences have been found in the engagement of different leadership activities for example, in police leader research (Silvestri, 2006; 2007).

One of the unique aspects of this research was that it explored prison leadership from the perspective of the lived experiences of senior leaders already engaged with and in prisons, those experts who had led prisons as part of their career history. Another limitation is that it did not

explore the expectations of prison leadership from the external standpoint, such as the victims and witnesses of crime, current and ex-offenders, the police, the judiciary and other legal professionals, current staff in prisons and other within and affected by the justice sector or members of the general public. Consequently, whether the expectations would look any different or how different the framework might look as a result of this broader view were not examined. There are of course a range of both practical and moral challenges and considerations to recruiting such a mix of participants. Whether it would be useful to explore the conflicts in expectations of those managerially responsible for prisons versus a wider sample more reflective of society was not on this occasion explored due to the nature of why the sample group chosen. The approach for this study was taken to reflect the actual and current expectations of prison leaders rather than any desired or 'ideal' expectations.

Another limitation is that this study, and resultant framework is firmly embedded within the existing culture, a real world context of where there are issues of, and restraints around resourcing, budgeting, infrastructure, overcrowding, violence, intimidation and corruption. It may therefore be that within a more 'ideal' context, the expectations of prison leaders may be different. The findings identified by the analysis as broad themes are likely to be relevant but the prioritisation might change depending on the financial and resource state and which political party is in power.

Finally, it is important for researchers to clarify their role especially when utilising qualitative methodology which can range from complete membership of the group being studied (an insider) to complete stranger (an outsider) (Adler & Adler, 1994). While there are a variety of definitions for insider-researchers, generally insider-researchers are those who choose to study a group to which they belong, while outsider-researchers do not belong to the group under study (Breen, 2007). For this study the lead researcher was neither a complete insider-researcher nor an outsider-researcher, and she therefore employed a conscious self-recognition in role duality as an 'insider-adjacent', being an employee of the same organisation as the majority of the participants, with prior working relationships with all of those participants but never having worked as a senior prison leader. There are both advantages and disadvantages of being an insider-researcher, these are grouped under the three headings of positionality, access and data collection/interpretation /representation (Chavez, 2008). Some of the advantages of positionality are an ability to expedite rapport building as well as being acclimatised to, and having legitimacy in the field, although the disadvantages to positionality are an over-identification or over-reliance on status or a rise in value conflicts or ethics. Some of the advantages to access are the expediency with which access is granted although this can cause a bias in entering the field.

Finally, some of the advantages to data collection/interpretation/representation are an insight into the linguistic code of the participants and organisation, knowledge of the historical and practical happenings and the identification of unfamiliar or unusual occurrences, however the disadvantages include bias in selecting participants or large amounts of impression management to maintain rapport. The advantages as outlined were apparent in some instances for example, an insight into the language of the organisation as well as some historical knowledge. To counter all of this maintaining awareness throughout the research of this 'insider-adjacent' relationship supported an ability to remain objective as well as taking a preventative approach by regularly discussing with academic supervisors and keeping a reflective log.

Suggestions for Future Research

While this was an exploratory qualitative study, its outcomes both support and extend previous research in this field and has resulted in the development of an initial framework demonstrating the empirical and psychological components of good prison leadership and has implications for research and practice. This framework could serve as the basis from which to test this empirically with a larger population in a quantitative study. Although worth noting that there is a distinction to be made between developing leaders and developing leadership (Day, 2000). Leader development concentrates on developing individual leaders whereas leadership development focuses on a development process that fundamentally involves multiple individuals (for example, leaders and sub-ordinates or peers). Developing individual leaders and developing effective leadership processes involves more than just a decision on which leadership theory to use (Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm & McKee, 2014). In addition, any research into leadership effectiveness should be defined and evaluated in terms of the performance of the group or team for which a leader is responsible (Kaiser, Hogan & Craig, 2008) and therefore any future studies should clearly define their loci of focus.

Future research will be discussed in three sections, validation of the framework, diversity and development of selection, assessment and development tools.

Implications for Research

Given that all methodologies have their strengths and weaknesses, too much reliance on one particular methodology limits researchers to a particular type of information and also weakens the field's capability to infer causal relationships between leadership and its outcomes (Hiller et al., 2011). Hence one approach to validate the framework could be to use the Delphi technique which is a favoured approach for researchers who are seeking judgement or consensus on a particular issue (Beretta 1996; Green, Jones, Hughes & Williams, 1999) which is a structured process consisting of a number of phases and allows for the inclusion of a large number of individuals but with no strict criteria for the way in which it is organised. Most Delphi studies recruit individuals who (based on criteria) are perceived to have expertise in the subject under investigation (Keeney, Hasson, & McKenna, 2006) which would work here. This would also allow for the examination of the framework across geographical and political boundaries to review if the framework could be universally applicable, acknowledging that there may be different emphasises on different elements depending on the country, the political or governmental involvement and culture, for example punitive or rehabilitative. This could also address one of the challenges here of a lack of ethnic diversity in the sample.

Implications for Practice

This new framework offers a number of opportunities for practice addressing a range of areas such as recruitment and selection assessment, learning and leadership assessment and development, talent management and succession planning.

First it can through a validation process be tested. Specific components that could then be used to assess whether current leaders hold these.

Second it can be mapped against existing tools such as values, competency or behaviour frameworks currently in use, this can then be used to review individual, team and organisational development and performance.

Third it can be used to inform and support the underpinning measures during recruitment and selection of senior prison leaders to both leadership roles and leadership development programmes as well as talent programmes.

Fourth, the development of a self-measure tool underpinned by the framework can be used to support both individual learning and the development of current prison leaders. For individuals, to review and reflect on their leadership, raising understanding and self-awareness. For larger groups to underpin the design of staff development, leadership learning and talent programmes, including aspiring senior prison leaders, supporting the development of the future pipeline. For example, building in the importance of formalised work placements outside of a prison as part of the career journey.

Conclusion

This study presents a framework of prison leadership, as seen through the lens of those who lead the prison service. In doing so, it makes several contributions to the literature. First, it is empirically grounded and moves beyond thought pieces and discussions to explicitly define the requirements of prison leadership. Second, it draws from the perspectives of a distinct senior sample rather than role incumbents. Third, it acknowledges the unique contribution of the prison context in leadership. Fourth, it proposes a dynamic framework from which to consider good prison leadership. Finally, it offers a platform from which further exploration of this complex and understudied subject of senior prison leadership can build.

This research provides evidence for a framework that moves beyond simply one type of approach to classifying or understanding the requirements of good prison leadership that have been taken previously such as competencies, knowledge areas, tasks or typology in order to address the lack of attention in the existing literature to the full requirements and conceptualisation of prison leadership. Whilst this framework of good prison leadership is distinctive/unique it is supported by the existing literature as a valid conceptualisation of good prison leadership and furthers previous research demonstrating that it is a multi-faceted assembly of contextual variables. It takes a much fuller and rounded approach to the expectations of prisons leaders with two main points: values are a central component of the framework. If these are not driving individual prison leaders' behaviours and actions, then what they are achieving will not be considered good prison

leadership. The other is that the framework is dynamic. The different components feed into each other and they each affect the other in how it is embodied.

By applying an empirical and psychological perspective to the factors of good prison leadership, drawing on the lived experiences and insights of a uniquely privileged expert audience, stating clearly that this is from the perspective of the organisation (not the individuals in post) it has been possible to develop a framework. This framework rather than being abstract or generic based on the possible, probable or even prospective expectations is one that is dynamic, empirical and has practical applicability. The lived experiences of having led prisons and seen other lead prisons often revealed more about how not to do something and therefore contributed to the forming of expectations of good prison leadership.

Good prison leadership clearly requires a range of components in order to be seen as such, prisons will run regardless of good leaders however they will not run well, be sustainable, create positive cultures or move forwards towards goals of change and be agents of rehabilitation. To increase the number of prison leaders that are able to operate in the way that is wanted and required there needs to be not only investment but also a shared understanding of what is considered good leadership in this challenging and difficult context.

Given the importance of the prison system in society, defining the ideal required qualities and characteristics of prison leaders should generate a substantial corpus of professional and academic writing (Jacobs & Olitsky, 2004). The proposed framework is therefore intended to be a serious contribution to this and to spark continued further work in this field.

Further research and publication is encouraged not only to determine the validity of these themes and thereby related interventions but for individuals, teams and penal organisations. Including offering suggestions for recruitment, training and development and its applicability outside of the UK and also to continue to highlight the importance of this socially significant role that prison leaders occupy. No longer should research into prison leaders be parsimonious.

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