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Exploring How Prisoners Experience Work: A Discursive Practice Approach

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ABSTRACT

Studies on prison work have long held the view that giving inmates the chance to work influences their lives and forms a critical component in their rehabilitation. Thus, the frequently touted benefits of prison work include but are not limited to, reducing idleness, financial benefits, skill acquisition, personal character reformation, desistance from crime, and cost reduction. The belief in the efficacy of prison work in providing these benefits has aided in hatching a copious body of practical and theoretical cottage industry of journal articles and books on prison work that extol its values and contributions to rehabilitation, subsequently stipulating suggestions for the working conditions of prisoners. In spite of the popularity of prison work in prisons across the globe, there is still not much empirical evidence about how the procurement of the work flows through the prisons and the ensuing possibilities associated with the process for inmates to comprehend and incorporate into their performance.

Drawing on the contemporary turn to practice in social theory as a lens, and conceptualizing practices as the analytical starting point for theorizing work, this study provides a fresh empirical articulation on prison work and rehabilitation by demonstrating how prisoners engaged in working outside the prison walls come to understand work, their motivation to participate and engage in the work, and how the work they do may contribute to their rehabilitation. Developing the thesis's contribution in the context of Ghanaian prisons, five prisons served as the empirical research sites. Adopting an interpretive approach and an exploratory qualitative research design, the main data for the inquiry were collected from 60 inmates, 20 prison officers, and 10 ex-offenders using semi-structured interviews and observations. Analysed through the reflective gaze of microstoria—the sharing of contemporaneous stories on prison life and work as recounted by prisoners—the thesis sheds light on the lived experiences of prisoners, emphasizing the discursive situated practices that come together to define work in the prisons, and how this work is organized. This was supplemented with publicly available data in the form of Ghana government prison policy documents, prison websites, and newspaper articles on prisons.

The study presents three main findings. First, emphasizing how external labour work is organized in the prison, the study found that inmates who participate in external labour activities had to qualify by serving either one-third or one-fifth of their sentences as a precondition for prison work or hard labour respectively. Additionally, inmates had to have exhibited good behaviour as

proscribed by the environment of the prison during the time served, as witnessed by other prisoners and officers alike. This highlights the forms of integration in the various climatic conditions in the prisons, which is indicative of the acceptable conduct required of participants who engage in external labour activities. Once an inmate passes this stage, they are seen as duly qualified and are called into a gang and assigned to an officer. Second, using the potlatch system as the analytical starting point, the study highlights property rights, rules of earning and holding positions, and reciprocal exchanges as played out in external labour activities. The active engagement of officers in sourcing jobs for inmates propels inmates to work assiduously in their quest to reciprocate the gifts and kindness that the officers have bestowed upon them. This account highlights the power relations embedded in external labour and is suggestive of the impact of the job sourcing process on the inmates' perceptions regarding the nature of the jobs which are found in the informal sector and are characteristic of fragmented, flexible and 3D (Dirty, Demanding and Dangerous). While it is undeniable that the sourcing process creates fierce competition for status and prestige among the officers, it also provides several other significant junctions which contribute to the general welfare of inmates in the prisons. Third, the study found that the transgression transparency employed by the prison service, such as publishing the names of inmates who '*misbehave*' at the gate, making the transgressions of the said inmates known to others, and suspending such inmates from taking part in external labour activities, means that transgressors are prompted to progressively engage in a coactive procedure that facilitates the development of mutually acceptable behaviour. Consequently, inmates are assisted to personally engage in acceptable behaviours espoused by the prisons, hence creating a personal narrative control of their own accord in an effort to enable behavioural change, leading to rehabilitation. Thus, personal narrative control helps inmates to take charge of their rehabilitation and prompts others who engage in or hope to engage in external labour to learn from them.

Overall, the study demonstrates the relevance of external labour activities as a promising intervention that, although improperly implemented in the prisons, reinforces the need for a positive, holistic approach to the rehabilitation of inmates in prisons. Thus, external labour refocuses our attention from the dyadic prisoner–officer relationship to a more complex triad of the prisoner as a worker, the officers as middlemen and at times employers, and the state as the general overseer, shedding more light on the varying means by which inmates can be rehabilitated in prisons. A series of practical and policy implications are also suggested to help boost and

improve external labour activities and support the rehabilitation of inmates in the Ghana Prisons Service. The study ends with a number of directions for future research.

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Thank you all so very much and God Bless

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the memories of my late parents. Thank you very much for everything. Continue to Rest in Peace

Declaration:

I declare that the contents in this thesis were written by me with the exception of some direct quotations from published and unpublished sources. I do understand that picking someone else's ideas without a citation is considered plagiarism in accordance with the Regulations of the University. All ideas and quotations that are not mine are referenced and the sources are acknowledged accordingly.

.

Signature: Eunice Aidoo Date: 25/01/2023

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 1
Introduction 1
1.1 Main research findings 9
1.2 Theoretical contributions 10
1.3 Implications for policy and practice 12
1.4 Definitions of key terms 14
1.5 Structure of the work 15
CHAPTER 2 18
Literature review 18
2.1 Historical development of prisons 18
2.2 Modern and present-day prisons 21
2.3 Characteristics of prisoners 22
2.4 Historical overview of prison work 23
2.5 Unpacking prison work 28
2.6 Impact of prison work 30
2.6.1 Purpose 30
2.6.2 Economic Benefits 31
2.6.3 Psychological and psychological benefits 32
2.6.4 Behavioural change benefits 32
2.6.5 Impact on rehabilitation 34
2.6.6 Potential impact on recidivism 36
2.6.7 Future prospects in life 39
2.7 Criticisms of prison work 40
2.7.1 Adds no skills to prisoners 41
2.7.2 Competition with regular labour 42
2.7.3 Exploitative in form and nature 43
2.8 Prisoners' experiences of work during incarceration 43

2.9 A discursive practice approach to prisoners' experience of work 44
2.10 Chapter Summary and Conclusion 54
CHAPTER 3 56
Methodology 56
3.1 Research Context 56
3.1.1 The beginning of prison in Ghana 56
3.1.2 Meaning of prison labour in Ghana 57
3.1.3 The Ghana prisons service 58
3.2 Research Approach 61
3.2.1 Exploratory qualitative research design 62
3.2.2 Participants' recruitment 63
3.3 Research methods 67
3.3.1 Theoretical Sampling Strategy 68
3.3.2 Snowball sampling method 70
3.3.3 Participant recruitment timeline and access 70
3.4 Microstoria: The stories of prisoners 91
3.5 Ethics in research 94
3.6 Data collection 95
3.6.1 Interviews and informal discussions 96
3.6.2 Field notes, policy documentation and other archival data sources 102
3.7 Data analysis 102
3.9 Methodology limitations 116
3.10 Summary and conclusions 118
CHAPTER 4 119
"BEYOND CHEAP LABOUR": HOW WORK IS ORGANISED IN THE PRISONS 119
4.1 External labour: Work outside the prison walls 119
4.2 Drafting constituents 120
4.3 The call-up 121
4.4. Prisontopia: The fleeting prison environment and work 125
4.4.1 The formal prison climate: Regimens, rules and routines 128
4.4.2 The informal climate of prisons: Values, norms and culture 129

4.5 Selecting the Officers 137
4.6 Gang Formation 139
4.6.1 Matchmaking 140
4.6.2 Scouting the prisoners 141
4.6.3 Cherry-picking 145
Likewise, an ex-offender also recounted; 145
4.7 Gang genres 149
4.7.1 Temporary gangs 149
4.7.2 Permanent Gangs 150
4.8 Justify your inclusion 151
4.9 Chapter summary and conclusion 154
CHAPTER 5 155
WORK, LABOUR, AND INCARCERATION: HOW PRISONERS EXPERIENCE WORK 155
5.1 Nature of the work: Informal sector jobs, flexible, fragmented, and 3D 155
5.2 Sourcing work for prisoners 161
5.2.1 Ranking members inside Kwakiutl: Key roles of officers in job sourcing for inmates 161
5.2.2 Ranking chief/Chief Order 162
5.2.3 Sub-chiefs/Officers 163
5.2.4 Angelic Hubris: The job sourcing process 164
5.3 Working tools 168
5.4 Getting on: Training for the job 170
5.5 The atmosphere and context within which work is executed 172
5.6 How inmates perceive the jobs sourced by officers 174
5.6.1 yaq!wima as a natural selection in prison: give before being counted 174
5.6.2 yaq!wima as back-scratching: the geometric progression of endless pyramids of obligation by inmates (residual feeling of gratitude) 176
5.6.3 yaq!wima as comeuppance for inmates 179
5.7 Prison bureaucracy: How inmates are taken in and out of the prison for work 181
5.8 Location of work outside the prison 185
5.9 Power dynamics at the coalface of work: dull compulsion, power in action 188
5.10 Reciprocating yaq!wima through Symbolic violence 191

5.11 Supervision by officers 192
5.12 It's all about the money: Discretionary remuneration system 195
5.13 Chapter summary and conclusion 199
CHAPTER 6 201
EXTERNAL LABOUR: REHABILITATION THROUGH TRANSGRESSION TRANSPARENCY AND PERSONAL NARRATIVE CONTROL 201
6.1 Transgression transparency in prisons 201
6.1.1 Profiting from prison work: The reasons to engage in external labour activities 203
6.1.2 Dealing with the abyss of time, social deprivation, and the pains of imprisonment 204
6.1.3 Social deprivation: Coping with the pains of imprisonment 207
6.1.4 Panhandlers in service: An alternative source of income 208
6.1.5 'You dey go Ghana come': Odyssey of external labour workers 210
6.1.6 'High-muck-a-muck' of prisons 212
6.1.7 Fuelling the informal economy in the prisons: Enterprising inmates and the apparatus market 217
6.1.8 Chop make I chop: Sharing is caring 219
6.1.8 Scratch My Back Make I Scratch Your Back 220
6.2 Rehabilitation after incarceration: Reality or fatality? 224
6.2.1 Fatalistic attitude of inmates towards rehabilitation 231
6.2.2 External labour activities: Punishment enough or rehabilitative? 232
6.2.3 Not the largest sector in the economy: How would ex-convicts cope? 235
6.2.4 Cul-de-sac career options for inmates learning low-skilled and low-paid jobs 237
6.2.5 Master-Servant relationship: How relationships with officers contribute to rehabilitation 239
6.2.6 Personal character rebranding through character moulding 243
6.2.7 Horizontal comradeship, quasi-family relationships and brotherhood of trust 244
6.3 Prison-hopping, the story of career prisoners: When life as a prisoner is the better option 246
6.3.1 Prison as a safety net for Inmates 247
6.4 Recidivism 254
6.5 Conclusion 257
CHAPTER 7 259
CONCLUSION 259

7.1 Restatement of findings 260
7.1.1 Beyond cheap labour: How work is organised in prisons 261
7.1.2 Work, labour, and incarceration: How prisoners experience work 263
7.1.3 External labour: Rehabilitation through transgression transparency and personal narrative control 266
7.2 Study contributions 273
7.2.1 Contribution to knowledge 273
7.2.2 Contribution to theory 275
7.4 Research limitations and directions for future study 282
7.5 Personal reflections 286
7.6 Conclusion 287
RFERENCES 288
APPENDIX 332

LIST of Figures

Figure 2.1. Conceptual framework…….52

Figure 3.1. Location of prisons chosen for the study…….64

Figure 3.2. Timeline of key stages of participants recruitment procedure ……72

Figure 3.3. Processes involved in contacting the prisons……..97

Figure 3.4. Data structure…….108

Figure 4.1. Exploring how work is organised in prisons……..136

Figure 5.1. Understanding external labour activities……198

Figure 6.1. Rehabilitation through transgression transparency and personal narrative.....223

List of Tables

Table 3.1. Participants information (Male prisoners)……74

Table 3.2. Participants information (Female prisoners)…….83

Table 3.3. Participants information (Ex-Offenders)……...85

Table 3.4. Participants information (Male Officers)……...87

Table 3.5. Participants information (Female Officers)……89

Table 3.6. Summary of field data collected……101

Table 3.7. Example of coding process……107

Table 3.8. Sources of data and how they were employed in the analysis…….111

Table 4.1. Colours of prisoners' jumpers and their meanings……..153

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Study Background

Studies on prison work have long held the view that giving inmates the chance to work influences their lives and forms a very critical component in their rehabilitation. The frequently touted benefits of prison work include but are not limited to, reducing idleness (Crook, 2007; McBride, 2003), financial benefits and skill acquisition (Naessens, 2020; Pierson et al., 2014; Rossi et al., 2013), personal character reformation (Johnson et al., 2017), desistance from crime (Duwe, 2015; Farrall & Maruna, 2004; Sampson & Laub, 2003), and cost-cutting possibilities in prisons (Cate, 2021; Thompson, 2012). The belief in the efficacy of prison work in providing these benefits has aided in hatching a copious amount of practical and theoretical cottage industry of journals and books on prison work that extols its values and contributions to rehabilitation, subsequently stipulating suggestions for the working conditions of prisoners (see, for example, Bullock & Bunce, 2020; Crewe, 2012; Cullen et al., 2014; Harding, 2014; Pandeli et al., 2019; Richmond, 2014; Zanella, 2020).

Keeping prisoners active and engaged in fruitful quests during their time in prison is a preoccupation of prison services in many parts of the world. The idleness that has long plagued inmates is viewed as a detrimental and counterproductive characteristic of prison life (Maguire et al., 1988), posing a major challenge to administrators and governments alike due to its negative impact, such as inhibiting prisoners from making any progress towards rehabilitation (Batchelder & Pippert, 2002) and not contributing anything towards reducing the expenses of running the prisons (Funke et al., 1982). Thus, governments and prison administrators are constantly seeking various means to curb it. With more than 10.77 million people held in prisons throughout the world and a total prison population increase by (24%) since 2000 which is slightly less than the general population (28%) in the same period (Fair & Walmsley, 2021; Walmsley, 2019), prisons provide fertile ground to initiate work programs that make use of the valuable human resources they contain by engaging the abundance of time inmates have on their hands as well as providing help in running the prisons.

Prison work is therefore a widely established practice in the field of criminal justice (Ivanics, 2022), largely understood as a standard component of the execution of prison sentences carried out in the form of jobs by individual prisoners held in penal institutions. It is generally accepted

that convicted prisoners must work, which has never really been challenged or seriously debated (De Jonge, 2018). As a widespread practice, both public discourses and scientific accounts on prison labour cover quite a wide spectrum; yet, scholarly contributions on prison work mainly focus on its exploitative nature (Bair, 2020; Brown, 2008; DelSesto, 2021; Jacobs, 2018; Rymhs, 2009) invisibility (Durnescu & Istrate, 2020; Hatton, 2017; Pandeli et al., 2019) and reduction of recidivism (Cooney, 2012; Duwe, 2014; Graffam et al., 2012; Maguire et al., 1988; Sedgley et al., 2010; van Netburg, 1996). In this regard, there has been loud reverberation of the concept of prison labour as scholars concur by drawing attention to the impact of in-prison work on attitudinal change, which is supposed to counteract the negative relationship that inmates too often have with legitimate employment after their release from prisons (Pandeli et al., 2019). So far, studies have underscored the intricate social dynamics that shape the many different perspectives of in-prison work but have done less to advance out-of-prison work and the nature of the work itself. A look at the expansive literature mostly reveals that despite the significant engagement of inmates outside the prisons, empirical research which examines the dynamics of prison work outside prisons is budding, as only a modest body of studies has chronicled this practice. As a result, studies on prison work raise more questions than they answer about how the work is sourced, the implications of the work, and how inmates understand the gradations of the work they do outside the prisons whilst incarcerated and its eventual contribution to their rehabilitation. Hence, capturing the essence of prison work necessitates taking a closer look at the idea itself, and its relationships to other forms of work.

Drawing on the contemporary turn to practice, in accounting for social life (Bourdieu, 1990; Dreyfus, 1991; Giddens, 1984; Wittgenstein, 2010) as a lens, this study explores how prisoners experience work outside their prisons. Specifically, it takes Schatzki's, (2002) conceptualization of practice as ‘sayings’ and ‘doings’ to account for the work experiences of inmates as they engage in working outside the prisons, and how these experiences potentially contribute towards inmates’ character transformation and rehabilitation. Contributions from the study are developed based on a qualitative inquiry into the external labour practices in five prisons in Ghana. The study is based on semi-structured interviews and observations of 20 officers, 60 inmates and 10 ex-offenders. Also, publicly available data in the form of government white papers, press releases, and newspaper articles were used to supplement the primary data gathered.

In focusing on the practices of external labour, the study provides a framework for understanding the nature of the work done by inmates outside the prisons, how they help to shape the character and behaviour of inmates for the future and how the participants make sense of their situation regarding incarceration and work, and how all these aspects contribute to the future outlook of inmates after incarceration. In drawing on practice theory as a lens through which to explore how work carried out by inmates outside the prisons of Ghana while incarcerated contributes to their character modification, skill acquisition and rehabilitation, the study emphasises the roles of intelligibility, routines, activities, and practices in shaping and giving form to the organisation of work in prisons, and by extension, everyday social life.

Research Motivation: Work in the context of prisons: past contributions and current agenda

The storied annals of the sociology of work and criminology are awash with copious tales of inmates working inside prisons for government, private individuals and organisations whilst incarcerated. Consequently, lessons from these narratives are characteristically institutionalised and suggestions are made through the pedagogy of case studies and communicated through recommendations for the institution and future researchers on prison work and labour. Still, such accounts serve as a reflection of what goes on in the work carried out by inmates, but whether this work has any reflection on rehabilitation is still not apparent, as researchers have not come to a consensus on the issue, especially with regard to work done outside the prisons.

The link between work and crime is manifold, as research has revealed an association between a person's position in the workforce and his or her penchant for committing a crime (Janko & Popli, 2015; Lageson & Uggen, 2013; Levitt, 2001; Uggen & Wakefield, 2008). Thus, access to well-paying legitimate jobs and other economic opportunities is an essential determinant of whether people would engage in crime. For instance, higher levels of job insecurity have been linked to higher arrest rates (Laub & Sampson, 2001). Also, work has gains that span various levels, including the individual, family, community, and society. Thus, securing a job attests to the assertion that the individual is progressing towards a crime-free lifestyle. Hence, (Beatton et al., 2018; Samara, 2011) assert that most crimes are committed by relatively young, less-educated men, specifically those with the lowest possible earnings and weakest prospects for steady jobs. Nevertheless, research proposes that new roles, new schedules, and new social

supports are the ingredients of a successful transition for prisoners (Maruna, 2000). Therefore, prison employment can improve prisoners' skill levels, range of work experience, and earning levels

Questions related to the objectives of prison labour have been present since the very beginning of the modern prison system, although the answers are still contested; prison work programs have sought many goals (Cullen & Travis, 1984). Some of the goals for the involvement of prisoners in programs are that it contributes to improved dynamic security within the prisons (Edgar et al., 2011), decreases participation in disciplinary violations during the time of imprisonment (Meek & Lewis, 2014), and reduces recidivism (Kim & Clark, 2013). It also has an economic appeal because it decreases operating costs, introduces prisoners to the customs and principles of the world of work, such as self-discipline, and establishes a link between individual productivity and financial rewards (Maguire et al., 1988). Guynes and Grieser, (1986) created a detailed model of the goals of prison labour, including three different dimensions depending on scales where the specific goals are realized. On the individual level, they defined objectives such as the promotion of good work ethics, participation in vocational training, and gaining income and work experience. On the organizational level, the main objectives were reducing idleness, structuring daily activities, and reducing the cost of imprisonment. On the macro level, at the same time, it was symbolic repayment for the society that was highlighted. Although the authors set up a goal structure based on the most widely acknowledged purposes behind the prison industry and also stated that potential tensions between these goals may exist (e.g., between inmate-focused and institutional goals, or between institutional and societal objectives), they did not analyse the potential conflict between these goals or the competing interests behind the operation of such a system.

Prison work/external labour, in this case, is the work carried out by prisoners in organisations outside the prisons. This work includes construction, farming and the like, which require little or no skill, a few hours of on-the-job training, and low remuneration. Most of the time, prisoners in Ghanaian prisons are accompanied by officers to various organisations outside the prisons to work regular eight-hour jobs in the name of facilitating the rehabilitation process. These jobs are expected to reduce crime within and outside the prisons, help prisoners to develop skills outside the prisons, and give prisoners some financial incentives. Prison work is different from the regular jobs of people living outside prisons. People with their freedom have choices regarding the type of work in which they engage, and the wages and other benefits to expect and accept. On the contrary, prisoners do not have the right to refuse to engage in work

activities because they could receive punishment such as losing privileges earned, segregation, and extra days on their sentences (Black, 2008). Again, workers' willingness to offer their services to organisations depends on their wages in return. That is, workers' income sometimes depends on their level of performance, which in turn depends on their aptitudes, equipment, and tools available. Besides, workers choose from many matching rewarding job options available to them based on their skills and preferences for different jobs.

Research Aim

Human Rights Watch (2019) states that prisoners maintain all their human rights while incarcerated except for the rights associated with their freedom (Coyle, 2009). However, most prisoners, especially in Ghana, where only superficial attention is paid to the fundamental human rights of prisoners (United States Department of State, 2018), do not have a say nor the opportunity to make choices associated with their work in prison. Likewise, decisions concerning their wages are left to prison officers' discretion, as the prison service has no structured payment forms. Hence, prisoners in Ghana tend to be cheated out of their labour. Still, research has shown that people are ultimately motivated to work because of the remuneration they receive and the autonomy that comes with the job (Razak et al., 2018; Schuck & Rabe-Hemp, 2018). Contrary to this belief, prison work does not offer prisoners any of these rewards for their work, which begs the question of the element that drives prisoners to work, the means they use to execute their tasks, and prisoners' attitudes towards working outside the prisons. If prisoners still work for organisations outside the prison despite all these limitations, how does working outside the prisons contribute to prisoners' rehabilitation?

In spite of the popularity of work in prisons across the globe (Milman-Sivan & Sagy, 2020; Richmond, 2014; Van Zyl Smit & Dunkel, 2018) there is still not much empirical evidence about how the procurement of the work flows through the prisons and the ensuing possibilities associated with the process for inmates to comprehend and incorporate into their performance. Most studies addressing the issue of prison labour are either too descriptive or overly one-dimensional regarding their thematic focus and analytical framework. In criminological accounts, prison labour is mainly discussed only through its relation to correctional practices or post-release possibilities. Meanwhile, in political-economic analyses, privatization and marketization of the penal field are frequently overemphasized, and the governing principle of profit logic dominates the interpretations (Scherrer & Shah, 2017). A rich body of literature exists on certain dimensions of prison labour, including but not limited to its relationship to

slavery or forced labour, international labour standards and labour rights (Armstrong et al., 2012; Gilmore, 2000; Kang, 2009); the effects of prison labour on post-release opportunities on the labour market (Cox, 2009; Flanagan, 1989; Maguire et al., 1988); and the logic and operation of the prison-industrial complex (Chang & Thompkins, 2002; Parenti, 2000; Thompson, 2012). At the same time, there are only a few examples of analyses that connect the historical, economic, political, ideological, and organizational aspects of prison labour (Conley, 1980; Whitehouse, 2017).

Against a backdrop of prison work literature, this study proposes that the work done by inmates whilst incarcerated should not be reduced to just its economic or exploitative impact alone, as those associations are firmly established. Since the current literature neglects to satisfactorily account for the dynamic processes in which inmates engage in out-of-prison work and fully recognises that there is a need to study work conducted outside prison, the goal of this study is not to re-assert the continuing significance of the linkages between prison work and the other variables previously stated, but rather, to address themes that are rarely written about in contemporary debates relating to prison work and accompanied by current misperceptions and 'blind alleys' (Crompton, 2010 p. 10) relating to policy and scholastic debates. Throwing the spotlight on how work is sourced from individuals and organisations alike and how inmates make meanings of it, this study will demonstrate that questions persist about the nature of outside-prison work, particularly its impact and how inmates understand it, providing a fertile expanse for research due to its ability to illuminate the dynamics of working relationships and their implications for employment and social policies. To expand upon the theme of prison work, understand the parties involved, their roles in sourcing the work, and how inmates understand the work, this study pulls data from a significant survey on the experiences of inmates and officers concerning how work is sourced and understood by participants in the prison service of Ghana. By exploring how the work is sourced, the study seeks to illuminate the dynamic processes at play when inmates work outside the prisons during their incarceration. The research questions driving the empirical inquiry are:

1. How is the work done by prisoners outside their prisons organised and labelled in the discourse on prisoner labour?
2. How do prisoners experience the work they do outside their prisons during the time of their incarceration?
3. How does the work prisoners do outside their prisons contribute to their rehabilitation?

The three research questions provide the avenue for an intricate exploration of external labour practices from the stories of inmates, officers, and ex-offenders from prisons in Ghana. The first research question addresses themes on external labour practices and how work is organised. By throwing the spotlight on how work is organised and labelled, the study offers an insight into the participants of the work, the management of the work and the nature of the work by extending our understanding of the climatic condition of prisons. The second research question explores how the jobs are sourced and interpreted, the working environment, the power dynamics of the parties involved in the work, the tools and equipment employed, and the motivation, engagement and procedures involved in the performance of the work. The final research question provides a detailed explanation of how the work contributes towards the rehabilitation of inmates as well as the other benefits associated with the work.

Methods

The study is based on semi-structured interviews and observations of officers, inmates and ex-offenders conducted over a six-month period in five prisons in Ghana. It employed the discursive practice theory as a lens in exploring how participants understand work outside the prisons. Additionally, secondary data from digital and archival footprints were used to supplement the primary data gathered. The theoretical sampling method was used to select 60 prisoners and 20 officers, whilst snowball sampling was employed in selecting 10 ex-offenders for the study.

The analysis of data was carried out in three primary steps in which the ideas discussed by respondents were analysed and compared to various process events. These steps facilitated the outlining of first-order codes, sub-theoretical, theoretical categories, and aggregate theoretical dimensions within the data (Corley & Gioia, 2004; Gioia et al., 1994, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985a; Patzelt et al., 2014; Pratt et al., 2006). The analysis started by employing 'open coding' (Bennett et al., 2019; Locke, 2001; Priest et al., 2002) to discover preliminary categories or first-order codes (Maanen, 1979) with regard to how participants described their experiences when working outside the prisons. This process assisted in identifying statements and terminology until the categorization covered the material. In addition, as common nodes started to be unearthed (i.e., first-order codes Van Maanen, 1979), NVivo (version 12) was used to classify and analyse the data (i.e., highlighting segments of the transcript with NVivo and assigning that text to a particular first-order code). Here, a plan was devised to refine coding schemes for future iterations of coding and to discuss potential themes that were emerging

while performing this analysis. In the second stage of the analysis, the work progressed from open coding (Locke, 2001) to more abstract coding of data into theoretical categories and subcategories, or what Locke, (2001) and Corbin & Strauss, (1990) call axial coding. Here, a comparison was made among the different respondents to separate 'outlier' accounts from more thematic categories. Subsequently, the last stage involved re-examining the first- and second-order codes and merging them into broad themes that captured the participants' understanding of external labour activities. Thus, the level of abstraction required to create a tentative view of aggregate theoretical dimensions as well as a preliminary view of the relationships between dimensions was created at this stage of the analysis.

Statement of originality of the study

According to Guetzkow et al., (2004), to grasp the full extent of originality is to consider the moral significance of a research work. As a result, the extent of the impact of the study being socially significant by solving real-world problems as opposed to solipsism needs to be considered. In this regard, this study which examines how prisoners experience work outside the prisons and focuses on how the work eventually contributes to their rehabilitation can be considered as solving a real-world problem and thus, satisfy this consideration of originality as opined by (Guetzkow et al., 2004). Another consideration for originality is the approach that was adopted in carrying out the research and reporting the findings. As an understudied area, especially in a Ghanaian context, Guetzkow et al., (2004), purport that an aspect of originality in research work is generated from adopting a new approach to an even tried/trendy research topic. Therefore, adopting a discursive practice approach to develop theories about work carried out by inmates outside prisons in Ghana underscores adopting a new approach to research that has been carried out by various researchers in developed countries. Not only that, the nature of this study is organised to explore an area of prison work which is rarely examined by researchers. Thus, even though different studies have been conducted in prisons exploring how work contributes to the rehabilitation of inmates, not much has been focused on outside-prison work and how that factors into the rehabilitation of inmates Hence, this study explores outside-prison work which is rarely focused on by researchers as a starting point to explain how inmates are rehabilitated through the prison system. Again, originality in research encompasses the ways in which a study is viewed as making a contribution to knowledge. Hence, this research adopted a different analytical gaze to answer three research questions that generated three original contributions to knowledge. First of all, the first research question

contributed to how inmates are selected for the work they do outside the prisons for which a model was developed. The second research question contributed to how jobs are procured for inmates by using the potlatch system of gift-giving and reciprocating as an analytical gaze to examine how officers search for jobs for inmates and how inmates, aware of this 'kind' gesture by the officers attempt at reciprocating the favour bestowed on them by working hard. Thus, this chapter highlights how the act of gift-giving and taking plays out in prison work. Finally, the third research question employed transgression transparency and personal narrative control to examine how the work inmates do whilst incarcerated contributes to their rehabilitation. Subsequently, the next section looks at the contributions of the study which elaborate on the various contributions that highlight the originality of this study.

1.1 Main research findings

The study developed three key themes, each serving as a response to each of the research questions. In response to the research questions, the answers revolved around the parties involved in the organisation of work, motivation, procedures, and engagement involved in the work, as well as how the work contributes towards the rehabilitation of inmates.

First, the study found that work is organized by taking into consideration the nature of the crimes committed by the inmates, the lengths of their sentences, and the behaviour of inmates in the prisons. This is manifested in five themes: (1) external labour, (2) drafting of constituents (subthemes: prisontopia – the fleeting prison environment and work; the formal prison climate – regiments, rules and routines; the informal prison climate – values, norms and culture, selecting officers), (3) gang formation (subthemes: matchmaking; scouting the prisoners; cherry picking), (4) gang genre (subthemes: temporary gangs – persona non grata, rough-and-ready, ecomock; permanent gangs – special gangs, location gangs), and (5) justifying one's inclusion. Cumulatively, these themes cohere together to extend our understanding of how external labour is organised in prisons and serve as a response to the first research question – 'How is the work done by prisoners outside their prisons organised and labelled in the discourse on prisoner labour?'

The second research question focused on 'how' the motivation, procedure and engagement of inmates play out in their understanding of the work they do outside the prisons. The chapter addresses the practices of how the jobs for external labour activities are sourced and explores how the processes involved in sourcing the jobs translate into the understanding of inmates and eventually into the performance of the work. Participants highlighted the practices surrounding

external labour activities in the areas of how the work is sourced for the inmates, the working environment, the remuneration they get for their work, and the general disposition of inmates towards the work they do outside. Taken together, this helps in answering the second research question, 'How do prisoners experience the work they do outside their prisons during the time of their incarceration?' This is demonstrated in how the motivation, procedure and engagement of the participants culminate to influence the performance of the work inmates do outside the prison by underscoring the power dynamics between the parties involved in the work and how the sourcing of the work plays a role in influencing how it is carried out.

The third research question provides a detailed exploration of the strategies employed by the prisons to ensure and enhance the rehabilitation of inmates. In an effort to stimulate character modification, the prison service supplements the punishment of incarceration and external labour activities with suspension, public shaming and publishing the names of inmates, which serves to make the occurrence of prisoners' transgressions transparent in order to prompt rehabilitation for minor offences such as disobeying officers, idling about at work and rule-breaking in the prison. Also, the study found that rehabilitation could occur at the individual, organisational and macro levels. Aside from rehabilitation, the study also found that other intentions of external labour activities include the economic utilisation of inmates as a workforce and personal financial gains for the parties involved in the work. Taken together, this helps in answering the third research question: 'How does the work prisoners do outside the prison contribute to their rehabilitation?'

1.2 Theoretical contributions

The study provided important theoretical contributions in the areas of practice theory, prison work, rehabilitation and the art of gift-giving and reciprocating, which are summarised as follows:

a) The study operationalised Theodore Schatzki's (2002) most influential version of social practice, which regards practices as temporally and spatially evolving sets of doings (actions) and sayings (discourses) organised by three major elements: practical understanding of what to say and do (inmates interpreting the tasks, knowledge and experiences required, training and tools employed in the performance of the job), engagement with what to say and do (feelings and dispositions of inmates, respect and self-esteem issues, motivation for the work, remuneration, and contributions to

rehabilitation and reduction of recidivism), and procedures of what to do and say (supervision given and received, rules of engagement, rules and policies of the prisons and how they influence the work outside). Consequently, inmates blend these elements in external labour dynamics to accomplish tasks which are deemed satisfactory by officers in the prisons (Giustini, 2022). A practice-based approach to work permits the framing of external labour as a processual, social accomplishment embedded in the actions of inmates, sanctioned in accordance with the prisons' regulations and framework of work. It engenders broader theoretical insights into external labour as comprising a pragmatic, motivational base for behaviour modification, rehabilitation, and wider societal impact (Miettinen et al., 2010). This study argues that practice theory affords re-framing of external labour as being constituted according to the factors that organise and stimulate work, adding further knowledge to our understanding of how and why inmates might be steered towards working whilst incarcerated. Throughout the study, external labour is conceptualised not as an unethical/ethical categorisation, but as a well-designed dialectic employed to navigate the lives of inmates and the performance of work outside the prisons. Thus, through the practice-based approach (Schatzki, 2002), external labour is re-framed as the competent accomplishments of the participants (inmates, officers) negotiated against the regulations, goals, and situationality of the prisons. From this stance, the study repositions our attention on prison work by refocusing external labour as a mode of knowledge and actions which emerges from the dynamics of social interactions among officers and inmates in prisons. Hence, by focusing on interpreting and illuminating external labour activity in an interestingly atypical institution which is still not visible to a lot of social inquiry, this study augments the mounting sociological literature on the essence of prison labour and work and its implications for prisoners, prisons, and the wider society.

b) Furthermore, the study also advances theory in relation to the art of gift-giving and reciprocating. Reciprocity in external labour relations not only augments the agency of inmates but also results in parallel outcomes, as the power dynamics between officers and inmates are unequal (Kowalski, 2011; Mauss, 2002; Nardi, 2009). This study contributes by showing how the art of gift-giving and reciprocating plays an exceptionally significant role in spurring efforts geared towards tackling recidivism, rehabilitation, and skill acquisition. The burgeoning literature on prison work offers many pathways to rehabilitation, recidivism, and skill acquisition, but none of them have included how the work is sourced and presented as a gift to be reciprocated by

inmates at some future time. In addition, the influence of the prison environment on decision-making and selection criteria is shown: rather than conceptualising inmates individually as purely economic actors in the prisons, it is proposed that their agency and behaviour are shaped by the environment of the prisons collectively.

c) The study contributes to prison work in a different way. Prior scholarly research works on prison have focused mostly on in-prison work (Milman-Sivan & Sagy, 2020; Richmond, 2014; Van Zyl Smit & Dunkel, 2018), or privatised prison work (Pandeli, 2015) and how they are performed in prisons. Ideally, inmates are given the opportunity to work on projects and tasks assigned to them in prisons, for which they mostly work for a few hours within the day. Findings from this current study looked at outside-prison work, which is undertaken by inmates who work for eight hours per day and sometimes more: an aspect of prison work that has been ignored by prior research. Examining prison work in this light enables us to gain a better perspective of the complexities of such work by shedding light on the tasks performed by inmates, which opens the avenue to reconsider what constitutes prison work.

d) The study contributes to the rehabilitation literature by examining how outside-prison work leads to behaviour modifications and positive attitude development. Although past research has highlighted the rehabilitative impact of in-prison work, the current study has demonstrated how rehabilitation could be achieved with external labour activities. Thus, using transgression, transparency, and personal narrative as a learning tool to enable inmates to form and change their behaviour to suit the performance of work outside the prisons, this study extends our understanding of how rehabilitation could be achieved through the work inmates perform outside the prisons.

1.3 Implications for policy and practice

The theoretical contributions of the study have the following practical and policy implications.

a) From the previous research aligning with the study, the work highlights the rhetoric within the law: International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention No. 29 (Milman-Sivan & Sagy, 2020) and the Prison Service Decree 1972 (N.R.C.D. 46) of prison work without stating categorically what constitutes external labour activities. Thus, without a clear definition and comprehension of the nature of the work that constitutes external labour and what this work is for, officers and inmates are left to draw their own inferences and produce their own interpretations of the nature of the work. Therefore,

there should be a review of the definition of external labour activities where the nature of the work is clearly spelt out, and the sources of the work, the processes involved in sourcing the work and the parties involved are clearly defined. Aside from stating the work clearly, it is vital to state the purpose of the work, so that participants are aware of the context in which they are working and the regimes within which the work is carried out, as this will influence the participants' approach to the work.

b) Another suggestion for the improvement of external labour activities is the wages paid to inmates. Unlike other countries, such as the UK and the USA (Jacobs, 2018; Pandeli et al., 2019) which have an established system of payment, the prison service in Ghana does not have an explicitly stated system and method of payment for inmates. Therefore, officers are encouraged to remunerate inmates based on their intuition. Situations like this could be disheartening to the inmates, as most officers pay them per their prerogative, which does not foster the intent of external labour. To ensure that the work achieves its aim of reforming inmates, they need to perceive a system of fairness in the way they are remunerated by the officers, as pay equity has an impact not just on the performance of their work but also on their perception and eventual skills acquisition from the job. Therefore, the prison service should institute a uniform pay system (whether this is a daily, hourly, or monthly wage) to ensure that inmates are paid accordingly in order to avoid employers and other parties taking advantage of their effort in the name of hard labour without any form of compensation.

c) To capitalise on the result of external labour activities for rehabilitation, the service needs to be in a position to inculcate the rehabilitative intents of the work right from its sourcing to its performance. Also, if inmates are expected to apply the skills they learn from their jobs after their release from prison, they need to be exposed to the inner workings of the contemporary work environment through the tools they employ in the performance of their work. Inmates should be enabled to learn the skills, but should also be permitted to practice with current tools and equipment employed in the contemporary work environment so as not to find themselves handicapped by a situation where they can do the work but are not well equipped with the skills to apply the modern tools and equipment to do so adequately.

d) As a best practice, the prison service should be equipped with halfway houses to ensure that inmates are given some time and enabled to integrate into society gradually, especially those who have been in prison for a long time. Alternatively, due to resource inadequacy, a section of the prison could be demarcated for such a purpose to transition

inmates who are nearing the completion of their sentences. This would enable inmates to have some time apart to disassociate themselves from fellow inmates serving their sentences, reflect on their lives and choices, and prepare themselves mentally and physically to face a different set of people with characteristics that are distinct from what they have come to know and grown accustomed to in the prison while serving their sentences. Integrating officers could also be trained to help facilitate the process of gradual integration.

e) Also, adequate training and preparations need to be given to the officers to enable them to handle specific issues related to external labour activities. This is because officers need adequate knowledge of external labour activities so that it can inform their practical experiences in external labour activities when escorting inmates. As a result, officers must be equipped to have a broader over-arching perspective of the context and content of external labour, not only in terms of their roles as escorting officers but also as officers of the entire prison system, in order to promote the understanding of inmates and help incorporate the goals of the work in the inmates' daily activities.

1.4 Definitions of key terms

External labour activities – work carried out by inmates outside the prisons.

Gang – a group of four inmates assigned to an officer for escorting duties.

Gang leader – an inmate chosen to be the leader of a gang of four prisoners or external labour duties.

Chief Order – Senior Officer in charge of the administration of external labour activities.

Master – Title used by inmates for male officers.

Lady – title used by inmates for female officers.

OIC – Officer in charge of a particular prison.

2IC – Officer who is second in charge after the OIC.

3IC – Officer in charge after the 2IC in a particular prison.

Yardmaster – officer in charge of maintaining affairs in the prison yard.

DSP – Deputy Superintendent of Prisons

ASP – Assistant Superintendent of Prisons

ACOP – Assistant Chief Of Prisons

ADP – Assistant Director of Prisons

Zontoli – Name given to soup prepared in prisons

Polar Prisoners or No Escapes – these are prisoners who have served most of their sentences and would not escape irrespective of the opportunities presented to them

Belbele – The name given to new prisoners

Black Coat – These are leaders selected by the officers from the inmates and coordinate activities between the inmates and officers

Cell leaders – The are inmates selected by a group of inmates in a particular cell as the leader

Jailman – The name used by inmates in prisons

JHS – Junior High School

SHS – Senior High School

Yaq!wima – The name of a gift among the Kwakiutl

RCC- Regional Coordinating Council

Boy-boy – Someone who waits on other hand and foot

Apparatus – Condiments

1.5 Structure of the work

The study is made up of seven chapters. Table 1 gives an overview of the structure and key aspects of the chapters.

Chapter	Chapter Contents	Elements
1	Introduction	Background, Justification, Importance
2	Literature Review	Theories, Models, Empirical studies, Gaps in literature
3	Methodology	Methodology: Semi-Structured interviews, Non-participative observation
4	Issues and Findings *How is work outside the prisons organized and labelled in the prison discourse?*	Discussion of findings for the first research question
5	Issues and Findings *How do prisoners experience work outside the prisons?*	Discussion of findings for the second research question
6	Issues and Findings *How does work outside prisons contribute to the rehabilitation of prisoners?*	Discussion of findings for the third research question
7	Conclusion	Restatement, Review of findings, Contribution to knowledge, Limitations, Future Research

Chapter two reviews studies on prison work regarding empirical data and places prison work in a wider context with reference to a historical overview of prison work and its implication for current practices. Thus, the chapter facilitates delineating how the shared memories and meanings associated with prison work provide enlightenment about such work in a contemporary prison.

Chapter three concentrates on the methods, choices and activities performed in securing the narratives of inmates, officers, and ex-offenders. The research context, research approach, data collection and analysis are explored in this chapter. Additionally, the ethical considerations for, during and after the data collection are examined, as well as the limitations encountered.

Chapter four presents the findings on the first research question by demonstrating how work is organised in the prisons. The chapter shows that prison work practices are organised through five key themes: (1) external labour, (2) constituents drafting (subthemes: prisontopia – the fleeting prison environment and work; the formal prison climate – regimens, rules and routines; informal climate – values, norms and culture, selecting officers), (3) gang formation (subthemes: matchmaking, scouting the prisoners, cherry-picking), (4) gang genre (subthemes:

temporary gangs – persona non grata, rough-and-ready, ecomock; permanent gangs – special gangs, location gangs), (5) justifying inclusion.

Chapter five presents the second research question, which focuses on 'how' the motivation, procedure and engagement of inmates play out in the understanding regarding the work they do outside the prisons. The chapter addresses the practices of how the jobs for external labour activities are sourced and explores how the processes involved in the sourcing of jobs translate into the understanding of inmates and eventually into the performance of the work.

Chapter six presents the third and final research question, which provides a detailed exploration of the strategies employed by the prisons to ensure and enhance the rehabilitation of inmates. The chapter also explores other benefits of external labour activities.

Chapter seven restates the research findings and also provides implications for theory, practice, and policy. Also, the study limitations and directions for future research are explored in this chapter.

CHAPTER 2

Literature review

PRISON, PRISONERS, AND HOW PRISONERS EXPERIENCE WORK

This chapter is a critical review of the existing literature on prisons, prison work, and the consequences of such work, and is structured as follows. The first section provides a historical overview of the development of prisons and details the historical developments and views on prison work. The second section looks at the views of modern and present-day prisons and the characteristics of prisoners and unpacks prison work and its impact. The last part explores the discursive practice approach to prisoners' experience of work.

2.1 Historical development of prison

Prisons as punishment

People who manage to stay out of trouble and act within the confines of the law sometimes take prisons and punishment for granted because they take up a peripheral space in the social awareness reserved for facts of life. However, issues about prisons have managed to work their way down into the hub of public domain, and hence cease to be taken for granted, but rather have become issues that need to be considered. People who commit crimes in society have been treated in many ways, but the use of imprisonment as a form of punishment is a fairly new concept that dates back to the last quarter of the eighteenth century (Pierson et al., 1948). Until recently, punishments for crimes were harsh, such that people deemed criminals were exiled, tortured, enslaved, mutilated, or at worst, executed. Some countries even used stocks, the pillory, and the ducking stool as forms of punishment. These punishments were meant to be humiliating so that they would dissuade people from participating in a life of crime afterwards. Thus, the aim of punishing people was 'to ensure by every means the control of the lower classes', as stated by Childebert II in 596 AD (Reichel, 1979, p. 46; Thorsten, 1967, p. 18). To that end, it was a natural practice for punishments to be given out to the very lowest of people—the slaves (Radbruch, 1950). Consequently, servitude was viewed as a restoration practice where lawbreakers were mandated to toil to re-establish the sense of balance in the world that was disturbed by their crimes (Pierson et al., 1948). It is therefore evident that the punishment and pain of prisoners have been articulated in different ways for many centuries and there exists literature to prove it. Also, the punishment was seen as a structured effort of assistance, espoused essentially for religious and humanitarian purposes. Religious

justifications covered all aspects of human life prior to the Age of Enlightenment in the Western world and the 'offender' was regarded as a sinner who had fallen from the grace of God. Therefore, offenders were made to engage in hard labour because it was viewed as an agent of change for their lives here and in the afterlife. Thus, a conviction to hard labour aided lawbreakers to receive the grace of God again and to be forgiven for their sins. Even though religious beliefs are not the primary driver for prisons and prison work, they were used as its base until other justifications were in time embedded into it (Johnstone, 1992).

Coercing lawbreakers to make amends for their crimes through work is an act that can be traced back many centuries (Gaes, Motiuk, et al., 1999). During imperial Rome, it was customary to discipline slaves using hard labour because the lowest class of freemen were more valued than slaves in the eyes of the influential imperial officers. Thus, the idea arose easily to utilise the labour of prisoners in the great works being undertaken by the state. Accordingly, the employment of prisoners in public works, also known as *opus publicum*, was instituted, where prisoners engaged in activities such as cleaning sewers, patching roads, and working in public baths. An acute form of these methods of punishment was a sentence *ad metalla,* which involved working in the mines in *opus metalli*. The prisoners in any of these cases were put in chains, and as *servipoenae,* they lost their freedom and engaged in hard labour by working in stone quarries, in metal mines, or sulphur pits. Later, prisoners were used in the Mediterranean Sea as oarsmen in war galleys; worked in the Spanish mines in North Africa by the banking house of Fugger for the settlement of huge loans issued to Charles V; and served in the arsenals of France and Spain (Maltby, 2002; Thorsten, 1967). Prisoners were also transported to toil in the Siberian mines and lumber camps of Russia and were used during the 16th and 17th centuries to build fortifications. Punishments during that era were for life and were deemed to be a form of slow and painful death (Von Bar, 1916). These punishments, as well as exile and death, were classified by the legists as capital punishments, for they attracted civil death.

However, the recognition of the progression from corporal punishment to imprisonment can be attributed to the 18th- and 19th-century philosophers. This is because the latter part of the 18th and the first half of the 19th century created an extraordinary list of writers on prison restructurings and also proposed a laid-out plan of how to implement their ideas effectively (Thorsten, 1967). Thus, in an era when the principles and strategies of punishment were under repeated inquiry, it is reasonable to turn back the clock to 18th-century Europe, when John Howard, Jeremy Bentham and Cesare Beccaria initially put prisons on the itinerary of social issues of their class. Based on their review of the justifiable rights of the state over the

incarcerated, there materialised the corrective and utilitarian rationalisation of punishment that still influences our thought processes even today, because criticisms of Bentham and the exploitations of the old establishments birthed the concept of present-day prisons (Ignatieff, 1978). The disposition of the time was that prisons could be a place of optimism rather than anguish, and development rather than inactivity (Pollock et al., 2012). These activists for prisons believed in the notion that prisons were the solution to the problems faced by societies, and this notion led to the creation of the 'big houses' of the 1900s –1950s (Johnson, 2002). Their positive zeal for the transformative capacity of prisons was seen in the rehabilitative period of the 1970s and the subsequent creation of the 'warehouse prisons' of the present day (Irwin, 2005).

Incarceration as a form of punishment in itself is something new, and rightly so, different from primitive penal servitude. It is viewed as a civilized form of punishment when compared to the other methods. Even though the punishment meted out to prisoners has evolved over time, the deprivation of liberty which has formed the core of prisons since their inception persisted. This is because prisons serve as a place of incarceration and security for the public from those confined within their walls (Opperman, 2014). Though originally used as a form of punishment for slaves in addition to hard labour, prisons were later accepted to be used for all individuals who, as a result of crime, were reduced to penal slaves (Barnes, 1921; Thorsten, 1967). Therefore, the notion arose that the common punishment which was introduced into law and applied to all offenders was once used only for slaves and bondsmen. Even though experiments with punitive imprisonment had been carried out earlier in the monastic sequence and houses of corrections in various countries, consisting mostly of delinquent clerics or minor misdemeanants, they had not influenced the means used in handling serious offenders, as they were still beaten, *roué* or broken on the wheel, mutilated, and hanged. Subsequently, the order surfaced for all offenders and criminals to be sent to prisons (Thorsten, 1967).

Prisons as detention centres

Although different types of jails and prisons have been in existence for hundreds of years, it was only 200 years ago that they were used as anything other than places of detention for debtors, religious or political offenders and those awaiting trial, and other, often less harsh punishments (Barnes, 1921). Thus, the great Roman jurist Ulpian clearly declared that prisons were created to detain people and not for punishment: a phrase that was utilised as the accepted definition and purpose of prisons until the 18th century. As stated by Ives (1914, cited in

Thorsten, 1967), the practice of being sent to prison as a form of punishment in itself to conform to rules that were clearly punitive and unnerving may be labelled as contemporary and reached its worst phase during the nineteenth century.

During the industrial revolution era, prisons thrived and extended their wake not just in the USA but also in other developed countries like the UK, Germany, and France (LeBaron, 2015). The reasons behind this expansion are complex, but prisons played a vital role in securing industrial social order, and right from the start, were principally concerned about putting prisoners to work and acclimatising them into the industrial environment (Garland, 1990; Ignatieff, 1978; Neocleous, 2000; Rusche & Kirschheimer, 1939). Prisoners during this era were mostly from the poor and working classes and were usually common people who were not gainfully employed in any type of waged work or had resisted the imposition of work that would serve as the necessity to obtain the goods and services of life (LeBaron, 2015). As historian Joanna Innes has described it,

> The new prisons were quite differently conceived. They were designed for a very specific clientele: for men and women drawn from the ranks of the labouring poor, guilty of no more than petty delinquencies considered to be especially characteristic of the poor: "idle and disorderly" behaviour of various kinds, unlicensed begging, vagrancy and the like (Innes, 1987, p. 42).

The prisons that were designed to receive these people were not simply places for detention but rather for punishment and reformation of character.

2.2 Modern and present-day prisons

The last few decades have witnessed a return to the question of punishment in public debate due to the rise in crime rates in most developed countries (Eisner, 2001; Ignatieff, 1978). For instance, a recent report by Walmsley, (2019) indicated that the prison population in the world has increased by 24% since the year 2000. This alarming increase in the prison population has rekindled the ever-recurring reservations about the effectiveness of imprisonment as a deterrent for crime, even though there is a proliferation of prisons and incarceration rates are ubiquitously increasing. Originally prisons were thought to be the ideal for refining not only the wayward souls they contained but the entire society itself. Rothman, (1971) asserts that crime was viewed as a sign of society's deterioration and prisons were primarily intended to restore order in society. Thus, advocates for prisons believed them to be the panacea to rising crime rates. However, recently, prisons have become known to be prone to internal disarray. Some of the

factors that have contributed to and exacerbated the conditions include congestion, mismanagement, inadequate funding, political meddling, absence of expert governance, ineffective or absent rehabilitative initiatives, discrepancies in judgments, mediocre and unfair parole procedures, imposed inactivity of prisoners, outdated equipment, and a small cluster of uncompromising and obstinate prisoners (Banks, 2017; Fox, 1971; Franklin et al., 2006; Limoncelli et al., 2020). Simultaneously, the growing burden of numbers has compounded the stressful living conditions, which are mostly associated with antiquated and dilapidated institutions. As a result, this has turned prisons into overpopulated institutions with a new breed of prisoners, more insistent on their rights than any in recent history (Ignatieff, 1978). For instance, in 2018, prisoners in America organised and went on a nationwide strike over poor working conditions in the prisons (Lopez, 2018). Furthermore, prisons have been involved in hostage-takings, demonstrations, and full-scale unrest (LeBaron, 2015). Originally an American phenomenon, prison insurrection has mushroomed to other prisons in countries such as Spain, France, Canada, Britain, and Italy (Ignatieff, 1978). Yet it is unclear whether such insurgencies have yielded anything more than token concessions. Nevertheless, in the eyes of the public, they have at least shifted the prisons from the idea of neglected institutions into ones that require major attention. In response to these forces, reform-minded prison administrators have relaxed the security and supervision of many prisons, prompting strong antipathy and obvious disapproval among prison guards. This mixture of overpopulation, open discontent, fumbling reform, prisoner aggressiveness, and guard obduracy has wrecked the brittle order inside prisons (Ignatieff, 1978). Currently, some consideration has been directed at approaches to employ to reduce the tensions and disorderliness within prisons to reduce the likelihood of the occurrence of riots and chaos (Comeau, 1971; French & Gendreau, 2006; Mccorkle et al., 1995; Useem, 2018).

2.3 Characteristics of prisoners

The connection between crime and the level of education has been proven, and a deficit in education is one of the variables that can cause an increase in the level of crime (Batchelder & Pippert, 2002; Tewksbury & Gennaro, 1994). A lot of people go to prisons with deficits in education, and according to Stafford, (2006), even before their imprisonment, prisoners tend to be unemployed or have only sporadic work experience. Most prisoners are people from the lowest rungs of society, whose careers involve breaking the law, and from that uncontrolled segment of the populace whose corporeal susceptibilities, delinquent tastes, or inadequate education have left them without firm profession, and who, for want of a better livelihood,

utilise their faculties, often very extensively, in marauding society (Arthur, 1868). Thus, prisoners already possess limited socioeconomic prospects (Ramakers et al., 2014) before their incarceration, and prisons have sometimes been labelled as establishments that accommodate the most underprivileged sectors of society (Wakefield & Uggen, 2010; Western, 2006). Hence, this supports McBride, (2003)'s assertion that prisoners come from the part of the population that is least likely to be employed to start with and are placed in an even more disadvantageous position in the job market after they serve their sentences because they are stripped of their self-determination and power upon their entry into prisons (Rymhs, 2009). Research has discovered that apart from the level of education, other factors, such as upsurges in the disparities in income, poverty, rate of unemployment and political obscurantism, add to the surge in imprisonment regardless of the crime rate (Barlow et al., 1996; Hochstetler & Shover, 1997; Jacobs & Helms, 1996; Mauer, 2006). For instance, studies on the demographics of prisoners suggest that the majority of them are without a job in the year before their imprisonment, receive incomes far below the minimum wage (Kling, 2006; Pettit & Lyons, n.d.), and have limited skill sets (Bushway, 2003). This supports the idea that to conserve their supremacy over the social hierarchies, class and race, the superior classes utilise prisons as a means of legislative, pecuniary, and social dominance over the savage groups: the jobless, the underprivileged, the displaced, the demented, political insurgents, and racial, autochthonous, and social others (Jacobs & Helms, 1996; Parenti, 2000; Shelden & Vasiliev, 2017; Websdale, 2001). Prisons mould the personalities of people through everyday experiences, supervision, surveillance, incentives for standardised activities, and punishments for misconduct (Crewe, 2007; Irwin, 2005). They provide the source materials that support the activities of prisoners or enable them to be fulfilled, and form the basis upon which prisoners react (Rubin, 2017). As a result, prisoners have never been viewed or counted as part of society; once a person is incarcerated, they inexplicably turn into a detached being that is the substance of opposing powers of denigration and charity. Thus, they are hardly ever perceived as people who can continue to add value by becoming part of the labour force. This outlook is intensely believed by the society and sometimes by the prison service itself (Crook, 2007).

2.4 Historical overview of prison work

Historians of work and labour usually link the development of labour relations with the teleology of freedom. Yet different forced labour practices—such as slavery, serfdom, indenture, and vassalage—are viewed as being the foundation for the development of free but

commoditized forms of labour and work over time, especially with the expansion of capitalist modernity, free contracts, and wage work (De Vito & Lichtenstein, 2013). However, in almost every historical period and society, forced labour has been used as a form of penal or administrative check for some sections of the population. Therefore, taking this long-lasting relationship between labour, work, and penalty as a frame of reference, this section explores the historically pervasive institution of prison labour from a universal and long-term perspective and its place within an assemblage of types of unfreed labour connected to the growth of modernity. Prison work is an essential aspect of prisons in most countries around the globe and has been since the colonial era, as work has been viewed as a means to realise numerous correctional goals. Prison work was introduced for punitive and retaliatory purposes in the 17th and 18th centuries, broadened for monetary gains with the expansion of the industrial prisons in the 19th century, and continued for its apparent therapeutic and educational purpose as a part of rehabilitation in the 20th and 21st centuries (Pierson et al., 1948). Since its emergence, it has been a topic for deliberation at various global gatherings. It was a topic for discussion in 1872 at the Prison Congress held in London, at the International Penal and Penitentiary Commission, and the United Nations Organization later allotted some time to this matter. But the issue of prison labour was first suggested to be included in the United Nations programme of work by the first Group of Experts in the area of the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders, which was organised in August 1949 (Nations, 1955), The Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners were accepted by the United Nations Congress in 1955 at Geneva, and includes a section on prison labour (Articles 71 to 76). Also, in August 1960, the Second United Nations Congress that convened in London approved a resolution on the assimilation of prison labour into the economic structure of countries and the remuneration of prisoners (Cornil, 1961). Most recently, a revised version of the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners in 1955, now called the Nelson Mandela Rules, was unanimously adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 17th December 2015 (McCall-Smith, 2016; UNODC, 2015).

Prison labour can thus be explained as an experience situated at the intersection of two vital social processes: the commodification of labour and the enforced social definition of prisoners as persons who have given up their rights and freedom. A look at the first aspect gives an indication that prison labour has manifested to be well-suited to other modes of production and is impeccably well-matched with current social relations, such as the growth of capitalism and the spread of wage workers. The second aspect gives careful thought to the impact of the state

in influencing the unfreed labour relations and underscoring the slanted views and depictions of prison labour. In all cases, prison labour appeared helpful in complementing the economic interests of indigenous and foreign industrialists and establishments with a tenacious racial hierarchy and mindset. These aspects cut across both the private and public use of prisoners and could comprise working beyond the prison walls or being imprisoned.

Historically, labour has always been a central component of punishment, and therefore, coercing prisoners to work has been a means to achieve various rehabilitative goals (Pierson et al., 1948). It is a well-known belief that prisoners forfeit their rights and their labour (effort) because of their criminality and that the state could be expected to profit from their imprisonment (Hawkins, 1982). Although the idea of a prison is a fairly modern concept, coercing criminals to work to atone for their crimes is a practice that dates back to the dawn of civilisation. For example, the Pharaohs, Ancient Chinese, and Romans used to force criminals into slavery to work in iron and salt mines, and Athenian prisoners worked in mines, on galleys and in building fortifications (Jackson, 1927). Also, during the early ages, entire families from the Chinese, Egyptian and Hebrew cultures were made to atone for the crimes of a single family member and thus subjected to a life of labour. Similarly, prison labour was practised in Europe throughout the Middle Ages through the sale of criminals into slavery. Thus, individuals who were unable to pay their fines were made to atone for them by offering their labour for free instead and this practice prevailed until the twelfth century. By 1550, correctional houses were built in England with the aim of helping the poor: thus, the period from 1550 to 1700 was characterised by the building of correctional houses or workhouses. These houses were built in London in 1550, Amsterdam and Nuremberg in 1588, Lubeck and Bremen in 1613, Berne in 1615, Hamburg in 1620, Basle in 1667, Vienna and Breslau in 1670, Luneburg in 1676, Florence in 1677 and Munich in 1687. These correctional houses formed the foundation for modern policies and ideas of prison labour, as they were operated on the public account system and implemented the plan of paying the inmates for their work (Jackson, 1927).

As stated earlier, prison work was an idea that was implemented for many centuries to be used as a tool of punishment for wrongdoing around the world. However, work was of little importance when prisons were used as establishments for holding inmates as they waited to be transported or executed. But by 1863, the Lords Committee clarified the definition of prisons as punishment and deterrence. Thus, hard work, hard fare and hard beds were the order of the day, as work played its role by engaging prisoners in a monotonous and wearisome effort at the treadmill. For example, hard labour was an integral part of the English and Welsh prison

system in the nineteenth century (Bailey, 1994) as it amounted to hard and pointless labour where prisoners were made to engage in vigorous activities such as the penal treadmill and the crank. The more the work wasted the time of the prisoner by being unproductive, the better, as it all added to the humiliation faced by the prisoner and contributed to the value of punishment (Cooper & King, 1961).

Prison labour has been acknowledged as vital to the numerous systems being advocated by different activists since the beginning of history (Bentham, 1989, 2017b; Elkin, 1948; Hanway, 1776; Holford, 1821; Howard, 1780; Mannheim, 1939; Nield, 1948). Yet, the exact nature of prison labour was greatly questioned. Some of the questions raised by the reformers concerned whether the work done by prisoners was voluntary or compulsory, whether it should be punitive and unproductive or industrious and profitable, whether prisoners should be paid for their work, and what the connection between the jobs inside and outside the prisons should be like, among others (Moore, 2018). Unsurprisingly, the activists stood at all times a number of steps into the future of prison practice. For instance, in 1778, Jeremy Bentham, a British philosopher and the founder of modern utilitarianism, famously stated that people should obtain skills in prisons which could be gainfully used upon their release from prisons because valuable work would show people to love labour as an alternate to hate (Bentham, 2017a). Such works will contribute towards the achievement of the twin aims of prisons: correction and guardianship. At the summit of the treadmill period, there was no examination of whether work was reformative as well as punitive. The most important consideration was how many twirls of the mill were ideal (Cooper & King, 1961). However, in 1895, the Gladstone Committee reasoned that for work to be rehabilitative, it had to be useful as well, because productive work delivered training in a well-organised and industrial manner. Yet, the punitive aim of work in prisons was still maintained, although mechanical labour was replaced by other types of work for prisoners, which were viewed as a better alternative to hard labour (Gladstone & Prisons Committee, 1895).

In 1933, the Departmental Home Office Enquiry produced recommendations for suitable work that sought to help to regenerate the physical and moral character of the prisoner in a quest to facilitate rehabilitation. It proposed that the work in which prisoners should engage in prisons must help to train them for their release. The work should be meaningful towards the rehabilitation of prisoners and not exploitative or based on the returns to the state (Cooper & King, 1961). Prison work has been evidenced through colonisation and in war situations throughout history, as colonial servitude was a major aspect of colonisation. Evidently, there

have been instances where prisoners are given to private employers. For instance, in Spanish America, prisoners were released to private firms who used them in the mines, manufacturing and mills (De Vito & Lichtenstein, 2013). Also, England was famous for sending her prisoners to the American Colonies and Australia, where they were employed in various productive works (Butler, 1896; Kercher, 2003; Sidney, 1852).

In recent years, the first study of the nature of prison work was carried out in Wisconsin in 1913 as a result of the enactment of the Huber Law, which saw prisoners working in communities during the day and returning to the jail at the end of the work day (Grupp, 1963). Also, during the industrial prison era (1900 to 1935), a lot of weight was placed on prison labour in the US prisons, and this labour generated enough revenue to make many of the prison systems self-sustaining. But during the Great Depression, unionised labour confronted the idea of prison labour, contending that it affected the jobs of free men and reduced the profits of organisations by selling prison-manufactured products at non-competitive prices (Dhami, 2013). Earlier researchers, such as Grupp, (1963) and Singer, (1977) supported the benefits of the system and argued that it improved the behaviour and future employability of prisoners in the long run. Notwithstanding, opponents emphasised the exploitative nature of prison labour (Bales & Mayblin, 2018; Browne, 2007; Chennault & Sbicca, 2022; Weiss, 1987) and suggested that a lot of gains could be made from those who were not able to stand against the power of the state that supports the prison authorities. Yet critics are of the view that prison labour can rehabilitate prisoners and consequently reduce recidivism, whereas others argue that it can serve as a source of profit if it is implemented and managed properly. But in recent years, the argument has arisen that prison work can achieve both rehabilitative and recidivism purposes (Guido, 2019).

Social theorists have not shied away from ascribing the substantial changes in approaches to penal labour because their lengthy historical interpretation has been well known. The research by (Rusche & Kirschheimer, 1939) revealed a direct relationship between altering means of production and the development of prison practices, which continues to stimulate research into the positive link between prison work and economic growth. In addition, the works of Foucault, (1977) and Melossi and Pavarini, (1981) have been immensely significant in focusing not only on the direct economic importance of prison labour but also on the means through which prison labour was employed and is still being employed, to mould and train prisoners as well as workers in general for the changing world of work.

Although prison labour has been utilised by many countries for years, its aim seems to have evolved from punishment to rehabilitation (Hawkins, 1982). However, as a measure to check the behaviour of prisoners, it has become inherently controversial (Van Zyl Smit & Dünkel, 1999) as many questions rather than answers evolve around the usage of prisoners in prisons (Guido, 2019). As Feldman, (2018) asks:

1. What role does prison labour serve in reaching the goals of prison systems?
2. Can prison labour ever be voluntary, or is it always an act of state coercion?

Even though the arrangements in prisons and prison work have seen some changes over the years, prison labour and the employment of prisoners by organisations have not changed. Therefore, without eschewing either the humanistic ideals of the reformers or the theoretical endeavours of the social theorists, the aim of this work is somewhat different. It is an explorative exercise designed to elicit basic information as a foundation for reconsidering fixed assumptions about prison labour.

2.5 Unpacking prison work

The concept of getting organisations involved in the idea of engaging prisoners to work is not a new one. Therefore, the last few years have witnessed a revival of interest in utilising the labour of prisoners in a productive capacity, especially as the time spent in prisons is seen as idle time and as a removal from the daily structure of life as a punishment (Rymhs, 2009). For instance, an account from an inmate in a maximum-security prison stated that violence was not the foremost issue in prison, as the main problem was the boredom that accompanied imprisonment. Thus, it was the tedium and monotony of prison life and its accompanying torpor and ennui that dragged prisoners down. It felt as though nothing really mattered and everything was hinged on when they would be released and how to endure until then, as well as how to make the time pass. Thus, monotony and time-slowing boredom, with sporadic eruptions of panic and rage, is the prevailing reality of life in prison (Morris & Rothman, 1995; Rhodes, 2004; Vick, 2015). Undeniably, a lot of prisoners recognise the vastness of time as one of the psychological issues of staying in prison. Even though the prisons are characteristically viewed as interrupting the sequence and pulse of the world outside, a lot of prisoners regard them as an extension of that world. In other words, prisons may not so much interrupt the routines that describe life outside as hold up a mirror to them. Hence, prison work

is one occasion where this continuum between the life inside and outside prisons arises (Rymhs, 2009).

There is a general understanding that prisoners should be given something to do, because in whatever shape or form it may take, work is an integral part of the basic needs of life for every able-bodied individual. Sociologist Gordon Hawkins backs prison work because he believes that work is the main origin of status and produces a sense of maturity. Also, without work, prisoners will not be able to develop the independence and diligent qualities they would need for support in the outside world (Hawkins, 1983). Thus, work helps the criminal minds of prisoners, which are sometimes characterised by a childish dependence on others, to mature into the independence needed to support them in life in the world outside (Davis & Michaels, 2015; Hawkins, 1983; Peled-Laskov & Timor, 2018). Work is thus viewed as means through which essential character traits needed for a free living can be acquired. Therefore, through prison work, desirable personal characteristics and useful skills can be gained (Ramm, 2011). Yet, the environment imposed by confinement and the motive of prison treatment offers a different meaning to prison labour and thus prison work. Those who advocate prison work contend that it not only offers physical work skills but also numerous other benefits. Consequently, work provides a much-needed break from idleness and inmates see it as a form of restoration, a penchant that activists anticipate would last until their discharge (McBride, 2003). Prison work programs construct themselves as helping male prisoners to restore 'normative' masculinity—one that is aligned with the values of society outside prison. As (Sabo, Kupers, & London, 2001 cited in Rymhs, 2009, p. 317) remark:

> The prison system, though it isolates prisoners from mainstream society, is not an isolated institutional element within that society. It is melded to the social landscape and the social relations of men and women.

Under the prison work system, some prisoners are selected by the Prison Service based on certain criteria to leave the prison premises during working hours to engage in some form of employment at regular jobs in the free community under the supervision of prison officers. In this case, the work is carried out by prisoners in organizations outside the prisons, following a standard routine in which prisoners set off from the prisons in the morning to work in various work environments alongside non-prisoners and go back to the prison at the end of the work day (Duwe, 2015; Turner & Petersilia, 1996). These works include construction, farming, and similar tasks that require few or no skills, a few hours of on-the-job training and low remuneration. Most of the time, prisoners in Ghana's prisons are accompanied by officers to

various organizations outside the prisons to work regular eight-hour jobs in the name of facilitating the rehabilitation process. These types of jobs are expected to reduce crime within and outside the prisons, help prisoners to develop skills outside the prisons, and give them some sort of financial incentive. Hence, the present study, being a deviation from what is typically researched in the prison service, will provide information as to the nature of prison work and how the work is organized, supervised, and accomplished by prisoners.

2.6 Impact of prison work

2.6.1 Purpose

The use of prisons currently stems from the virtually absolute suppression of capital and corporal punishment at the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, which led to the conversion of various forms of social suppression into imprisonment and fines. Consequently, prisons currently have to take in huge numbers of lawbreakers of various types, and must also do what it takes to provide them with appropriate treatment. Therefore, various efforts have been initiated by different countries to design dedicated establishments to detain and train different types of lawbreakers (Cornil, 1961).

Those who developed the idea of prisons thought about their aim and the meaning of discipline routines and the internal organization of daily life were clearly defined. These details, both large and small, were carefully thought out and planned, with the thinking geared towards creating habitable conditions which would lead towards reform. Thus, the first prisons were instilled with a purpose that was closely linked to the religious principles of philanthropic societies and community leaders (Adamson, 1992). However, the mission statements of organisations today rarely define the purpose of prisons, narrowly defining them as means of safe and secure custody and accountability, whilst other prisons also aspire to protect the public (Galliher, 1970; Mumford et al., 2016). Focussed statements about the worth and consequence of what precisely must take place in prisons are in short supply. Besides, there is a severe dearth of research on prison life or what occurs within prisons (Haney & Zimbardo, 1998; Mears, 2008). Astonishingly, the United States, for instance, assigns substantial expenditure to prisons but remains uncertain about what needs to take place in them. Therefore, the determination to rehabilitate prisoners must absorb philosophies about the worth and importance of imprisonment. As a result, Garland, (1990) states that fairness, leniency, civility, kindness, and courtesy should be part of the values espoused by prisons and ingrained in the intrinsic and

constitutive part of their role. Putting restorative justice and rehabilitation together to build an institution with a richer ethical sense and greater utility should be the purpose of prisons (Cullen et al., 2014). This positive view of prisons gives both external legitimacy, as the interest of society in justice and crime prevention are catered for, and internal legitimacy, as time spent living and working in prison is worthwhile and important (Pollock et al., 2012). Prison labour seeks to achieve different objectives (Cullen & Travis, 1984). Employing the labour of prisoners in institutional upkeep jobs decreases violence which is always viewed as a detrimental and counterproductive characteristic of life in prisons. Work in prisons also introduces and reminds prisoners of customs and practices such as punctuality and responsibility for time, the connection between individual performance and financial rewards, and the self-discipline and perseverance associated with the world of work. Teaching prisoners these principles associated with the world of work is imperative since most prisoners enter prisons with vague or non-existent work histories (Maguire et al., 1988).

2.6.2 Economic Benefits

What prisoners do with their time in prisons is becoming contentious, especially given the high costs involved in running prisons, so the issue of prison work has emerged as a matter of economic importance and social concern (White, 1999). Work programs are ubiquitous in prisons and jails worldwide. Such programs are popular with policymakers and the public alike. Governments and legislators favour work programs as sound economics because offenders' work offsets the cost of their incarceration, which, in turn, pleases taxpayers. Prison wardens and the public endorse work for inmates as a method of avoiding idleness. The security of the institutions is enhanced by reducing inactivity and keeping the offenders occupied (Pierson et al., 2014). The work of prisoners has also been used to defray the costs of confinement (Tocqueville & Beaumont, 1970), an advantage that is also frequently mentioned today (McBride, 2003). Real work could be a huge benefit to prisoners, the prison service, tax-payers, and prisoners' families. Activity that is engaged with the economy and society would provide prisoners with a sense of reality—something that is often missing from the surreal world of jails. Being busy and productive helps to give a sense of self-worth, particularly when it is appropriately remunerated, and allows the man (usually) to help support his family. It could both make prisons calmer because people are busy, and reduce tension because prisoners feel that they are providing for their families, who might thus be more willing to visit and keep in touch. The taxpayer would obviously benefit, because benefits to families could be reduced and

prisoners would pay tax. In the long run, prisoners would have contributed to a pension, and this investment would save us all huge sums (Crook, 2007).

2.6.3 Psychological and psychological benefits

It is common to assume that boredom is salutary for other people when in reality, we could be oblivious to its psychological repercussions and its injurious impact on the character of prisoners (Fry, 1934). There is ample evidence, however, to show that prisons which provide activities, training and opportunities for rehabilitation encounter many fewer problems, and are much less likely to suffer from riots and unrest, than those where prisoners are locked up for 23 hours a day, in cramped cells, with no opportunity to change their behaviour (Opperman, 2014) While criticizing many of the functions of prison labour, Parker, a former prisoner (a Columbian University graduate who served 11 years in Arizona prison), claims that prison work programs still serve an important purpose of maintaining sanity because it helps inmates to resist the paralyzing effects of incarceration (Ramm, 2011). Yet, the advantages of prison work are entirely kerbed within the prisons. This is because many inmates yearn to work whilst incarcerated—not to improve themselves, learn any useful skills, or even contribute to the economy in any way, but simply because any form of work helps to stimulate the incarcerated body (McCoy, 2009).

2.6.4 Behavioural change benefits

The motive for prison work has been changed over the years. Though the aim is still to lessen institutional lawlessness and teach prisoners skills, prison work is now also required to bestow prisoners with the required work practices and positive work ethics and enhance their human capital (American Correctional Association, 1986; Gaes, Motiuk, et al., 1999). The core prison punishment is still and will remain, the deprivation of liberty. The prison itself has to be a place of confinement and secure protection of the public from those inside the prison walls. Some writers opine, using the religious language of redemption and salvation, that a suitable system of prison work can help to rehabilitate prisoners and help to reduce recidivism. Others also assert that if prison work is properly managed, it would be profitable to the prison system, as it will help to reduce its drain on the public coffers.

Work programs in prisons offer a short-term corrective system by engaging prisoners' time through the creation of perquisites that may be offered, continued, or discontinued based on the prison's judgement of the prisoner's good behaviour (Carlson, 2004; Sykes, 2021). Currently, there is an emphasis on 'strengths-based resettlement' whereby the needs of the public are fulfilled together with improving the skills and talents of prisoners by getting prisoners involved in exciting and worthwhile volunteer and community work (Levenson & Farrant, 2002). Involvement in these activities aids prisoners to make constructive input into societies, which can be a significant introduction to their reunification into societies (Burnett & Maruna, 2006; Farrant & Levenson, 2002; Mcneill et al., 2005). This will enable them to develop a conception of themselves as 'usefully employed beings' within societies (Lebel et al., 2008). Thus, prison work serves as an avenue to reduce behavioural problems associated with imprisonment and improve the safety of prisons. It enhances prisoners' commitment to convention, discourages involvement in deviance (Gaes & McGuire, 1985) provides structure and control for prisoners through incentivising them towards appropriate behaviour (Colvin, 1992) and from a lifestyle point of view, decreases leisure time which prisoners are likely to engage in misconduct (Steiner & Wooldredge, 2014; Wooldredge, 1998).

Prison-level research has discovered that violent misconduct is less likely when more prisoners are occupied in work programs. A study conducted in US federal prisons (Gaes & McGuire, 1985) discovered that increased participation in job-related programs, in contrast to educational programs, vocational training programs, or counselling, was associated with decreased occurrence of prisoner-against-prisoner attacks with weapons. Likewise, in Mccorkle et al., (1995) research in state and local penitentiaries, facilities with more prisoners engaged in work, education, or some form of industry training programs had lower rates of prisoners' violence against each other, as well as reduced prisoner assaults against prison officers, but involvement in programs had no association with prison riots. Yet, Steiner and Wooldredge, (2014) established that in their study, the number of prisoners who are assigned to work was not linked to the level of violent or nonviolent behaviour. Still, individual- and multilevel research has also revealed that delinquency is lesser with prisoners who are engaged in prison industries, controlling for individual divergences (Duwe & McNeeley, 2020). Saylor and Gaes, (1997) discovered that partaking in the Federal Bureau of Prisons' (FBoP) Post-Release Employment Project (PREP) appreciably decreased misbehaviour. Additionally, Gover et al., (2008) revealed that working in prisons decreased disciplinary infractions. Likewise, Steiner and Wooldredge, (2008) found that the number of hours spent per week on a work assignment was

negatively associated with violent misconduct, alcohol or drug use, and other nonviolent misbehaviour. However, (French & Gendreau, 2006) meta-analysis of 68 studies showed that, overall, educational/vocational programs did not have significant effects on institutional misconduct.

2.6.5 Impact on rehabilitation

Rehabilitation in prisons refers to offering prisoners the chance to acquire knowledge and skills that will help them to successfully integrate into society after their release (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2017). Rehabilitation was accepted by the international community and countries assign jobs to prisoners, since prison labour has been seen as a key aspect of rehabilitation (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002). At the time of drafting the Convention Concerning Forced or Compulsory Labour 1930 (No. 29) of the ILO, prison labour was still established on the values of reckoning and deterrence; yet it was acknowledged that another goal of employing prisoners in educational and worthwhile jobs was to build up their ethical behaviour during their incarceration and to enable them to live crime-free lives upon their release. Work is an essential component of a successful life and gives people financial freedom, a sense of self-worth, community involvement, satisfaction, status, and belonging (Van Zyl Smit & Dünkel, 1999), as well as reinforcing the rehabilitation of prisoners. Just as prisoners learn to manage compulsions, rage and ignorance using treatment programs, they also have to learn how to develop positive work ethics, as this is essential for their effective rehabilitation (Johnson et al., 1997) because people who work are seen as productive members of society. Thus, effective prisoner re-entry into public life necessitates that they have and show good work ethics (Hawkins, 1982).

To punish or rehabilitate has been the question being asked constantly regarding the purpose and function of the employment of prisoners (Bullock & Bunce, 2020). Undeniably contemporary penal discourses in England and Wales have found prisons to be places for the rehabilitation of prisoners (Ministry of Justice, 2010). Also, prison policy in America has continually upheld that prison labour is rehabilitative and that it works to reintegrate prisoners into public life through useful jobs and contributions to the economy of the world outside. Hence, in 1816, the Auburn Prison was opened in the state of New York, operating under a philosophy of reforming prisoners through precise, communal work environments and solitary confinement (the ‘Auburn Prison Model’) rather than capital punishment and torture (Ramm,

2011). Rehabilitating prisoners is dependent upon training them to acquire skills and competencies that can be applied in the outside world and advocates contend that prisons do accomplish this goal. Proponents of prison work opine that it gives prisoners more than just physical work skills but other significant skills as well. For instance, sociologist Gordon Hawkins supports prison work programs because work is 'a major source of status and of a sense of adult independence'. He argued that, without labour in prisons, prisoners become idle and dependent on others hardly a behaviour that will support them on the outside. Hawkins seems to suggest that labour programs help to mature the criminal mind—to settle a childish 'dependence on others' (Hawkins, 1983, p. 87), and to instil the pride and self-reliance necessary to life on the outside. Thus, prison work can be perceived as a rite of passage and a means of accomplishing essential character qualities for free living. Accordingly, through prison labour, good qualities are learned as well as useful skills (Ramm, 2011).

Notwithstanding the rhetoric which stresses the appeal of prisons as places of change and rehabilitation, official reports point out that as institutions, prisons are failing to embed the principles, relational procedures and practices that have been established to assist in the effective implementation of rehabilitative systems (Criminal Justice Joint Inspection, 2017; HR Inspectorate of Prisons, 2017; Robinson, 2008). The odds of rehabilitation are increased in a milieu that promotes a sense of self-worth and self-reliance by providing well-thought-out programmes and activities. This requires a well-adjusted system that offers objectives and inducements, reasonable remuneration, the prospect to save, realistic working conditions, and standard vocational training. It is essential to show offenders that they are competent enough to succeed at something. It is also essential to persuade prisoners that legitimate work can provide stability and opportunity—formerly known as the work ethic (Crook, 2007). Prisons are an open market designed by incentives and interests, with irreducible profit maximisation ascribed to market transactions. Taken together, prisons can be viewed as a perception of an institutional failure to take responsibility for prisoner rehabilitation, which is instead devolved to the prisoners. Any institutional provision for rehabilitation is generally perceived by prisoners to be self-serving in terms of its rationale and experienced as ill-resourced, poorly conceived, and superficial. As such, institutional provisions are thought unlikely to contribute to positive behaviour change. From the perspective of prisoners, the prison climate—characterized by a lack of interest in rehabilitation among correctional staff, lack of empathy and concern, and mixed but often impersonal and sometimes antagonistic relationships

between prisoners and correctional staff—disrupts any ethos of rehabilitation (Bullock & Bunce, 2020).

Whilst many authors (such as Crewe, 2012; Garabedian, 1963; Irwin & Cressey, 1962; King & Elliott, 1977; Liebling, 2011) have evaluated the social institution of prisons by detailing the types, purposes, power dynamics, values and philosophies, relational processes and elements that impact authority inside convict communities, they have failed to examine how prisoners go through rehabilitation in prisons. Some authors (such as (Auty & Liebling, 2020; Caldwell, 2012; Clemmer, 1940; Morris & Morris, 2013; Sparks & Bottoms, 1995; Wolfgang, 1961) have also examined the prison environment by looking at how prisoners adjust, the influence of the prison experience on prisoners, the means through which the prison setting applies pressures or 'pains' on prisoners, how institutional identities take shape, and how outside factors influence the operations and beliefs of prisons. Indeed, research has failed to clearly address how prisoners experience rehabilitation in prison, even though inferences about the prospect for the rehabilitation of prisoners can be made from these works (Blagden et al., 2016). As a result, this work will rely on prisoners' experiences and stories to fill this empirical gap. It will consider prisoners' perceptions and lived experiences concerning prison work and how it influences their rehabilitation.

2.6.6 Potential impact on recidivism

Turning prisoners away from a life of crime can prove to be a daunting and near-impossible task to be accomplished by the prison administration, especially when prisoners are considered to encounter several health and social problems, such as low levels of education, inadequate work experience, low skills, absence of family support, debt, substance abuse, and mental and physical health issues (Lewis et al., 2007; O'Keeffe et al., 2003; Social Exclusion Unit, 2002). These factors influence recidivism among prisoners, and besides practical assistance, it is generally accepted that prisoners need to be encouraged to develop and sustain any good changes they can effect in their lives, and prison administrators have a role to play to ensure prisoners remain motivated regardless of these likely obstacles.

Recidivism can be defined as a re-arrest, re-conviction and re-imprisonment for a new crime or the return to prison for a technical violation revocation. Although the first three recidivism variables strictly measure new criminal offenses, technical violation revocation (the fourth measure) is a broader measure of rule-breaking behaviour. When prisoners are released to

correctional supervision (i.e., parole), they can have their parole revoked for violating the conditions of their supervision. Because these violations can include acts that may not be criminal in nature (e.g., use of alcohol, failing a community-based treatment program, failure to maintain agent contact, failure to follow a curfew, etc.), technical violation revocations do not necessarily measure re-offending. Yet, because 'remaining law-abiding' is a common parole condition by which released prisoners must abide, technical violations also include revocations for lower-level criminal behaviour (i.e., misdemeanour and gross misdemeanour crimes) that would not result in being re-sentenced to prison for a new felony offence (the third measure) (Duwe & McNeeley, 2020). Broadly, theories about why offenders desist from crime include maturation; the influence of social bonds, whereby their increasing ties to education, a family or job lead to a cessation of criminal activity as individuals gain a legitimate stake in society; and a change in personal identity or sense-of-self as the circumstances and motivations of the offender change over time (Maruna, 2000; Mcneill et al., 2005). Essentially, desistence is described as a process that can be hindered or helped via practical and emotional support from services and significant others. Desistence requires the involvement and cooperation of the offender (agency) as well as access to the necessary opportunities (training, job, stable housing etc.) to affect and sustain change (Hunter & Boyce, 2009).

Research has discovered that there is a worrying rate of recidivism, especially with the mixed impact of prisons on the character of prisoners after release as a recent report found that the rearrest of convicted prisoners ranged between 26 and 60 per cent, with a reconviction rate of 20 to 30 per cent and reimprisonment rate from 14 to 45 per cent (Yukhnenko et al., 2020). For instance, along with the recent rise in incarceration levels comes the sobering realization that, with few exceptions, all of the people currently housed in US jails and prisons will eventually face the challenge of reintegration into society (Stafford, 2006). This fact is driven home by the high number of current US residents who have spent a portion of their lives in prison: 1,215,800 people were held in different prisons across the US as at the end of 2020 (Carson, 2021) and most of those who attempt re-entry into society fail and are re-arrested within three years (Langan & Levin, 2002; Ostermann, 2015).

Work serves to fill an essential need for most people, as it provides revenue, satisfies needs for belongingness, and supplies feelings of societal contributions and self-worth (Fahey et al., 2006). Studies on recidivism pinpoint the connection between employment after prison and crime (Stanley, 1979) hence, teaching work skills and experience through prison work is considered to improve the post-release changes that prisoners will encounter (Maguire et al.,

1988). In this regard, work makes a difference in preventing return to prisons, because it helps to keep former prisoners occupied and out of trouble. Therefore, in order to reduce recidivism, prison administrators have to increase work programs to allow prisoners to acquire the relevant skills that they will need to apply upon release. It is general knowledge that prisoners develop work skills during participation in prison work programs which they can apply after their release, thereby reducing recidivism (Smith et al., 2018) since they could offer their services to earn a living, as work experience enhances their employability (Gaes, Motiuk, et al., 1999). For instance, Bales et al., (2016) found that compared to a control group, prisoners who participated in work whilst incarcerated had considerably lower recidivism levels when measured by arrest for any new crime, arrest for a new felony offence, and conviction for a new felony offence.

Not all research has found the same conclusive relationship between prison work and recidivism. Even though work has evidently been considered as a protective shield against crime, few studies have examined the impact of prison work on prisoner recidivism (Duwe & McNeeley, 2020) as most studies tend to look at work to release and post-release work experiences, but not those currently in prisons. Also, research conclusions give very little indication as to precisely why and how prison work could be effective at decreasing recidivism or how prison work influences men and women in different ways (Richmond, 2014). However, one of the challenges of examining prison work is that every individual employed by the prisons has different experiences. Thus, the skills and training that prisoners receive differ, as some prisons engage in highly specialised works such as document conversion, whereas others operate warehouses.

Irrespective of the mixed findings of earlier works, various evaluations of prison work have revealed that notwithstanding the weak methodological nature of these results (Wilson et al., 2000) there are ample indications to propose that prison work is effective in decreasing recidivism (Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2007). For instance, Wilson et al. (2000) conducted four comparisons concerning prisoners who took part in prison work and those who did not. While the odds ratio for the four comparisons was 1.48 and yielded a 20% decrease in recidivism, the effect was not statistically significant (Duwe & McNeeley, 2020). Still, in examining New York's Prison Industry Research Project PIRP, Maguire et al., (1988) did not find a statistically significant difference between the recidivism rates of those who participated in prison work. Saylor and Gaes, (1997) used a more sophisticated and rigorous method by controlling for rival causal factors such as selection bias and time at risk using

propensity score matching and a Cox proportional hazards model and discovered that prison work considerably reduced recidivism. Richmond, (2014) recently examined the effect of The Origin, Organisation, and operations of Industries in Federal, Penal and Correctional Institutions (UNICOR), a federal prison work program, on recidivism in female prisoners, and found that the program did not decrease recidivism even though they used propensity score matching. Similarly, Northcutt Bohmert and Duwe, (2012) revealed that Affordable Homes Program (AHP), which is a prison work crew program, had no influence on recidivism, but participation in a Minnesota employment program which gives prisoners employment assistance during the last several months of their imprisonment witnessed a decrease in the hazard ratio for recidivism by 32% to 63% (Duwe, 2015). On the other hand, Day et al., (2009), suggest that to reduce recidivism, prison work has to be combined with other interventions. Thus, integrating and combining multiple intervention approaches increases the chances of prison work programs' success, for example, in reducing recidivism. This is the approach used in the work release approach in Israeli prisons, where rehabilitation programs take place in a separate unit that acts as a community framework for prisoners. In addition to learning employment skills, the prisoners receive support in terms of other social and personal skills for societal integration (Weisburd et al., 2017).

2.6.7 Future prospects in life

Generally, work plays a crucial role in helping to manage correctional populations by providing a means through which prisons' financial costs can be decreased. As correctional philosophies have changed over time to accommodate the idea of reforming prisoners, working while in prisons has taken on a more rehabilitative approach. Consequently, various strategies and correctional initiatives have been created to incorporate prison industries and employment services into correctional systems in an attempt to tackle the poor employment histories and low job-related skills of most prisoners (Smith et al., 2018). Furthermore, prison administrators and advocates of prison work maintain that it offers prisoners valuable job-related skills, personal growth, and self-worth (Flanagan & Maguire, 1993; Ministry of Justice, 2010; Travis et al., 2014; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2018). Accordingly, a study by the National Institute of Justice revealed that prisoners who have the chance to participate in prison work programs find it easier to find jobs after their release (Moses & Smith, 2007). Still, some critics of prison work view its impact on the lives of prisoners as moulding prisoners into citizen-employees and not just extracting valuable work from them (Foucault, 1977; Melossi

& Pavarini, 1981). Hence, those prisoners have fewer disciplinary infractions in prison, find better jobs when released, and are able to maintain employment for a longer period of time (Johnson et al., 1997).

2.7 Criticisms of prison work

It is easy to understand why prison work and the use of prison labour is a controversial issue because, over the years, various penal activists and writers have made huge and even diametrically opposing claims about it. The propriety in preparing a person for freedom under conditions of captivity has constantly been doubted (see Christie, 1977; Lea & Young, 1984; Scheerer, 1986; Steinert, 1986). These scholars believe that re-socialising offenders for normal life in the general or open society in an 'abnormal' and closed community, or training persons for responsible living by giving them no responsibility whatsoever, is difficult if not impossible. This is because the realities of life in prison and the values internalized by inmates are largely incompatible with the values and practices expected by society. Furthermore, it has been argued that prison conditions deny prisoners the attributes that they need to develop into good citizens. They are also denied the essential minimum of any sense of responsibility. Decisions concerning their sleeping, waking, eating, doing, and acting habits are made for them from 'above'. While unity and sense of community contribute to personal growth in the outside society, these are discouraged in the prison, lest the many prisoners overwhelm the few officers. In society, leadership is seen as an ultimate virtue, but in prisons, this characteristic is identified, isolated, and blunted. Assertiveness—a characteristic encouraged in everyday living—is equated with aggression in prison and repressed. Other qualities, such as self-confidence, pride, and initiative, are eroded by the experience of prison into self-doubt, obsequiousness, and lethargy. The process of prisonisation and inculcation of prison sub-culture, exemplified in the use of argots and other deviant acts such as sodomy, becomes the misery of innocent and unsuspecting inmates. Moreover, learning techniques for big-time crime and/or involvement in gangs becomes part of the inmate subculture (see (Appiahene-Gyamfi, 1995; Goffman, 1959; Nortey, 1977; Sykes, 2021; UN Crime Prevention and Treatment of Offenders Newsletter No. 8717).

In addition, the long-standing tactic employed by the ILO to tackle prison work lies at the root of the controversy. Based on the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) of May 1932, the ILO has consistently treated prison work for private-owned businesses with great suspicion,

yet it effectively grants a free hand to public organisations. It is this dichotomist position on prison work within the public and the private sectors—an essential characteristic of its approach to prison work—that has become the root of animated debate in recent years. While the United States is often cited as a leading example of the expansion of the private prison industry, other key industrialized states have also been promoting policies that encourage cooperation between public authorities and private work providers in a manner that seems to be at odds with the ILO's normative approach to prison labour (ILO, 2015, pp. 141–142, 2017, pp. 198–199; Milman-Sivan & Sagy, 2020). According to the ILO (2017), the average national percentage of prisoners working in entrepreneurial workshops in Germany increased steadily from 12.57 per cent in 2008 to 21.36 per cent in 2013 (Milman-Sivan & Sagy, 2020). Thus, while the ILO has not wavered from its binary (public/private) view of prison work, Australia, Germany, the UK, the USA and other developed nations have persistently developed schemes challenging, and indeed flouting, it (Milman-Sivan & Sagy, 2020).

Irrespective of the benefits derived from prison work, it comes with many criticisms, such as the following:

2.7.1 Adds no skills to prisoners

Even if the assessment is inadequate, evaluations of 'what works' with respect to employment, education and training interventions (ETE) for prisoners highlight the prerequisite for a closer fit between the training and qualifications obtained whilst incarcerated and skills shortages and job opportunities in the community, and the building of better links with employers to promote the case for ex-offenders as future employees (Fletcher et al., 1998; Flynn, 2004; Social Exclusion Unit, 2002; Webster et al., 2001). Critiques pinpoint the remoteness of skills and experience, such as an absence of direct contact with, or accountability to, their employers or organisations (Webster et al., 2001) gained from prison work by prisoners from the real world. Furthermore, there is the challenge of raising prisoners' hopes even though the training that is sometimes offered does not possess serious job prospects (Simon & Corbett, 1996; Webster et al., 2001). Again, many prison work programs obviously offer prisoners specific skills, but the marketability of these skills is a challenge that has beset prison work since its implementation. Critics highlight that prisoners are offered jobs in fields experiencing labour excesses in the free economy, use dated tools and production methods, or need permits that are hard for ex-prisoners to obtain (Lindsay, 2020). In spite of these challenges, it is evidenced that providing

prisoners with work skills and experience is an essential mechanism to raise the likelihood of the prisoners' gainful (and legitimate) work when they are discharged (Maguire et al., 1988).

2.7.2 Competition with regular labour

Labour from prisons is normally considered cheaper and more profitable than any type of legitimate and regulated labour on the outside. This makes prison work programs and labour a target for opposition from organisations, trade unions, and other stakeholders. For instance, during the industrial prison era (1900–1935), considerable emphasis was placed on inmate labour in US prisons. In fact, revenues generated by prison labour resulted in many prison systems being self-sustaining. However, during the Great Depression, organized labour challenged prison labour and commerce, arguing that it cost-free world workers jobs and cut profits for businesses by selling prison-produced goods at non-competitive prices. As a result, Congress passed the Hawes–Cooper Act in 1929, making prison-made goods subject to the laws of the state just like other commercial goods. In 1935, further legislation by Congress, the Ashurst–Sumners Act, amended in 1940, strengthened the prohibition against the sale of prison-made goods in the free market by making any transport of prison-made goods in interstate commerce a federal criminal offence (Dhami, 2013).

An aspect of colonial state intervention that evoked considerable opposition among commercial groups in the Madras Presidency in British India and elsewhere was related to the establishment of industries in jails, utilizing jail labour. The issue was seen as the state competing with private enterprise; and, with the introduction of power machinery in some jails, the cry was raised that the state was no longer competing against private enterprise with convict labour but with means of production, which greatly enhanced the output of the jails (Swaminathan, 1995).

Prison labour is not typical labour, as it stimulates hostility from the external economic world, as prison labour competes unfairly, and can do so because it exploits its workforce. Prison work has been compared to slave labour, but for different reasons, such as prison work taking decently paid work out of the economy, away from free workers, and undermining the living conditions of those employed by driving their employers to compete with organisations that employ prisoners (Chang & Thompkins, 2002; Thompson, 2012). Evidence of this competition can be seen in the USA, for example, where local businesses have to compete with the Maryland Prison Industry, which benefits from cheap labour from prisons and the resultant high profit (Gardner, 2006). In another example, a recycling plant in South Georgia laid off

500 employees, just to replace them with workers from prisons, and the church-owned Sacred Heart Hospital in Eugene cancelled its contract with a unionised linen service and redirected its service to a prison laundry (Lafer, 1999). Thus, what this indicates is a boom and redirection of legitimate work to prisons due to economic gains and control, neglecting the interests and needs of workers and making it difficult for organisations with which they compete in the market (Ramm, 2011).

2.7.3 Exploitative in form and nature

Critics assert the exploitative nature of prison labour and insinuate that large proceeds may be squeezed out of individuals who are not able to resist the power of the state that supports prison authorities (Van Zyl Smit & Dünkel, 1999). As a result, some writers are of the view that due to profits by the state and prison administration, prisons are intentionally filled up. For instance, Chang & Thompkins, (2002), Davis, (2000), Parenti, (2000), Schlosser, (1998) argue that the increase in the number of people in prisons has become both a force for and a product of the prison industrial complex, and the explosion in the prison population has become a convergence of the economic and political interests of exalting corporate profits and elite power from incarceration. For instance, some inmates refuse to participate in prison labour because they equate it with slave labour, which raises questions about the meaning and the principles behind contemporary prison work programs (Ramm, 2011). Whatever the intention may be, the importance of prisoners working outside the prisons whilst incarcerated cannot be overemphasised.

2.8 Prisoners' experiences of work during incarceration

Work is a necessary evil because work done under normal settings has become accepted as a component of everyday life. Thus, the contemporary civilization unemployment, with the demoralization it causes, is seen as one of the social evils to be fought. Work is something that we as human beings cannot do without because it affords us the opportunity to earn a living, live the style of life we want and dream of, and even measure our worth and determine our values based on the work we do. As such, it is very difficult to accept and tolerate idleness or the thought of not being occupied. For instance, during the Great Depression of the 1930s in a Borstal institution in England, a disciplinary team ordered young men to stay inactive as a form of punishment. It was acknowledged that the fact that they were not ordered to work but made

to remain inactive was punishment enough because it is rather hard to stand inactivity. This notion has influenced the ways in which prisoners are treated in certain countries. In Belgium, for example, a circular in 1936 directed prison wardens to offer preference to inexperienced inmates when allotting jobs, as the jobs were insufficient and could not be given to every prisoner (Cornil, 1961). Rule 89 of the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners points in the same direction by stating that untried prisoners should always be given an opportunity to work (Cornil, 1961).

Prison work offers a paradox for researchers studying the link, and difference, concerning market and nonmarket labour. Prisoners are usually remunerated with an hourly wage and are closely supervised. Their work situation is made up of two characteristics that are often used to describe the employment relationship: what Tilly & Tilly, (2018) in the social science literature, term 'short-term monetization' and 'time-discipline' and what legal doctrine would call 'compensation' and 'control.' Besides, prison labour is deficient in characteristics conspicuous in deliberations of nonmarket work—features usually referenced as 'intimacy': work rooted in a very personal bond amongst a small number of people and usually characterized by the identification with or safeguarding of the interests of people who benefit from their labour (Kittay, 2019; Zelizer, 2005). Hence, prisoners who work in an organisation are not classified as workers of that company. For example, the US courts consistently class prison labour as a nonmarket activity, and reason that it is therefore not 'economic' in nature. Such classificatory questions have concrete stakes. Because of its nonmarket character, courts exclude prison labour from the legal category of employment. Only employment relationships are subject to labour protections like the minimum wage. Therefore, the courts' account of economic activity becomes linked to whether inmates can challenge working conditions such as prison wages at or below $1 per hour (Zatz, 2009). The overriding issue, then, is that offenders, even if employment is an achievable aim, are at an immediate and serious disadvantage when competing for jobs in the 'labour market'. This has resulted in their concentration in temporary, unskilled, and low-paid jobs, where disclosure is less likely to be requested or to be an important criterion in selection (Hunter & Boyce, 2009).

2.9 A discursive practice approach to prisoners' experience of work

Discourse can be defined as the act of speaking and writing (Woodilla, 1998), which ushers things into existence through the creation, propagation, and utilization of words (Parker, 2014).

For instance, the discourse of prisons and prison work has introduced different prison work management practices into various prisons in recent decades (Chalaby, 1998; Litchfield, 2018; Liu et al., 2020; Mayr, 2003; McKendy, 2006; Muth et al., 2016; Sloop, 1996). Discourses can be regarded as 'tactile' because they construct material that mirrors reality in the practices that they invoke. They are thus encapsulated in texts or words, but transcend those individual words that fashioned them. As a result, words can be seen as a discursive 'unit' and an exemplification of discourse (Chalaby, 1996). Thus, the analysis of discourse involves the step-by-step study of text or words—that is, written or spoken language, cultural artefacts, and visual representations (Grant et al., 2001; Wood & Kroger, 2000) which are full of traces to discourses that can never be found in their entirety (Parker, 2014). Consequently, a study on organizational discourse such as the one carried out in prisons is based on the texts that make up, and are composed by, the prisons (Putnam et al., 1996). This point of view aligns with Kress's, (1995) observation that:

> Texts are the sites of the emergence of complexes of social meanings, produced in the particular history of the situation of production, that record in partial ways the histories of both the participants in the production of the text and of the institutions that are "invoked" or brought into play, indeed a partial history of the language and the social system, a partiality due to the structuring of relations of power and of the participants (p. 450).

A discourse is a system of symbols that regulates and orders certain social and institutional practices; it supplies resources for members to build understandings and identities, experience emotions, and account for actions. Discourses indicate what items and ideas are important and what positions are accessible to members in the practice—the range of roles that could be espoused jointly with their potential for action and correlations with other participants. Discourses also offer standards of evaluation which form the basis of social relations of power. These standards regulate how the positioning of participants is developed and how people take up particular discursive positions from those available (Evans, 2000). As stated earlier, discourse can be described as practices of writing and talking (Woodilla, 1998) however, such a broad description will not serve the purpose of this work. Therefore, the researcher will draw on Parker, (2014) definition, which defines discourse as a system of statements which creates an object. As a result, discourse sets out in some ways the manner in which to talk about a topic, and prescribes the appropriate and intelligible approach needed to talk, write or conduct ourselves, whilst also prescribing limits and restrictions needed to talk and conduct ourselves in relation to the issue or build knowledge about it (Hall, 2001). In simple terms, discourses

are well-thought-out compilations of meaningful texts or words (Parker, 2014). Put differently, discourses do not just explain things: they perform things (Potter & Wetherell, 1987) through the manner in which they make sense of the world (Evans et al., 2006). Reference to the term 'word' or 'text' does not simply mean written transcriptions only, but refers to any type of representative expression that necessitates a physical means and allows permanent storage (Taylor & Van Every, 1993). For a text or word to be created, it has to be inscribed—spoken, written, or portrayed in some manner—consequently changing into material form and becoming available to others (Taylor et al., 1996). As a result, words or texts that are embodied in discourses may take different forms, such as written documents, verbal reports, artwork, spoken words, pictures, symbols, buildings, and other artefacts (Fairclough, 2001; Grant et al., 1998; Taylor et al., 1996; Wood & Kroger, 2000). According to Fairclough, (1992) discourses cannot be studied directly, but have to be explored through examination of the texts that comprise them. Discourse analysis does not centre on individual or isolated texts, as social reality does not rely on isolated texts but on bodies of texts. Hence, discourse analysis involves the examination of sets of texts, how they are made understandable through their association with other texts, the ways in which they rely on different discourses, how and to whom they are circulated, the means of their production, and the means with which they are received and consumed (Fairclough, 1992; Philips & Hardy Cynthia, 2002; van Dijk, 2008).

Accordingly, (Foucault, 1998, p. 463) explains discourse as:

> The ensemble of more or less regulated, more or less deliberate, more or less finalized ways of doing things, through which can be seen both what was constituted as real for those who sought to think it and manage it and the way in which the latter constituted themselves as subjects capable of knowing, analyzing, and ultimately altering reality.

From this view, (Butler, 2011) opines that we all possess bodies that carry out daily activities such as eating, sleeping, and feeling pain and pleasure, but how these bodies experience these activities and how important they are is discursively constructed. Discourse analysis is not just about scrutinising the substance of a written or verbal account to look for evidence of power, but rather investigating how subjects and objects materialise in space and time through discursive practice, whether the action of practice is writing, talking or any other action (Larsson, 2014) such as prisoners working outside prisons.

Practice theory is a paradigm ingrained in pragmatic and Marxist sociology, and in Bourdieu's, Giddens', and Foucault's social theories. It is a 'meso' approach, which promotes practices as the logical entities for examining social phenomena: for instance, work and organisations

(Nicolini, 2012). Practices are routinised yet creative behaviours linked by mental-bodily actions, ability, standards, and emotional and motivational knowledge (Giustini, 2022). Thus, theories of practice offer distinctive and challenging ways of understanding human actions, and their association with social order and change. Their uniqueness and potential become easiest to grasp following articulation of what a practice is. Empirically, any recognisable activity can be considered a practice, with relevant examples for the present discussion including walking, working, sleeping, rule-following, exercising, eating, or creating relationships. A practice (*Praktik*) is an ordered type of behaviour that is made up of different constituents which are linked together: types of physical deeds, types of intellectual activities, 'things' and how they are used, background knowledge such as experience, emotional states, level of enthusiasm and level of understanding. A practice such as the methods used in preparing food, eating the food, executing tasks, researching, or taking care of ourselves and others, creates a block of activities whose subsistence, exact linkages and interdependencies rely on these activities and cannot be reduced to any one of these single elements. For instance, in prisons, inmates obeying rules, executing assigned tasks, keeping cordial relationships with fellow inmates, and refraining from engaging in violent activities are all blocks of activities which rely on one another to contribute to the rehabilitation of prisoners and reduce recidivism. Similarly, a practice embodies a pattern that can be infused with a massive number of single and frequently distinctive actions that reproduce that practice. The person who acts as the mental and physical agent is seen as the 'carrier' (*Träger*) of a practice and also in several other practices, which do not need to be synchronised with each other. Accordingly, the person is not only a carrier of the pattern of the physical actions but also of some ordered means of understanding, experiencing, and desiring. These prosaic mental actions to understand, experience and desire are the qualities of elements needed by a person who engages in practice but not the qualities of that person. Applications of the practice theory approach cover the most mundane facets of everyday life, from the activities carried out in a typical day by a prisoner to well thought-out activities in organisational environments such as working in an organisation outside the prisons which is planned and structured by the prison administration. The scope of practices could range from transient doings or activities to established long-term patterns of activity. Some examples of performances recognized as 'practices' are quite limited to small geographical areas such as a prison cell or a particular prison, whereas others are much more general in extent, such as the entire Ghana Prisons Service. Consideration of practices normally demands a thorough investigation of the equipment and material culture needed, but must also allot integral roles to vocabulary and other types of linguistic performances.

The idea of practice has a long history, and its roots can be traced to ancient philosophers such as Aristotle and to more recent works by (Bourdieu, 1990; Dreyfus, 1991; Giddens, 1984; Wittgenstein, 2010). At the moment, there is no agreed-upon approach or definition of practice, since practices are intrinsically ontological, as the principles of practice, how it is acknowledged, and the parameters of practice take place as a result of the shared aims of social life. Consequently, the use of practice in social sciences is as diverse as the types of examples used to back it up. As a result, elucidations of practice depend on the ontological and epistemological inclination and interest of the researcher (Reckwitz, 2002). For instance, Heidegger's and Wittgenstein's studies on understanding and rule-following have had a major impact on practice theories (Egan et al., 2015; Glendinning, 1998), and so have the works of Foucault and sociologists such as Pierre Bourdieu and Anthony Giddens. Thus, practice has various definitions as different writers tackle the more specific depiction of the practice-as-entity concept in diverse ways (Røpke, 2009).

According to (Turner, 2002) practice is defined as those non-linguistic circumstances needed for the successful accomplishment of a given activity that are learned: at this point, practice entails an activity that requires its participants to genuinely have obtained some tacit skills of a type that enables them to carry out an activity. On the other hand, Bourdieu conceptualised practice as intertwined activities that are incorporated within a field and endeavoured to shed light on the notion through the central principle of habitus—a stable system of dispositions and structures which generate and organise practices (Bourdieu, 1984, 2014). Thus, essential to Bourdieu's idea of practice is the concept of field, through which a story of the social is created. A field is made up of a realm of activity through which individuals practise certain interests, by relying on capitals—not only economic, but also cultural and symbolic—that are accessible to them (Schatzki, 2005). A central point of this theory is that class position is an essential predicator of how social structures are reshaped in the physical surroundings (Bourdieu, 1984). However, some critics contend that Bourdieu's concept of a class society has an inert conception of modern societies and their peculiarities (Gram-Hanssen, 2009). Giddens, (1984, 2005) also gives an account of practice, where practice is made evident by a group of actions, directed by a set of laws, and comprised of situated activities and relations, which are influenced by the agency of other actors. Both Bourdieu's and Giddens' views about practice are theorised as individual site ontology.

Though it is sometimes asserted that practice theory is actually just another type of cultural theory, Reckwitz, (2002) brings to light the distinction between traditional social theories and

practice theory in an effort to comprehend sociality. He asserts that practice theory is useful because it provides the capability to comprehend and describe actions through symbolic structures of knowledge, as it does not disregard the 'tacit or unconscious layer of knowledge which facilitates a symbolic organization of reality' (p. 246), unlike other social theories that focus on explaining actions with recourse to single interests. Practice theory has the capacity to explain through reconstructing the symbolic structures of knowledge that permit and limit the agents to construe the world from certain perspectives, and to subsequently act in corresponding ways. Social order, then, does not emerge as a result of conformity to mutual normative expectations but is rooted in the collective cognitive and symbolic structures, in a 'shared knowledge' which facilitates socially shared ways of ascribing meaning to the world (Lizardo, 2007; Reckwitz, 2002). A practice is therefore a structured way in which bodies are moved, objects are handled, subjects are catered for, things are portrayed, and the world is understood. Hence, it is a tautology to describe practices as 'social practices' because practice is social since it is a 'type' of behaving and understanding that emerges at different places and at different points of time, and is carried out by different bodies/minds (Reckwitz, 2002).

Practice is 'incorporated and substantially mediates assemblages of human actions principally structured around collective practical understandings' (Schatzki, 2000), and 'practices are correlated and inherent in ways of understanding, saying, and doing things' (Schau et al., 2009). In the words of Schatzki, (2000), a practice encompasses 'sayings, doings and tasks'. The 'sayings' imply what is spoken or gestured, and what is performed and enacted encompasses the 'doings', how these acting and performances are justified, and the outcomes they produce. Schatzki's practice theory argues that practices are geared towards a set of ends and that participants may opt to perform a selection of tasks to achieve those ends (Lloyd, 2010). Still, Schatzki opines that these activities may not always be regular or routine, because they are positioned within contexts or environments, and for that reason, practitioners need to accommodate the unique or unexpected events that can occur, even within the context of everyday practice. A key point to Schatzki's idea of practice is the notion of *prefigurement*, where the course to any activity is qualified by the social site: that is, it is enabled or constrained. Thus, all practices are social. Hence, they are not constituted as an individual self-sufficient activity but are located within and through group activities—formed, interwoven, and sanctioned through a dialogic intra-group process. This implies that there is an intersubjective dimension to the concept and its dimensions and arrangement, which facilitates the development of shared understanding and shared skills (Schatzki, 1996). Therefore,

practices are understood, organised, and performed through the discourses that characterise and shape a setting: these might include educational discourse, the discourse of specific workplaces, religious discourse, or even informing discourse, and in this case prison work (which would direct what information is considered valid) (Kemmis, 2009).

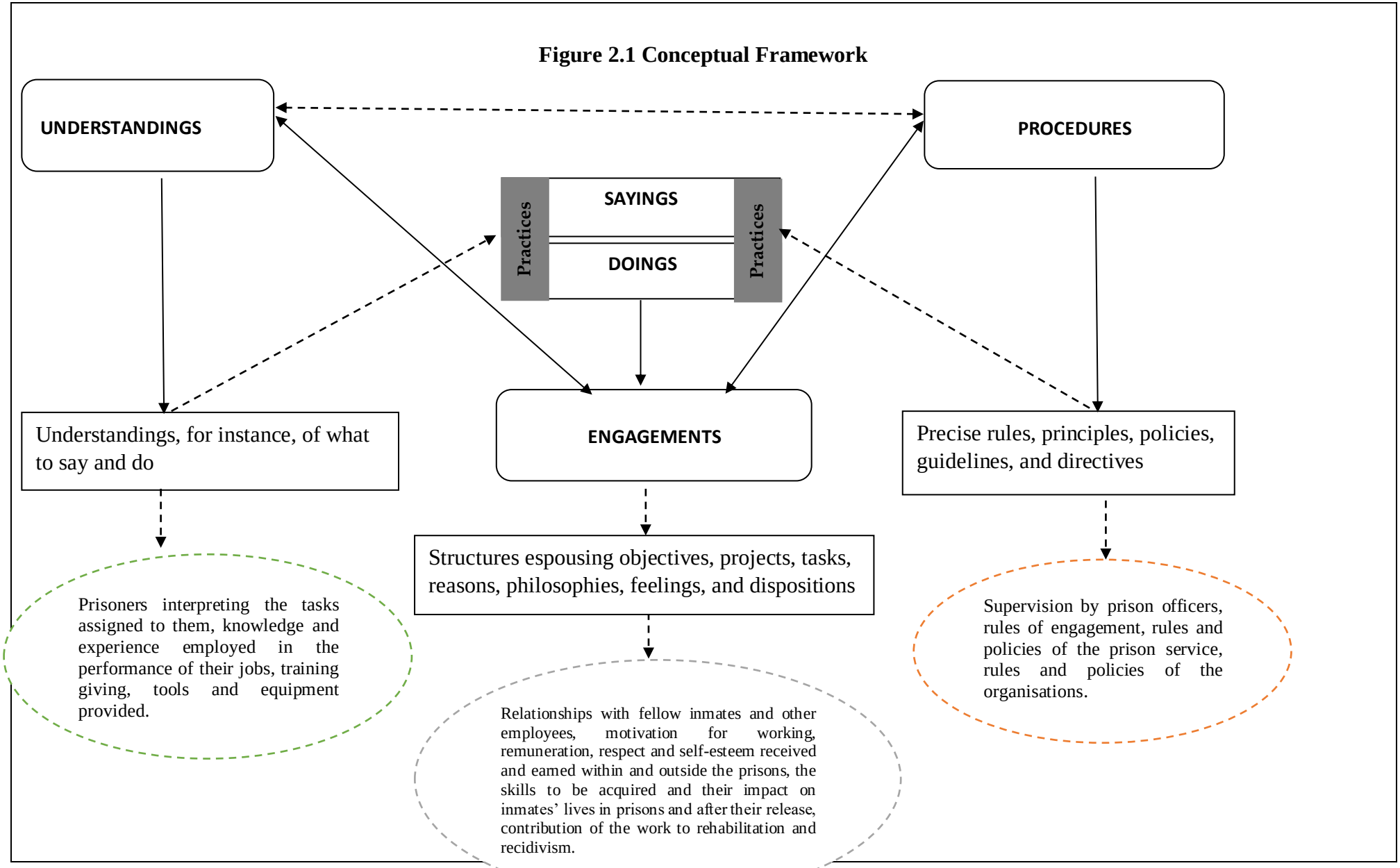
Practice theory is chosen as the best fit theoretical lens for this study because the idea of practice is viewed as a dimension of activity within a socially constructed context, and the concept of prison work as practice is viewed as a mutual understanding of prison work practices in theory (Jansson, 2013). Schatzki, (1996) opines that doings and sayings are connected, and outlines three main paths to the connection. He describes practice as a temporally recounted and spatially distributed linkage of doings and sayings. The doings and sayings forming a practice make up a nexus, which implies that they are connected in some ways. Three main connections are involved: (1) via understandings, for instance, of what to say and do; (2) through precise rules, principles, policies, guidelines and directives; and (3) through engagement, or what Røpke, (2009) terms 'teleoaffective' structures espousing objectives, projects, tasks, reasons, philosophies, feelings and dispositions. The focal point is on the connections that make practices come together as entities. In a more recent account, Schatzki, (2021) accentuated that the nexuses of actions are materially mediated, as individuals employ artefacts to form the links that build a practice into an entity. Therefore, Schatzki, (2012, p. 14) consideration of practice as an 'open-ended, spatially-temporally dispersed nexus of doings and sayings' echoes, in a similar way, the position of the social in practical activities. As a result, practice as a 'nexus of doings and sayings' (Schatzki, 1996) is not just confined to the individual(s) (prisoners, ex-prisoners and officers) who perform a particular activity but is opened to prospective observers (at least within the same culture). Warde, (2005) interpreted the paths of connection into components and made reference to Schatzki's three elements as understandings, procedures, and engagements. Hence, a practice is viewed as a set of interconnected heterogeneous things, and artefacts are added as elements in the components of practices. As argued by Reckwitz, (2002) engaging in practice most often implies utilising certain things in a particular way. Practice can be viewed as a structured nexus of individual activities through which understanding and intelligibility take place (Schatzki, 2005).

In a similar view, Reckwitz, (2002) applies the notion of elements in his definition of practices as a routinized type of behaviour made up of various elements, linked to each other: types of bodily conducts, types of intellectual conduct, 'things' and how they are utilised, and background information in the form of understanding, expertise, emotional intelligence, and

motivational knowledge. As practice cannot be reduced to any one of these activities, because performing a practice is mostly dependent on the linkages of all the elements (Bueger & Gadinger, 2015), so is prison work which ensures that everyday practices such as obeying the rules, the motivation of prisoners to work, remuneration of prisoners, the tasks assigned to them, supervision, interaction with non-prisoners, and the tools and equipment used to work are all geared towards the rehabilitation of inmates.

This study operationalises Theodore Schatzki's (2002) most influential version of practice theory, which conceives practices as temporally, spatially evolving sets of doings (actions) and sayings (discourses) organised by three major elements: practical understanding (competencies), teleoaffectivity/engagement (ends, emotions), and normativity/procedures (rules), and was expanded by Warde, (2005) as indicated in Figure 2.1. People blend these aspects in 'performances'—dynamic endeavours which are considered appropriate by people in a similar social order.

Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework



By implication, prison work requires tools and equipment, assigned tasks, motivation, remuneration, supervision, interactions, and some sort of training, which must come together and be utilised in a certain way to be effective. All practices take place in a social field, and thus reflect the knowledge claims that are embodied within that field (Scheer, 2012). Thus, prison work is carried out outside the prison premises and in organisations outside the prisons. For this reason, prisoners who do these jobs are expected to acquire knowledge and skills that are embodied within the field of working in proper organisations and apply them to their lives to enhance their rehabilitation and also help them after their release from the prisons. Practice covers deliberate, premeditated acts; it also includes, and in fact emphasises, inured behaviour carried out with little or no cognitive attention. In practice theory, subjects (or agents) are not observed as prior to practices, but rather are viewed as the product of practice; subjects 'exist only within the execution of social practices: a single subject "is" (essentially)—even in his or her "inner" processes of reflection, feeling, remembering, planning, etc.—the sequence of acts in which he or she participates in social practices in his or her everyday life (King, 2016) . Warde, (2005) simplified Schatzki's view of practice as being made up of a nexus of practical activity and its representations (doings and sayings), which are coordinated by understandings, procedures, and engagements. Understandings are the practical interpretations of what and how to do, knowledge and know-how in a broad sense. Understanding in prison work will involve prisoners interpreting the tasks assigned to them, the knowledge and experience employed in the performance of their jobs, the training given, and the tools and equipment provided. Procedures are instructions, principles, and rules for how to do things. Procedure in prison work will cover supervision by prison officers, rules of engagement, rules and policies of the prison service, and rules and policies of the organisations. Engagements are emotional and normative orientations related to what to do and how. Engagement in prison work will involve relationships with fellow inmates and other employees, the motivation for working, remuneration, the respect and self-esteem received and earned within and outside the prisons, the skills to be acquired and their impact on inmates' lives in prisons and after their release, and the contribution of the work to rehabilitation and recidivism. Relating this to Reckwitz's, (2002) perspective, each of the three elements that coordinate practices—understandings, procedures, and engagements—encompasses both tacit and discursive processes; they cover both bodily and mental processes; and they deal with material things as well as immaterial processes (Halkier & Jensen, 2011).

Discursive practices, as developed by Foucault, are known as the practices (or operations) of discourses, implying knowledge creation not linguistic practices or language use. The focal point is on how knowledge is formed through plural and contingent practices across diverse locations. Such an approach bridges a symbolic-material distinction and signals the always political nature of 'the real' (Bacchi & Bonham, 2014). Discourse can also mean practices, whether linguistic, organizational, or structural, that form what makes up 'knowledge' or 'truth'. The current work will make use of linguistic, organisational, and structural forms of practices employed by prisoners in the execution of their duties within and outside the prisons. Predictably, discursive practices direct a person to a particular understanding of a phenomenon; thus, words are not the only transparent medium for the relaying of information. For example, through the study of the discourses currently in use, it is possible to understand the social effects of describing prison work in a particular way.

2.10 Chapter Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the literature in order to present the historical context for this research. It has followed the progression of prisons from being a place of punishment (Reichel, 1979; Thorsten, 1967) to being a place for rehabilitation (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002). The chapter dealt with prison labour and prison work from imperial Rome, where prisoners were used as slaves (Gaes, Flanagan, et al., 1999) to the modern position in society and the many purposes for which prisons have been used recently (American Correctional Association, 1986; Opperman, 2014). The chapter discussed the debates surrounding the impact of involving prisoners in jobs outside the prisons and how this helps with rehabilitation and reduces recidivism. I also introduced the arguments for and against prison work and explored how prisoners experienced work during incarceration (Guido, 2019). The chapter has also drawn attention to the deprivations experienced by prisoners and explored the literature that has discussed themes of prisoner characteristics and criticisms of prison work. In addition, the chapter employed the practice theory originally developed by Schatzki, (2000) and expanded by Warde, (2005) to explain how prisoners experience work outside the prisons. Although prison arrangements and prison work have seen some changes over the years, prison labour and the employment of prisoners by organisations have not changed. Hence, even though prison labour has been utilised by countries for years, its aim

seems to have evolved over time from punishment to rehabilitation (Hawkins, 1982) yet as a measure to check the behaviour of prisoners, it has become inherently controversial (Van Zyl Smit & Dünkel, 1999) as many questions rather than answers evolve around the usage of prisoners in prisons.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

This chapter covers the methodology that underpins this empirical enquiry. First, the research context and setting are discussed, followed by the research approach and method. The data collection method and sampling techniques are then discussed. Finally, the ethics and data analysis techniques are discussed. The chapter ends with a summary and conclusion.

3.1 Research Context

3.1.1 The beginning of prison in Ghana

Incarceration is not native to the people of the Gold Coast (Ghana) and the rest of Africa. Nonetheless, the Colonial Gold Coast is an enlightening area in which to analyse the issues of prisons and prison work with generalizable gains for many jurisdictions today. The historical background of the Ghana Penal System can be divided into four stages: the introduction of British penal institutions (1841–1876); the abolition of penal labour (1876–1907); the Gilbert and Sullivan prison system (1907–1920); and the Cookson era and beyond (1920 to independence) (Seidman, 1966). During the pre-colonial period, the people of Ghana dispensed their own systems of punishment and criminal justice. Prevention and indemnification were its focal points, together with other aims achieved by Western criminal law. Though they were not expressly stated, the fundamental philosophies ingrained in current criminal justice systems were practised by the criminal justice system during the pre-colonial era (Dalgleish, 2005; Ojo & Ojewale, 2019). For instance, criminals were made to pay fines for unintentional killing, a thief was made to return the items stolen in addition to paying a fine to the traditional ruler or chief, and offending husbands were fined for criminal intercourse. In cases where thieves were unable to pay the fines issued to them, they were put to death or a member of their family was sold into slavery (Sarbah, 1968). During this period, punishment for crimes was endured by offenders and their immediate blood relatives, which provides an indication of how community values were viewed at that time (Arthur, 1991). On the other hand, informal punishments comprised public degradation and derision through muckrakes, songs and innuendos.

Crimes were viewed as a destruction of community solidarity: therefore, punishments for offences

were aimed at pacifying the gods and ancestral spirits and returning peace and harmony to the community. Thus, the chief and the offenders' family or clan meted out punishment, with the intention not to banish offenders from the community but to reintegrate them into society through compensation and reconciliation between offenders and victims. Accordingly, various ethnic groups gave out different punishments in accordance with what best fit their cultural practices and beliefs (Tankebe, 2008). The traditional criminal justice system was characterised by *immediacy* – giving out immediate punishment; *escapelessness* – ensuring the impossibility of the criminal escaping the pervasive scrutiny of the spirits and gods; and *severity* – giving out harsh punishment to dissuade perpetrators and other members of the public from engaging in that act and thus safeguarding the society (Abotchie, 1997; Tankebe, 2008).

The introduction of imprisonment as a form of punishment for wrongdoing came with the advent of the British Colonial Masters in the eighteenth century. Despite the fact that there was a traditional criminal justice system in place, the British Committee of Merchants, led by Captain George Maclean, set up five cells in the Cape Coast Castle in 1841 to supplant it. As a result, after the Bond of 1944 was signed between Commander Hill, who represented the British Government, and six Fante chiefs, it ushered in a new era that ended up changing the scope of prisons from custodial institutions to places for punishment. This enjoined the custodians of the criminal justice system—the chiefs—to give up criminals to the British to be dealt with (Akoensi, 2017). Subsequently, after Ghana gained independence from the British, imprisonment in Ghana followed the English Prison Act of 1865, which rested on what was known as the three goals of imprisonment: a separate system of confinement, penal labour, and a restricted diet (Van Zyl Smit & Dünkel, 1999). The prisons placed more emphasis on punitive measures, as it aimed to enforce and ensure that prisoners went through the worst form of pain possible. The situation changed tremendously by 1926 because of the influence of the British prison reforms, made possible by the Gladstone Report of 1895. Accordingly, imprisonment placed more focus on reformation than on punishment (Frimpong, 1999).

3.1.2 Meaning of prison labour in Ghana

Prison labour became an essential aspect of the new form of punishment for the people of the Gold Coast, although imprisonment as a form of punishment for crimes was not known under the

indigenous system of criminal justice (Frimpong, 1983). Prison labour was economically valuable to the colonial regime and the overall gross value of prison labour was firmly positive over the entire colonial period. Prison labour was used by the Colonial Masters to work on government-funded projects, predominantly during the early part of the 20th century (Akurang-Parry, 2000; Bernault, 2007; Hynd, 2015). Thus, the use of prisoners for colonial public work projects continued throughout the 1950s in British colonial Africa, where it was projected that between one in every 300 and one in every 500 Africans were sent to prisons from 1930 through to the 1950s, as opposed to one in every 2000 British nationals in Britain (Hynd, 2015). For instance, research by Thomas, (1973) revealed that prison labour was used to supplement the dearth in the supply of labour in cash crop farming and mining throughout the 1920s in Nigeria and Ghana. However, only state organisations were allowed to make use of prison labour and prisoners were assigned to operate within their provincial districts (Archibong & Obikili, 2020).

3.1.3 The Ghana prisons service

The Ghana prisons service is a part of the criminal justice system of Ghana, which was established based on Article 205 (1) (2) of the 1992 constitution of Ghana. It is also a member of the National Security Council under Article 190 (1) (a) and a public service under Article 83 (1) (f) of the 1992 constitution of Ghana. The prison service is mandated by the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, The Prisons Service Act, 1972 (NRCD 46), the Prisons (Amendment) Regulation, 1970 (LI 648), the Prisons Standing Order, 1960, the Prisons Regulations, 1958 (LI 412/58), the Prisons Service (General Administration) Regulations, 2016 (CI92) and the Prisons Service (Staff Discipline) Regulations, 2016 (CI93), which provide legislation and administrative powers to govern the operations of the service. The population of the prisons as of December 2018 was 5,351,995 prisoners and that of the staff was 7,025 prison officers. The Ghana prison service has 46 establishments across the country. They include the Prisons Headquarters, Prison Officers' Training School (POTS), Senior Correctional Centre (formerly Ghana Borstal Institution), seven Central Prisons, fifteen Local Prisons, seven Female Prisons, three Open Camp Prisons, nine Agricultural Settlement Camp Prisons, one Medium Security Prison, and one Maximum Security Prison . The service is entrusted with the safe custody of prisoners under the Prisons Service Act, 1972 (NRDC 46); however, in recent times, most of its activities have been geared towards the reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners.

Kumasi Central Male Prison

The development of prisons in the country started in the early 1800s, with an emphasis on punishment rather than safe custody. During the early 19th century, the British government adopted the indirect rule system of government, and, as a result, District Commissioners were appointed to see to the day-to-day administration of the government. The Kumasi Central Prison was established in 1901, soon after the British Government gained grounds to rule in the Ashanti Region. To enable them to work effectively and to instil fear in the indigenous people who posed as threats to their administration, several local and district courts were created by the colonial masters. The prison was established to confine lawbreakers to facilitate the smooth running of the British administration. In 1925, Kumasi Prison was reconstructed to increase the number of cells to accommodate a large number of inmates within the province. The site covers an area of 44,424 square feet, allowing 500 cubic feet for each prisoner.

Kumasi Central Female Prison

The Kumasi Female Prison was administered as part of the Kumasi Central Prison (Male) during its inception. Admissions and discharges of inmates were done at the Kumasi Central Prison. The officers who worked in the female section also reported directly to the Central Prison, as well as providing all the technical assistance the section needed. In 1991, the Kumasi Female Prison was granted full autonomous status, which gave it the authority to assume charge of its affairs. The female prison is located at the centre of Adum in Kumasi and is structurally attached to the Kumasi Central Prison. It has a total land size of 0.07 acres, which houses four cells measuring 1200 square feet each. The Prison takes both convicts and remand prisoners.

Manhyia Local Prison

The Manhyia Local Prison was originally a subset of the Asantehene's palace. Its original function was to accommodate people who committed crimes and were found guilty by the Asantehene's court. In 1954, the government took over the management of the facility and gazetted it as one of the country's prison establishments. The prison is located in Kumasi, at the Manhyia Palace where the Asantehene resides. It has a total area of 0.001221 km^2. The inmates' population is made up of convicts and debtors. The building contains six cells and seven offices.

Nsawam Medium Security Prison (Female)

The Nsawam Medium Security Prison was established in 1960 and received its first inmates on 10th October 1960. It is located in the south-eastern outskirts of the Nsawam township, along the Accra-Nsawam trunk road. The prison is located on 823.027 acres of land. Construction of the prison began in 1956, after the land was acquired from the Adonten division of the Aburi stool. The acquisition was successful through the assistance of the late Ohene Djan, a royal of Aburi and a friend of Ghana's first President, Kwame Nkrumah. The establishment of the Nsawam Medium Security prison was necessitated by overcrowding in the central prisons and the McCarthy Committee's report on the prison, which recommended that a new prison be built at Nsawam, near Accra. The categories of inmates held by Nsawam Medium Security Prison are those on remand, recidivists, lifers, and prisoners on death row.

The Nsawam Female Prison was officially opened on the 10th of December 1973. It is the biggest female prison in Ghana and ensures the safe custody of female prisoners as well as their welfare and reformation. In 1988, there was an exchange programme between Ghana and Nigeria where seventeen Ghanaian female prisoners serving various terms in Nigerian prisons were transferred to Ghana and placed in Nsawam on 17th December 1988.

Research philosophical stance

Ontology is concerned with the study of being and tends to answer questions regarding what constitutes reality (Crotty, 1998; Ghana Prison Service, 2019; Scotland, 2012) whereas epistemology is based on how knowledge can be constructed, obtained and disseminated (Cohen et al., 2017; Vivien et al., 2018). As the aim of social science research is geared towards comprehending the social realities of different individuals and demonstrating how their views guide the actions they take within that reality (Anderson et al., 2003; Beck & Mahoney, 1979), taking an ontological and epistemological stance is a crucial element during research because it aids in discovering how the perception of human nature consciously affect the approach taken by the researcher to unravel social truths. In this regard, constructivism-interpretivism was deemed appropriate for this study as the study is centred on understanding how prisoners experience work outside the prisons during their incarceration. Interpretivism seeks to build knowledge from the

understanding of the unique experiences and views of individuals and constructivism views knowledge as socially constructed by individuals (Melegati & Wang, 2021) .

Constructivism-interpretivism posits that truth is formed from the experiences of individuals instead of developed from an external objective entity. Thus, the social reality of the prison is viewed as being co-constructed by the prisoners, officers and ex-prisoners who interact and make sense of their world and function in an active way which helps to approach and explore the truth from their lived experiences. Thus, the individuals or actors become the expert source of information for their lived experiences (Tadesse, 2016) which helps in interpreting reality from their point of view. From an ontological stance, constructivism-interpretivism holds that reality is built on the interpretation and the mental construction of the actors (prisoners, officers and ex-prisoners) involved in prison work. From an epistemological stance, there are no objective approaches and the findings from the study are created based on the interactions between the respondents (objects being studied) and the researcher. Additionally, reality is influenced by the social environment of the actors. That is, specific individuals, who exist in a specific place, in a particular time frame, create meanings from events and actions from extended, multifaceted processes of social interactions which involve discourses, history, and action (Schwandt, 1998). A key aspect of constructivism-interpretivism is to understand rather than explain a phenomenon. Following this, to understand the world of prison work, one needs to interpret it from the viewpoint of the lived experiences of officers, prisoners and ex-prisoners. Hence, the researcher needed to elucidate the process of meaning construction and clarify what and how meanings are expressed in the actions and language of the actors. Consequently, the philosophical stance influenced the research approach, methods and methodology used in the study.

3.2 Research Approach

Research involves an effort to orchestrate and reorganize the intricacies of the realities within which we live and/or study, and depict them in such a way as to connect their diverse (seemingly distinct) propositions in an efficient way, thus extending the knowledge base of our discipline and/or producing patterns of knowledge applicable to our immediate problems (Abma, 2002; Henwood & Pidgeon, 1994; Polit & Hungler, 1999; Sarantakos, 1998). A research approach could be quantitative or qualitative, but for the purposes of this work, the qualitative approach was used. This approach was chosen because of its efficacy to help answer the research questions. The

qualitative approach involved fieldwork where close contact with the people (prisoners, former prisoners, and prison officers), setting (the prisons), site (work environment outside the prisons), and institutions (the organisations with which prisoners work) was developed. Thus, it enabled the observation and collection of data to explain why the respondents thought and behaved in certain ways instead of emphasizing counting the number of respondents who thought or behaved in particular ways. Accordingly, qualitative research was better at simplifying and managing the data without destroying its complexity and context (Bowen, 2006; Yauch & Steudel, 2003).

3.2.1 Exploratory qualitative research design

A poorly crafted research design fails to give correct answers to the research questions or achieve research objectives, and in turn does not help the end users of the research. As a result, creating a sound research design formed a key aspect of this work (Shukla, 2010). Since the goal was to gather evidence to answers real-life questions from respondents, the choice of the research approach was a crucial factor, because various trade-offs were needed when tackling questions regarding different aspects of the research (Holloway & Galvin, 2017). Consequently, for the purposes of this work, the explorative qualitative research design was employed, because the research topic needed to uncover the stories about prison work in Ghana. Polit & Beck, (2012) assert that this design serves to illuminate how a phenomenon is manifested and is especially useful in uncovering the full nature of a little-understood phenomenon.

External labour, which is not a very well-known subject, especially in the context of business management, was chosen for the study, and since little is known about the subject, an explorative qualitative research design was deemed to be the right approach. Therefore, a qualitative exploratory design helped to explore prison work, which has limited coverage within the extant literature, and allowed the participants of the study to contribute to the development of new knowledge in that area (Reid-Searl & Happell, 2012). The exploratory research design enabled exploration of a phenomenon—in this case, prison work—to deal with a research issue that needs more clarification, and to gain further insights before an approach can be developed (Shukla, 2010). The current topic, prison work, presents an area of research that is rarely examined by researchers, especially in Ghana. Hence, the choice of exploratory qualitative research was appropriate, because it helped to gain a deeper insight into the phenomenon.

3.2.2 Participants' recruitment

Multiple case study approach

Case study research starts with the discovery of a specific case, which could be a concrete entity, such as an individual, a small group, an organization, or a partnership; or a less concrete entity, such as a community, a relationship, a decision process, or a specific project. In this study, the case comprised the prisoners and prison officers in the Ghana Prisons Service (Yin, 2009). The idea of using a case study was to identify a case that could be bounded or described within certain parameters, such as a specific place (prisons) and time (six months). The case study for this research was the Ghana Prisons Service. Five prisons (Nsawam Female Prison, Kumasi Central Male and Female Prisons, Amanfrom Camp Prison, and Manhyia Local Prison) were chosen for the research. This is because relying on one source of data is typically not enough to develop an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018). These prisons were chosen because they fall under the class of prisons that are mandated to undertake external labour programs. Figure 3.1 shows where the various prisons are located on the map of Ghana.

Kumasi Central Prison (Male)

Staff strength

Number of senior officers – 56

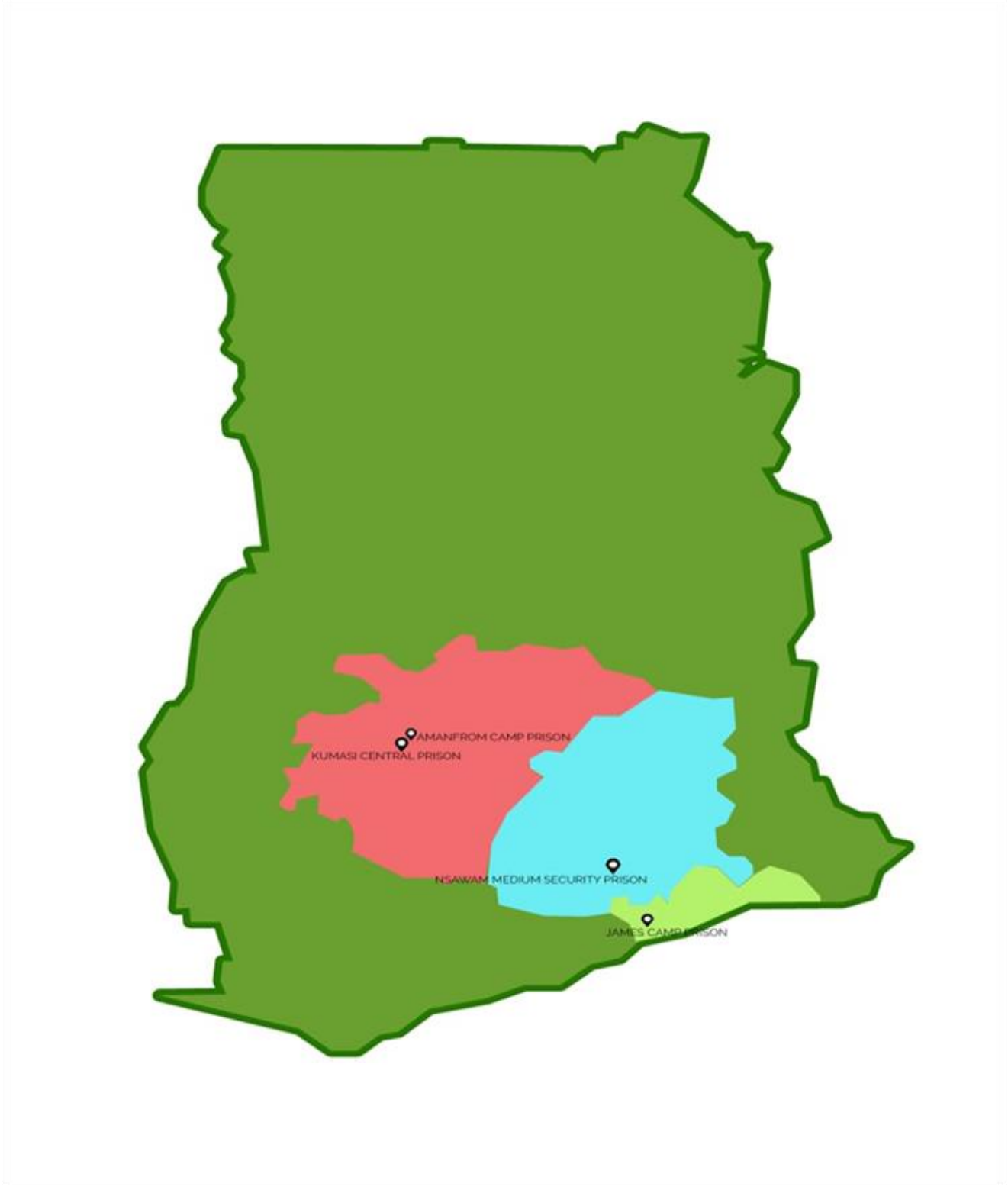
Number of junior officers – 372

Total staff strength – 428

Inmate Population

On average, the total lock-up (number of inmates in custody) of Kumasi Central Prison, which is the second most populated prison in Ghana, is 1,700. As of March 3rd, 2022, the lock-up stood at 1,773. It must be emphasised that the total figure changes frequently and the same is updated daily.

Figure 3.1 Location of prisons chosen for the study



Prison External Labour

Inmates who qualify for external labour are mostly engaged in works such as clearing (weeding) compounds of government/public facilities, loading and offloading goods for private organisations and individuals, desilting choked gutters/drainage facilities in the Kumasi metropolis, construction works, and conveying goods for companies or individuals from one point to another.

Officer-Inmate ratio

The prescribed ratio when undertaking external labour is four prisoners to one officer (4:1) per group (mostly referred to as a Gang in the Ghanaian prison discourse). The number of groups or gangs deployed to execute a task is dependent on the nature of the work and the extent of labour required.

External Labour Locations:

Some of the places where inmates are assigned for external labour include public agencies, such as state ministries and agencies, schools, markets, hospitals, private organisations/companies, and residences.

Amanfrom Camp Prison

Staff strength

Number of senior officers – 30

Number of junior officers – 193

Total staff strength – 223

Inmate Population

As of March 3rd, 2022, the total lock-up of Amanfrom Camp Prison stood at 230. On the average, the inmate population of this facility is 240.

Manhyia Local Prison

Staff strength

Number of senior officers – 19

Number of junior officers – 139

Total staff strength – 158

Inmate Population

As of March 3rd, 2022, the total lock-up of Manhyia Local Prison stood at 148. On average, the inmate population of this facility is 150.

Prison External Labour

Unlike the Kumasi Male Central and Amanfrom Camp Prisons, where some inmates do not qualify for external labour due to their risk level and high sentences, all the inmates of Manhyia Local Prison are eligible for outside labour. The inmates are mostly engaged in providing the following services: clearing (weeding) the compounds of government/public facilities, loading and offloading goods for private organisations and individuals, desilting choked gutters/drainage facilities in the Kumasi metropolis, and conveying goods from one point to another.

Kumasi Female Prison

Staff strength

Number of senior officers – 15

Number of junior officers – 144

Total staff strength – 159

Inmate Population

As of March 3rd, 2022, the total lock-up of Kumasi Female Prison stood at 23.

Prison External Labour

Unlike the male prisons (Kumasi Central and Manhyia Local Prisons), the inmates of Kumasi Female Prisoners' engagement in external labour is somewhat restrictive, as they do not go as far as the men and do not engage in certain activities. Most of the activities in which they engage occur in the immediate vicinity of the prison, except for the cleaning of the officers' quarters, for which they need a vehicle to convey them to the venue. The activities include work in a bakery, cornmill, salon, and chop bar.

Officer-Inmate ratio

The prescribed ratio is four prisoners to one officer (4:1) per group (mostly referred to as a Gang in the Ghanaian prison discourse). The female gangs are usually deployed to clean the external surroundings of the prison facility.

Nsawam Female Prison

Staff strength

Number of senior officers – 28

Number of junior officers – 180

Total staff strength – 208

Inmate Population

The total lock-up (number of inmates in custody) of Nsawam Female Prison as of March 3rd, 2022 stood at 65.

Prison External Labour

The female inmates who qualify for external labour are mostly engaged in farming activities on the prison farms, cleaning, and providing services at local restaurants. However, inmates who do not participate in external labour are engaged in trade skills such as bead-making, dress-making, batik tie-and-dye, soap and sanitiser production, hairdressing, and preparing/cooking meals for sale.

Officer-Inmate ratio

A ratio of four prisoners to one officer (4:1) is usually classified as a group as and when there is the need to embark on external labour.

3.3 Research methods

To comprehend the process by which decisions are made with regard to prison work, some time needed to be spent with the prisoners and officers of the Ghana Prison Service, and through

observation and speculation about potential patterns, they were interviewed about the possible meanings and patterns whilst continued testing and gathering of data was carried out simultaneously until a theory grounded in the data was developed (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Thus, the analysis of data and resulting research outcomes flow logically from the above process (Donalek, 2004). Research methods included the practical activities of sampling, data collection, data management, data analysis, and reporting (Carter & Little, 2007). The merits and rationale as well as the suitability of the methods chosen are explained in this section.

3.3.1 Theoretical Sampling Strategy

Apropos to the interest in building theory about the processes involved in prison work, an inductive longitudinal study was conducted across five prison establishments in Ghana (Mannucci et al., 2021). Theoretical sampling was employed to discover the context within which the phenomenon of interest (i.e., prison work) was intense and could be observed repeatedly and transparently (Bamberger & Pratt, 2017; Yin, 2009). Emmel, (2013) asserts that qualitative sampling is not a single planned decision, but rather, an iterative series of decisions throughout the process of research. Qualitative research samples purposively; that is, samples are selected to serve an investigative purpose rather than to be statistically representative of a population (Ritchie et al., 2013). Theoretical sampling was employed to choose participants for this research, as the goal of the study was to build rather than test or elaborate a theory (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Glaser & Strauss, 2017; Petriglieri et al., 2018). Prisons in Ghana were purposefully selected but were narrowed down further to focus on people (prisoners and prison officers) who had acquired some knowledge and experience by being involved in prison work. The participants (prisoners and prison officers) were chosen based on the following criteria:

Sampling strategy recruiting prisoner participants. The prisoners (male) should:

i. be convicted of a misdemeanour offence and have been taken outside to work in the past three months;
ii. have been taken outside the prison to work not less than twice during their incarceration;
iii. be left with a maximum of six months to complete their sentences.

Sampling strategy recruiting prisoner participants. The prisoners (female) should:

i. be convicted in a medium security or central prison and have been taken outside to work in the past three months;
ii. have been taken outside the prison to work not less than twice during their incarceration;
iii. be left with a maximum of two years to complete their sentences.

Sampling strategy recruiting prison officers. They should:

i. have worked as a prison officer for Ghana Prisons Service (GPS) for not less than a year;
ii. have accompanied prisoners to work outside the prisons;
iii. have had experience with planning, scheduling, and logging prisoners for external labour activities.

First of all the prisoners must have been convicted of a misdemeanour offence in order to have participated in several of these external labour activities and gained the needed experience to share their knowledge about prison work. Secondly, they should have been taken out of prison to work in the last three months in order to familiarise themselves with the current happenings in the world of work. This would enable them to give current accounts of their experiences within the world of work. As a result of their recent involvement in external labour, recollection would be made very much easier. Lastly, they should have a maximum of six months (males) to complete their sentences, in order to provide impartial accounts of their experiences, knowing that they would be leaving prison very soon. For the women, they should have a maximum of two years to complete their sentences. The reason being that there are very few women in prison compared to men so the opportunities available to engage their services outside the prison are limited. Also, among the female prisoners, just a fraction of them are willing to offer their services outside the prison premises. The implication for this is that the prisons, therefore, engage the services of women even if their crimes go beyond misdemeanour and so may have prisoners with longer sentences working outside. Therefore, reducing the maximum remaining prison sentence any further would eliminate participants who have engaged in jobs outside and could serve as sources of valuable data for the study.

The officers should have worked for the prison service for not less than their probation period of one year to qualify for external labour activities. Secondly, unless they are in an administrative position that is directly linked to external labour activities, they should have accompanied inmates to work in the last three months to enable them to give an ongoing account of their experiences. Finally, they should have experience with planning, scheduling, and logging of prisoners themselves, as well as being engaged in sourcing for jobs.

3.3.2 Snowball sampling method

The ex-offenders were contacted using the snowball sampling method (Johnson, 2014; Noy, 2008). During the interviews, some of the prisoners and officers were asked if they had contact with former inmates. A contact was provided by an officer, which was followed up to identify and talk to the first ex-offender. The participant subsequently provided the contact of another inmate, and after the interview, this cycle continued until I reached a point where participants were not giving me any new information (Francis et al., 2009; Fusch & Ness, 2015).

3.3.3 Participant recruitment timeline and access

The Ghana prison service hosts 5,351,995 prisoners and employs 7,025 staff. Even though the prison context is difficult to access for outsiders like me due to the high protection of inmates' privacy, I had the unique opportunity to leverage personal contact with some officers of the service who helped with my introduction to the service. Initially, there was a lot of correspondence between myself and the officer who facilitated my introduction to the service. I could not go to the offices for face-to-face meetings due to the pandemic, but all the issues that needed to be addressed were dealt with, and clarification was provided wherever necessary. Before the start of the fieldwork, an officer in the prison service was contacted in August 2020 to discuss the research topic, rationale, and modalities for data collection. After several rounds of correspondence and telephone conversations between the officer, myself, and the prison service, I was invited to formally provide an official letter seeking permission to conduct the research in the service including my research proposal, and a reference letter from my supervisor for their consideration, in January 2021. Upon receipt of the request, the service requested to be provided with the possible interview questions to be asked during the interviews as well. After the submission of the

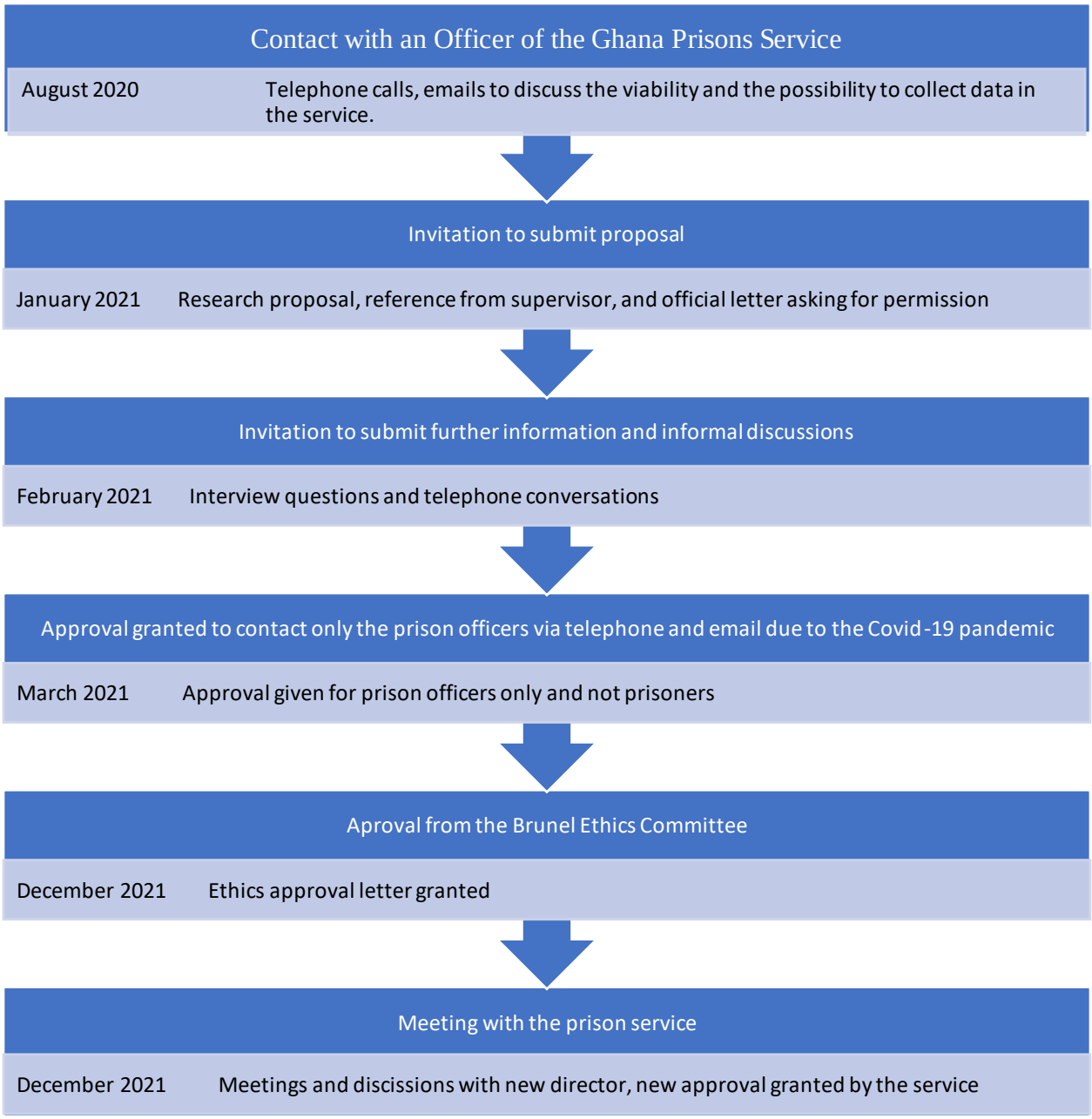
documents, a telephone discussion was conducted because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Approval was granted in March to contact just the Prison Officers at the time. Due to the pandemic, the prisons were closed to the public for any form of visit, so it was impossible to contact the prisoners at the time. When Brunel University made its final decision and granted its ethical approval in December 2021, the prison service was again contacted for renegotiation of access to the prisons. Unfortunately, the Director who had approved the first letter had retired, which meant that I needed to go through the process again. However, this was different and quicker because the relationship had already been established with the service. Hence, a meeting was held in December 2021 with the new Director to discuss the data collection process, access, and the modalities governing the data collection. Even though spending all this time just to secure access to the prisons may seem too much for any research, in this case, it happened sooner than expected because of the seemingly clandestine nature of the prison environment and the perceived nature of danger attached to the word 'prisons' (Andermann, 2012; Nnam et al., 2022; Pandeli, 2015).

After the acquisition of permission from the prison authorities, all members of the service (both prisoners and officers) were encouraged to engage in the research (Patzelt et al., 2014). The fieldwork for the study was carried out in five prisons (Nsawam Female, Kumasi Central Male and Female, Amanfrom Camp and Manhyia local Prisons) over a six-month period between January and June 2022. However, coming to the prisons as an outsider was a bit of a challenge because it created some concerns, especially among the prison officers, regarding their willingness to participate in the study and be transparent with the answers they provided. To curtail this issue and ensure that they were motivated as well as willing to provide answers that showed a true reflection of what was happening in the prisons, I decided to spend some time with them and answer any questions they had concerning the research as well as allay their fears about the answers they provided (Chown, 2021).

Every decision involving the feasibility of conducting this study needed to be considered, especially with regard to the timing and convenience of the participants. During the initial stages, many prisons were considered for the study, but this decision would have been time-consuming, especially looking at the time limit associated with doctoral studies. Again, considering the changeable nature of the prison environment, with prisoners coming and going (Pandeli, 2015), the importance of building strong connections with research participants and the somewhat

complex nature of external labour warranted building a strong and thorough comprehension of this phenomenon over a period of time. Figure 3.2 shows the participant recruitment timeline and procedure.

Figure 3.2 Timeline of key stages of the participant recruitment procedure



As depicted in Figure 3.2, consultation with the Ghana Prisons Service started in 2020 but officially continued until March 2021, when approval was issued by the service. Ethical approval

from the Brunel Ethics Committee was issued in December 2021. Following the approval, a consultation was held with the Ghana Prisons Service to renegotiate access and agree on the best possible date to start the data collection. Tables 3.1 to 3.5 give details about the sample selected.

Table 3.1: Participant information (Male Prisoners)

Participant (Pseudonyms)	*Age*	*Education Level*	*Occupation before incarceration*	*Number of times in Prison*	*Reasons for imprisonment*	*Sentence*	*Time served*	*Time remaining*	*Period of time engaging in*	*Type of Job engaged in*
1. Aaron Amia	25	Junior High School (JHS) 2	Tomato farmer	First time in prison	Stealing	2 years	1 year 9 months	3 months	1 year	Carrying blocks, concrete filling and community cleaning
2. Abraham Atinga	28	JHS	Painter	First time	Stealing	10 years	9 years 6 months	6 months	3 years	Sweeping the palace
3. Adam Akosu	27	JHS 2		First time	Fighting	8 years	7 years 8 months	4 months	2 years	Cleaning the palace
4. Alexander Touch	43	Class 6	Businessman	First time	Forgery of currency	10 years	9 years 7 months	5 months	2 years	Prison poultry farm
5. Amos Bekoe	37	JHS	Trailer Driver	First time	Stealing	7 years	6 years 8 months	4 months	2 years	Cleaning the palace
6. Andrew Ntow	40	JHS 2	Trader	First time	Bought stolen goods	7 years	6 years 9 months	3 months	2 years	Sweeping and general cleaning in the city

7. Augustine Wood	32	JHS	Plumber	First time	Unlawful entry	5 years	4 years 7 months	5 months	1 year 3 months	Construction, cleaning
8. Barnabas Fri	43	Class 4	Mason	First time	I steal a fight	15 years	14 years 6 months	6 months	3 years	Masonry, sweeping, desilting gutters and digging manholes
9. Benjamin Adensu	30	Class 4	Sliding door apprentice	First time	Unlawful entry	6 years 3 months	5 years 7 months	5 months	2 years	Masonry, sweeping, desilting gutters and digging manholes
10. Caleb Miia	29	JHS	Funeral Director	First time	Stealing	6 years	5 years 9 months	3 months	1year	Masonry, sweeping, desilting gutters and digging manholes
11. Christian Styles	36	JHS	Software Programmer	First time	Bought and sold stolen goods	8 years	7 years 6 months	6 months	2 years	Masonry, sweeping, desilting gutters and digging manholes
12. Collins Ntim	35	Class 6	Trotro Mate	Third time	Stealing	6 years	5 years 8 months	4 months	1 year 6 months	Construction, cleaning
13. Cornelius Apaah	21	Senior High School (SHS) (Home Economics)	Event host and funeral director	First time	Stealing	6 years	5 years 7 months	5 months	1 year 7 months	Masonry, sweeping, desilting gutters and digging manhole

14. Daniel Nimo	32	JHS	Trotro Driver	First time	Injured a policeman when he tried to get on my vehicle to effect an arrest and crushed his walkie talkie in the process	1 year	7 month 1 week	5 months	3 months	Weeding at the Regional Co-ordinating Council (RCC)
15. David Santo	20	JHS	Mason	First time	Fighting	1 year	11 months and some days	16 days	4 months	Packing blocks, digging trenches, weeding and masonry work
16. Derrick Amaga	29	Class 2	Galamsey	Second time	Fighting	6 years	5 years 8 months	4 months	2 years	Construction, sweeping
17. Ebenezer Alhassan	35	Class 5	Woodmaster Operator	First time	Stealing	3 years	2 years 6 months	6 months	8 months	Sweeping, digging pits, desilting drains, construction work, prison farms, carrying

										stuff from stores, washing cars
18. Eddie Nor	25	JHS	Barber	Second time	Stealing	3 years	2 years 6 months	6 months	9 months	Construction, cleaning and weeding
19. Elijah Badu	32	SHS	Mason	Fourth time (released on 1st May and came back on 3rd August)	Stealing	10 months	6 months	4 months	4 months	Construction of school, RCC: weeding at children's hospital, cleaning
20. Judas Frete	24	JHS	Trotro Driver's Mate	First time	Stealing	8 years	7 years 8 months	4 months	2 years	Foundations, arranging blocks, broken tiles, washing cars, chopping firewood
21. Enock Appiah	26	JHS	Trotro Drivers' Mate	First time	Stealing	3 years 6 months	3 years	6 months	8 months	Weeding RCC

22. Felix Hwanni	23	Class 2	Farmer	First time	Stealing	1 year	7 months	5 months	3 months	Filling foundation, weeding behind churches
23. Francis Asamoah	39	Class 4	Plumber	First time	Fighting	5 years	4 years 8 months	4 months	1 year	Construction, sweeping
24. Gabriel Samosa	28	Class 5	Driver	Second time	Stealing	1year	9 months	3 months	4 months	Concrete, packing foundation blocks (2000 to 3000 blocks per day)
25. Gideon Gani	31	SHS 2	Driver's Mate	First time	Stealing	9 months	8 months and some days	9 days	3 months	Packing blocks
26. Joab Biansua	39	SHS1	Driver	First time	Stealing	10 months	8 months	2 months	4 months	Weeding RCC
27. Isaac Ko	37	JHS	Unemployed	First time	Stealing	7 years	6 years 9 months	3 month	2 years	Construction, masonry work, Zoomlion Ghana Limited

28. Isaiah Sibo	32	JHS	Butcher	First time	Stealing	10 years	9 years 6 months	6 months	2 years	Latrine filling manholes, construction works
29. Jacob Ofori	32	JHS	Driver	Second time	Stealing	15 years	14 years 8 months	4 months	3 years	Construction works
30. James Mensah	29	Class 3	Galamsey/ motor fitting electrician	First time	Stealing	2 years	1 year 9 months	3 months	7 months	Piggery and farming
31. Jethro Kebo	33	SHS/NVTI	Galamsey/Auto electrician	First time	Stealing	3 years	2 year 7 months	5 months	8 months	Farming, construction
32. John Oppong	42	SHS	Chef	Second time	Bought stolen goods	2 years	1 year 9 months	3 months	10 months	Piggery, construction
33. Joseph Gyan	28	JSH	Trader	Second time	Stealing	3 years	2 year 6 months	6 months	6 months	Construction, farming
34. Joshua Odum	32	Class 6	Cocoa Farmer	First time	Stealing	2 years	1 year 10 months	2 months	7 months	Farming
35. Lazarus Bio	35	JHS	Chainsaw Operator	First time	Threatened to shoot someone	1 year 6 months	1 year	6 months	7 months	Farming

36. Luke Yankson	23	JHS	Phone Seller	First time	Drug addiction and stealing	5 years	4 years 6 months	4 months	1 year 10 months	Faming, construction
37. Mark Aliso	26	Class 6	Farmer	First time	Unable to pay a debt	4 years	3 years 8 months	3 months 27 days	1 year 8 months	Vegetable farming, construction
38. Matthew Yorke	43	SHS	Barber	Third time in prison	Fought with his tenant	1 year	11 months	1 month	3 months	Prison farms, construction
39. Mica Saul	29	JHS	Sliding door maker	First time in prison	Stealing	5 years	3 years	4 months	2 year 6 months	Construction, kitchen
40. Michael Bosu	30	Class 2	Trader	Second time	Stealing	4 years	3 years 7 months	5 months	1 year	Construction, weeding, sweeping
41. Moses Que	35	SHS	Barber	Second time	Fighting and disorderly conduct	6 years	5 years 7 months	5 months	2 years	Construction, general cleaning of private homes,

42. Nicolas Oti	32	Class 5	Barber	First time	Stealing	3 years	2 years 6 months	6 months	1 year 2 months	Construction, farming
43. Patrick Piaho	25	Class 4	Unemployed	Second time	Stealing	3 years	2 years 8 months	4 months	7 months	Construction, cleaning, weeding
44. Paul Neko	26	JHS	Trader	First time	Drug addiction and stealing	2 years	1 year 6 months	6 months	8 months	Construction, cleaning
45. Peter Young	29	Class 3	Mason	Second time	Fighting	6 years	5 years 9 months	3 months	2 years	Construction, Cleaning, weeding
46. Reginald Danko	39	SHS	Trader	First time	Bought stolen goods	2 years	1 year 9 months	3 months	6 months	Sweeping, construction
47. Richard Pagai	30	JHS	Carpenter	First time	Stealing	2 years 7 months	2 years 2 months	5 months	1 year	Construction, weeding
48. Ronald Wusu	26	No formal education	Trotro Mate	First time	Fighting	2 years	1 year 8 months	4 months	9 months	Construction, cleaning, farming
49. Sampson Adi	40	SHS	Driver	First time	Fighting	5 years	4 years 6 months	6 months	2 years	Construction, general cleaning

50. Silvester Prako	39	JHS	Carpenter	Second time	Stealing	3 years	2 years 8 months	4 months	8 months	Construction, cleaning
51. Solomon Abori	26	No formal education	Trotro mate	First time	Fighting and disorderly conduct	4 years 7 months	4 years 2 months	5 months	1 year 8 months	Construction, cleaning, weeding
52. Zachariah Frimpong	28	Class 3	Mason	First time	Stealing	3 years	2 years 7 months	5 months	1 year 3 months	Filling, weeding

Table 3.2: Participant information (Female Prisoners)

Participant	Age	Education Level	Occupation before Incarceration	Number of times in Prison	Reasons for Imprisonment	Sentence	Time served	Time remaining	Period of time engaging in external labour	Type of Job Engaged in
1. Abigail Kwakwa	23	No formal education	Seamstress	Second time	Child abduction	5 years	3 year 8 months	1years 4 months	2 year	Cornmill operation, general cleaning
2. Anna Sika	35	Class 6	Second-hand trader	First time	Fighting	10 years	8 years	2 years	3 years	Bakery, chop bar, general cleaning
3. Bernice Dauda	32	JHS 2	Seamstress	First time	Narcotics	15 years	13 years, 1 month	1 years, 11 months	2 years, 2 months	Kitchen, general cleaning
4. Candance Obour	29	O-Level	Unemployed	First time	Human Trafficking	5 years	3 years	2 years	4 years	Farming

5. Gifty Konadu	27	SHS	Mobile money operator	First time	Stealing	2 years 6 months	2 years 5 months	1 month	1 year	Rabbitry, general cleaning
6. Deborah Eshun	26	JHS	Not previously employed	First time	Stealing	6 months	5 months and some weeks	1 week	4 months	Farming
7. Delilah Fordjour	25	JHS	Hairdressing apprentice	First time	Child abduction	5 years	3 years, 6months	1 year, 6 months	2 years	Sweeping, farming and general cleaning
8. Dorcas Odom	34	First degree (Economics)	Worked in the ministries	First degree	Drug trafficking	10 years	9 years	1 year	5 years	General cleaning, salon

Table 3.3: Participant information (Ex-Offenders)

Participant	*Age*	*Education Level*	*Occupation before Incarceration*	*Number of times in Prison*	*Reasons for Imprisonment*	*Sentence*	*Time released*	*Period of time engaging in external labour*	*Type of Job Engaged in*
1. Emmanuel Yedi	36	Class 2	Mason	Second time	Stealing	3 years	6 months ago	1 year 3 months	Construction, weeding, cleaning, and other menial services
2. Frederick Akom	28	JHS	DJ	First time	Stealing	2 years 8 months	3 months ago	1 year 7 months	Construction, cleaning, sweeping
3. Godfred Bio	24	No formal educat-ion	Driver's Mate	First time	Fighting	3 years	2 months ago	2 years	Construction, cleaning, sweeping
4. Joel Ackoji	45	Class 5	Trader	First time	Stealing	10 years	3 month ago	3 years	Construction, cleaning, sweeping

5. Jones Okriku	40	SHS	Mason	First time	Fighting	2 years	4 months ago	1 year	Farming, construction, sweeping
6. Ishmael Kwakye	35	Class 6	Trader	Second time	Stealing	3 years	3 months	1 year 6 months	Construction, sweeping, cleaning
7. King Oppong	30	JHS	Unemployed	Second time	Fighting and disorderly conduct	5 years	5 months	2 years	Construction, farming, cleaning
8. Maxwell Oduro	29	SHS	Farmer	First time	Stealing	2 years 9 months	2 months	1 year	Construction, cleaning, sweeping
9. Paul Wontumi	32	Class 2	Galamsey	Second time	Stealing	3 years	3 months ago	1 year 6 months	Construction, sweeping, cleaning

10. Prince Ackah	38	No formal educat-ion	Mechanic	First time	Fighting	5 years	4 months ago	2 years	Construction, cleaning, sweeping

Table 3.4: Participant information (Male Prison Officers)

Participant	**Gender**	**Age**	**Rank**	**Level of Education**	**Years in the Prisons Service**	**External Labour Engagement**
1. Charles Oppong	Male	40	Deputy Superintendent of Prisons, DSP	Diploma	13	6 years
2. Frank Asafo	Male	37	Assistant Superintendent of Prisons, ASP	First Degree	14 years	5 years
3. Nathanael Brobbey	Male	58	Senior Chief Officer (In charge of all the junior ranks)	MSLC	36 years	34 years
4. Noah Ofori	Male	41	Sergeant	SHS	13 years	10 years

5. Obed Nimoi	Male	59	Officer in Charge (OIC)/ Assistant Director of Prisons (ADP)	PhD	20 years	20 years
6. Paul Suani	Male	37	Deputy Superintendent of Prisons (DSP)	Master's degree	9 years	8 years
7. Peter Osei	Male	43	Sargent	SHS	14 years 3 months	8 years
8. Philip Brown	Male	32	Corporal	SHS, NVTI	10 years	9 years
9. Reuben Kasa	Male	38	ASP	First degree	12 years	8 years
10. Samuel Obour	Male	46	Chief Officer	GCE O-Levels	26 years	10 years
11. Solomon Sowa	Male	56	Chief Officer	HND	35 years	35 years
12. Stephen Kobina	Male	38	Corporal	First degree	11 years	8 years

13. Theophilus Okyere	Male	48	Assistant Chief Offer of Prisons (ACOP)	SHS	20 years	15 years
14. Thomas Adepa	Male	47	ASP	First degree	12 years	10 years

Table 3.5: Participant information (Female Prison Officers)

Participant	**Gender**	**Age**	**Rank**	**Level of Education**	**Years in the Prisons Service**	**External Labour Engagement**
1. Christabel Ofori	Female	39	Sergeant	DBS	15 years	14 years
2. Naomi Brown	Female	33	Lance-Corporal	SHS	4 years	3 years
3. Dorcas Konkor	Female	37	Sergeant	SHS	15 years	3 years

4. Judith Sarfoa	Female	34	Corporal	Diploma	10 years	10 years
5. Mary Mansah	Female	35	Lance-Corporal	SHS	7 years	6 years
6. Priscilla Kokomo	Female	52	Senior Officer	O-Levels	30 years	25 years

3.4 Microstoria: The stories of prisoners

This study set out to make an inquiry into the stories and experiences of prisoners working outside the prisons. Prisoners are individuals who are viewed as criminals and dwell outside the margins of societies, and mostly come from poor socio-economic backgrounds (Cnaan et al., 2008; Kaushik & Sharma, 2009; Western, 2018) and described by the economic measures that position them on the periphery of the minimum income required to live (Shah, 2011). Prisoners are overlooked by the prevailing ideological discourse on workers, which privileges the idea of workers as people with freedom who can make their own decisions with regard to their conditions of service, while prisoners are not considered workers of any business, even the ones they work for or are made substitutes for when there is a shortage of workers (Hurst, 2020; Mantouvalou, 2021). Though overlooked, this class of people consists of a much more diverse, culturally dispersed and heterogeneous group, who aspire to similar things, such as sovereignty from the conventional hierarchy of political and economic institutions and solidarity for social justice (Hellman, 2018). Therefore, this study will focus on the everyday stories of prisoners who populate the margins of our societies; stories that belong to the disenfranchised and dislocated voices of prisoners (Imas et al., 2012). As a result, microstoria will be employed in this exploratory research (Boje, 2001) to locate the fragmented and short stories that form antenarratives of work. Microstoria develops fine-grained comprehension of various opinions to allow a subjective analysis of hidden meanings. Thus, studies employing microstoria do not aim for objectivity and generalizability; instead, they conduct subjective coding of various opinions with hidden nuances, which become pivotal to the interpretation of antenarratives (Boje et al., 2015).

The choice to focus this study on prisoners where the language, axioms, taxonomies and theories of labour or work do not make sense was more than just a motivation to approach prisoners in prison and more of an effort to hear the unheard stories of prisoners with regard to outside labour. Though I have not been to prison before, over the years I have to some extent learnt to empathise and appreciate the struggles and invisibility that prisoners suffer during and after their imprisonment. As a result, the absence of visibility and alienation faced by prisoners contributed to my conscious choices regarding decisions on how best to approach the research, because the study needed to reflect their narratives, reflections, empathy and observations.

The study unearthed the ethnocentric dominant look imposed on communities of the periphery and the margins to describe or depict the other (Imas et al., 2012) whose opinions are lost during legitimized interpretations, narratives or explanations that take frame within the imperialist knowledge produced in the West (Smith, 2017). Arguably, just like the works of (Imas et al., 2012; Smith, 2017) this study was geared towards an attempt to de-colonize 'prison and work', recognising that by writing in English, the evaluations, explanations, and expressions would certainly be prepared within the rules and guidelines of grammar to reflect the knowledge creation of the academic West. Therefore, being cognizant of these limitations, and in line with the opinions of the authors above, microstoria was viewed as the most suitable approach for this study (Boje et al., 2015; Hinderaker, 2017; Hinderaker & O'Connor, 2015). Narratives analysed in this study are considered microstoria because they reflect the autobiographies of daily life and experiences within an institution (prison) as narrated by those who experience them (prisoners), or in the words of Boje, (2001) the 'little people'. In the view of Boje, (2001), such accounts are narratives of the institution, as they are told by non-elite or unofficial organisational sources, even though they may be seen as personal accounts which have actors, plots, metaphors, etc. (Hinderaker & O'Connor, 2015). Microstoria provides a method that breaks with the dominant power of grand narratives and theories that govern and represent work. Institutional power has to adapt to the local conditions and values in order to survive because it is actually weaker than it presents itself. Thus, by observing the entire picture from a small scale or bit by bit, it is likely to comprehend and appreciate the concrete dynamics of social formation and transformation within organisations (Rosa, 2017).

The most essential aspects of microstoria are the development of original views and reflections as well as assessing and analysing the living and lived circumstances of participants. According to Boje, (2001) microstoria are the stories of 'little people'—for example, native people, women, minorities, and in this case, prisoners—which are normally taken for granted and neglected in mainstream studies, as they are not viewed as adding or providing to the big picture. Hence, these microstories do not contribute to the unitary discourse, a unique and grand history, but rather detail the quirky or eccentric, the overlooked, and the inappropriate. To be more precise, microstoria provide the opportunity to ascend the often insuperable frontiers and obstacles that exist between us, 'others' and the 'other' (Ahmed, 2010; Nowotny et al., 2013; Wilson, 2010), promoting a fresh, somehow new, and no less unreasonable or honest point of view on the lived experiences of people

who rarely get heard. Although the microstoria approach places a lot of emphasis on grounded emergent micro-aspects of stories, it also set those stories within the grander narrative spectrums of time, such as class, race, and socio-economic moorings. Consequently, microstoria analysis aims to recognise the names of places of people in ways that permit microstories to be told, because it necessitates contextualisation within the grand narrative to avoid a 'trivialisation of the information gathered' (Iggers, 2005). Microstoria was employed in this study to listen to the personal realities and truths not captured by the grand narratives of work. Thus, many truths came up due to the disparities and circumstances of individual experiences and cases, but this does not imply that there was no discernible reality or truth for the respondents as a group.

The criteria for choosing to use the microstories of prisoners and accommodating the limitations and paradoxes (Geertz, 1968) associated with researching the other was that this would allow me to approach individuals who had been disfranchised and who operated at the margins of society (Imas et al., 2012). These are people who are sometimes referred to as 'nobodies' (Galeano et al., 1991) or 'banlieues' (Wacquant, 2009), and are disregarded or overlooked by mainstream establishments and therefore not provided any form of support or attention for their existence or efforts; those who sometimes have to live below the poverty line; those who do not have freedom, because of their incarceration (Berger & Losier, 2017; Pinheiro et al., 2015; Ugelvik, 2014) to be the people that they would like to be (Nussbaum, 2011). These considerations influenced the choice to use microstoria as an alternative to grand narrative and its ideologically-driven nuances of how reality is supposed to be.

The respondents were met in the prisons where they were excluded from the society, lived, and conducted most of their activities, except for the work in which they engaged outside the prisons. They were asked various questions, which helped to engage them in conversations that reflected fluid communication about their perspective of prison work in Ghana. The questions mostly mirrored what they wanted to share in terms of what they regarded to be their ways of understanding the work they do outside the prisons and how that contributes to their rehabilitation in order to capture the microstories of the respondents, which reflected the language of deprivation and exclusion. According to Boje, (2001), narratives from microstories need to be gathered free from researcher intrusion to preclude introducing outsider influence on the story and to safeguard remnants of organizational impact in the telling (Hinderaker & O'Connor, 2015). Consequently,

to avoid the obsessive attempt to impose (colonialist) representations that defined who they were and what they did, the respondents were encouraged to speak in their own language regarding what they went through as prisoners before intervening with translations and analytical frameworks.

3.5 Ethics in research

The research was conducted in line with guidelines from Brunel Research Ethics Online (BREO). The Brunel University Ethics Committee also issued ethical approval for data collection and analysis for this research. However, the application for ethical approval was one of the most difficult tasks to undertake during this stage of the research. I made the first application for ethical approval in March 2021, but I was not granted the final ethical clearance until December 2021. In all, I submitted the ethical application four times before gaining the approval of the University to start with the collection of data. The reason for this complex process was the unusual nature of my research environment and the fact that the University wanted to ensure that the ethical dimensions of voluntary participation, anonymity, confidentiality, informed consent, the potential for harm and communication of results which enshrined the ethics guidelines were elaborated on and would be adhered to by the researcher. Furthermore, the university wanted to ensure that all the safety protocols were in place and adhered to since it is not a common practice for a business student to decide to conduct research in prison. Also, my application was affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, as there were restrictions from the prison service and restrictions on travelling in general.

Following the guidelines for ethical approval (see Appendix), I made sure to give each participant a copy of the participant information sheet. Once a participant was identified, they were issued a copy, and for those who could not read, I read and explained its content to them. Participants were also given copies of the consent form and were helped to read and sign it before they were interviewed. I also read and obtained the signature or thumbprints of those who could not read and write. The respondents were made aware that it was within their right to participate and that they could withdraw their participation at any time or decide not to answer any questions with which they were not comfortable. Participants were briefed that details of the interview would be stored securely on the Brunel University server and that I would be the only person to have access to them. Participants were assured of the anonymity of their participation.

3.6 Data collection

The main data for the study came from interviews with prisoners, ex-convicts and prison officers, and was supplemented by non-participative observation and impromptu conversations with participants and other members of the service. The interviews were semi-structured and contained a series of open-ended questions covering various topics about prison work and the involvement of participants (Padavic et al., 2020). Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were chosen for this study because they can provide a deep account (Seale, 2004), including depth, nuance, and multidimensionality (Ascenso et al., 2018; Gotwals & Tamminen, 2020; Lauritzen et al., 2019). Compared to structured interviews, which have a tendency to produce a defined pattern where the researcher's influential voice is in evidence throughout the process (Corbetta, 2003; Koskei & Simiyu, 2015), semi-structured interviews rather encouraged communication and in-depth conversation with participants.

To keep track of the implementation of the daily activities of prisoners who engaged in prison work in real-time across all five focal prisons, and to make comparisons of the implementation of the prison work concept across the various prisons and over a period of time, interviews and observations were utilised. Through the combination of semi-structured interviews and unobtrusive observation throughout the data collection process (Aytac, 2016; Khalili & Nayyeri Fallah, 2018), the inquiry was exposed to the intricacies of what was happening in the prisons. This enabled the probing of participants and gave them the opportunity to speak about their narratives of what was happening in terms of prison work and how they understood it. Table 3.6 shows the sources of data and how they were used in the analysis

Interviews were mainly face-to-face, and they lasted between 45 minutes and one hour. To effectively understand the nature of prison work and how prisoners interpret it from their point of view, considerable time (between one and five hours a day) was spent observing the actions, work attitudes and performance of prisoners and prison officers across the five prisons, interviewing prisoners performing multiple tasks, and learning about the operations of the prisons from archival data sources. External labour or prison work is an intricate subject which demands an understanding of the prison environment and the prisoners themselves. Therefore, engaging prisoners in this setting by holding question-and-answers sessions with them using a set of structured questions with predetermined answers for comprehension of their work environment

and how they cope within the walls in prisons might merely lead to a premature understanding of the phenomenon of prison work. Hence, Simon, (2000) called for research on the prison to be more qualitative and supported a return to the mid-20th-century practices of accessing and analysing prisons (Reiter, 2014; Simon, 2000). Therefore, to understand the phenomenon of external labour and gauge a better comprehension of prisoners' attitudes towards this work, the study needed to take place within the natural environment of the prisoners (Pandeli, 2015).

3.6.1 Interviews and informal discussions

Before the interview

The various prisons were visited and meetings were held with the Officers-in-Charge (OICs) to discuss the data collection approach and how the prisons could facilitate the process smoothly. During these meetings, the contents of the consent forms and participant information sheets were discussed. However, the size and the type of prisons demanded a different approach to meetings with the OICs, and this influenced how and where the meetings were held. At the Manhyia local prison, Kumasi Central Female and Amanfrom Camp Prisons, because of the size of the prisons, I was able to meet the OICs directly. After interacting with them, I was directed to see the 2ICs (Second-in-Command). I had another discussion with them, and after our brief interactions, I was directed to see the Chief Order (the officer in charge of administration and therefore the one in charge of external labour activities). The Chief Order consequently assisted with the interview process. On the other hand, for the big prisons (Kumasi Central Male and Nsawam Female Prison), I had to first book an appointment with the Prisons' PR Offices. On the day of the appointment, I had to explain the purpose of my visit to the PR officer, who then led me to another office in charge of administration. In that office, I provided a copy of my permission letter, which was checked with the documents on file to ensure that I had the right to be there. After an interaction with the administration officers, I was led to the office of the 2IC to discuss the purpose of my visit with them as well. After this discussion, the commanders were informed of my visit and appointments needed to be made to invite me for another discussion. After the discussion and satisfactory responses to their questions, the commanders handed the responsibilities to the 2ICs, who eventually delegated the tasks to the Chief Orders. Figure 3.3 shows the processes involved in contacting the Prison Service.

Figure 3.3: Processes involved in contacting the Prisons

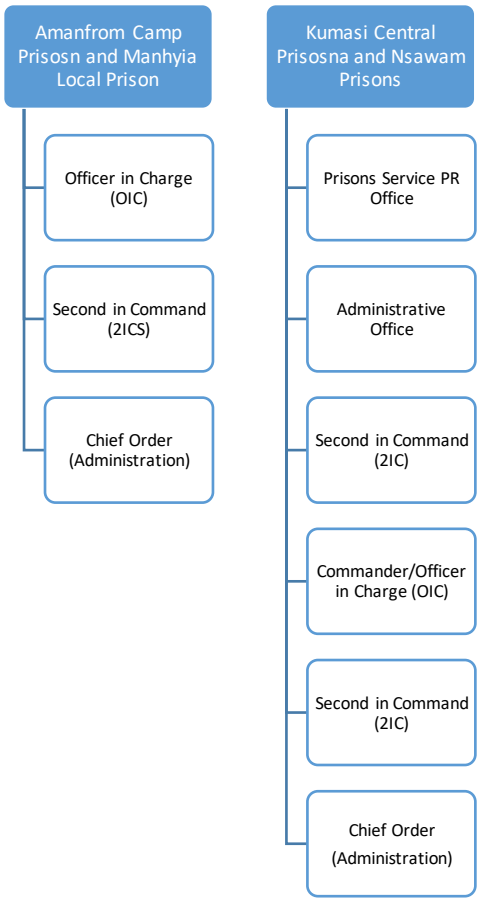


Figure 3.3 shows that the processes used to contact the smaller prisons were less bureaucratic and less rigid than the bigger prisons

When the Chief Orders were briefed on what I needed to do and understood the criteria set out in the sampling strategy, they assisted in selecting participants who met the criteria set out in the sampling strategy. These respondents were chosen with the help of the Chief Orders, who are responsible for administering, scheduling and overseeing external labour activities. The Chief Orders were briefed and assured that the participation of the prisoners and officers in the research was voluntary and that prisoners had the right to participate in the research or refuse to do so. Once a prisoner or an officer was identified as eligible, they were invited by the Chief Order to take part in the research, but before their involvement, copies of the participant information sheet and consent forms were given to those who could read, while for those who could not read, the contents

of the forms were read and explained to them individually. They were given some time to make up their minds before they agreed to be involved in the interviews.

During the interviews

During the interviews, participants (prisoners, ex-convicts, and prison officers) were informed that they were free to choose whether or not to answer the questions asked and that it was not compulsory to answer all the questions. Also, participants were made to understand that they were free to decline to answer any question they were not comfortable with and that they could decide to stop answering the questions altogether at any point during the interviews. They were briefed to understand that there were no material or financial incentives for taking part in the research.

Interviews and informal discussions with prisoners

The first interviews were conducted to spend some time with the participants to understand their life, their background, and the nature of prison life. The interviews were carried out within the prisons and not on the job sites, so the focus was to probe to gather information about what the participants knew about prison work. However, the subsequent interviews were more focused on the jobs that were performed by prisoners outside the prisons. Although I had an idea of the set of questions I wanted to ask, I would usually pick up on issues raised by the respondents and shift the discussions to them just to probe into such issues in depth (Chown, 2021).

The lengths of the interviews varied depending on how interactive and willing the participants were in sharing information. Sixty semi-structured interviews were conducted in five prisons: 15 at Manhyia local prison, 22 at Kumasi Central male prison, three at Kumasi Central female prison, 15 at Amanfrom Prison, and 5 at Nsawam female prisons. Also, twenty officers were interviewed, as well as 10 ex-offenders from different prisons. The interviews at the Manhyia local prison were conducted in an open space in the prison yard, but at Kumasi Central and Amanfrom, they were conducted in the Offices of the Chief Order, at Nsawam they were done in the prison's chapel, and the former prisoners each decided where they wanted to have their interviews, so the venues varied. All the interviews lasted between 45 minutes and one hour. As a policy, the Ghana Prisons Service does not allow electronic devices inside its prisons: hence, all the interviews were handwritten in shorthand and so much attention needed to be paid to the details as the respondents spoke.

Sometimes the respondents were prompted to repeat what they said or pace how they spoke to enable me to capture the most essential points they made. The rest of the information was written in detail during the ride back from the prison or sometimes at the end of the day during reflections, but always within 24 hours. Also, when leaving the field at the end of the day, I often wrote or voice-recorded some of the documents to highlight emerging themes and points of interest (Chown, 2021).

Moreover, the Ghana Prisons Service does not allow its prisoners to be alone with a non-prisoner without the presence of a Prison Officer, and this policy sometimes impeded the data collection process. As a result, officers were always assigned to the rooms where the interviews were being conducted. However, in some cases, when the officers realised the line of questioning and answers and grasped that the interviews had nothing to do with their work, they excused themselves to enable the prisoners to feel more comfortable in answering the questions, although with other officers, I had to plead with them to give us some space to allow the prisoners to feel more comfortable in answering the questions asked. In most cases, officers eventually allowed us some space, and in some instances, I made sure not to talk too loudly so that the officers could not hear what was being discussed. Again, there were some officers who were in support of what I was doing and even encouraged the prisoners to be forthcoming. For instance, at Kumasi Central male prison, a senior officer decided to monitor the process to ensure that everything was running smoothly during the interviews, and when he arrived, he mentioned the prisoner by name and said:

> 'Tell her everything she needs to know. In fact, tell her all the things you guys do—both the legal and even the illegitimate activities'.

At that point, the prisoner was slightly uncomfortable and unsure of what to say, but when the officer left, he was much more confident and told me a lot of things: in fact, I ended up spending more than an hour with that prisoner. After that encounter, the day was so productive that all the prisoners I spoke to afterwards were willing to share everything they knew with me. I had to be prompted by an Officer at around 4:45 because the prisoners needed to be in their rooms by 5:30 pm.

The interviews with the prisoners were divided into various sections. For the first interviews, the interview sections included (1) the motivation of prisoners to engage in external labour, (2) prisoners' personal history and experiences, (3) prisoners' knowledge about work, (4) prison life

and participants' relationship with other inmates, and (5) the nature of the prison environment. The second interview was made up of the following sections: (1) prisoners' impressions of prison work so far, (2) important lessons learned, (3) the skills they have developed, and (4) reasons for partaking in prison work. The last part of the interviews was carried out to cover (1) future plans or plans after release, (2) the impact of prison work on their lives, (3) how the work shaped their thinking, (4) contributions of the work to their lives, and (5) general impressions. However, the interview protocols evolved as the analysis progressed and new themes surfaced (Charmaz, 2006; Spradley, 2016). After each interview, revisions were carried out to identify emerging themes in order to merge them in subsequent interviews to further develop the themes (Caza et al., 2018).

Interviews and informal discussions with prison officers

I conducted interviews with Prison Officers face-to-face at designated places specified by the respondents, but mainly around the prison premises. During these interviews, only the interviewee and I were present in a room designated for that purpose, and the interviewees were guaranteed that their responses would only be reported in a way that maintained anonymity. The interviews lasted between 45 and 60 minutes on average. The interviews were divided into various sections. The first section included (1) how prisoners are selected for the job, (2) the criteria they use to select prisoners for work outside the prison, and (3) the relationship they have with prisoners. The second section was made up of the following: (1) officers' impressions of prison work so far, (2) important lessons learned, (3) the skills they think prisoners develop, and (4) what they think makes prisoners partake in prison work. The last part of the interviews was carried out to cover (1) the general impressions of officers on external labour, (2) the impact of prison work on the lives of prisoners, (3) how the work has shaped the thinking of prisoners, and (4) contributions of the work to the rehabilitation of prisoners.

Unobtrusive observation insights and impressions

In addition to interviews, while onsite, I also engaged in unobtrusive observations. Here, participants were observed going about their normal duties and notes were taken on key issues without getting involved (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The observations were used to capture tacit knowledge about prison work which would otherwise be overlooked from the interviews (Krishnan et al., 2020)**.** Observations were done with the focus of identifying interactions between

prisoners and prison officers during work, understanding how prisoners experience work outside the prisons on a normal basis, trying to understand the issue on a case-by-case basis, and identifying concerns around prison work. During the period of observations, entries were made about the interactions that went on during work, especially outside the prisons. These entries were recorded as field notes on onsite observations as soon as possible—typically on my way back home from the prisons. These observations, insights, and impressions were later used to supplement interview transcriptions as well as to confirm emerging theoretical perspectives during the analysis (Patzelt et al., 2014). The observation served to achieve two main objectives—complementary and confirmatory (Krishnan et al., 2020). First, the observations complemented the interviews by providing rich insights into the content of the interactions that took place during the interviews. Additionally, observations assisted with the confirmation of some of the issues that arose during the interviews. Table 3.7 gives a summary of the field data collected.

Table 3.6: Summary of field data collected

Name of prison	**Category of Participant**	**Age range**	**Number of Participants (interviews)**
Manhyia Local Prison	Prisoners	21 to 43	15
	Prison officers	37 to 59	7
Kumasi Central – Male	Prisoners	20 to 39	22
Amanfrom Camp Prison	Prisoners	23 to 43	15
	Prison Officers	32 to 56	7
Kumasi Central – Female	Prisoners	23 to 35	3
	Prison Officers	33 to 52	6
Nsawam Medium Security Prison – Female	Prisoners	25 to 34	5
Ex-Offenders			10
Total			**90**

3.6.2 Field notes, policy documentation and other archival data sources

The research was enhanced by data from interviews and observations as well as data from various sources for triangulation purposes (Denzin, 2012, p. 19; Jick, 1979; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Rose & Webb, 1997). *Triangulation* entailed the effort made to self-consciously double-check findings by employing several sources and modes of evidence to corroborate (or at least not contradict) the findings (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In an inductive study such as this one, triangulation involved subjecting the result to an 'onslaught of a series of imperfect measures'(Webb et al., 2000, p. 3) to substantiate results produced from the primary data. To achieve this objective, several additional sources of data were evaluated to test the soundness of the research findings as shown through the interviews. First, with the permission of the OIC and participants, a copy of the card for outside labour was shown to the researcher to corroborate the involvement of prisoners in external labour activities. These cards contained the names of prisoners, signed by the Chief Order. Secondly, since external labour has been implemented in the prisons for some time and the prison administration is making strides to increase it in terms of the number of prisoners and organizations participating, it has since received significant interest in the media, such as newspapers publications, social media, popular websites, and the likes. Thus, I gathered articles and videos from all these sources. These data were corroborative because they drew from different sources (i.e., they included interviews and insights from those not included in my database) and employed a different approach (i.e., investigative reporting). Data from these various sources were used to supplement the analysis and triangulation of the primary data collected. Thirdly, all my correspondence and informal discussions with the Ghana Prisons Service (i.e., e-mails, text messages and informal discussions) were captured, which provided confirmation to support the findings of the interviews and observations conducted. In total, the supplementary data included 300 (double-spaced) pages of text that balanced and authenticated the prisoners' and prison officers' stories during the interviews and observations.

3.7 Data analysis

Overview of Data Analysis

It is commonly recognized that writing and reporting in qualitative research is part of the analytic process, in that a researcher's thinking and interpretation generally develop via the writing process (Carter & Little, 2007; Richardson, 2000). Therefore, the analysis for this work was structured using recognized procedures for inductive, theory-building research as a guide (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Locke, 2001; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Van Maanen, 1979). The data was analysed with an open mind in order to allow the data to speak to the researcher (Suddaby, 2006). Thus, even though I had an idea about prison work, I did not allow my knowledge to interfere with the data collected; neither did I harbour preconceived propositions about how prisoners understand the work they do whilst incarcerated, nor how respondents would differ in their answers to the questions asked. Thus, whilst I listened, spoke, watched and felt in order to get into every odd cultural turn I could, it would still not be reasonable to imply that I understood the world of the prisoners as the respondents did.

The field data represented the recordings of first-order impressions, as they started with the observed talk and actions of respondents in the research environment. The data derived were made up of two generic but distinct types. First of all there was the '*operational data*' which contained the running stream of unplanned dialogues and actions observed and engaged in with the respondents during field data collection (Van Maanen, 1979). These kinds of data crop up in recognized and describable environments and are related on a daily basis to issues encountered by respondents as they go about their affairs. For instance, in the prisons, such issues included when they woke up, how they were informed of their jobs, when they went out, and how they prepared to go out. Secondly, there were the '*presentational data*' which were made up of those exterior impressions that respondents endeavoured to uphold or boost in my presence, to the respondents themselves as well as to other people that may be interested in their lives, such as the officers and visitors. The presentational data were mostly ideological, normative, and abstract, and most often dealt with a contrived representation of actions than with the routinised practical actions essentially engaged in by the respondents. In the prison environment, they involved how some of the inmates initially wanted to paint a 'utopian prison' and how others gave the impression of a 'changed person' during the initial stages of the data collection by stating continuously that 'Everything is fine, I'm okay with the way things are, I do not want things to change, I'm being treated well here, I deserve to be here'. In other words, operational data is made up of observed action (behaviour *per se*), whereas presentational data contains the façades put forward by respondents as these

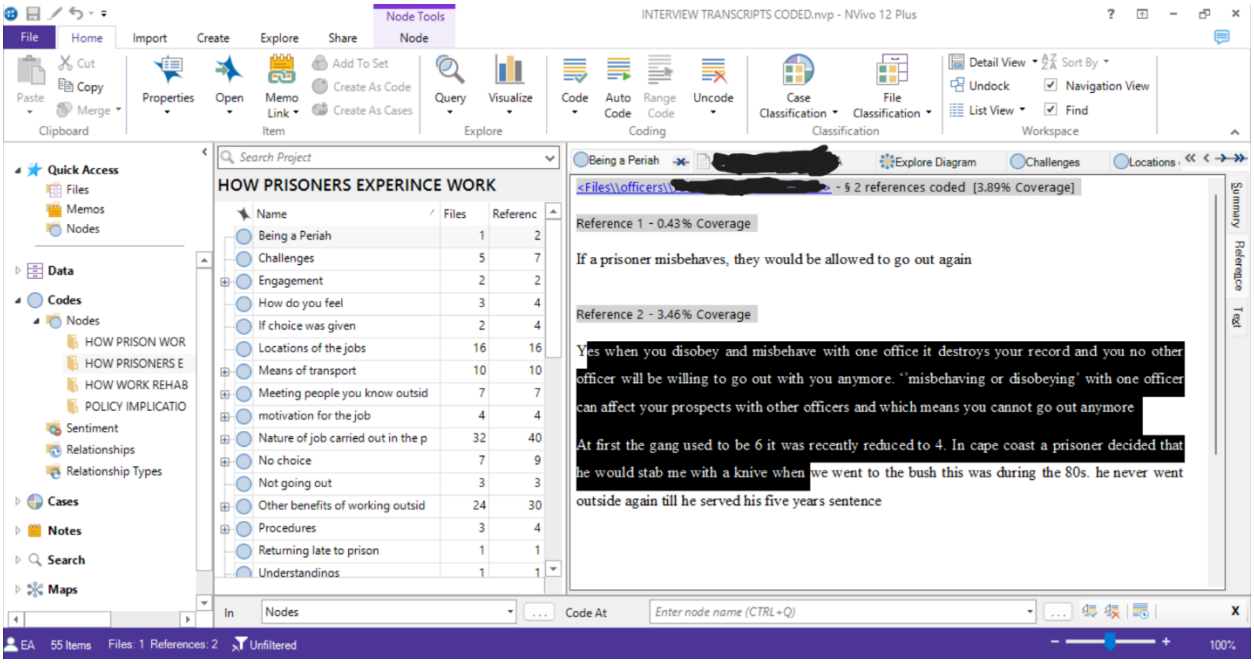
activities are talked about and otherwise symbolically projected within the research setting. However, the distinction between these sets of data is not always clear, as they can sometimes overlap. Hence, verbal communications were customarily recorded together with observation of concrete activities in an attempt to make this distinction clear.

The approach to data analysis assisted in carrying out three primary steps in the data-analysis phase, in which the ideas discussed by respondents were analysed and compared to various process events. These steps were to outline first-order codes, sub-theoretical and theoretical categories, and aggregate theoretical dimensions within the data (Corley & Gioia, 2004; Gioia et al., 1994, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985b; Patzelt et al., 2014; Pratt et al., 2006).

Identifying first-order codes

The analysis was started by employing 'open coding' (Bennett et al., 2019; Locke, 2001; Priest et al., 2002), by looking to discover preliminary categories or first-order codes (Van Maanen, 1979), concerning how participants described their experiences when working outside the prisons. A plethora of terms, codes and categories used by respondents surfaced early in the research (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In this first-order analysis, which tried to stick closely to respondents' terms, little or no effort was made to refine the categories: hence, a very large number of categories emerged, with, for instance, 20 to 60 first-order categories that emerged from the first 5 interviews, and the sheer number of categories initially became overwhelming (Gioia et al., 2013). The sections (i.e., portions of texts and other data) of each interview transcript were coded independently, as well as other data that were recognized as perhaps pertinent to answering the research questions (Yin, 2015). The sections were grouped and classified and allocated nodes that surfaced during the classification process. At this stage, I started to loosely endeavour to discover consistent subjects, dilemmas, answers, or actions engaged in by respondents (Gioia et al., 1994), using constant comparison techniques (Glaser & Strauss, 2017). Furthermore, in an iterative process, I read and re-read the interview transcripts, and coded and recoded the data as many times as possible. Consequently, this process assisted in identifying statements and terminology until the categorization covered the material. In addition, as common nodes started to be unearthed (i.e., first-order codes: (Van Maanen, 1979); NVivo (version 12), as shown below, was used to classify and analyse the data (i.e., highlighting segments of transcripts with NVivo and assigning that text to a particular first-order code). Here, a plan was devised to refine coding schemes for future

iterations of coding and to discuss potential themes that were emerging while performing this analysis. Subsequent to assigning names to the codes, I started to create categories (combining codes).



This permitted the refinement of the research analysis as the data was visited repeatedly, but ultimately, the data was recorded many times, refining the codes each time and solidifying categories and subcategories. As with all steps in the analysis process, this approach was not linear, but was a 'recursive, process-oriented, analytic procedure' (Cho & Trent, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985b; Locke, 1996) that continued until I began to grasp important themes. Subsequent to deciding on a set of classifications, the data were grouped into large tables; the rows contained the (sub)nodes, whereas the columns were made up of the cases. Cells enclosed the equivalent sections of text from the interviews and/or other data. Based on this 'raw' tabulation, a summary table was designed, where the rows were still the nodes and the columns were the cases; however, here, the cells embodied evaluations for each node level (e.g., whether the respondents' attitudes towards prison work were positive or negative) for the corresponding case. Consistent with moving my thinking between operational data and presentational data, I vacillated between the raw table and the raw data (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). This vacillation led to the emergence of key constructs and their relationships.

Aggregating First-Order Codes to Second-Order Codes

In the second stage of the analysis, the work progressed from open coding (Locke, 2001) to more abstract coding of data into theoretical categories and subcategories, or what Locke, (2001) and Strauss and Corbin, (1990) call axial coding. Here, a comparison was made among the different respondents to separate 'outlier' accounts from more thematic categories. For instance, in one coding statement, called 'prisoner characteristic', I was able to recognize differences in each respondent's perspective on who was to be blamed for the prisoners' current condition, how hopeful they were for life after prison, and how much control they would have over their future. Particularly, the difference among respondents started to emerge at this level on these variables by stressing and then evaluating ideas in each respondent's statement (as corroborated by secondary data).

Aggregating Second-Order Codes to Theoretical Dimensions

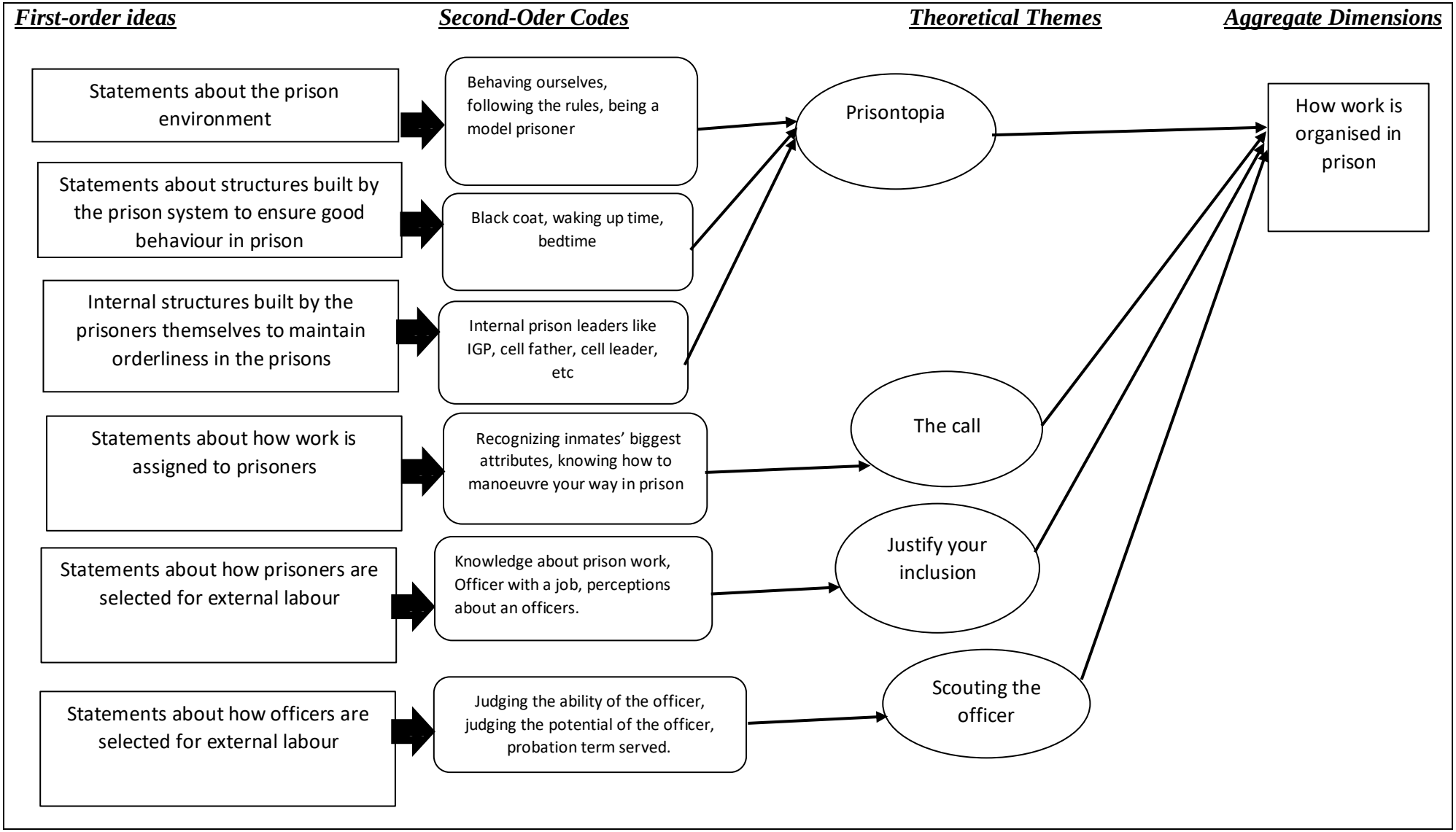
The level of abstraction to create a tentative view of aggregate theoretical dimensions as well as a preliminary view of the relationships between dimensions as the last stage of the analysis was created at this level. Here, I started to organize the theoretical perceptions, iterating again between the data and the emerging dimensions to evaluate the fit (Glaser & Strauss, 2017; Locke, 2001). Tables were then created where cases could be compared across theoretical dimensions that appeared as the primary dimensions emerged. Table 3.7, below, gives an example of the coding process used in the study.

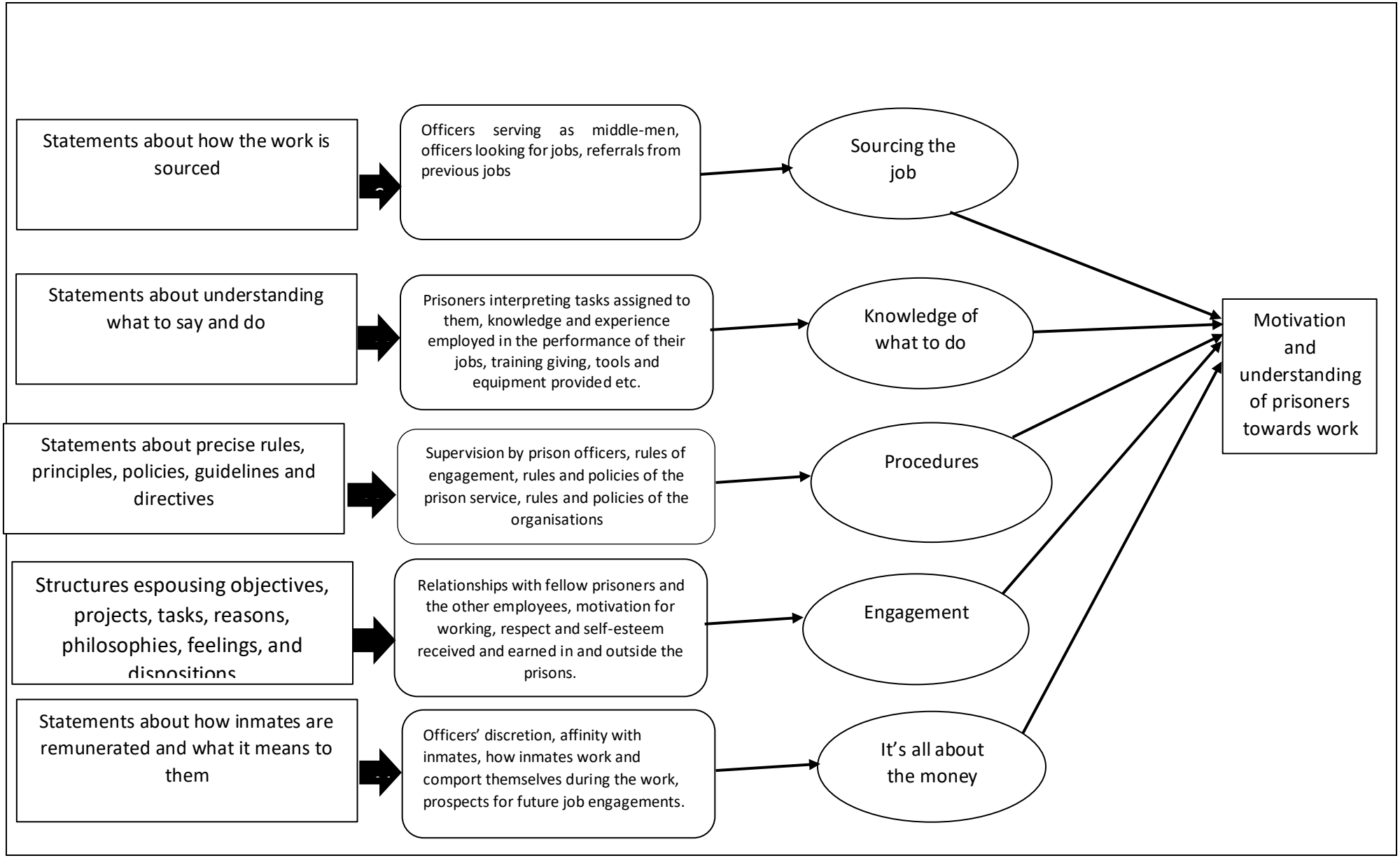
Table 3.7: Example of the coding process

Raw Data	First-Order Codes	Second-Order Codes	Theoretical Categories	Aggregate Dimensions
Question: How are inmates selected for the job **Response:** By qualifying through serving their sentences and checking their behaviour which is the most important thing	The prison environment, nature of crime and sentences served	Comport ourselves, following the rules and being model prisoners	Prisontopia	How work is organized
Question: What are some of the benefits of the work you do **Response:** I get paid to work, I get to experience and see outside, the get to do my own personal 'runnings' as well	Things we do outside with our officers, gang members solidarity, brotherliness	Preferential treatment, experiencing a bit of freedom, 'wo ako Ghana aba'	'High-muck-a-muck' of prisons, informal prison economy	How work contributes to rehabilitation
Question: How do you get paid? **Response:** It depends on the officer you go out with and his perception of you and your gang member. This is because some are generous but other are **not**	Being with a particular master for some time, engaging and cooperation between masters and inmates	Affinity with inmates, comportment of gang members, future job prospects	It's all about the money	How work contributes to rehabilitation

Again, Figure 3.4 gives a summary of the process described above for data relevant to the final result, illustrating the first-order categories, theoretical categories, and aggregate theoretical dimensions, in line with (Corley & Gioia, 2004; Gioia et al., 1994, 2013; Patzelt et al., 2014; Pratt et al., 2006; Van Maanen, 1979).

Figure 3.4: Data Structure




Statements about how the work is sourced
Officers serving as middle-men, officers looking for jobs, referrals from previous jobs
Sourcing the job
Statements about understanding what to say and do
Prisoners interpreting tasks assigned to them, knowledge and experience employed in the performance of their jobs, training giving, tools and equipment provided etc.
Knowledge of what to do
Statements about precise rules, principles, policies, guidelines and directives
Supervision by prison officers, rules of engagement, rules and policies of the prison service, rules and policies of the organisations
Procedures
Structures espousing objectives, projects, tasks, reasons, philosophies, feelings, and dispositions
Relationships with fellow prisoners and the other employees, motivation for working, respect and self-esteem received and earned in and outside the prisons.
Engagement
Statements about how inmates are remunerated and what it means to them
Officers' discretion, affinity with inmates, how inmates work and comport themselves during the work, prospects for future job engagements.
It's all about the money
Motivation and understanding of prisoners towards work

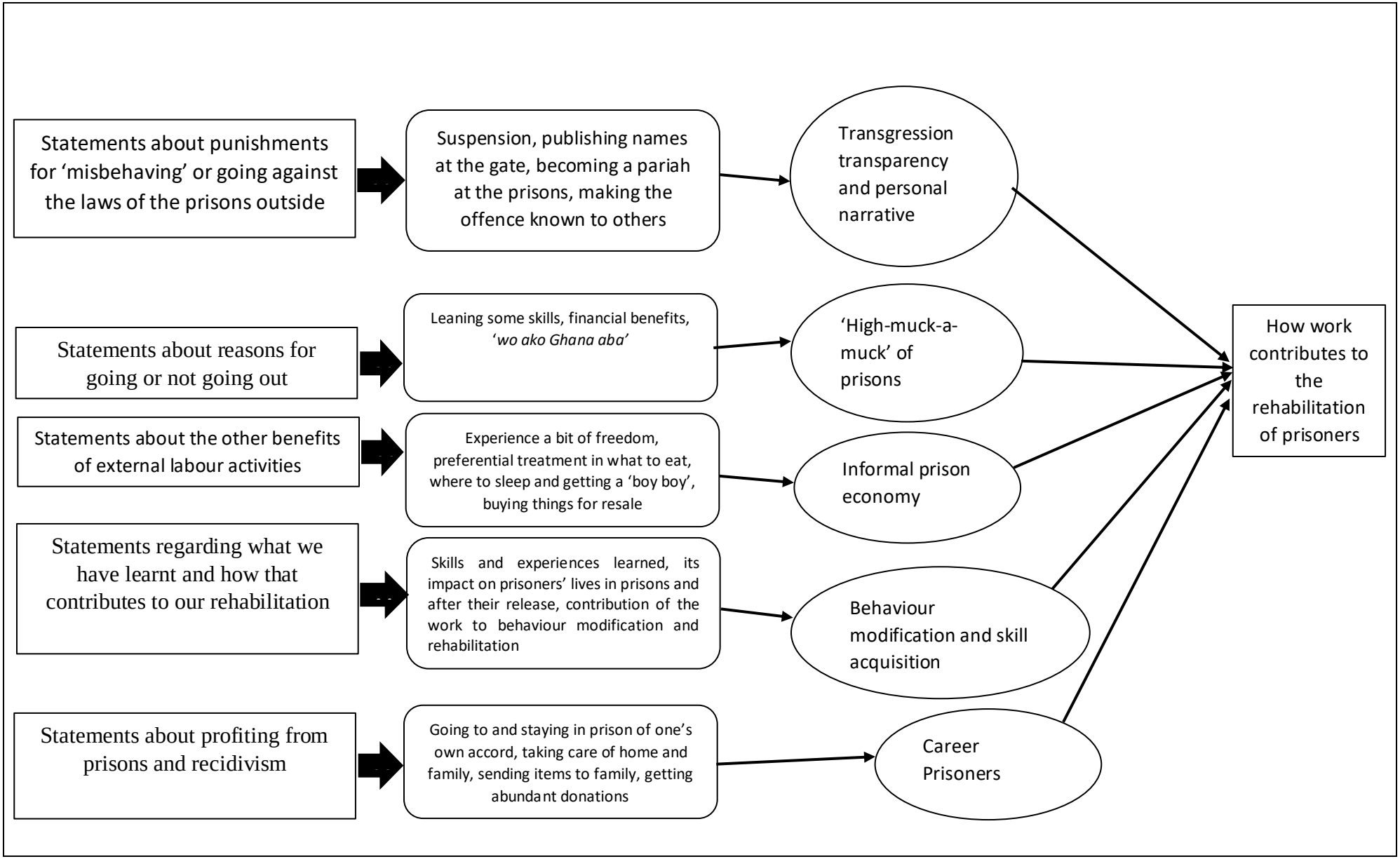

Statements about punishments for 'misbehaving' or going against the laws of the prisons outside
Suspension, publishing names at the gate, becoming a pariah at the prisons, making the offence known to others
Transgression transparency and personal narrative
Statements about reasons for going or not going out
Leaning some skills, financial benefits, '*wo ako Ghana aba*'
'High-muck-a-muck' of prisons
Statements about the other benefits of external labour activities
Experience a bit of freedom, preferential treatment in what to eat, where to sleep and getting a 'boy boy', buying things for resale
Informal prison economy
Statements regarding what we have learnt and how that contributes to our rehabilitation
Skills and experiences learned, its impact on prisoners' lives in prisons and after their release, contribution of the work to behaviour modification and rehabilitation
Behaviour modification and skill acquisition
Statements about profiting from prisons and recidivism
Going to and staying in prison of one's own accord, taking care of home and family, sending items to family, getting abundant donations
Career Prisoners
How work contributes to the rehabilitation of prisoners

Table 3.8: Sources of data and how they were employed in the analysis

Sources of Data	Nature of Data	Use in the Analysis
Archival data	Institution-related documents: Annual reports, calendars, log book.	Helped with the familiarisation of the prison context to understand and learn the discourses used within the prison, which are eventually infused into the practice of prison work Facilitated the integration and triangulation of stories from the interviews and observations
Observations	Field notes from meetings with OICs, Chief Orders, 2IC and other members of the service. Pictures and explanations given. Observations within the prison environment and personal observations outside the prisons.	Facilitated the triangulation of interpretations that emerged from the interviews Familiarisation with the prison system and culture
Interviews and informal conversations	Informal conversations with officers, prisoners and ex-convicts ranged from brief to long exchanges sometimes before or after the interviews. Semi-structured interviews covering how work is organised, the motivation for prisoners and the benefits thereof.	Assisted with the integration of observation with the participants' accounts to improve the understanding of discourse used in the prisons and how it influences the practice of prison work. Assisted with the familiarisation of the prison environment, helped to gain the trust of participants, discussed and clarified insights from the observation, and supported emerging interpretations.

3.8 Reflection: Gender, the prison environment, the outsider and Covid-19

Even though I have seen prisoners around and sometimes interacted with some of them informally, I was nervous about starting my research in a prison environment. However, after my encounters with the officials at the prison service and eventually establishing a relationship with the service, I became a bit more comfortable during the start of my data collection. I also took some time to acquaint myself with the prisons whenever I visited many of the facilities, and I became familiar with many of the officers and learnt about the inquisitive nature of prisoners. Therefore, this gradual entry into the prison service made the beginning of my fieldwork less daunting (Pandeli, 2015).

Additionally, the study was affected by the restrictions put in place during the Covid-19 pandemic, which made it nearly impossible to get the approval of the prison service to engage in the research. Interviews were held in separate (special) rooms for the inmates, which restricted my ability to see the inmates act in their natural habitats, although I got the chance to observe them at work. Also during the observations, I needed to respect the guidelines put in place by the prisons by keeping my distance, which sometimes obstructed my view and ability to get a detailed record of what was happening. During this period, having conversations with inmates proved difficult, as we were required to maintain a social distance between us but I managed to get the work done in the face of these challenges.

Research Evaluation

It is essential that this study is acknowledged as authentic by practitioners, policy makers researchers and the public. As a result, trustworthiness serves as an avenue to convince researchers and readers that the findings from the research are worthy of attention (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). Lincoln & Guba, (1985) refined the idea of trustworthiness in naturalistic research by introducing the parallel criteria of trustworthiness which uses credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability analogous to the conventional quantitative assessment criteria of validity and reliability (Nowell et al., 2017). Although other writers have recently introduced more expansive and flexible indicators of quality in qualitative research, I chose to employ the original and putative measures presented by Lincoln and Guba to establish trustworthiness in this study. Thus, the criteria for trustworthiness were interwoven throughout the examination of how a discursive practice study of this nature was carried out.

Credibility

Credibility addresses confidence in the truth of research findings (Macnee & McCabe, 2008) by assessing if the interpretation of the findings by a researcher indicates plausible information drawn from original data and represents the views of the respondents (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). As a result, a study is deemed credible when it captures the views of respondents by addressing the fit between the views of the respondents and the researcher's representation of them (Tobin & Begley, 2004). According to Lincoln & Guba, (1985) prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing and member check are the techniques used to address the credibility of a study.

Prolonged engagement: I started to engage the prison service a year prior to the commencement of the data collection and spent six months collecting data from the various prisons. Most of the interviews were conducted in the prison premises. Consequently, the length of time spent prior to and during the interviews enabled the participants ample time to get to know the researcher, increasing trust and intimacy among both parties thus, stimulating the participants to offer richer data through various revelations. Therefore, by prolonged engagement with the respondents, I steadily transformed from an "outsider" to more of an "insider" (Hung & Min, 2020, p. 117). whom participants were relaxed to open up to the extent that officers encouraged inmates to give out all necessary information.

Persistent observation: In this study, observations involved watching participants as they performed various activities outside the prisons. It served as an avenue to gather more data in the natural settings on how work is conducted outside the prison. The aim was to identify and understand patterns that are associated with external labour activities among prisoners. Nevertheless, there were instances where participants were asked questions for clarification. At the end of the observation, a document detailing observation, intuitions and clarifications was used to record events.

Debriefing: During the entire data collection period, my supervisory team were briefed intermittently which enabled them to make some practical suggestions based on their experiences as seasoned researchers. Consequently, these inputs enhanced the quality of the research serving as an opportunity to present the findings of the research in a clear and concise manner by preventing any form of bias (Morse, 2014).

Triangulation: In this study, the within-methods triangulation in which two or more approaches are combined was applied (Flick, 2018). This was demonstrated in the research by employing interviews and observations in gathering data for the study. This method of triangulation increased credibility as it was used to enhance understanding (Morse, 2015). Also, data source triangulation (Creswell, 2013, 2018; Flick, 2018; Vogl et al., 2019) was applied such that different sources of the data such as Ghana government prison policy documents, prison websites, and newspaper articles on prisons were employed in the work. These various sources were consulted which ensured that the data for the study was not derived from just one source which reflects the researcher's own perceptions about how work is done outside the prison. Triangulation offered a broad source of data for a holistic comprehension of how prisoners experience work outside the prisons during their incarceration.

Member checks: this involved a process of continuous, informal testing of the data by soliciting the views of the respondents during the writing of the views expressed by them. Here I continually maintained contact with some of the officers and ex-prisoners by constantly enquiring and seeking clarifications from them to ensure the right information is reported (Enworo, 2023). This facilitated the research process and enabled the respondents to actively co-construct the research outcomes together with the researcher (Iivari, 2018).

Transferability

Transferability denotes the generalizability of a study which can be made on a case-by-case basis in qualitative research (Tobin & Begley, 2004). As a result, a researcher needs to provide a thick description of the findings to enable those who seek to transfer the findings to their site to judge the transferability of the work (Lincoln & Guba, 1985b). Consequently, thick descriptions were provided for each of the research findings to ensure that all areas concerning external labour activities in the prisons were explored and discussed. Also, to avoid repetition and enhance transferability, I employed Forero et al., (2018)'s example by applying a sampling strategy with the argument that it has the potential to extend the degree to which the study is transferable (Liamputtong, 2019). As a result, a purposive sampling technique was employed in selecting the prisons that were used in the study. Theoretical sampling technique was used in selecting the sample size for the prisoners and officers whilst snowball was used in selecting the ex-prisoners. This sampling technique ensured that participants with relevant information who have acquired

in-depth knowledge as a result of their experience in working outside the prison were selected for the study. Therefore, the sample comprised the most appropriate participants who were able to demonstrate their knowledge and experience of external labour activities. This sampling technique enabled the researcher to reach as many participants as possible until data saturation was reached at the point where no new information was being received from the respondents.

Dependability

Dependability is when readers are able to analyse and judge the process involved in carrying out the research. Therefore, research dependability ensures that the research process is consistent, traceable and visibly documented (Tobin & Begley, 2004). Thus, dependability applies the following strategies to ensure that a research process is consistent (Nowell et al., 2017);

Rich description: this entails providing sufficient information about the context of the research by clarifying the purpose of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1982) and specifying the nature of the questions that would best meet the research goals. This study is imbued with greater transparency and logic which enabled the development of appropriate data collection instruments that gave the opportunity to unearth deep responses from the respondents of the research to answer the research questions.

Throughout the research process, I reflected on how questions such as how do prisoners experience work? What is the value of the work towards their rehabilitation?… were some of the right questions that could ascertain the true responses that could answer the research questions (Wolgemuth et al., 2018, p. 7). Based on this, my supervisory team facilitated the process to ensure that the right questions as well as instruments were employed in this research. Also, Brunel Ethics played a key role by pointing out aspects of the research that needed further elaborations and clarification during the ethical clearance process. Taken together, these processes ensured the appropriate research method-related selections, comprising the choice of a suitable and satisfactory sample that consequently guaranteed theoretical saturation (Morse, 2015).

Confirmability

Confirmability ensures that the interpretations are clearly derived from the findings of the data. This requires the researcher to demonstrate how they reached their conclusions from the interpretations of the data (Tobin & Begley, 2004). Thus, Guba & Lincoln, (1989), asserts that

confirmability is shown when credibility, transferability, and dependability are all realized. Therefore, it includes markers such as the rationale for the methodological, theoretical, and analytical selections made by the researcher throughout the entire study which can inform others to understand how and why those choices and decisions were made (Koch, 1994) As a result, an Audit Trails which necessitates a concise rationale for choices and decisions (Koch, 1994) has been known to offers readers the evidence of the choices and decisions made by the researcher concerning the methodological, theoretical and analytical choices made throughout the study (Sandelowski, 1986). Thus, the findings of a study are auditable when another researcher can evidently follow the decision trail. In this regard, another researcher who possesses the same data, viewpoint, and circumstances could come to similar or analogous, but not conflicting, conclusions (Koch, 1994) about how prisoners experience the work they do outside the prisons during their incarceration.

3.9 Methodology limitations

Given the nature of the methodology chosen, it would be premature to assume that the data collection method (semi-structured interviews and observations) would present accurate findings about the nature of prison work in Ghana. This is because such methods are sometimes susceptible to researchers' and respondents' bias, especially considering the emotions attached to the concept of research in prisoners. Although the processes were thought out carefully and the steps meticulously planned to ensure a fair approach to the collection of data, there is no denying that the imbalance of power dynamics between my status as a researcher and the prisoners' status may have influenced the responses given by the inmates. This might accordingly have influenced or possibly altered the way in which participants decided to respond to the questions asked.

Furthermore, based on the regulations of the prisons, inmates are not permitted to talk to anyone outside the prisons without the authorisation and supervision of officers. Therefore, during some of the interviews, some officers were placed at vantage points in the rooms to supervise the process and ensure that it ran smoothly. This put pressure on some of the inmates, who did not want to speak freely due to the presence of the officers, even though they were assured of their confidentiality.

Theoretical sampling was employed in this study in an effort to diversify the participants and ensure that the data gathered was reflective of external labour activities and relevant to the theory. Nevertheless, it is possible that some of the key individuals who needed to be contacted were missed. Again, the majority of the respondents who participated in the work were picked with the help of the Chief Orders and Yard Masters, who served as gatekeepers, as they regarded those selected as relevant for the study. Thus, the individuals selected may have painted or given a more utopian depiction of the external labour activities than what they were actually like in practice. Additionally, the use of the snowball approach to contact the ex-offenders could have affected the data collected, as there was the likelihood that the first person contacted chose people with similar narratives and experiences, which may not have been a true reflection of the overall views of the work done outside the prisons.

Also, the gender of the participants can be conceptualised as a limitation of the study. Even though both females and males were interviewed for the study, the male participants formed the majority, and in the ex-offenders sample, only males were chosen for their input. Although in most cases the sample size reflects the demographics of prisoners and officers of the service, this study alludes to the importance of external labour activities for both men and women in the prison service and as such should have included, if not equal proportions of people from both genders, then more women to generate a balanced discussion. As a result, more varied or balanced participants could have influenced the outcomes of the discussion and provided a much more detailed analysis of the impact of prison work on the lives of inmates.

The coding method employed in the study is interpretive and therefore subjective in nature. Although NVivo was used throughout the process, my position as a researcher was to set concepts and categories that were not only reflective of the concept but also considered right and appropriate to me. Therefore, there were times when I had to rely on my intuition to differentiate the various categories because I believed that had the data have been given to another researcher, they would have come out with different codes and categories. Bearing this in mind, I relied on the advice of (Corbin & Strauss, 2015) to ensure that the methodology chapter was as transparent as possible, and during the analysis, I provided sufficient quotes from the participants to support the views expressed in the work and also to serve as proof for sceptic readers.

3.10 Summary and conclusion

This chapter captured the history of prisons and prison work in Ghana and provided a general overview of the current status of the Ghana Prison Service. This was followed by the justification for the adoption of a qualitative research method and explorative research design. I also elaborated on the sampling techniques adopted (theoretical and snowball sampling) and how the participants were recruited and contacted for the study. In addition, I discussed the ethics, data collection methods and other field notes that were employed in the research. Finally, the discussion ended with examining how the data was analysed and evaluating the data analysis method.

CHAPTER 4

"BEYOND CHEAP LABOUR": HOW WORK IS ORGANISED IN THE PRISONS

This chapter is structured around prison work outside the confines of the prisons, and how such work is organised. First, it provides an overview of the context within which work in the prisons is organised, emphasising how the prison environment, the types of prisons, and the prison culture facilitate work in the prison system. Next, it unpacks the work itself, in terms of how it is organised, how prisoners are selected for work, and how officers are selected to escort prisoners and how they are assigned work.

4.1 External labour: Work outside the prison walls

The work in which inmates engage during incarceration is geared towards the benefit of the prison service and the public at large and is regulated by the Prison Service Decree 1972 (N.R.C.D. 46). Prison labour, or what is referred to as 'external labour' in the prison discourse, comprises activities in which inmates engage outside the prisons under the supervision of officers, who also provide the needed technical advice. There are two types of external labour activities—prison work and outside or hard labour—which are provided for under the Prison Service Degree 1972 (N.R.C.D. 46).

Prison work refers to activities carried out by inmates outside the prison which enhance the welfare of the prisons or benefits the prisoners and the service as a whole. The categories of activities performed by inmates doing prison work are heavily dependent on the service because they provide for and serve as easy sources of labour for some of the projects within the service (Frimpong, 2019). For instance, under the prison work initiative, inmates engage in agricultural activities and produce from the farms is used in feeding the inmates, while the surplus is sold to the public. These activities are undertaken under the supervision of the Agricultural Unit of the prison service.

Outside or hard labour involves activities that are undertaken by inmates outside the walls of the prison for the benefit of private individuals or organisations and are supervised by the industrial

wing of the prison service. Here, inmates engage in activities such as construction, clearing bushes or cutting hedges on large plantations, cleaning, and rendering other services as proscribed by the service for people and organisations, which is highly patronised and to some extent exploited (Frimpong, 2019). According to the Prison Service Decree 1972 (N.R.C.D. 46), all inmates sentenced with hard labour are required to engage in external labour activities, as stated under section 42 subsections 1 to 7:

> *Every prisoner convicted of a criminal offence may, in accordance with regulations, be required to perform work during the period of his imprisonment. Such work may, in accordance with regulations, be performed in prison or outside, and in any part of Ghana*.

Therefore, the law is emphatic on the engagement of the labour of inmates for the benefit of the service and the community at large. However, there are some compelling reasons, such as overcrowding, excess labour availability, limited resources, and the nature of inmates' crimes, among others, that impede the ability of the service to engage the work of all the inmates under its care. Hence, the service has instituted a system to select the most qualified inmates to engage in external labour activities. The next section will discuss in detail how the inmates are selected to participate in external labour activities.

4.2 Drafting constituents

The nature of the crime committed by a prisoner is the primary determinant of their suitability for work outside the prison. Inmates with long sentences who were engaged in crimes such as armed robbery, murder, defilement and other crimes of such nature are precluded from going outside to work. Only inmates (males) who have committed misdemeanours and crimes considered felonies are permitted to go outside to work because, for females, it is subject to the availability and willingness of inmates to participate in the work. Beyond this criterion, the selection of prisoners for work outside the prisons does not follow any specific rules or procedures. Evidence from the data suggests that selecting prisoners for outside work can be classified into four distinct phases, very much analogous to how footballers in a team are selected for a club. The selection of inmates starts with the 'call-up' by the Chief Order, which mirrors the search and selection criteria employed by a football scout looking for a potential player for their team. Secondly, inmates are matched up with potential officers through a self-cuing mechanism utilised by the Chief Order,

the officers, and the prisoners themselves. Finally, inmates are made to justify their inclusion in the team, as played out in a football team, and consequently given the options to either stay or switch to a different team.

4.3 The call-up

The call-up, as used in organizing the research findings, refers to how prisoners are selected to participate in external labour activities, and as in any organised activity, the process of organising is used in making the selection. In the prison, the organisation of the external labour activities is taken care of by the Chief Officer responsible for Administration, known in the prison discourse as the Chief Order, whilst the Officer-in-Charge (OIC) of the prison has oversight responsibility. The Chief Order, who is also in charge of all the junior officers in the station, is responsible for selecting both prisoners and prison officers for the jobs. The criteria used in selecting prisoners for a job are; the nature of the prisoner's crime, the prisoner's sentence, the amount of the sentence served and the prisoner's character or behaviour in the prison, in the yard, and in their individual cells, as confirmed by a senior officer:

> A lot of factors are considered: how long an inmate has served, his behaviour in the yard and cell, and the type of crime he committed are some of the factors we consider. (Nathanael, 58, Senior Chief Officer)

Accordingly, not all prisoners have the privilege of going out, as affirmed by an officer:

> Every offence has its punishment, and there are some offences that do not allow the prisoner to be sent out, like rape, defilement, narcotic, and debtor prisoners (owing someone). The offence that an individual can go out with are stealing, unlawful entry, causing harm, and minor offences (Thomas, 47, ASP).

The rationale for not allowing inmates with longer sentences to go outside to work is that such inmates may be tempted to run away, as there have been instances where inmates who were sent out to work have managed to escape from the site of the job. For instance, the Public Relations Officer (PRO) of the prison service confirmed in an interview that inmates who were sent outside to engage in external labour sometimes succeeded in absconding when they got out of the prisons (Lowdown, 2022). Similarly, officers who were interviewed confirmed the assertion by narrating

how some of their colleagues had encountered situations where the inmates they escorted outside escaped:

> They do run away all the time and you may not even realise how they do it. Someone may be excused to go to the toilet and by the time you realized they may not come back again. In such an instance, you have to bring the rest of the boys to the prison and inform the gate and chief officer of the incident. (Solomon, 56, Chief Officer)

Thus, inmates with longer sentences are engaged in vocational training inside the yard, but, due to the inadequacy of resources, a lot of them do not get the opportunity to participate in any meaningful activities and end up idling about in the prison.

After assessing the nature of the crime, the next step is to look at the length of the sentence and the period of the sentence served, which is known in the prison discourse as 'qualification'. Normally, to qualify for prison work, inmates should have served one-fifth of their sentence or one-third for outside or hard labour jobs. This statement was affirmed by a Chief Officer:

> The most important thing is to qualify, but the period served on your sentence would qualify you to go out. Automatic qualification for inmates is one-third sentence served, but for prison work such as farming and cleaning, it is one-fifth, because they do not go too far. (Samuel, 46, Chief Officer)

After assessing the sentences of the prisoners and the period they have served, the next step is to assess the behaviour or character of the individual to see if they are suitable candidates for working outside the prisons:

> We look at their character/behaviour because there are some people who, even after being sent here, do not learn anything from the environment, the values, and the entire prison system. Therefore, it is not compulsory that after an inmate has served one-third of their sentences, they should be allowed to go out. If you are found to exhibit bad behaviour and not of good character as seen by the officers and prison leaders alike, you will not be allowed to go out. (Christabel, 39, Sergeant)

It was apparent during the data collection that the issue of good behaviour was so important to the service that it prompted a prisoner to affirm that sometimes exhibiting good behaviour trumps qualification:

> You need to exhibit good behaviour before you can be permitted to go out. Sometimes even when you exhibit good behaviour, you may be allowed to go out without necessarily serving your sentence requirements. (Adam, 27, Inmate).

Similarly, another inmate stated:

> Some people qualified before me but due to their attitudes, they are not allowed to go out to work (Benjamin, 30 Inmate).

Also, in recounting his experience of good behaviour, Lazarus (35, Inmate), who had been transferred from another prison, narrated:

> The moment I came here, my jumper was changed to blue, so some of the boys here were even questioning why the sudden change in colour was so soon. When the officers checked my case and read my record, they realised I was okay, and I checked all the boxes for them. Some of the boys were murmuring and they were told that according to the documents I have in my hand, it shows that I deserve to wear blue.

The task of checking the behaviour of inmates to include in external labour activities was carried out by the chief officer in the small prisons with relatively small numbers of inmates, as described by Nathanael (Senior Chief Officer):

> I study the inmates to see if they exhibit good behaviour before I can send them out. So not everyone gets the opportunity to go outside because if I see you exhibiting any bad behaviour, you will not be permitted to go. I know all the inmates by heart, so I study them personally and I start immediately after they arrive so that by the time they serve 1/3 of their sentences and qualify to go outside, I know who to send.

However, section 42(4) of the Prison Service Decree (N.R.C.D 46) categorically states that:

> *Every prisoner under sentence of imprisonment with hard labour shall, in accordance with regulations, be required to perform such form of hard bodily labour as may be prescribed by regulations, regard being had to his age and physical condition*.

Although working during incarceration is a widespread practice for inmates, as it is legally mandated under the Prison Service Degree 1972 (N.R.C.D. 46), the onus to work is not enforced in the prisons because of the inadequacy of job opportunities and limited production capabilities

available (Ivanics, 2022). Thus, to be included in external labour activities is considered a privilege, which provides a means of control, usually employed by prison officers (Nuttall, 2000; Van Zyl Smit & Dunkel, 2018). To participate in this seemingly clandestine operation, inmates need to qualify and be examined through rigorous processes developed by the prison administration.

Ideally, all inmates are required to participate in external labour activities, but in practice, not everyone who qualifies gets the opportunity to do so. Hence, upon qualification of inmates, the service (officer) still determines who gets to participate in external labour activities. However, in the larger prisons, this is a collaborative effort between the officers and the prison leaders. The leaders in the prisons do not take part in the selection process but are able to furnish the officers with the right information that they need to make decisions regarding the prisoners. Research has shown that coordinating and collaborating are central to an endeavour such as this (George et al., 2016; Sawyer & Clair, 2021). Hence, the prison administration and the leaders of the prisoners work and coordinate the activities of the prisons to ensure that the right person is selected for the job. Here, there is the coordination of activities among the Chief Order, the Yardmaster, the officers, and the prison leaders, such as the black coats and cell leaders. As stated by prisoners and officers alike, as soon as prisoners enter the prisons, their behaviour is assessed to ascertain the nature of their character and their viability to occupy positions in the prisons and also to work outside. The Chief Order collates reports from the Yardmaster, prison leaders, and even other prisoners, because he can have oversight and responsibility throughout the prisoners' incarceration, but would not be able to keep up-to-date detailed records of the individual inmates in the prison, as he does not live with them in the cells and therefore will not be privy to some character flaws exhibited by inmates when they are not under his watchful eyes. Therefore, how the behaviour of inmates is observed and consequently how they are selected to participate in external labour activities is organised around what I have termed 'prisontopia', which illustrates the norms, values and rules in both the formal and informal prison climate and will be discussed in the next section.

4.4. Prisontopia: The fleeting prison environment and work

The word 'prisontopia', as used in organising the findings in this study, refers to the seemingly perfect prison environment where there are rules and regulations made for and by prisoners, which everyone supposedly follows to ensure a perfect liveable environment. Hence, prisontopia is used here to conceptualise what happens inside the 'black box' of imprisonment (Auty & Liebling, 2020) to qualify inmates as model citizens for external labour activities. Prison is an intricate system made up of people with numerous psychological, cultural, and social experiences who interact in a highly constrained and deprived climate (Wenk & Moos, 1972) with rules that can be very restrictive, prohibiting behaviour and actions which could be considered legal and acceptable in other environmental contexts (Camp et al., 2003). Indisputably, the contextual settings of prisons have an impact on the behaviour of the men and women held within their walls because, by design, prisons restrict freedom of movement and choice by placing their inhabitants in subordinate and dependent roles, resulting in concomitant behavioural responses. Thus, if inmates are able to acclimatise themselves to the environment of the prison and follow the regulations therein accordingly, they would be seen as model citizens in the yard.

The statement that one is taken to prison as punishment, not for punishment, indicates the moral position that imprisonment is punishment enough for crimes committed by inmates (Ross et al., 2008). But, such a view is inclined to look at prisons as a kind of 'black box', which is punitive just by virtue of stripping the liberties from prisoners, and as such, is fairly comparable in its effects across institutions for any given length of custodial sentence (Ross et al., 2008) Moreover, the maintenance of order in prisons is very important for prison administrators, government and the society as a whole, as any form of misconduct poses a safety risk and is a threat to the well-being of societal members, compromises the effective organization of prison institutions, and increases institutional costs (Goetting & Howsen, 1986). Therefore, inculcating good behaviour into the selection criteria of inmates engaging in external labour activities means that those wishing to work outside would be compelled to obey and behave according to the norms of the prison in order to be selected. Hence, under austere conditions of severe overcrowding and budget restraints (Bosma et al., 2020) it can be challenging to maintain a safe and stimulating prison environment, but the prison administration has put measures in place and the prisoners themselves have instituted some internal structures to ensure a conducive climatic environment. Nevertheless,

functioning effectively under these climatic conditions can be difficult for any group of people, especially for individuals who have had problems abiding by societal rules in the past, since any form of aberration from the rules or customs in prison is considered misconduct (Eichenthal & Jacobs, 1991; Irwin, 2005; Wooldredge, 1998). Consequently, any act of disobedience pushes an inmate from the ideals of a model prisoner: a fact which is taken into consideration when selecting inmates for external labour activities, as automatic qualification is not a norm in prisons. Yet, the exact conditions of prison differ based on the physical fabric of the institution, the harshness of the regime, and its social organization, jurisdiction, the political opinions of inmates and other entities associated with it (Ross et al., 2008). Consequently, to participate in prison also depends on the type of prison to which an inmate is sentenced, as not all prisons allow their inmates to participate in external labour activities.

There are various types of prisons, but the nature of the crime and sentence determine the prison to which an inmate is sent. There is the maximum security prison, which does not allow inmates to go out at all; the medium security prison, which houses both high- and medium-risk prisoners, but when the prisoners eventually meet the laid out criteria, they are allowed to go out to work; the central prison, which houses most of the low- to medium-risk prisoners, engages in outside work, and also serves as the distribution centre for the local and camp prisons; the local prisons, which are basically labour stations whose function is to primarily engage prisoners in outside work; and the camp prisons, whose prisoners are primarily engaged in farming activities but do work outside as well. This was reinforced by a statement made by a prison officer:

> In this region, after a prisoner is convicted, they are sent to the central prisons first and then the local and camp prison pick some from there. Sometimes when we discharge a lot of our boys and the number reduces, we go to central to request for some prisoners to be transferred to us. (Philip, 32, Corporal).

Similarly, a senior officer (Theophilus, 48, ACOP) from a smaller prison said:

> We do not take direct prisoners, but we take them from central, and that is where the actual classification is. We go for lesser sentences, which is from six months to at most four years, but this time we even take six years but with lesser offenses such as pickpocketing, stealing, assault, threatening, unlawful entry, mobile phones snatching, because of the congestion among other things, and we bring them here to work on the farm.

The classification of prisoners and prisons is believed to give the prison administrators some control over the climate (both formal and social) of the prison. Hence, Camp & Gaes, (2005) argue that one of the ironic characteristics of the correlation between the criminal history and the culture/climate of prisoners is that the administrators of prison in reality influence the culture and climate of prisoners by assigning inmates to institutions with security levels corresponding to their supposed level of risk. Thus, what low-security inmates have in common is that they have fairly benign criminal backgrounds, whilst high-security inmates share massive criminal backgrounds. As a result, the irony of classifying prisoners according to their criminal proclivities and allocating them to corresponding levels of security is that the prison system classifies the prison environments into various degrees of criminogenic prison climate. Hence, the greater the average security scores of prisoners in any given prison, the more criminogenic the climate, which will ultimately influence how inmates behave.

Whenever the word 'prison' is mentioned, the thought that goes with it or its connotation is that it is a house for criminals and that those criminals are justly there to pay for their crimes. Hence, the general perception of a typical prison environment or climate is that of a melancholic, miserable (Pandeli, 2015) and gloomy ambience, with prisoners always seen in a mournful mood and unhappy about their situation in the name of paying for their crimes. Far from this assertion, the prison environment can be likened to a fourth-world country, but with more structures and internal regulations in place to check prisoners, and with more affiliation than a regular fourth-world country. Thus, the notion that prisons possess exclusive and measurable climates has instinctual appeal, in that it streamlines the complexities associated with the environment into a model with which one can identify. For instance, some prisons' climates are considered tense and inflexible, whereas others are considered compassionate and thoughtful, and still others are seen as stoic, while some are filled with activity and social stimulation (Auty & Liebling, 2020; Wright, 2010). Aside from the many regulations which prisoners and non-prisoners alike are supposed to follow, the prison environment is less intimidating than it appears to be. For instance, during the data collection, I observed one prison having a pageantry context, another had had an inter-cell competition the previous day, as stated by an officer, one prison was having a dance competition, and in another prison, the Yardmaster was announcing the winners of an inter-cell competition. Thus, a Sergeant put it this way:

> It is what they do to entertain themselves in order to cope with their situation and forget about the harshness of prison life. (Christabel, 39, Sergeant)

In assessing the character of inmates to qualify for external labour activities, the parties involved normally look at how inmates assimilate with the cultural values, norms and rules established in the prisons. Consequently, for inmates to exhibit good behaviour, they need to be disciplined and follow the rules and obey the norms formally and informally established in the prison. Thus, discipline in prisons is organised around what could be referred to as formal and informal prison climates. Whilst the formal climate is very much rooted in explicit and coded ways of behaviour, the informal climate draws on the relationships that exist among inmates in the prison.

4.4.1 The formal prison climate: Regimens, rules and routines

One common feature of the climate of prisons is the criminal backgrounds that bring inmates together in the same place. Accordingly, Camp & Gaes, (2005) argue that stakeholders worry that having so many 'criminals' in one place is a criminogenic concern, as it provides a catalyst for further criminal activity by more subtle processes of inmates becoming exposed to knowledge of the criminal tactics and skills used by other prisoners, as affirmed by an officer:

> The purpose for being here [is] to reform them, but certain prisoners just pick up bad habits from here, so for such inmates, if you take them outside, they would behave in a way that provokes the officers to react. (Naomi, 33, Lance Corporal)

As a result, the prison service has instituted strict policies and regimens that attempt to shape the behaviour of inmates at best and serve as a form of punishment to inmates at worst. This was recounted by an inmate:

> If you are stubborn, you would be handled with iron fists and disciplined in order to have a change of attitude, so that when you are released and remember the treatments, you would not want to come back again. (Mark, 26, Inmate)

Undoubtedly, the climate of prisons influences the behaviour shown by inmates within its confines, as prisons by design restrict prisoners' independence, ease of movement and choice, thereby retaining inmates in subordinate and dependent positions, with consequent behavioural responses (Wright, 2010). This behaviour is expected because it influences the criteria used by the officers

in selecting inmates to go outside the prison to work. As a result, the prison environment is inundated with rules that prisoners have to follow, both within their cells and also when they are in the 'yard', as recounted by an inmate:

> The rules in prisons include the strict policy against fighting in the yard, the time we eat, the number of times we are counted in the day, the time we go out, and the time for final lockdown. (Moses, 35, Inmate)

The formal climate, or what is commonly referred to as the regime and the pains of imprisonment (Johnson & Toch, 1982) comprises the formal elements of the prison, such as security measures put in place to control prisoners, prison work programmes, use of autonomy, sophisticated prison management, and the normal routines in the prison environment, which are supposed to ensure control and prison security (Camp & Gaes, 2005). Accordingly, (van Ginneken et al., 2019) opine that the formal climate of prisons is made up of autonomy, safety and order, meaningful activities, staff–prisoner relationships, contact with the outside world, and facilities. Hence, the formal prison climate is rooted in strict regimens, aimed at changing the character of inmates by protecting the security of the prison through crowd control strategies so as to enhance the inmates' behaviour. Since research supports the idea that a positive prison climate is linked to positive results in behaviour improvement (Bullock & Bunce, 2020; Ware & Galouzis, 2019; Woessner & Schwedler, 2014), the prison environment is characterised by a strict regimen that helps prisoners to go about their daily activities, as recounted by an inmate:

> Being in prison is an inside-outside (number-checking) routine. You wake up in the morning around 5:00 am and wait for the officers to open the cells at 6:00 am, have your bath, take your breakfast and sit in the yard if you are not assigned to go out. At 11:00 am we would be summoned by the bell to get into our cells for a head count because the "rushing" (the name given to the food in prison) would be ready by then, a process which would be repeated at 2:00 pm even if we do not have any rushing at that time. At 3:00 pm we are reminded to take our bath and get ready for the final lockdown and headcount, and then to bed at 5:30 pm. (Cornelius, 21, Inmate).

4.4.2 The informal climate of prisons: Values, norms and culture

Other than the domain of the prison that is connected to the official rules and regulations that normalise prison activities, conduct, and prisoners' relationships, there is another aspect of the

prison climate in which the inmate culture, sometimes referred to as the informal structure or social structure (Camp & Gaes, 2005) is formed and shaped by other factors primarily created and constituted among inmates, which are thought to influence the behaviour of prisoners. As argued by (Crewe, 2011), the vernacular of life in prison provides a guide to the quality of life experienced by prisoners. As a result, the institutional and physical features, as well as discourses of the prison, provide the basis that shapes the social structure of the prison. So, whilst incarceration in itself denies inmates the autonomy and liberty to make certain decisions about their lives, there is still variation in the extent to which inmates still have some degree of freedom to make their own decisions and move around the prisons (Bosma et al., 2020). Perhaps greater autonomy in prison can alleviate some of the ills of incarceration and promote higher perceived quality of prison life (De Vos & Gilbert, 2017) which is one of the factors that account for the improvement of behaviour that contributes to being a model prisoner. Consequently, inmates, especially men, are free to adopt these structures and buy into their essence to cope with imprisonment in their quest to turn their lives around and lead legitimate lives approved by society. The structures developed by the inmates themselves act as a 'quasi-government' protecting the rights of inmates and shaping their behaviour as a way of supplementing the rules established by the prison administration (Catino, 2019; Daudelin & Ratton, 2018; Wang, 2015). As narrated by an officer, these structures are set in place to provide some kind of oversight responsibilities for the inmates themselves.

> The prisoners themselves have their structures espoused with values that are directly linked to that of the prisons to help control the behaviour of inmates. They have selected various inmates and entrusted them with the responsibilities of taking care of the affairs of the prisons and especially in the cells when the officers are not around: that is why, in spite of the overcrowding of our prisons, you don't hear of riots and prison misbehaviours. (Frank, 37, ASP)

Thus, in order to thrive, the structures established by the inmates rely on the ability through discourses linked to higher-order societal values or the fundamental values of the institution to which they are linked (Etzion & Ferraro, 2010; Leca & Naccache, 2016); in this case, behavioural modification of the prisons. Thus, shared values, both socially and individually, impact the overall institution as well as the individual behaviours of the actors therein. Values create meanings and serve as a yardstick for the selection of frequencies, means, and results of the acts (Kluckhohn et al., 2013); they also encourage and push for changes in behaviour. Therefore, the values exhibited

by inmates in the prisons can be viewed as ductile and dynamic, geared towards behavioural change (Maurer et al., 2010). In this view, one respondent stated:

> Even though the 'jailman' is no respecter of age, like what pertains outside the prison walls, we do not condone , and it is abhorrent for jailmen to fight. If a prisoner is aggrieved about something, there is a laid-out structure and a channel to follow in order to get things sorted out because the way you behave is factored into everything, including the decision to include you in external labour activities. (Aaron, 25, Inmate)

Similarly, another inmate also explained:

> If a prisoner fights and he has some privileges, such as sleeping on a bed, it can be taken from him. He will have to work his way back to sleeping on the bed again. So, it is better to follow the prison protocol and get things sorted than to allow things to fester and escalate to a point where it affects your chances of being selected for external labour activities in the future. (Amos, 37, Inmate)

A third inmate said:

> In the yard, the black coats selected by the officers themselves maintain the peace and act as middlemen between us and the officers. In the cells, we have the cell leader, cell father, cell judges, IGP, policemen and other leaders we have to approach with our grievances, as well as learn the ropes of being model inmates from them. (Ebenezer, 35, Inmate)

In a similar vein, another inmate also shared his opinion on the norms in the prison;

> If you have any issue with anyone in the prison, you cannot take matters into your hands and react; rather, you have to report it to the cell father. If he is unable to settle the case, he hands it over to the policeman to investigate. The cell judge sets a court date where inmates have the right to choose their lawyers to represent them, but in the end, the judge does not rule in favour of any of the parties and they would be assigned various punishments amidst staining their image because as a rule, no one is ever right in the prison. (Elijah, 32, Inmate)

To enforce these norms and ensure that everyone complies with them, inmates elect officials and leaders such as 'black coats', cell leaders and the likes among themselves to oversee the enforcement of these norms. As stated by Greer, (2000) men in prison go through various deprivations, and so, to cope with these personal losses and experiences, inmates often create and assume certain roles. Consequently, for the prisoners to make meaning of and deal with their

incarceration, they have established their prison culture and formed their own structure or quasi-government to incorporate their own behaviour modifications. The harsh climatic conditions experienced by male prisoners as opposed to females propel them to adopt a culture with structures that enable them to cope with such pressures imposed by imprisonment and enable them to survive and experience life like human beings should. Still, women, who are often referred to as '*forgotten prisoners'*(Dodge & Pogrebin, 2001; McGuirl, 1975; McQuaide & Ehrenreich, 1998; Pimlott & Sarri, 2002) have a diametrically opposed climatic experience of prison compared to men (Greer, 2000). They do not have a strict regime, as recounted by an officer:

> As for women, we do not bother them as we do with the men. Their condition is far better than the men's—they eat better, stay healthier and are more comfortable than the men. (Mary, 35, Lance Corporal)

It appears that the strict regimen does not apply to the female prisons, because findings from these prisons indicated a rather more relaxed environment. Furthermore, women are counted just twice during the day, as compared to the men, who are counted three times a day. Interestingly, the women in the prisons are given the opportunity to take naps in between their daily counts, as narrated by an inmate.

> We wake up in the morning at 6:00 am, take my bath, go for my breakfast, head to the parade to be counted and work on our individually assigned tasks, engaging in general cleaning in and around the prison. Afterwards, those who work outside would leave and the rest would sit in the yard. The bell rings at 11:00 am for the second head count, served our food for the day if it is a double ration, and they open the cell for us to have a nap till 2:00 pm. At 3:00 pm, we are reminded to take our baths and have our supper. We then sit in the yard till 5:00 pm, head to our cells and sleep at 5:30 pm. (Abigail, 23, Inmate)

Compared to the men, who have a very tall hierarchical structure, the women have just two leaders in prison. These include the 'star' class: these are senior prisoners in charge of all the inmates in the prison. They give advice to the prisoners and also act as intermediaries between the prisoners and the officers. Secondly, there are cell leaders: these are inmates who are in charge of the cells.

A look at the governing of the conduct of inmates and structures designed by inmates themselves presents seemingly picture-perfect prisons where everything works according to plan and shows a

fair system where prisoners are treated equally. Thus, all these factors are incorporated into how prisoners are selected for external labour activities. If a prisoner is found to be law-abiding both in the cells and in the yard, it boosts their chances of being selected to work outside the prison, as the service firmly holds that automatic qualification does not guarantee selection for external labour activities. Though these norms are supposed to be upheld by inmates in order to help mould them into model prisoners who are fit to participate in external labour activities, not all the respondents agreed with this system, and some even questioned the fairness and relevance of structures, especially in relation to their involvement in external labour activities:

> I believe the system of 'no one is right in the prison' is unfair to us because sometimes some people who know very well that they would never qualify to work outside can just provoke your anger in their quest to ensure that you also do not get the chance to work as them, and if you react, it becomes another problem. (Christian, 32, Inmate)

Another inmate concurred:

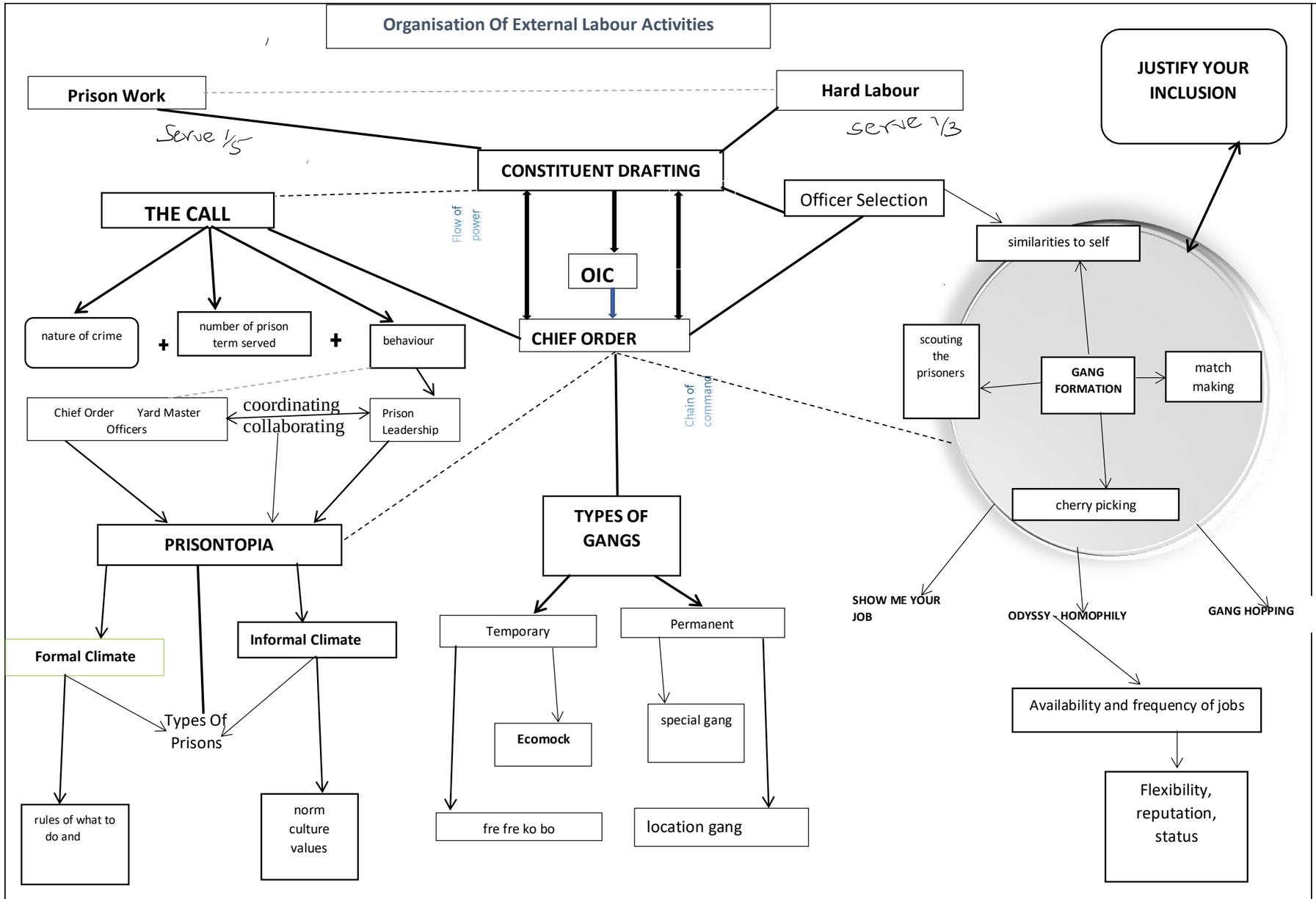
> I feel some of the norms in here affect us negatively because it appears that if you go out to work, you have to be good and friendly with everyone at all costs, else anyone—especially those who do not work outside—can get you into trouble, which can result in you losing that privilege (Adam, 27, Inmate)

Hence, life in prison is known to compel prisoners to adapt and become accustomed to the incarceration environment by altering everyday habits in favour of integrating successfully into the prison culture (van Dooren et al., 2011) through changing the habits, routines and behaviours of inmates until they eventually recognise the prison-specific norms as the way of life within and outside the prisons (Buck et al., 2022; Chikadzi, 2017). As a result, inmates are expected to behave in conformity to the prison's formal and informal climatic norms, to the extent that some prisoners are seen as model citizens merely by following and conforming to all the rules and norms because flaunting any of them will result in punishment, as one inmate explained:

> Sometimes when you disobey in the prisons and you are charged, you will be punished. For instance, depending on the offence, you would be assigned to wake up at dawn before anyone else to pound the palm nuts that we use to prepare soup before going out to work, or you will lose your right to work outside and be reassigned to work in the yard instead. (Mica, 29, Inmate)

The stories from the participants demonstrated that inmates needed to clearly articulate their perceived behaviour, such as good interpersonal relationships and reasonable use of the autonomy granted (Auty & Liebling, 2020) to be described as model prisoners. The exhibition of such behaviour should be vouched for by fellow inmates and leaders in the prisons, as well as being evidenced in the attitudes of the inmates in the yard, as witnessed by officers before they would be considered for work outside the prisons. Thus, the prison climate influences acceptable behaviour in prisoners—an aspect that is crucial in the selection of inmates for external labour activities. Underneath these formalised practices of the routinised life cycle, inmates have also created their own values, culture and norms, captured here as the informal climate, which mostly aligns with the formal climate and contributes to shaping the behaviour of inmates into model prisoners. These seemingly perfect climatic conditions where inmates follow the rules stipulated in the formal climate and acclimatise to the cultural values of the prisons to be considered model prisoners for selection to work outside the prisons is termed 'prisontopia', as the prisoners believed that they existed in their own world outside the country, which made more sense to them than being considered prisoners of crimes hidden away from society. Yet, with perceived accepted behaviour so narrowly defined, inmates feel compelled, encircled by 'eggshells' (Crewe, 2011, p. 520), and held accountable for even the smallest cracks, as they are required to 'constructively engage' (Attrill & Liell, 2007, p. 195) in an institutional activity for which they have little or no real voice. Consequently, Jacobs, (2016) asserts that many prisons fail to convince inmates that they are morally lucid, but for the inmates involved in this study, it is an obligation bestowed on them to be morally upright, as the climate in prison impacts their opportunities for involvement in external labour activities, which impact the need for change and development in prisons. This is depicted in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 Exploring how work is organised in prison



From Figure 4.1, the starting point for inmates to work during incarceration is to qualify by serving either 1/3 or 1/5 of their sentence for which the Chief Order who is authorised by the OIC would check the records of the said inmate and also enquire from sources such as other officers, yardmaster and prison leaders to confirm if they have exhibited good and appropriate behaviour during their sentence. If an inmate is able to pass through the checks by fulfilling all the requirements in both the formal and informal climatic conditions in the prisons (prisonsontopia), they are assigned an officer or can decide to choose an officer or a gang to work with. Thus, to be considered for work outside the prisons, inmates have to fit the criteria officially laid down by the prison administration, as well as those norms accepted by themselves as people living in a community. Furthermore, when inmates do qualify to work outside the prisons, they need to be escorted by officers assigned by a senior officer. However, not all the officers are given such responsibility, because certain criteria are used in selecting them. The next section will explore the criteria used in selecting officers for escorting duties.

4.5 Selecting the Officers

Escorting prisoners to work outside the prisons is part of the job of junior officers (from second-class officers to sergeants), whilst the senior officers have oversight responsibilities. The Chief Order, as the senior officer responsible for all the junior officers in any particular station, selects the officers who are qualified to escort prisoners to work outside. The criteria for selection are based on the number of years served, as well as the officer's physical and mental capacity to take prisoners outside. Since the job of escorting prisoners outside is mostly carried out by junior officers, when officers first arrive, they are paired with other officers (preferably senior officers) who are experienced in taking prisoners out. This provides the opportunity for the officer to learn on the job, and as time goes on, if the officer's capacity is apt, they would be allowed to take prisoners out by themselves. However, if, after the probation period, the officer is still not capable, they would be paired with other officers, and sometimes with senior officers as well. This was supported by an officer in the extract below.

> Yes, we do have criteria for the officers and not every officer is allowed to send prisoners outside. From training, officers are accompanied with a letter stating that they should not escort prisoners alone without serving their probation. If such officers have to go out, they need to be accompanied by a senior officer instead. (Theophilus, 48, ACOP)

The officer should have served their probationary term with the service, as affirmed by a senior officer below.

> Before they would be allowed to take a prisoner outside, they would have to serve their probation of two years. This is because the prisoners are very fast and intelligent, so when they realise that they are being escorted by a new officer, they would even coach them on what to do… Aside from the number of years served, we also assess the capacity of the officer to take prisoners out. The senior officers need to ensure that the officer can actually handle a prisoner should he take them out. For instance, there are some officers who have served for 15 years but have not been allowed to take prisoners out. For such people, if we want them to take prisoners out, we add an extra officer, because per our assessment they do not possess the strength to handle prisoners when they take them out. (Priscilla, 52, Senior Officer)

Correspondingly, a senior officer gave a similar account, but his version was somewhat different from the other officers in that he emphasised the capacity of the officer as the main criterion for the selection of officers to escort prisoners outside to work. From his point of view, an officer can be allowed to escort prisoners outside the walls of prisons to work provided that the senior officer in charge deems him fit to have the capacity to handle prisoners when they are assigned to him. From what he said, officers have the responsibility to escort prisoners outside, but it is the prerogative of the senior officer in charge to assess the officers' capacity before assigning prisoners to them, as indicated below:

> If we observe officers and realise that they are not the type who can control the inmates whilst outside, they would be automatically disqualified. Some inmates are recidivists, so they have acquired a lot of experience in dealing in prison, and as our training period is not enough to capture everything we have to know to start our jobs, we mostly learn on the job from these prisoners. Inmates don't really care about the uniform or the rank of the officer because a Lance Corporal can be in a better position to take prisoners out and do a better job than maybe a senior officer. (Solomon, 56, Chief Officer)

After an officer has exhibited the capacity to handle inmates adequately and also served their probationary period, they would be assigned some inmates to take outside for external labour activities. These inmates assigned to officers are called 'gangs'. The next section will discuss the composition and formation of gangs.

4.6 Gang Formation

In prison discourse, a 'gang' is made up of four prisoners assigned to an officer to escort them outside to work. Usually, one of the members is chosen by the officer as the gang leader and entrusted with oversight responsibility over the rest of the gang members. The gang is handled by an officer who is referred to as the 'Master' in the male prisons and '*Ewuraba*', translated as 'Lady', in the female prisons. The Chief Order is in charge of gang formation, but a gang can be formed by prisoners themselves or by an officer. The practice of gang formation in the prison contains a fundamental paradox in that it seeks to sometimes privilege like-minded prisoners and officers, while ostensibly abiding by egalitarianism. Its paradoxical essence or 'paradessence' (Shakar, 2001) lies in its symbolic and material value of bestowing relational benefits on officers and prisoners alike (Sarpong & Maclean, 2015). As a result, inmates stated that:

> Joining the gang to work is secondary because going outside facilitates our business, and if the officer is good, we would do whatever he says. If he gives us permission, then we would also not complain and do any job he gets for us, so it's a win-win situation because the main motive of the external labour is not external labour per se. (Elijah, 32, Inmate)

Also, an ex-offender recounted:

> If the officer himself takes us to (where they sell the weed or jot (cigarette)) or to joints, and we are able to buy and satisfy ourselves with what we want, when we get to the site, even if he tells us to lift the building for him, we will do it. That is how it is, but if he does not, or if he 'makes long', (strict) then that brings disagreement between the jailman and the officers. (Frederick, 28, Ex-convict)

Additionally, members in the gangs are swapped around because some members become disqualified whilst others are released from the prisons, so most gangs comprise both new and old members, meaning that some individuals need to be familiar with the work and information needed for the effective performance of the work. Accordingly, there are different means through which practice-arrangement bundles develop, but one thing that is common is that new practical understandings must materialize to consolidate the change and that the development of these new practical understandings takes time since different participants react differently (Schatzki, 2013). Hence, to understand their activities and what is required of them, new gang members are paired with those who are more experienced during external labour activities to

accelerate their familiarisation process and to help bring them up to speed with the requirements of the work, as indicated by an officer:

> We ensure that in the gang there is someone more experienced who can teach the rest of the members what to do with regards to the job and working outside in order to ease some of the burden on the officers. (Reuben, 38, ASP)

Similarly, an inmate also shared this view:

> We orient new members by showing them what they need to know and do whilst making sure they understand the responsibilities of going out to work and what it entails so that they work accordingly, or else they get replaced for subsequent jobs. (Peter, 43, Sergeant)

Again, another inmate narrated:

> Normally the Chief Order changes the prisoners in the gang by switching them up with the old and new, especially for the non-permanent gang. This, he believes, allows the old gang members to teach the new gang members what to do and also dissuades them from cultivating the intention to escape. (John, 42, Inmate)

Gang formation manifests in three durationally indivisible activities of matchmaking, scouting the prisoners and cherry-picking, which together comprise the salient logics that gives the form to gang formation in practice.

4.6.1 Matchmaking

Matchmaking is the process through which the chief order matches officers to prisoners who qualify to go outside to work. Upon qualification, prisoners are informed by the Chief Order directly, or the Yardmaster is assigned to inform inmates regarding when they can go out, as recounted by an inmate:

> When it's three days for you to qualify, the Yardmaster calls you and tells you that you will qualify on this day, so you must come for your jumper. When you are assigned to an officer by the Chief Order, you can go with the same gang, unless the officer says you have done something bad against him and that he would not want to go out with you anymore, else you can go with the same gang and officer at any time. (David, 20, Inmate).

On the other hand, some prisoners also prompt the Yardmaster to inform the chief order when their time is due, whereas others are informed by the cell leaders or the black coat.

> I went to the Yardmaster to verify if I was due to go outside to work: he told me to write my name down to enable him to check with the Chief Order. At the end of the day, the Yardmaster told me I wasn't due yet and that I needed to spend one more week. When I went to him after serving the additional week, he informed me that I was qualified to go outside. (Daniel, 32, Inmate)

The Chief Order uses similarity-to-self cueing (Sarpong & Maclean, 2015), which refers to the recollection and recognition of physical markers and other shared identity commonalities (Song & Parker, 1995). The group markers mostly cued could be real or imaginary physical make-up of prisoners and officers, such as the nature of the crime, the time served and the prisoners' relationships with the officers. Other shared identity commonalities include the skills and experiences of the prisoners and officers and the mental capacity of officers in comparison with the prisoners. The starting point, according to the officers, is not expressly codified, but an inherent starting point of self-cuing could be triggered by observing how the officer vibes with the prisoner in terms of direct and indirect comments made by officers with regard to the prisoners and vice versa, and the body language of the officer when the prisoner's name is mentioned. Thus, it is made up of a series of meshed actions, observations and cooperations between the officers and inmates. Matching inmates and officers is a task that requires precision, understanding, and also human instincts. This is supported by an officer below.

> Before I assign an officer, I make sure the officer has some connection with the prisoner. I know the officers and the prisoners by heart, and I know at least something about their capabilities and personalities. (Nathanael, 58, Senior Chief Officer)

In support of the Chief Order's choice, a prisoner had this to say:

> I have been given my master, so he is the one I go with. When my master is not around, I don't go anywhere unless I am directed by the Yardmaster to go do something else. I am not comfortable working with another master because my master makes me feel comfortable, allows me to do whatever I want; he makes me buy anything I want and rest when I'm tired during work. He can even allow me to go and buy my own food because he knows I'll come back. On days my master does not have work or is not on shift I would rather prefer staying in the yard: even though I do not like it, it's better than going out with a different master. (Gabriel, 28, Inmate).

4.6.2 Scouting the prisoners

Scouting refers to a situation where officers make their choice of the prisoners they want to escort. When a prisoner is assigned to an officer, the officer has the option to decide not to

escort them. This decision could be based on past behaviour, an escape attempt made by the prisoner, gross disrespect, or reports from other inmates or fellow officers.

> You can drop a prisoner if he/she is assigned to you by the Chief Order, as officers have the right to reject a prisoner they are not comfortable working with, and so does the prisoner. This is because you are the one taking him/her out, so if an officer took them out previously and they (the officers) did not have a good experience, you can base on that to decide not to take them with you. (Dorcas, 37, Sergeant)

Similarly, another officer also explained:

> Some of the prisoners are troublesome, and due to that, others may not be willing to work with them, so when the prisoners raise the alarm, the officer has to quickly change them. However, when a prisoner refuses to work with an officer, the officer accepts that as a win-win situation because the prisoner has been honest with them. In such instances, the officer has to let the prisoner go, because if they force the prisoner to work, they may likely run away, and the onus will fall on the officer and the service as a whole. (Paul, 37, DSP).

Furthermore, officers select prisoners based on their skill set because some officers prefer prisoners who possess specific skills related to the job at hand. For instance, an officer who is a mason and engages in construction would prefer prisoners who possess skills in that job. This enables the officer to help the inmates to actively engage and continue to learn on the job, as affirmed by Obed (59, ADP).

> Some of the officers are carpenters, bricklayers, welders, and all sorts of vocational work. Inmates are able to learn from them when they go out to work. Some people who were apprentices are able to polish their skills, but it all depends on the inmates themselves and their willingness to learn.

Similarly, another officer emphatically stated that they take the skill of prisoners into consideration:

> Before I make a prisoner a part of my gang, I, first of all, assess him to ensure he is serious and ready to learn on the job. I also check his career background to ensure they have the skill set that I need in order to enhance the performance of the job and help enable me to impact his life by teaching him to polish up their skills on the job. (Philip, 32, Corporal).

This was affirmed by an inmate.

> …and then there is our gang. As for us, the master can decide not to take a particular inmate on a particular day and replace us at any time. If the master is changed, he can change the members of the gang, and I can also go to another gang or another master by choice. Sometimes a master may have sympathy for you, consider you and go with you, but there are others who also look at your ability and tell you that the job we are going to do, you cannot do it, or you don't have the ability to do it. (Mark, 26, Inmate)

Some officers also engage in similarity-to-self cueing by choosing inmates who are similar to them in some way in order to influence them and their character.

> Before going out with an inmate, I need to ensure that they are individuals that I can arrest their mind to ensure they learn something from me and also positively influence their lives. If the inmate is such that I cannot vibe or flow with, impact in a way or behaves in a manner that is not accepted by me, then I cannot accommodate them in my gang. (Stephen, 38, Corporal)

In a similar vein, a Chief Officer also recounted:

> The officer must personally know them, so the officer has to check them out before he can go with them. You need to be sure about the prisoner, and if you don't like him, you can reject him, because there are some people that when you take them out, will give you so many problems. (Solomon, 56, Chief Officer)

In a related development, an inmate narrated:

> I know how to drink, smoke, and do hard drugs, and maybe the officer may not be into them and see them as abhorrent. At times, the nature of the job is such that we need to be intoxicated in order to do it. So, if the jailman wants to take one tot or smoke something to facilitate the performance of the job, but the officer refuses, there could be an exchange of words. When we return to the prison, he will report me to the Chief and I would be made to sit in the yard for days, weeks or months as a form of punishment, by which time I would be considered a pariah that no one would be willing to work with. (Elijah, 32, Inmate)

Equally, other officers just choose prisoners due to their capacity to work and finish the job. The officers know very well that the nature of the work is difficult, and the pace is not like that of a regular job, so it takes people with strength and agility to complete the task within the time allotted. Therefore, prisoners who match these qualities are needed to perform the work. Hence,

upon the assessment of the officer, if a prisoner is deemed unfit, he has the right to drop them and pick the ones he feels has the qualities he looks out for in an able inmate.

> It depends on the officer and the nature of the job. For instance, with the construction work, it is difficult, so for some of them, they would give us the chance to take some booster while advising us not to overdose, because if we abuse it and that officer is caught, he would be penalised, and that's our secret. (Daniel, 32 Inmate).

In describing how fit inmates are supposed to be when selecting them for work, an officer said:

> The job is such that it demands some sort of physicals to complete it. Not all the prisoners who qualify can perform the work. For me, I check how fit the prisoner is by looking at their health because you need to take their health into consideration. I also check if the prisoner has the strength it requires to do the work by checking how physically fit the inmate is. (Philip, 32, Corporal)

Moreover, some inmates opt not to work with their fellow inmates when they are put in the same gang due to their capability. Therefore, an officer needs to assess the capacity of an inmate so as not to disturb the contribution of the other inmates:

> Every inmate has their capacity, which can influence their performance because the weak ones can impede the momentum of the overall job performance. As a result, some inmates may elect not to work with such inmates. Therefore, as an officer, you need to assess the situation and decide what is best for the gang and the performance of the job as a whole. (Peter, 43 Sergeant).

The dynamics in the gang are to stay quiet, do their job and go back to prison because once a prisoner strays out of line from this regimen and incurs the wrath of the master, the other gang members turn to shun the company of that inmate and start to disown him. On this basis, one inmate stated:

> When there is a disagreement, to ensure we do not incur the wrath of the officer, we tend to side with him and try to distance ourselves from the jailman in trouble lest his issue affects our prospects as well. (Judas, 24, Inmate).

The challenge is that once an inmate is dropped by an officer, they become a pariah that no one wants to touch, and it makes life difficult for the said inmate to find a new gang. Thus, it takes extra effort on the part of the inmate to find themselves a new master, as reported by inmates.

> A master can say he would not work with you and that may affect your prospects of working with other masters (Joab, 39, Inmate)

Likewise, another inmate also narrated:

> There are jailmen that, though qualified, nobody likes 'walking' with them, or they do not like their company, so for such people, they don't get to go out to work. However, they can get lucky because when we all go out to work, an opportunity can open where they need some jailmen to go out suddenly to work. As a result, the chief order will have no option but to take them. Others will qualify and will not get the opportunity to go out as often as others due to their spat with an officer. (Lazarus, 35, Inmate)

4.6.3 Cherry-picking

This is where prisoners are given the option to select the officers with whom they prefer to go out. Here, prisoners have autonomy over the choice of officers to work with. When prisoners are assigned officers, they are at liberty to decide not to work with them, as indicated by an inmate:

> Jailmen can move from one gang to the other. In fact, we can choose not to work with a particular officer. So jailmen can move to different gangs due to the treatment they receive from some of the officers, but the problem is that if you want to move from one gang to another, you need to motivate your way through the gangs. (Enock, 26, Inmate)

Likewise, an ex-offender also recounted;

> Engaging in gang-hopping is a costly exercise that the jailman cannot afford, as it most times demands entering into some sort of agreement with the officers. (Ishmael, 35, Ex-offender)

Again, inmates who have recently qualified to go out but have not yet been assigned to any officer go in search of gangs that will have a vacancy in the near future due to a member being released or disqualified by an officer. In such instances, the newly qualified inmate can strike a bargain with the inmate who is about to be released to talk to their master on their behalf, as described by one inmate:

> At times, we can strike a bargain with our fellow inmates: for instance, if one is being discharged and there is one that just qualified, the outgoing jailman can talk to the master on your behalf, and if the master accepts, he will allow you to replace him in the gang. So, you join his gang and do any job you would be assigned to; this is one of the easiest ways to join a gang. (Isaac, 37, Inmate)

Upon refusal to go out with a particular officer, prisoners engage in an odyssey in search of their officer of choice in a process that is anchored on the basis of homophily (McPherson et al., 2001). Grounded on the principles of homophily, prisoners select their preferred officers, whom they perceive to share similar values in terms of external labour activities (Evtushenko & Kleinberg, 2021; Hanks et al., 2017; Lawrence & Shah, 2020). In this case, inmates negotiate with an officer who will be willing to accept them as part of their gang, and then inform the Chief Order afterwards. The practice is beset with misunderstandings and (re)negotiations between the prisoners and officers until their interests coincide. Thus, a prisoner rejected by an officer or those who have rejected an officer, or newly qualified prisoners, can decide to come together to form a gang. Upon reaching an agreement, they then identify an officer who might be interested in their offer. The criteria used in selecting an officer include whether the officer has a job and how often their gang goes out to work, the payment and other benefits offered by the officer, the officer's skill set, their values, their reputation, and their flexibility. The inmates meet the officer and present their proposal by listing what they think they can do for him, their past accomplishments, if any, and their ability to work hard to meet the demands of the officer. If the officer is interested in what the inmates are offering, he would add them to their gang and inform the Chief Order. This process is described by an inmate below.

> Unlike prison work, with outside labour activities, when you are assigned to an officer and you don't like him, you can change. You may have to look for other members who have qualified as well to form a gang, make our own cards by writing our names and sentences on them, and look for a new master. When we see a master we like, we have a discussion among ourselves and come to an agreement first, then approach him and present our proposal. If he accepts, we will then give him our card, because we look for a master, and if he accepts us, he then looks for a job for us. (Moses, 35, Inmate)

Other prisoners also engage in what I call 'show me your job', where they reject an officer because of their inability to get them a job. In the prisons, one of the things an officer can do to retain their gang and also have some leverage over the inmates is to demonstrate their ability to go out with them to work throughout the week. Hence, if an officer does not have a job for the inmates, they can decide to leave him for other masters who do have opportunities. Inmates do not choose such officers to be their masters:

> If we have a master and he does not have a job, we can leave him and go to the one that has a job until our master gets a job and comes for us. At times when we get a new master and he has better conditions for us, we stay with them permanently or until his

> work is completed, and then move on to find a new master… so it is an unending cycle of gang-hopping until we are discharged. (Jacob, 32, Inmate)

In an attempt to avoid being rejected or losing their gang due to lack of jobs or being on leave, some officers negotiate with their colleagues on the inmates' behalf and even look for substitute masters for them in their absence, as recounted by an inmate:

> The officers change due to the shift system in the prison service, or they do go on leave, incapacitated, among other reasons that prevent them from coming to work. Hence, when a master is unable to make it to work, to ensure his gang is not dispersed or in disarray when he gets back, he can direct his colleague to take us out, especially if he has a job for us. (Joshua, 32, Inmate).

It comes as no surprise that given the opportunity, prisoners and officers prefer to choose those who share their values because having the right parties during external labour activities facilitates the performance of the work. The findings illustrate that sharing of reciprocal interests between officers and prisoners can bolster their capacity to disregard the choice made by the Chief Order (who is in charge of external labour activities), which unlocks new options and allows prisoners to disrupt the poor conditions in which they find themselves. While there is an unequal power dynamic between the prisoners and officers, the collaboration between them can influence the outcome of the involvement of prisoners in external labour in a bi-directional manner. For these reasons and more, some officers decide to take fewer than the required number of four prisoners, and in some instances go out with just three, two or even one prisoner. In such instances, officers are not interested in adding more prisoners to their gang:

> A special gang is made up of some specific boys and their master, and that group never changes unless the master is on leave. Those boys are the ones the master likes working with because they can keep up with the pace he wants them to work. For such gangs, even if one member is sick and you are told to join them, you would be made to feel uncomfortable due to the tight-knit relationship, or the masters can refuse to replace their members until such a time that the one that is sick gets well, or choose to maintain the gang as it is. (Moses, 35, Inmate)

Likewise, another inmate also explained:

> When my master does not have any work, I stay in the yard until such a time that he finds one, or when he directs me to another master; else, I will not work. (Adam, 27, Inmate)

In spite of the effort put in by some inmates in negotiating their way into a gang in order to better their chances of participating in external labour activities, not all the inmates who qualify to go out are willing to engage in external labour activities. In cases where an inmate refuses to partake in external labour activities or to be part of any gang, they would have to provide a reason and supply proof to the Chief Order, as described by an officer and an inmate.

> For the gang, it is based on individual differences: some want to go, whilst others, for some reason, do not. (Mary, 35, Lance Corporal).

> If you decide not to go, you would need to give a reason for not going, and if it is tangible, the Chief Order, together with the Yardmaster, would accept and put someone in your stead. (Felix, 23, Inmate).

Nevertheless, it was evidenced from the findings that the men were more willing, interested and even anticipated the time when they would be allowed to engage in external labour activities, but the women were less enthusiastic about going out to work. The men were interested because aside from everything else, work helped them to come to grips with incarceration and to deal with the harshness of imprisonment.

> The inmates like the external labour activities because you see this prison—if you don't find something to distract you, you will go mad (Charles, 38, DSP)

Similarly, an inmate narrated:

> Going out is good for me, as I had to stay in the yard continuously for three years before being allowed to go outside to work, and trust me, even though the work is the hardest thing I've ever done, I don't think staying in the yard is an option. (Judas, 24, Inmate)

For various reasons, the women were unwilling to leave the prisons and preferred to stay in the yard instead:

> Here sometimes we even have to force them by dragging them out before some of them decide to go out of the yard. Most of the women are not comfortable going outside the prisons to work at all. (Naomi, 33, Lance Corporal)

Likewise, an inmate also recounted:

> I am in prison, and I don't think it is necessary to go out at all, especially when it comes to engaging in eternal labour. I am okay here and that's what matters to me. I don't like going out at all… (Delilah, 25, Inmate)

When inmates finally agree to work and join a gang in prison, they could fall into any category. The next section explains the various types of gangs that exist in the prisons

4.7 Gang genres

Prisoners can be admitted to various types of gangs. Ideally, gangs are classified based on the type of work in which they engage, the composition and duration of the gang, and the location or sites at which inmates work. On this basis, there are permanent and temporary gangs.

4.7.1 Temporary gangs

There are two main types of temporary gangs in the male prisons and one in the female prisons, as described below.

Ala Ala (persona non grata) gang

These are the inmates who are seen as pariahs, whom nobody wants to add to their gang. Such prisoners stay in the yard even though they are qualified, hoping that an opportunity will open somewhere. They go out to work when the prison has surplus jobs and there are no other inmates available. At times during the day, some people contact the prisons for inmates to work with them, and when all the gangs have gone out and the Chief Order contacts them and realises that they are nowhere near where the job is or all the gangs are busy with other jobs, he will organise the boys available and assign the officers available to escort them to work. This is mostly on a 'first come, first served' basis and depends on the jobs available. So, when they hear '*Ala ala*' in the yard, they have to quickly run to where the call is coming from, because if they do not get there on time, someone else will be selected instead, as recounted by an inmate:

> Some of us are qualified but no master wants to work with us and we cannot go outside to work on our own, but sometimes luck strikes and the Chief and officers have no option but to use us like that, and at times when you are lucky, like I was, the master you will go out with initially may like you or some of you and can decide to form or add you to their gang. (Isaiah, 32, Inmate)

Fr3fr3kobo (rough-and-ready) gang

Unlike the '*Ala ala*' gang, the '*Fr3fr3kobo'* gang are inmates who have qualified but have not been assigned to a master, but not because they are disliked by their fellow inmates and masters. These inmates get ready in advance so that when the masters get to work, they can take their pick of the inmates. At times, inmates have to plead and negotiate with officers in order to be added to their gangs. In this case, inmates do not have the option of choosing their gang members and have to be willing to work with whomever they are put in the same gang with, whether they like it or not. This is not about the feelings or perceptions of inmates, but about suppressing their feelings and keeping their perceptions to themselves to make ends meet. The criteria for selection, in this case, are inmates' readiness to work and do anything that they are asked to, their preparedness in the morning, their negotiation skills, and their history with fellow inmates and officers.

> We prepare and wait in the yard, hoping that someone will drop by with a job and there will be officers ready and able to take us out so that we also get the opportunity to work. It is all about being on an alert to hear the call. (Gideon, 31, Inmate)

Ecomock

This is the female version of the temporary gang. At times when the prisons have excess work and need extra hands, they call for the available inmates who are willing and able to work to join the gang. Unlike the men, some of the women who join may not necessarily have qualified for external labour activities, as described by one inmate:

> When there is excess work, they shout '*ecomock'*, and inmates who are fit to join the gang to complete the task go outside because you don't need to be qualified to join, you just have to be fit to work. As a result, this gang usually has large numbers of inmates. (Delila, 25, Inmate)

4.7.2 Permanent Gangs

Special gang

This is a gang made up of some specific boys and their master, and that group never changes unless the master is on leave. Those boys are the ones the master likes working with because they can keep up with the pace at which he wants them to work and have worked on building

relationships with the other members over time. In such gangs, even if some members are lost, the master can decide not to add any other members. Once an inmate joins a special gang, he will work with that officer until his release date. Hence, the gang is formed and maintained by the escorting officer himself.

Location gangs

Some gangs are also organised along the lines of the locations where inmates work. These gangs are permanent and purposefully established to work in specific locations assigned to them by the Chief Order. These gangs include, but are not limited to, the firewood gang, the kitchen gang, the palace gang, 3BN, and OIC.

When inmates choose to join any of the gangs, irrespective of the means they take to join, they still need to prove their skills, competencies, loyalties and commitments to the officers and the other gang members in order to solidify their stance in the gang: a process termed 'justify your inclusion'.

4.8 Justify your inclusion

After gang formation, prisoners have to prove their competencies to the other gang members, the master and the Chief Order to solidify their membership in the gang. By proving their membership, prisoners get the chance to stay in the gang permanently if they wish to do so. Therefore, inmates have to justify their inclusion in the gang by proving beyond every reasonable doubt their reasons for joining, to earn the respect of other gang members and showcase their abilities. In prions with farms, such as the camp prisons, prisoners are given the opportunity to work in the prison farms as a way of showcasing their skills after serving one-fifth of their sentences. Through working in the farms, prisoners are observed by gang members and potential masters to assess their capacity, teamwork and behaviour towards the officers who escort them. These factors are taken into consideration when a prisoner finally qualifies to work at a farther distance and during the final evaluation of the prisoner's capacity to work.

> Inmates will qualify to go to the farms before qualifying for outside labour. So, we use the farm as a rehearsal for going outside because the tasks are similar to some of the tasks engaged in outside labour. Once you qualify for the farm, you start preparing towards working outside, because, during the work, your capacity is assessed by both the inmates and masters alike. (Jethro, 33, Inmate)

In a similar vein, another inmate also explained:

> We assess our capacity and rapport whilst working with each other just to see the gang we would like to join or the officer we would like to 'walk' with. For the inmates, we check how they work, because we don't want to work with a lazy person, their attitude, and their vibe; but for the masters, we check their style of supervision, flexibility, and how they treat inmates on the farm because it gives us a mental picture of the treatment we will receive when we go for long-distance work. (Matthew, 43, Inmate).

Not only the inmates but also the officers use the prison farms to test their capabilities to escort prisoners further afield:

> When an officer serves their probation and we determine that they are capable of escorting prisoners, we still need to test them to satisfy ourselves that they would do right by the service and would not encounter any escapes. I assign them to farm duties to test their competence first before allowing them to engage in active escorting. (Solomon, 56, Chief Officer).

Still, prisons without farms use the approach of allowing prisoners to work around the prisons for the first two weeks of their qualification, or sometimes some weeks before they qualify. The prisoners work outside under the watchful eyes of officers in the prison, fellow inmates, and passers-by.

> Inmates are tested by allowing them to work in and around the prison premises and watching them closely as they perform their jobs. Normally a prisoner is assigned to an officer for that purpose, but I also oversee the activity, to ensure they are qualified and competent enough to work. I would observe them for at least two weeks first before allowing them to go for external labour. I give them random instructions just to test how they would obey orders if they were outside working, so when I instruct them to stand at a particular spot and they decide to go to another place, then I know that they would not obey an officer. For such prisoners, though qualified, I would never assign them. (Nathanael, 58, Senior Chief Officer)

Qualifying for external labour activities is essential for participation, but not all inmates are given the opportunity to engage in such activities, although the law (Prison Service Degree 1972, N.R.C.D. 46) specifically states that all inmates are required to engage in hard labour once that sentence has been given. The data gathered rather suggest that it takes more than qualification to be made to engage in external labour activities, as inmates would have to prove themselves beyond every doubt in order to be selected. Additionally, once qualified, inmates would have to take a series of measures to ensure that they are included in a gang to work, and

even then, they still need to justify their selection to the officers, the Chief Order and fellow inmates before they are accepted and allowed to work, meaning that inmates have to go through the process of constantly proving and justifying their selection each time they are taken out, or else their position would be taken over or be given to someone else. Once an inmate is qualified, there are given a jumper that they are required to wear whenever they go outside to work. The next section will explore the colours of the uniforms worn by inmates and their significance.

Prison uniforms

One distinguishing feature of external labour is the uniforms worn by inmates when they go out to work. The colour of the jumper worn by the inmates depicts who they are and what they do in the prison. Hence, when prisoners are accepted as part of a gang, be it permanent or temporary, they are given a different coloured jumper from the ones they wear in the yard as set out in Table 4.1, below.

Table 4.1: Colours of prisoners' jumpers and their meanings

Colour of jumper	**Meaning**
Own Clothes	These are worn by inmates on remand. Since they are not yet part of the prisons, they have the choice to wear their own clothes in the prisons.
White	The colour white is worn by new inmates, also referred to as '*belebele*', translated as a bird that can fly. They know nothing about the prison or the yard, and given the least opportunity, they would make their escape. Such prisoners are not allowed to go out, because if they get the opportunity, they would run away. So, as if one were to play with a bird, they would fly away: hence the name 'belebele'.
Orange	Orange is worn by inmates who have served one-fifth of their sentences and work outside the prisons doing prison work. Such inmates work on the prison farms at the camp prisons, but those in other prisons stay in the yard.
Blue (Men) Blue and White Uniform (Women)	Blue is worn by inmates (male) who qualify to work outside the prisons and have little time left on their sentences. They are also referred to as 'Polar Prisoners' or 'No Escapees' meaning that they will never escape, as they know that they have served most of their sentence already. These prisoners have everything to lose, have been with their masters for some time, and have developed a bond and empathy for them. Thus, such inmates would not want to run away and jeopardise their masters' careers. The women who work outside the prisons wear blue and white uniforms

4.9 Chapter summary and conclusion

The influence that the inmates' environment has on their behaviour is considered to be significant to both male and female prisoners. As a result, it is factored into the selection criteria for prisoners who engage in external labour activities. However, with acceptable behaviour being so narrowly defined, prisoners find themselves trapped by a system where they are deemed responsible for their own progress and failures at the same time. As inmates are expected to engage constructively in institutional projects in which they have little control over the next course of action to take, the prison is about as far from the ideal place as one can imagine. Although prisoners do not resent genuine opportunities for growth, such as those offered by external labour activities, some amount of discomfort almost always accompanies such personal development. Certainly, in an institution where the officers come in inexperienced and possess inadequate knowledge of the systems, it results in prisoners leading the process through which they are ruled. This results in situations where prisoners clear the mist for their own sentence terms and guide the officers through the process. Consequently, prisoners become the patrons of their own punishment and incarceration by utilising the shopping list of the public in terms of compiling information on the behaviour they need to exhibit in order to be selected, garnering some experiences by engaging in external labour activities and enforcing norms established by themselves.

CHAPTER 5

WORK, LABOUR, AND INCARCERATION: HOW PRISONERS EXPERIENCE WORK

This section of the study explores the practices undertaken by participants when working outside the prisons. Specifically, the chapter endeavours to uncover the practices involved in the sourcing of jobs for inmates and the roles of the parties involved in this process. By drawing on potlatch (as discussed in section 5.2) as a conceptual gaze, the art of gift-giving and reciprocation by the parties involved in external labour activities is examined to understand how they contribute to the performance of jobs outside the prisons. Moreover, the understanding of inmates regarding how the work is sourced and how they incorporate that perception in the performance of their jobs is explored. Finally, the procedures involved in securing inmates for jobs, the working environment, codes of conduct when working outside the prison, and the system of remuneration and how it contributes to the engagement of inmates in performing the jobs are explored.

5.1 Nature of the work: Informal sector jobs, flexible, fragmented, and 3D

External labour is carried out in the informal sector because a lot of work performed in this sector, especially in the construction industries, employs the services of prison labour to reduce the cost of production (Buckley et al., 2016). Thus, this sector is viewed as a refuge that allows prisoners to create spaces for manoeuvre due to the low entry barriers to the sector, as indicated by an officer:

> Most of the jobs that we do outside are not jobs that require any technical skills to execute. For such jobs, any prisoner of sound mind can perform it with some sort of little training. (Stephen, 38, Corporal)

Also, employers in the sector utilise the services of prisoners, partly because they are cheap but mostly because they are also very hard-working. This view was affirmed by an inmate:

> As a jailman, once you go out, you must work hard to prove yourself to the boss. We don't have any chance to slack because anytime we go out, it serves as an opportunity to justify our inclusion all over again to our master and gangmates. We have to work hard to please the master as well as our gangmates, especially the gang leader, so we work at a different pace to be recognised (Isaiah, 32, Inmate)

Another inmate, who is serving his second term in prison and has participated in external labour activities both times, shared a similar sentiment:

> As a jailman, you have to work at the pace determined by the master, because you know the master has gone for his job and is allowing you to benefit from it, so if you don't work hard, you are out. Also, our masters need to ensure we finish the job before time so that we can swiftly move on to other jobs, while they are praised by their own masters and employers and provided with some good references, which will enable them to be recommended for future jobs. (John, 42, Inmate)

An officer shared a similar view:

> We don't have a lot of time and yet there is a lot to be done within the hours we are out, so inmates have to work extra hard in order to get things done. If an inmate does not pull their weight when we go out, I don't go out with them in the future. (Philip, 32, Corporal)

Moreover, prison work is characterised by flexibilization, fragmentation and non-unionisation, which are associated with informal forms of employment (Berntsen, 2016). Flexibilization is evident because the majority of the work in which prisoners are engaged does not have any specific formats to be followed, there are no employment contracts, and the number of hours worked is not determined, because it depends on the prisoners' willingness to finish the work and move on to the next job. This was stressed by the prisoners interviewed, as shown in the following excerpt:

> We do not know the type of job we are going out to do, because mostly we are informed of the activities of the day outside the gate of the prison or when we arrive at the job site. Irrespective of when we are informed, we must ensure we finish it on time in order to move to the next project, because the more we work, the more it helps us. (Jacob, 32, Inmate).

Additionally, the work is conducted at any time of the day, depending on the availability of jobs in the prisons, as the inmates and officers interviewed have different starting and finishing times for their jobs. Also, inmates recounted that sometimes they will finish one job, and on their way back to the prison, the officer would take them to a different site to complete another task. Further, when working outside, some people can approach officers and request the

services of inmates without necessarily going to the prisons. During such instances, officers tell inmates to work as quickly as they can on the first job so that they can have some time to move on to the job that they have just been given, and in most instances, such jobs are rarely reported to the service due to their impromptu nature. In this regard, an inmate recounted:

> Sometimes when sweeping, someone may approach our master that they need us to work a short-time job for them. So when we get such offers, we try to finish sweeping quickly so that we can get some time to work such jobs. (Abraham, 28, Inmate).

Therefore, jobs performed by prisoners in external labour deviate from the typical full-time, open-ended employment contracts with rigid working hours to more flexible work which requires inmates to work whenever or wherever necessary with temporary or zero hours, with a wide range of freelance and pseudo-self-employed contractual arrangements, or even without any form of contractual arrangement. Since legally inmates cannot enter into any contractual agreements with any employer, some officers do take it upon themselves to enter into contractual agreements with employers, secure the work, and select inmates to do the jobs. Instead of letting the employers look for inmates themselves, the officers turn into self-employed individuals or middlemen between the service and the employers. This was described by an officer as follows:

> We have some contracts with some construction and cleaning companies, but most of the work we do are from individuals with no contractual agreements. Legally inmates cannot have any contractual agreement with employers, but some of the officers do reach out to some organisations or individuals, get the deal and secure the inmates from the service to work. (Solomon, 56, Chief Officer)

Additionally, another officer recounted that:

> Ideally the owners are supposed to come to the chief order to seek the inmates, but now they come to us first and we approach the chief order afterwards. (Stephen, 38, Corporal)

Similarly, an inmate shared this view:

> The masters sometimes have their work and come for us to help them get it done. We know it's their work because of the passion and attention they pay to it, and also at times, they tell us. (Judas, 24, Inmate)

Fragmentation in external labour involves the crevassing of the vertically integrated formal employment relationship and the tendency to shift towards outsourcing to external agencies such as officers, as well as establishing partnerships with them. These activities move the employment relationship from a dyadic employee/single employer relationship to a more intricate relationship among various parties (Rubery, 2015). Therefore, parties involved in the employment relationship shape the work environment and thus find themselves working alongside workers from different employers on entirely different terms and conditions. Thus, during external labour activities, inmates find themselves working alongside different individuals, whether for the same contractor or different contractors, under different terms and conditions of service, which impacts the work environment and relationships.

> We do work with other people who are not prisoners, and from the way they work, we can tell they are under no pressure to complete their tasks as we do. We do extremely well because of the strict supervision and the fact that we need to justify ourselves every day. At times, they even wonder how swiftly and quickly we work and the magnitude of tasks we are able to finish within the number of hours worked. (Ebenezer, 35, Inmate)

Irrespective of how inmates work, the nature of the tasks they perform during external labour can be considered mainly prosaic and low-skilled. These activities typify the informalized, low-valued jobs that are socially, legally, and economically undervalued, and in the words of Pandeli et al., (2019), are labelled as 'invisible work'. These jobs are made invisible and obscured by the prisoners who perform them (Petersson & Backman, 2021) because, under normal circumstances, the public do not expect people who are incarcerated to be working. Therefore, their activities are observed by institutional observers such as the public, the work in which they engage has no permanent workplace, and they are mostly exploited for their labour (Giustini, 2022). Thus, people pay little attention to their activities, and neither do they care to assess the impact of their work on the economy. This view was shared by an inmate who participated in the weeding and cleaning of a children's hospital and the construction of a school:

> We sweep, clean, scrub, work in bakeries, hairdressing, take firewood, and work in construction; basically, any menial job that is offered to us, we must perform, and yet I do not see any support from people or show of care from the people we serve when we go out. They only focus on the negative aspects of some of the things they say we go out to do. (Elijah, 32, Inmate)

In the same vein, another inmate who participates in cleaning the community from time to time shared his knowledge:

> Before coming to the prison, I didn't regard what the prisoners did as work but rather saw it as some sort of punishment for their crimes. Also, what they engaged in did not concern me, as I only saw them performing activities which in my opinion had no value whatsoever. But being in prison for all these years, my perspective has changed, and now I think they do contribute something to society. (Aaron, 25, Inmate)

Additionally, the work in which prisoners engage can be considered as 3D (Dirty, Demanding and Dangerous), involving domestic, construction and agricultural jobs. The jobs are considered 3D because their expressions are analogous to the physical and social features of work deemed as dirty, demeaning, and dangerous (Berkelaar et al., 2012). Society looks down on these categories of jobs and they are not viewed as highly respected career choices (Ahmad et al., 2018). First of all, the jobs are not considered prestigious but dirty, because they involve working in dirty work environments, as stated by an inmate.

> Some of the work we do are very dirty and difficult, and I get nervous whenever we have to go out because I would never have ventured into these kinds of jobs if I were outside. (Adam, 27, Inmate)

Secondly, some of the jobs are degrading, and with the pace and the supervision given during their performance, only a few people, such as prisoners who have no choice, may consider engaging in such jobs. This was narrated by an inmate:

> I feel ashamed doing these kinds of jobs because it is so disparaging that at times we have to psych ourselves or get motivated somehow before we can perform them. For instance, there was one time we had to help empty a sewer manually. Due to the nature of the job and the environment, we pleaded with our master to allow us to drink some alcohol and smoke weed before we could proceed with the performance of the work. Most times we have to perform the job without thinking about it or else we will not be able to concentrate on its performance. (David, 20, Inmate)

Similarly, another inmate, who is a software programmer by profession, said:

> This is not a job I will perform in my normal mental state. It is inhumane for anyone to perform these tasks or work like this in their life, but when they sentenced us, we were told that we would engage in hard labour to serve the government, so that is what we do when we go out. (Christian, 36, Inmate)

Lastly, the work is dangerous because of the physical demands of the jobs. These jobs are characterised by the physical demands and burdens they require of their labourers, as reiterated by an inmate:

> No human being on earth deserves to work like this or better still do these jobs. The work we do manually outside are the tasks that are performed by machines in other places, but we have no option because the masters keep echoing the fact that we were sentenced with hard labour in our brains all the time and that makes us think that we have no choice but engage in the work. (Caleb, 29, Inmate)

Also, a female inmate narrated that the work is difficult to the extent that the job in which she engages is not supposed to be performed by a woman:

> I am convinced every time I go out to work that the job I do is not a woman's job. I assemble the machine I work with, which is very heavy by the way, at the start of my shift, and dismantle it after the day's work. These activities I believe are performed by men outside the prisons. Due to this, I get to the yard every day with body aches all the time. (Abigail, 23, Inmate)

Likewise, these sentiments were shared by an officer:

> I know the nature of the work the inmates engage in and believe me, sometimes I don't feel comfortable escorting them, but unfortunately, there is nothing I can do, because when they were sentenced, they were told they would serve with hard labour, but the nature of the hard labour is undefined, so we engage them in these tasks as the equivalent of the hard labour proposed by the court. (Stephen, 38, Corporal)

These qualities of the work performed by inmates exemplify and contribute to the '3D' label. Thus, prisoners are considered to provide low-quality labour, as most people with little knowledge about external labour would not consider the impact of the work they do, but would look at it from the angle of punishment instead. All these considered, the work in which

prisoners engage is viewed as low quality and epitomises the 3D of work, as it is devalued because of its physical and social stigmas as well as because it is performed by prisoners.

5.2 Sourcing work for prisoners

Sourcing of work is based on a nexus of relationships between the officers, the prison service, individuals, and organisations. This plays out like the potlatch system celebrated by the Kwaliutl people of the Pacific Northwest Coast Indians. Among the Kwakiutl people, potlatch was part of the winter ceremonials which took place every year, as they divided the year into a summer secular season when people fished and gathered other food, and a winter sacred season when they organized their ceremonies (Trosper, 2003). Accordingly, Drucker & Heizer, (1967) assert that the Kwakiutl were grouped into 'festival groups' that were in frequent contact with each other and were linked by endogamies. As a result, they typically welcomed each other for potlatches and feasts, occupied abutting lands, and at times even kept adjacent fishing grounds (Trosper, 1996). The formal structure of the Kwakiutl society was made up of local groups, which formed the basic units of the society and consisted of kin groups made up of people who were or considered themselves to be related, called *numaym* or *namima* (Boas, 1920; Drucker, 1940). The kinship belief engaged in organising the groups was bilateral, but with a minor patrilineal predisposition, as people usually identified with and had ties to their paternal kin, though they occasionally identified with their maternal relatives. Each *namima* owned lands (fishing places and other sites of economic importance), as well as ceremonial privileges such as songs, dances, carvings and names, among other things, meaning that property belonged to the named position and not to the person currently occupying it (Trosper, 2003).

5.2.1 Ranking members inside Kwakiutl: Key roles of officers in job sourcing for inmates

The main goal of any potlatch was to showcase in front of a responsive social unit(s) and their chiefs one's rights to an inherited claim or some other privileges, which usually comprised constant involvement in a key role in the potlatch itself. These claims were granted the seal of public endorsement, which was authenticated by the guest chiefs, who, when they potlatched afterwards, accepted the claimant by referring to him by his claimed formal name and gave him a gift in the claimed place in the potlatched precedence series (Drucker & Heizer, 1967). Thus, some of the aspects of the potlatch system provide features that can reasonably be applied to this work to demonstrate how inmates understand work in a modern-day prison, as the need

to understand the meaning of how inmates experience work has propelled me to think about the narratives of standardised actions exhibited by the Kwakiutl during potlatch as a stepping stone leading to an explanation of external labour activities. The endeavour to envision the practice as controlled by a single set condition does not broaden our horizon on the fine details of the work done by inmates and its implications for their lives. Thus, this section provides a translation from the discourses of chiefs, sub-chiefs, commoners, guests, hosts, feasts, and ceremonies to such terms as Chief Order, prisoner officers, and prisoners involved in external labour activities in modern-day prison practice. In the prison discourse, prison corresponds to what the Kwakiutl system termed a confederacy, which is made up of a multitude of tribes (*namima*), the ranking chief as Chief Order, and the sub-chiefs as the officers.

5.2.2 Ranking chief/Chief Order

The term for a chief in Southern Kwakiutl is '*gialaxa*', meaning 'the first to come down', implying that the first *namima* ancestor was thought to have descended to the Earth in the guise of some numinous being such as a thunderbird, hawk, or in another fabled form, and then taken off his regalia to adopt human form (Drucker & Heizer, 1967). Ideally, the eldest son from the line of the eldest sons was made the ranking chief, as the position was regarded as one of great responsibility by the Kwakiutl, because although numerous assets, both economic and ceremonial, were possessed by the basic social group, the ranking chief acted as the administrator of the family heritage (Drucker & Heizer, 1967). Consequently, the power wielded by the chief to exert influence on the people flows from the land through the people by the law. So, by utilising the wealth of the land, the House or people feasts its Chief so that he can appropriately fulfil the law (Ebert, 2013). In relating this to the prison, the Chief Order (officer in charge of administration) is responsible for all the activities involving external labour. This position is garnered by virtue of long service, expertise, and seniority over all the junior officers. The chief order, like the ranking chief in the Kwakiutl, has earned the position through promotion and long service, and as a result, is responsible for all the junior officers in a particular station. Hence, the power wielded by the Chief Order in exercising their duties and gaining control over the junior officers is founded on the administration of the prisons, which obliges him to perform this task as part of his duties to the position. The position of the Chief Order as the ranking chief of external labour activities is inherited (Drucker & Heizer, 1967), with a resultant onus to conduct external labour activities. Invariably, participation by the Chief Order is conceived as a sense of duty—an arduous mission, not to be taken nonchalantly—

rather than a privilege to be enjoyed, just as the ranking chiefs during potlatches were obliged to impoverish themselves by giving everything they had during potlatches (Trosper, 1996).

Throughout the potlatch, the ranking chiefs were responsible for leading and organising food gathering events as well as conducting ceremonies in the winter to ensure that the salmon were given the respect due to them to safeguard their return in the next secular season (Walens, 1981). Additionally, they decided when it was appropriate for the group to move to their salmon fishing grounds, the areas where members were supposed to hold their versions of the first salmon ritual to guarantee a munificent harvest for the season, as well as carrying out various rites of economic importance for the native people. An aspect of the revered obligations of the leaders was to see to the supply of wealth to the other *numaym* that were in the village or neighbouring villages. Correspondingly, the Chief Order is responsible for organising, administering, and controlling all external labour activities by determining the nature of the work to be carried out, the resources needed, the grouping of inmates into gangs, and the assignment of officers. In prison practice, inmates are organised into gangs mirroring the 'festival groups' of the Kwakiutl, which, according to Drucker and Heizer, (1967), were in frequent contact with each other and were linked by endogamies. The gangs comprise inmates assigned to an officer who escorts them to external labour activities, and it is the responsibility of the Chief Order to organise inmates into gangs and assign them to officers to be escorted outside.

5.2.3 Sub-chiefs/Officers

The younger brothers of the ranking chief were his potential rightful heirs, depending on their order of birth, in the event that the chief died without issue. As rightful potential heirs, the brothers of the ranking chief assumed some sort of nobility and were entitled to respect, although they held no official positions (Drucker & Heizer, 1967). The sub-chiefs only acted in advisory positions until there was an expansion (in salmon harvest and trade goods) that propelled them to become directly involved in potlatching. This runs in parallel with the role of officers engaged in escorting inmates during external labour activities. Thus, acting as sub-chiefs during external labour, the officers take instructions from the Chief Order regarding which inmates and which employer to work with, provide feedback and report to him after the day's work.

5.2.4 Angelic Hubris: The job sourcing process

During the earlier traditional or pre-contact period, only the high-ranking chief in each *namima* was required to give potlaches, hence making the occurrence less frequent. This resulted in small potlatches being held both within and between tribes. In those times, the wealth generated from the potlatch came from the collective effort of the entire *namima*. Thus, everyone from commoners and junior chiefs to the highest-ranking chief contributed whatever wealth in goods they had in their possession to the chief as part of the preparation towards potlatching, because everybody had to help their chiefs in putting on the best ceremony. This role of the ranking chief plays out in the role of the Chief Order of the prison, as originally, they were the only ones required to organise working outside the prisons. Anyone who had any job and needed the services of prisoners could contact the prisons to assist them in securing prisoners. Such individuals would need to book an appointment with the Chief Order, who is in charge of the external labour activities, to discuss the number of gangs they would need. Upon assessment, the Chief Order is able to determine the number of gangs that would be considered necessary to perform the task based on the nature and requirements of the job. However, if the individual or organisation has utilised the services of prisoners before, they normally come to the appointment with their own quotations. This was clearly expressed by Nathanael (58, Senior Chief Officer):

> When an individual or an organisation brings their job, we discuss it and I suggest the number of gangs that would be needed for the job. Sometimes some people come in with a preconceived number of gangs they would need, but after our discussion, they realise they either need more or fewer gangs.

The account given by Nathanael recalls the duties performed by the ranking chiefs during the earlier form of potlatches. This signals a centralised, more controlled, and better-organised program, structured and monitored under the care of one person in the prison. The implication here is that like potlatch, external labour used to be conducted on a smaller scale due to the number of people involved (Trosper, 1996).

After settling on the number of workers needed by the individual or organisation, the chief order checks his/her documents to ensure that he/she has the required number of prisoners to meet the demands of the job. They then go ahead to charge the person or organisation the approved government rate per prisoner and file the same in the records, as indicated by a senior officer:

> I tell them the government labour fee, which is GH10 cedis (£0.57 pence) per prisoner for a day. Hence, a gang of four prisoners would equal (4*10) GH40 cedis per day for the government's chest. (Paul, 37, DSP)

After agreeing to the terms spelt out by the Chief Order, the owner of the job makes payment (the government's approved fees) to the Chief Order. Subsequently, the Chief Order assigns the job to one of their officers, who then proceed with the necessary arrangement. The officer goes to the site of the job, assesses it, charges it, and comes to an agreement on other arrangements such as transportation, food, and other terms and conditions for the performance of the work. This was narrated by Philip (32, Corporal):

> The officer who is assigned the job goes with the owner to look at the job, evaluates it and charges it based on the nature of the job and in accordance with the officer's discretion.

After 1849, potlatches grew in size as a result of the increase in potlatching goods, which perpetuated the proliferation of the potlatching, thus allowing the medium- and lower-ranking chiefs to give potlatches (Trosper, 1996). Thus, the people of Kwakiutl, like the inmates, were under the angelic hubris of their chiefs. Angelic hubris, as used in organising this finding, refers to the forced generosity engaged in by the officers who act in the guise of searching for jobs or gifs (*yaq!wima*) in the Kwakiutl discourse for inmates to help them, when in fact they ultimately stand to gain from the prisoners' labour. Due to the surge in external labour activities, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic, officers who escorted inmates out to work engaged in sourcing jobs for inmates, as narrated by officers and inmates alike:

> There are periods of times officers get a lot of job offers, but there are times they hit a dry spell, and during these times officers go job hunting for inmates. (Obed, 59, ADP)

> At times, the officers go in search of jobs for the inmates, because as an escort officer, you have good prospects when you take the boys out to work regularly, especially when you have good boys you do not intend to lose. (Solomon, 56, Chief Officer)

> I got some calls from people who needed our services, but I also went in search of jobs during my free time. For the urgent jobs, I called some of the ex-convicts I still keep in touch with but, for non-urgent ones, I deferred them until the prisoners were allowed to go out to work again. (Stephen, 38, Corporal)

> After the lockdown, we had more flexible working arrangements that eased some tasks off my hands and allowed me some free time, but I knew during that time some people needed some work to be done by inmates but could not come to the prisons, so I used

> the time to search for jobs that would be performed by the prisoners when they are allowed to go out. (Philip, 32, Corporal)

These responses show how the officers become directly involved in searching for and securing jobs for the inmates. For instance, Philip used his spare time outside work to search for jobs for the inmates to help them to become more productive after the lockdown. It is, therefore, crucial to note that these actions of communitarian egalitarianism of scouting for jobs for inmates are rather predicated on plutocracy to enforce officers' honour and prestige, as indicated by Solomon, who explained that officers with jobs in the prison earn more respect. This wave of job sourcing by officers enables them to be revered by the inmates with whom they work to the point that they listen to them more than to some senior officers, as has been observed during the potlatch, which saw the ratings attached to the gifts given being discontinued and in some cases, some chiefs of lower ranks giving bigger potlaches and receiving larger presents than their seniors (Godelier, 1999; Neikirk & Nickson, 2021).

Even so, as an officer, having a job for your 'boys' indicates the extent to which you earn their respect and that of your colleagues. Accordingly, an officer who takes prisoners out regularly seems powerful in a way and as such earns the respect of prisoners because the officer gets to have a hold on them, and they tend to kowtow to his or her words. Hence, procuring jobs for inmates also helps in securing their trust and loyalty. Consequently, inmates were emphatic that they held officers who were able to give them jobs in high esteem and would listen to them and even regard their counsel as opposed to other officers. The importance of officers having jobs to offer was clearly expressed by Elijah and Jethro:

> If my master does not have a job, I leave him and search for another master to follow, because this is how I can survive here, because my loyalty always lies with the officer with a job and nothing else. (Jethro, 33, Inmate)

> As an officer, you need to help boys by taking us out to work constantly, so if I have an officer that takes me out every day, of course, I will listen to him, try my best to please him and stay loyal to him, because others may wish to be in my position. (Elijah, 32, Inmate)

As reflected in this view expressed by Elijah and Jethro, the number of officers involved in job sourcing for inmates has skyrocketed over the years, resulting in the expansion of the program in the prison. Consequently, it has degenerated into an individual affair, where each officer

looks after their own gang and vice versa, instead of a collective effort by the prison administration through the Chief Order as captured by an officer:

> As for the inmates, when you take them out consistently, they respect, regard, and listen to you as their leader when you try to advise them. When they are with you, they try to stay out of trouble, because they know they can be dropped at any time and they may end up with an officer who may not have work for them, or even if they did, it would not be consistent. (Peter, 43, Sergeant)

Consequently, the preoccupation of most officers is centred around earning the respect of colleagues and the loyalty of inmates and then keeping this momentum going. This reinforces prison officers' desire to be active with their 'boys' all the time by getting personally involved in the process of job hunting for inmates. As such, prison officers themselves go in search of jobs for the prisoners. They search by scouting construction sites and other job sites, as well as enquiring from people to see if they need extra hands for any menial labour jobs, as confirmed by Obed (59, ADP):

> There are periods of time when officers get a lot of job offers, but there are times they hit a dry spell, and during these times, officers go job hunting for inmates.

In a similar vein, another officer shared this sentiment:

> At times, the officers go in search of jobs for the inmates, because as an escort officer, you have good prospects when you take the boys out to work regularly, especially when you have good boys you do not intend to lose. (Philip, 32, Corporal)

The search for jobs by officers, I was informed, was exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic when the prisons shut their doors to the public and outsiders were not allowed to enter for any reason. During that time, officers said they met people at the gate to discuss the possibilities of jobs offers, whilst others recounted that they were simply contacted by prospective individuals and organisations who needed their services, as stated by Stephen (38, Corporal):

> I got some calls from people who needed our services, but I also went in search of jobs during my free time. For the jobs that were urgent, I called some of the ex-convicts I still keep in touch with and gave them the opportunity to execute them, but for non-urgent ones, I deferred them until such a time that the prisoners were allowed to go out to work again.

Similarly, some officers narrated that they used their downtime during the pandemic to scout for jobs that would be performed by the inmates when the pandemic receded:

> After the lockdown, we had more flexible working arrangements that eased some tasks off my hands and allowed me some free time, but I knew during that time some people needed some work to be done by inmates but could not come to the prisons, so I used the time to search for jobs that would be performed by the prisoners when they are allowed to go out (Philip, 32, Corporal)

The individuality of job sourcing by officers indicates that the jobs offered serve as tokens of esteem and products of goodwill, as they complement and indulge inmates. Inmates are flattered by the officers' gestures because they provide some sort of recognition of their worth and fulfilled their wishes to be treated as 'human beings' despite being prisoners. Indeed, Douglas's, (2002) assertion that there are no free gifts is cautiously implanted and translated in this practice, as officers do not perform this act of generosity free of charge but implore inmates to work hard eventually in exchange:

> The masters sometimes have their work and come for us to help them get it done. We know it's their work because of the passion and attention they pay to it, and also at times, they tell us. (Judas, 24, Inmate)

As indicated by Judas, it is obvious that the most essential aspect of this job sourcing by officers is the massive amount of work in which the officers can get inmates to engage at any time. Again, officers utilising their spare time to engage in the accumulation of more jobs signal their status, not in terms of their individual statuses but rather what they represent in the prisons to inmates (Barker et al., 2019). After the job is secured, with inmates and officers assigned to work, the next step is to provide the inmates with the tools required and the training needed, if any, to complete the work.

5.3 Working tools

As the jobs in which inmates are engaged are not considered to demand any special skillset in their execution, inmates use simple tools such as pickaxes, cutlasses, hoes, shovels and other simple farm and construction tools in their work. Due to the inadequacy of working tools or the lack thereof, officers are left to provide their own working tools for inmates, with a few exceptions where employers provide inmates with tools to work with as narrated by officers:

> The tools are not provided by the service, so officers need to perform magic to get them. (Samuel, 46, Chief Officer)

Similarly, a chief officer also explained:

> If the Chief Order sends an officer on a job with the inmates, he will provide the location, and the tools for the job, meaning the officer can take the tools from here. However, the government has not provided any tools for external labour, so when an officer has his own job for the prisoners, he has to search for his own tools for the boys as well. (Solomon, 56, Chief Officer)

Aside from the tools provided by employers, which are supplied to inmates at the site of the job, tools supplied by the officers are carried from the prisons to the site. Thus, inmates stated that they take their tools from the service and bring them back after work:

> Some of the tools—cutlasses, hoes, and pickaxes we work with—are taken from the service and carried to the site. When we work in gangs, we normally assign one member who would be in charge of the tools. When we are ready to depart, he goes for the tools that we would need, and we carry them along to the location. (Elijah, 32, Inmate)

Based on these responses I enquired about the dangers of allowing inmates to carry such sharp and potentially dangerous objects walking down the streets in broad daylight among citizens who could be at risk. An officer responded:

> We have been doing this for ages and have not had any bad encounters with the public because we usually take out time during the selection stage to ensure that the right candidates with good attitudes are sent out to work. (Solomon, 56, Chief Officer)

Another officer supported this:

> If anything, they rather take their anger on us the officers, and not the general public. I remember some years back I had an encounter with an inmate who threatened to kill me with his cutlass. After managing to detain him with the help of the other inmates (because we don't carry guns when you go out) and bringing him back to the prison, he was never allowed to go out again until his release. (Nathanael, 58, Senior Chief Officer)

Furthermore, the archaic nature of the tools inmates employ when they work outside is a major concern, as it does not enable them to learn the skills they would need to return to the

contemporary work environments of the industries for which they are being trained, as most of these tools have been rendered obsolete by advancement in the tools used in the sector. Therefore, even if inmates are able to acquire the needed skills, they lack the know-how in applying modern tools to perform their work, meaning that large businesses would not want to employ them and smaller ones that may still use such tools in their operations may not be able to absorb them. Thus, the obsolete nature of the tools echoes the hard labour to which inmates are sentenced, and in some instances, inmates narrated that they were not allowed to use sharp objects for work and were coerced by some officers into using blunt tools:

> The tools we use are all part of the hard labour sentence, as we are told by officers. When we ask for better tools to work with, they don't lose any chance by reverberating the fact that we were sentenced to hard labour and therefore needed to go through all this because of that. (Isaac, 37 Inmate)

Similarly, an ex-offender shared this view:

> The tools that we use are just blunt, and not sharp at all, and at times when we tell a master to give us some time to sharpen your knife or ask him why they have given us a blunt tool, they just respond with the 'hard labour' phrase or tell us to use what we have or make us aware that's the best they can do, and we end up with blunt tools (Joel, 45, Ex-offender)

When inmates are given tools to work with, they need to be trained on how to use them, because not all the inmates have had the experience of working or engaging in any form of economic activity. Hence, to avoid accidents and ensure that the work runs smoothly and inmates are given the best opportunity to work as is expected of them, they need to be given some form of training.

5.4 Getting on: Training for the job

As a practice, external labour is administratively controlled, but it occurs largely unobserved and, in most cases, unbothered (under the radar) when it comes to public knowledge or concern. Nevertheless, what prisoners do cannot be divorced from the prison environment in which they function, so the environment of the prison is factored into the selection of prisoners for work. Yet, in most cases, inmates are selected without consideration of the existing skills (if any) that they possess, as affirmed by an inmate:

> I used to be a seamstress, but when I got here, I was told to do a different task, which is unrelated to what I was doing outside, and I had to comply—even though they have a tailoring centre here, I wasn't considered for any role in that. I am under their authority, so I cannot make any laws for them: I just had to comply with what they told me. (Abigail, 23, Inmate)

Another inmate reiterated this:

> No one asks you what you can and cannot do. The thing is, when you qualify, you are told you would go out, but even the nature of the job is normally unknown until you get to the place of work, so how can they consider the prior skills you had before coming into the prisons? (Alexander, 43, Inmate)

Aside from inmates being at times mismatched to the tasks they perform, they are also rarely provided with any form of training, because it is assumed that they have some working knowledge or would be able to learn all they need to know about the job and its performance by watching their colleagues work and trying to emulate them as soon as they arrive at the site on their first day of work, as described by an inmate:

> You just get to the place of work and start, and that is it, so if you don't know how to do the job, you observe whilst others perform it and follow suit because you do not want them to know you have no clue of what to do, else you would be axed for the next assignment or be tagged as lazy, and that can affect your future job prospects. Me, for example, the first time I tried working, it was too difficult for me because the work was not something I have experienced before, so I was tagged as lazy and no one wanted to go out with me, but an officer decided to give me another chance and I made every effort to prove myself with that opportunity. (John, 42, Inmate)

Likewise, an officer explained that:

> Inmates are sentenced to hard labour: they must learn how to perform the job within the shortest possible time because their sentences are attached to the work. (Judith, 34, Corporal)

Ordinarily, people who work in any capacity are given the choice to perform a job—usually, a task related to their interests; yet inmates are not even given the chance to choose the jobs they can do in terms of their capabilities, meaning that they end up with jobs in which they have no interest. Yet, they are expected to outperform themselves whenever they get to the site, under

strict supervision, which can be problematic at times for the inmates and the officers alike. Aside from being pushed to perform tasks, they might never ordinarily choose to perform, inmates are not given any training or time to learn and familiarise themselves with the performance of the job, which often leads to accidents, as every minute matters when it comes to the work. As well as learning about the job within the shortest possible time, inmates need to familiarise themselves with the working environment of external labour.

5.5 The atmosphere and context within which work is executed

The working environment of external labour is usually serious, orderly, and business-like, as prison officers who supervise the prisoners have been given some form of training in managing inmates, as narrated by an officer:

> Before any officer can be allowed to escort prisoners outside, irrespective of their rank, they would need to possess the competency to do so. They have to undergo some on-the-job training and observation and be confident enough to escort prisoners. (Theophilus, 48, ACOP)

Additionally, an inmate also had this to say:

> You see the way we walk when we go out … yes, that is how it is supposed to be. When you see us with our masters, it's serious business—we don't have any time at all to joke. External labour is the true definition of 'time is money' because we need all the time we can get. The more we do, the more we get paid, and move on to the next job, so it is a win-win situation (Ebenezer, 35, Inmate)

Yet, the civilian instructors, who are mostly foremen, who supervise the work being done by the inmates are obviously not given any form of training in managing prisoners and therefore use their technical knowledge in managing their workforce and prisoners alike, but they are not supposed to directly manage the prisoners:

> When we go out it is only the masters that we have to listen to: the foremen can provide us with technical instructions about the job only, but any other thing, like complaints, they have to pass it on to our masters. (Elijah, 32, Inmate)

> For the non-prisoners, they cannot shout at us: it's only their foremen that can give us directions because our master is under him, and it's only my master that can supervise

> us and give us orders. Sometimes when we finish the jobs assigned to us early, some of the foremen reassign us extra jobs in order to make up for the extra time; others also tell us to close for the day. (Matthew, 43, Inmate)

Nevertheless, inmates also stated that they cultivate a cordial working relationship with non-prisoners when they work together:

> We interact with non-prisoners about our lives and life in prison in general; they give us advice, and others provide us with gifts and even go to the extent of shopping for us. (John, 42, Inmate)

Similarly, another inmate recounted:

> I remember one time we worked together for a week on a construction project and on the final day, the non-prisoners we worked with came with clothing, shoes, and some provisions as well. (Benjamin, 30, Inmate)

In contrast, another inmate indicated that the way prisoners interact with non-prisoners normally depends on the attitude of the master with whom they are working:

> Not all officers tolerate us communicating with non-prisoners. The non-prisoners give us different reactions; I guess it all boils down to personality because some of them do advise us, whilst others do not have any reasonable thing to say (Amos, 37, Inmate)

Managing prisoners under such circumstances cannot be an easy task for officers, especially because they (prisoners) are not contained in a prison yard, and additionally, they have some sense of freedom and a working tool that they can use at any time. When asked how they managed their prisoners, especially when working with civilians, an officer stressed the importance of:

> Good interpersonal relationships, and factoring in personal interests. We also identify the work opportunities that provide our boys with some dignity, even though they are incarcerated, so that makes them feel a sense of gratitude towards us and listen when talk to them. (Philip, 32, Corporal).

Again, upon observation, I discovered that some of the officers participated in the work themselves. This was confirmed by prisoners, who stressed that some of the officers helped with the work to get it done on time:

> …especially with jobs that require certain skills, the masters do take off their uniforms and join us to work in order to finish the work early. This keeps the pace of the work faster and helps in accomplishing more. (Alexander, 43, Inmate)

An officer also confirmed this:

> Yes, when we get to the site you can hardly distinguish between me and my boys: that is why I do take care in picking them, as I work with them and we do the work equally. I don't like lazy boys; neither do I like someone who does not have a vision. When I take a look at you and realise you do not have any vision when it comes to working hard and preparing for your life after here, I will not go out with you again. (Philip, 32, Corporal)

Consequently, inmates indicated that they have a lot more respect and loyalty for such officers than for those who did not join them in the work or those who merely supervise. This enables inmates to develop some empathy for them, subsequently enhancing a bi-directional relationship between officers and inmates. As a result, inmates are able to inform officers if there are any dealings among them to which the officer may not be privy, as confirmed in the following extract:

> If a master is good to us, we will be good to him. If a master engages us well when we go out, we will let them in on every secret that they need to know to help them with the performance of their escorting work; everything including those who have plans to escape when they go outside to work. (John, 42, Inmate)

5.6 How inmates perceive the jobs sourced by officers

5.6.1 yaq!wima as a natural selection in prison: give before being counted

The Kwakiutl potlatch was not merely a juncture for banqueting, merriment, and bestowing or reciprocating gifts, although it did incorporate these essential elements; neither was it a system engaged in to ease pressures resulting from paranormal abnormalities, nor transforming such (Benedict, 1932). Rather, it formed the core of the Kwakiutl's pecking order. For instance, an individual may be entitled by birth to a noble name—a name that identified his place in the native society along with the associated privileges. Even so, he would be required to give a potlatch, at which he would publicly testify to his hereditary privileges to claim this name (Drucker & Heizer, 1967). Similarly in the prison, external labour is one of the major activities which forms a pillar of the prison culture and is accepted by both inmates and officers. Yet, to

participate, officers and inmates perform potlatches by giving *yaq!wima* (the term used for gifts by the Kwakiutl) to one another. Officers who qualify to escort inmates outside should have jobs available in order to influence inmates' performance; concurrently, inmates must reciprocate this generosity by working hard. Hence, the law of natural selection plays out here, where each party needs to give something in exchange in order to survive and adapt to external labour activities. To be productive and effective, an officer has to take inmates out consistently, whereas inmates need to work extra hard to be productive. This assertion is echoed in the following statement:

> If a master is good to us by consistently taking us out to work, we will be good to him, and for such masters, when they tell us to even lift a whole building, we will. We will also make his work easier by letting him in on everything, including those who have plans of escaping. (John, 42, Inmate)

John's narrative resonates with how officers have to give *yaq!wima* in the form of jobs to inmates to elicit their trust and cooperation to work when they go outside. Notably, as the potlatch was a coercive system where the leaders of Kwakiutl, based on their statuses, were obligated to give away their wealth to gain standing, so also has it become customary for officers to engage in giving to inmates to earn their respect and cooperation, as work forms an essential part of their domination in the prisons. The emphasis here is on the element that finding jobs for inmates is a requirement, like the potlatch, which reflects a system in which people involuntarily gave away *yaq!wima* to adapt to their environment.

As time went by, not only the chiefs but also the House (the term used to describe a group of tribes in Kwakiutl) were also required to participate in potlatches because it was coercively parochial of demur to the extent that even low-born men valued their involvement, as it safeguarded their affiliation with their group and promoted them to share a reflected gleam of the laurels of their chief. This also plays out in prisons, where inmates who had not worked before their imprisonment or thought their life had hit a dead-end due to incarceration are afforded the opportunity to work by the prison service. Again, the sense of service provided by the officers through the sourcing and securing of jobs for inmates provides them with a feeling of gratitude for the opportunity to share in the '*goodies*' of imprisonment. Hence, inmates are prompted to engage in potlatches as a way of not only paying back but also adjusting and adapting to their new environment. Inmates are required to engage in potlatching back to the officers, just as the children of Kwakiutl were involuntarily engaged in potlatches even before

they reached the age of conscious decision-making—as a total social singularity which barred substitutions necessary to a real choice, young men were persuaded to get involved through mockery, invectives and *nadowigets* (witchcraft), and the threat that they would otherwise live a despondent life amongst their people (Adams, 1973; Cole & Chaikin, 1990). Like the young men in Kwakiutl, inmates are thrust into this world of *yaq!wima* giving and receiving without any choice, as giving back to the officers is the only way to survive external labour substitution, as those who are not willing to participate are shunned by other gang members or touted as a pariah, not to be touched by other officers:

> We cannot complain because our masters are helping us to cope with imprisonment—that is why they go out of their way to look for jobs for us when there aren't any in the yard, so we have to do everything officers tell us to do, including working extremely hard, because disobedience and laziness can cause other gang members to push us out at all cost, and whilst out, we will also be considered as a pariah by others. (Jethro, 33, Inmate)

The account by Jethro mirrors the point that inmates who find themselves in acculture situations during external labour activities and ceased to participate in giving back during work are impervious to the slights and jibes that are the only weapon of fellow gang members and the officers shunning their company, touting them as lazy, and eventually rendering them as pariahs, not to be touched by other officers.

5.6.2 yaq!wima as back-scratching: the geometric progression of endless pyramids of obligation by inmates (residual feeling of gratitude)

Essentially, potlatching served as a redistribution scheme, which ran in parallel with a banking or loan system requiring the guests as recipients to reciprocate the *yaq!wima* received with interest at some future time (Ebert, 2013). Thus, every *yaq!wima* item in terms of blankets or other wealth bestowed on the guests placed them under an obligation to produce twice as many items for their donors when it was their turn to host (Trosper, 2003). Consequently, the non-stop double-return requirement culminated in endless pyramiding or geometric progress of obligations (Boas, 1920) where *yaq!wima* were made in hundreds or even thousands, with participants incurring considerable debts to be paid back twofold to all hosts from whom they had received gifts. Similarly, payment and repayment form an innate part of external labour activities, as officers are engaged in this for the purpose of amassing the amount of work needed

for distribution and redistribution among the inmates, irrespective of its nature and value to their lives in prison. Although the jobs are deemed prestigious investments, their direct nature in the eyes of the inmates is a favour unreservedly granted, for which the officers expect repayment at some future time when they go out to work:

> As jailmen, we must work hard to prove ourselves, because anytime we go out is an opportunity to justify our inclusion to our master and gangmates, as we have to work at a different pace to be recognised. (Isaiah, 32, Inmate)
>
> Not everyone gets the opportunity to go out to work, so if you get someone who wants to help you, just reciprocate their kindness by doing whatever they tell you to do. Some people want this opportunity, but they are not allowed to because of their case. As staying here is like languishing in a pit, we have to take this opportunity offered to us by our masters and respect them accordingly. (Abraham, 28, Inmate)

Similarly, this point was stressed by officers:

> We don't have a lot of time, and yet there is a lot to be done within the hours we are out, so inmates have to work extra hard to get things done. If an inmate does not pull their weight when we go out, I don't go out with them in the future. (Philip, 32, Corporal)
>
> For our boys, they are being supervised, and the point is that if someone does not pull their weight at work, they would be dropped the next day, as many people in the queue are always willing to go in their stead. I do not tolerate prisoners doing whatever they want because there are people in the queue, so if you don't work hard when we come back to the yard, I'll drop you. (Frank, 48, ACOP)

The accounts by the inmates and officers reiterate the idea of continuous repayment by inmates for the tasks given to them by the officers. The feeling of gratitude that accompanies the performance of the work stills lingers even after the job is done, eventually influencing inmates' performance to the point where they feel compelled under the obligation and impression to gratify officers. Consequently, the *yaq!wima* continues to accumulate, as the officers continue to enable inmates to work constantly, while inmates are never able to reciprocate these favours. Additionally, the rule of the potlatch was that a guest who previously gave a considerable gift to the current host in a major potlatch needed to be given a larger gift corresponding in size based on the total number of gifts available for distribution by the current host (Drucker, 1940). Granted, the giving of *yaq!wima* escalated to the point where households would give each other everything they possessed whilst raising the stakes of the *yaq!wima* until

the gifts were so outlandish that the bids uncovered the irrational nature of ownership (McGee, 2003).

In the case of external labour, this played out in the existence of a well-defined reciprocal relationship between the motives of benevolence and power preservation of the officers, who personally search for jobs and set agendas for their gangs. This *yaq!wima* by the officers towards inmates incites them to give their best towards the performance of the job, as the gestures, though seen as altruistic in the eyes of the officers, place an unnecessary burden on the inmates to return the favour in the future:

> Sometimes when we get to the location, we start to work right away with no breaks or breakfast, because the officers at times feel that eating would waste time, as the most important thing to them is the job, their money and future job recommendations. They do get a lot from the work, which is why they themselves go in search of the job. (Gabriel, 28, Inmate)

Consequently, inmates are pushed to work beyond what is required of them due to the power imbalance between them and officers, signalling symbolic violence:

> Due to the pace of the work, some inmates sustain some cuts and bruises, but they hide their injuries unless it is very severe, and still keep on working, because they would not want to be confined to the yard or be touted as lazy by the other gang members. (Isaiah, 32, Inmate)
>
> You always have to be prepared when you go out because you can be asked to do anything, and even sometimes engaged in more than one job at a time. For instance, there are times we finish one job—say, packing blocks at a site—but on our way back to the prison, our master can receive a call from another employer or be approached by one, so we rerouted to perform that job instead. (Judas, 24, Inmate)

The above excerpts from Gabriel, Judas and Isaiah reflect that the reciprocal exchanges between officers and inmates provide a method of social insurance (Suttles, 1960) as the knowledge that officers would search for and share jobs with inmates offers a solution to the prisoners' predicament of idling in the yard even after qualifying to work outside. Hence, the system of giving and reciprocating *yaq!wima* changes the payment pattern to make cooperation the appropriate scheme for the participants, which provides a buffer for maintaining the authority of officers over inmates. Like the potlatch, although officers inherit their titles and authority over inmates, they must make sufficient input in order to continue to assert their

influence. Therefore, by providing jobs for inmates, officers not only secure their cooperation, which incites them to work, assiduously but also provoke sustained control and influence over inmates. To this extent, the repayment for the *yaq!wima* bestowed never ceases, as inmates continually work to pay it off.

5.6.3 yaq!wima as comeuppance for inmates

During potlatches, products were presented to the people gathered in their role as eyewitnesses to the claims granted with the presumption that payment would be made for services rendered during the ceremony. Therefore, houses were constructed, posts engraved and elevated, and ceremonial offices performed by the guests, as it was perceived as degrading for the chief to build his own house or delegate the same to his relatives (Barnett, 1938). As a result, only the guests were permitted to engage in these jobs and were paid for their services. This is accounted for in the practice of prisoners' external labour activities, as played out in the manner in which the inmates perceive the tasks involved as fuelled by the need of the officers to engage inmates and also benefit in the long run from their generosity, engaging inmates in odd jobs which have nothing but economic value:

> We work in a dirty work environment and do some muddy things I have never done before, and in the process, get dirty and malodorous to the point that makes me feel ashamed of myself. (Mark, 26, Inmate)

The upshot of the statement by Mark is that inmates feel that the practice of the work is to engage them in meaningless activities purely for economic gains, as inmates reported that it served as a form of punishment for the crimes they had committed and that they were being made to do these jobs to pay for their crimes, as they had been handed sentences with hard labour. Thus, the work was retribution for the crimes, as captured by Stephen, Christian and Caleb:

> I know the nature of the work the inmates engage in and believe me, sometimes I don't feel comfortable escorting them. Unfortunately, there is nothing I can do, because when they were sentenced, they were told they would serve with hard labour, but the nature of the hard labour is undefined, so we engage them in these tasks as the equivalent of the hard labour proposed by the court. (Stephen, 38, Corporal)
>
> This is not a job I will perform in my normal mental state. It is inhumane for anyone to perform these tasks or work like this in their life, but when they sentenced us, we were

> told that we would engage in hard labour to serve the government, so that is what we do when we go out. (Christian, 36, Inmate)
>
> No human being on earth deserves to work like this or better still do these jobs. The work we do manually outside are the tasks that are performed by machines in other places, but we have no option because the masters keep echoing the fact that we were sentenced with hard labour in our brains all the time, and that makes us think that we have no choice but engage in the work. (Caleb, 29, Inmate)

These storied accounts indicate how the inmates and officers perceive the jobs they do outside as punishment for the crimes committed and nothing else. Caleb, who corroborated the account of Christian, indicated that the officers made sure that they reminded the inmates daily of the opportunities availed to them by virtue of the work they were doing, and that as they had been sentenced to hard labour, they had no grounds to complain about the arduous nature of the work. Thus, prisoners, who are considered low-quality labour by most people with little knowledge about external labour, may not consider the impact of the work they do, but rather look at it from the angle of punishment. Despite the rhetoric which stresses the allure of productivity associated with the jobs, the perceptions of inmates draw on how, as a practice, external labour activities seek to embed the principles, social processes, and practices of work to enable the efficient implementation of productive regimes rather than punishment. Accordingly, inmates iterated that their understanding of the tasks they performed during external labour activities was to engage as a means of payment for their crimes. As the elements (officers and inmates) of practices in external labour activities are symbiotic and thus resilient to change, and as material arrangements tend to persevere, different versions of practices can co-exist within the arrangement of practice bundles, which can lead to further investigation and ultimately uncertainty on behalf of the actors involved in the practice (Loscher et al., 2019; Schatzki, 2013). As such, the parties involved in external labour activities held different views about their intentions towards becoming involved in external labour activities. In the eyes of an officer, external labour involves:

> Activities which are part of the strategic plans of the prison and are engaged in by inmates to help them learn some skill, get them exposed to the world of work, enable them to improve in other facets of life, and contribute to a positive character-building in and out of the prison. (Obed, 59, ADP).

On the other hand, an inmate held a different view:

> They are activities that we engage in because we were sentenced with had labour and had no choice but to comply. It enables us to cope with life in prison, and provide some financial incentive to help us survive and live well during our sentence in prison. (Dorcas, 34, Inmate)

Correspondingly, an ex-offender shares a similar view but in a more reflective voice:

> They are activities that we engage in to exploit our labour and further humiliate us for being prisoners, but what can we do about it? We have to serve the government, so that is it. (Emmanuel, 36, Ex-offender)

Although the parties shared different versions of their views on external labour activities, one thing they had in common is that engaging in external labour has some consequences for prisoners. However, to properly execute their tasks, prisoners go through the practice of understanding, where they take into consideration the nature of work assigned to them, the knowledge and experience needed for the work, the training (if any) given in performing the job, and the equipment provided and required for the job. Moreover, to ensure the availability of jobs in the prison service, officers engage in job sourcing from individuals and organisations.

After the job has been sourced and secured, officers and inmates need to follow a series of processes to ensure that they have received the right approval to go outside the prisons. Thus, participants have to familiarise themselves with the do's and don'ts and what work outside entails, so the next section will describe the bureaucratic procedures involved in taking inmates out to work.

5.7 Prison bureaucracy: How inmates are taken in and out of the prison for work

For the most part, the procedure involved in securing inmates from the prisons to engage in external labour activities is not explicitly laid out by the service, but there are distinct activities in which the actors engage that, when unified, can be viewed as the process that participants have to negotiate, which follows a series of bureaucratic steps.

First of all, the prisoners who qualify to go out wake up early, get ready, and wait for their masters. However, the length of prisoners' wait normally depends on the type of gang to which they belong. Inmates who belong to a permanent gang or have a master already receive direct instructions from their masters with regard to when they will leave the prison, as described by an inmate:

> Our master tells us the time we would go out a day before because there are times when we leave the prisons at 6:00 am, but I know some people who leave as late as 9:00 am or even 11:00 am. (Joshua, 32, Inmate)

On the other hand, inmates without a master normally wake up as usual and get ready in the hope that their services will be needed for the day. If they are needed to work, they would be informed by the Chief Order, as narrated by an inmate:

> We wake up and get prepared and wait, and when there is a job available, you will hear 'outside labour', so you quickly come to the yard and join the other members to be despatched and hope that you get assigned to a master that day (Isaiah, 32, Inmate)

Similarly, a female inmate also confirmed:

> Sometimes when they have more jobs and they need extra hands they shout 'Ecomock', and that prompts us to gather in the yard to be escorted outside by an officer. (Gifty, 27, Inmate)

Similarly, an officer confirmed this assertion:

> Most of the boys are not selected prior, but the chief officer gives the approval when there are jobs available (Solomon, 56, Chief Officer)

When the gang is set, the Chief Order checks their names to ensure that they correspond with his data on inmates who are qualified to go out to work. Upon the arrival of the escorting officer, the Chief Order gives him a card listing the names of the members of the gang and their sentences:

> I have a form to fill out, so I fill in the name of the officer, the name of the prisoner, where he was arrested, where they are going to work, as well as the particulars of the person they are going to work for. (Nathanael, 58, Senior Chief Officer)

Upon satisfactory confirmation with the Chief Order and confirmation by the officer himself of the prisoners he has been given, he takes them to the gate. At the gate, the names of the prisoners are called aloud, to which they are supposed to respond with the lengths of their sentences, as described by an inmate:

> When we get to the gate, they mention our names aloud and we respond with our sentences to ensure they are aligned with their records. For instance, when they mention my name, 'Cornelius Apaah', I respond with 3 years 10 months and the officer at the gate will check their records before agreeing to allow me to go out. (Cornelius, 21, Inmate)

Additionally, an officer emphasized that:

> The gate, which is the eyes of the prison, can refuse to let a prisoner out if they detect that they are not qualified, because if a prisoner responds with the wrong sentence, it signals a variation between what the prisoner is saying and what is on the card, so the card would be given back to the officer to be sent back to the Chief Order to make the needed amendments or needed clarifications. (Philip, 32, Corporal)

When the officer at the gate is satisfied with the inmates and has confirmed the correspondence between names and sentences, the inmates are thoroughly searched to ensure that they are not carrying any contraband:

> Going out is not the problem because when we get to the gate most time, we are barely searched: the real search occurs when we get back from work. (Daniel, 32, Inmate)

After the search, the officer at the gate would shout 'four out', open the gate and the master would lead the way out. When they leave the prison, the location of the job would determine the means of transport used:

> The master tells us the location of the job and the mission of the day when we get out. If the location is within walking distance, we take the lead, and the master follows behind us but if it is far enough, we either wait for a vehicle or proceed to the station to board a public transport. (Gabriel, 28, Inmate)

On their way to the site, inmates buy food if they have money or borrow money from the officer, as they usually leave before breakfast or prefer not to eat the food from the prison, as described by the inmates and officers alike:

> Sometimes we get out of the prisons too early, even before breakfast is served, so we buy food outside, but at times we may not have any money on us, so we borrow money from the master, who then deducts it from any money we would be paid at the end of the day's work, or we can decide to work on an empty stomach until lunchtime. (Jones, 40, Ex-offender)

Upon reaching the location of the work, the officers can allow the inmates to eat or instruct them to get on with the work and eat later, as described by an inmate:

> At times when we get to the site, we can rest, have some thirty minutes to eat our food and then crack on with the job, but for some officers the work is more important to them, so they just instruct us to start work immediately and eat our breakfast during lunch time. (Isaac, 37, Inmate)

When the day's work is over, the officer escorts the prisoners back to the prison using the same or agreed means of transport. When they get to the gate, the officer shows the card to the gate to confirm that there is correspondence between the information at the gate and the card in his possession:

> When the officer gets to the gate, he says' four correct', meaning that he took four prisoners out and has been able to bring all of them back. As an officer, the most important thing is getting prisoners back when you take them out, so you have to do everything in your power to ensure that you present the correct number of inmates you took out to work. (Peter, 43, Sergeant)

At the gate, prisoners are searched to ensure that they are not in possession of any contraband goods. Also, inmates who have money with their masters drop it off at the reception for safekeeping, as prisoners are not supposed to be in possession of money beyond a set threshold:

> At the reception, prisoners are searched to ensure they are clean of any items that should not be allowed to enter the prisons. If prisoners are in possession of money, they have to lodge it at the reception, as every inmate has an account where their money is kept for safe keeping where they are free to withdraw at any moment provided it is within the GH40 cedis limit accepted by the service. (Theophilus, 48, ACOP)

Furthermore, there is no fixed time for inmates to end the day's work, as this is dependent on the type of gang they belong to, the nature of the job and the location. Inmates who belong to permanent gangs have a fixed time limit and normally finish work as early as 10:00 am or as late as 2:00 pm, but those without a permanent gang might work until 5:00 pm or even 5:30 pm when they are supposed to be in their cells for the final lockdown:

> Permanent gang members have a fixed time to stop working, but for those of us without a gang, we can close at any time provided we get to the prison on time, which sometimes we are unable to. (Christian, 32, Inmate)

These procedures, though seemingly simple, have to be followed by all members of the prison who want to engage in external labour activities. However, at times, prisoners do not return to the prisons until 6:00 pm, which is after the final 5:30 pm lockdown, and they are considered to be at fault, and not the officer who took them out. The officer is only responsible for returning the same number of prisoners that they took out, but the inmates have to face the consequences of returning late, as described below:

> When we arrive at the yard late from working outside, we the inmates are the ones that face the consequences of the officer's decision for not bringing us to the yard on time. When we get to the prisons, we are hurried to do everything. Sometimes we cannot have our supper and end up going to bed hungry because there is no time to eat, as the officers would command us to get inside as quickly as we should. (Nicholas, 32, Inmate)

This view was also shared by an ex-convict:

> Getting to the prisons late was a hassle because when that happened, we did not get time to even shower after working in the sun and doing these tasks throughout the day. Due to this, when we got to the cells without showering, our fellow inmates complained about the foul smell from the sweat, which did not help us at all. (King, 30, Ex-offender)

5.8 Location of work outside the prison

During external labour activities, inmates work on various sites, as prescribed by the job and the escorting officer. Thus, the sites at which actors conduct their doings and sayings also characterise the situations in which they are located. These sites provide participants with a field of action intelligibility which enables them to perform certain actions in the given situation (Schatzki, 2002). Thus, the site where activities are performed and where entities engage in their doings provides them with specific constellations that enable them to gain meaning from the activities (Loscher et al., 2019). Thus, the location of the job is paramount to its performance and the inmates' involvement. This is because the location determines the logistics and benefits that inmates presume that they will derive from the job. According to the

prisons service, to ensure that they get back in time, inmates are not allowed to go beyond a certain distance from their prisons, as explained by a chief officer:

> When someone brings their job here, we ask them about the distance inmates have to cover to get to the location, because prisoners are not permitted to go beyond 6 miles or 10 kilometres from their prisons. (Nathanael, 58, Senior Chief Officer)

However, stories from the inmates, ex-convicts and officers indicated that the inmates do go further than this: sometimes 20, 30, or even over 40 kilometres beyond the legal requirement. I gathered from their stories that parties involved in external labour activities have interpreted this clause to mean that they can go to places beyond the permitted distance so long as they can get back to the prison before the final lockdown. Still, it was obvious that inmates were taken to locations with prospects of job availability, which can mostly be found on the outskirts of the city. Moreover, the state of a country is reflected in its prisons: therefore, since it is difficult for lawful citizens to find jobs, it is even harder for inmates, as the prison service encounters many difficulties in finding work for them. This is because the prisoners get the surplus of the tasks that the lawful citizens may not want to do, and there is often not enough work for all the prisoners, so they have to struggle and prove themselves like the rest of the citizens.

Yet, upon enquiry, the inmates recounted that they were rather more excited to work in locations that are very far from their prisons and stated that the farther the better, because:

> Working long distance actually helps us in so many ways, but most importantly, it introduces us to various sections of the city we have not seen in a very long time. (John, 42, Inmate)

Again, the means of transport to the location normally depends on the distance, the nature of the job, and the arrangement between the employer and the prison service or the escorting officer:

> When we have a job that is within walking distance, the inmates walk in front whilst we follow behind to the site. But, if the job is far from the prison, we go by car. If the job is related to the prison, the service will provide us with a government vehicle, which will wait for us in front of the prison. Sometimes some employers bring their own vehicles to pick us up from the station and give us money for transportation when we finish work, but most of the time, we use public transport to the locations, so we walk the inmates to the stations and take public transport. (Peter, 43, Sergeant)

When asked about their views on taking public transport with other passengers, an inmate said:

> I do feel ashamed taking public transport to work, because for most of the passengers, the moment they see us, they judge us, as the general conception is that once you are in prison you are a thief. Some do not respond when we greet them, and others go to the extent of insulting us. These reactions from people really bother me, to the extent that I mostly detest going to places where I will meet people because their scornful gazes can penetrate through my soul, but I have no choice in the matter. (Luke, 23, Inmate)

Similarly, another inmate recounted:

> I am a bit scared of getting on public transport in this jumper because of an experience I once had with a fellow passenger. I was supposed to sit next to this woman, but the moment she realised that I was to sit beside her, she started calling me names, but I didn't budge, so I made the bold move of greeting her and she told me to shut up and that I was a criminal, and she advised me to make sure I don't touch her or even breathe whilst we were on board. (Mark, 26, Inmate)

However, not all inmates have had negative experiences on public transport: some described positive experiences.

> When we get on buses in our uniforms, some people have sympathy for us and empathise with our situation. For those who care to know, they ask us the reasons we were brought to the prisons, and when we tell them, they advise us. Others also just go ahead and start giving us unsolicited advice without listening to us or with no knowledge of what went wrong. (Moses, 35, Inmate)

Still, irrespective of their experience, inmates iterated that they preferred walking to the location of the job than taking any form of transportation because it benefits them financially:

> We prefer walking to taking a vehicle to work because walking affords us the opportunity to meet other people who are not prisoners for a change. During such encounters, we sometimes interact with them with the permission of our master, and they encourage us as well. We get a lot of gifts when we walk because when people see us walking with our tools for work, they empathise with us and are moved to offer us lots of gifts. (Elijah, 32, Inmate)

However, the female prisoners were less enthused about walking to their location:

> I feel embarrassed when I walk in public in prison attire with people staring at me because it depresses me, and I have to cover my face most of the time because of this ordeal, as I know people think that being here dehumanises me. (Candance, 27, Inmate)

In a similar vein, an officer also narrated:

> I know the men like walking, but the women don't because most of the women we have are here without the knowledge of their families, friends, or people they know so there is always the fear of meeting a familiar face outside when outside for which they may not like, so some people qualify for external labour but refuse to go out under the pretence of being sick, and at times we practically have to drag them out of their cells (Dorcas, 37, Sergeant)

It is prudent for officers to escort inmates to locations where they can work effectively to satisfy the conditions of their sentences, and since most of the jobs inmates can do are located further from their prisons, this suggests that inmates are likely to go far beyond the stipulated limit provided by the service so long as they can return before the final lockdown of 5:30 pm. Although inmates regularly go beyond their requirements, they are still rather excited about this development, because it provides them with a change of scene from the prison, helps them to forget in that moment that they are incarcerated, and gives them the opportunity to explore the city and especially to get to know places they have not seen for years or places where they might not have been. The next section will explore how inmates become engaged with the performance of the jobs they do outside the prisons.

5.9 Power dynamics at the coalface of work: dull compulsion, power in action

Inmates and officers wear uniforms prescribed by the service when engaging in external labour activities. However, the uniform worn by officers serves as the emblem which identifies them as servants of the state, granting them a source of power (Bauman, 2013) to be feared and obeyed by inmates. Hence, officers feel that putting on the uniform somehow cements their legitimacy of power and authority by default, to the extent that inmates are expected to acquiesce to their orders and obey their commands (Akoensi, 2016). Thus, by donning the uniform, officers become 'power in action' (Bauman, 2013, p. 17) who are supposed to be revered, feared, and expect their commands and directions to be obeyed and followed by inmates. Yet, from the perspective of the inmates, this raises the question of obeying and kowtowing to the commands of officers based on what (Carrabine, 2004, p. 180) refers to as 'dull compulsion' where inmates resignedly consent to or rationally put up with prison rules and commands even when the dispersal of established power is obviously illegitimate. Thus, dull compulsion provides the power relations which facilitate situations where inmates accept

a defeatist disposition that the structural circumstances with which they are confronted are unchangeable, although primarily illegitimate (Sparks & Bottoms, 2007). Consequently, this distinguishes it from cooperation, which is deliberate and based on, for example, perceived legitimacy, although it is difficult to empirically establish (Akoensi, 2016). Even so, apart from its role of differentiating between officers and inmates, the uniform also serves as a way through which government agents (officers) or people in position legitimise themselves in their own eyes (Tankebe, 2013) and those of their subjects. Based on this perception, an inmate argued:

> The only difference between us and the officers is the uniforms they wear: else they are, like us, sentenced to spend the rest of their working life in prison. (Ebenezer, 35, Inmate)

Hence, the uniform grants officers power, whose legitimacy, though arguable, is employed in getting the work done through inmates during external labour activities. Although inmates also wear uniforms during work, they do not derive any source of power from them, which begets unequal power dynamics between inmates and officers. These unequal power dynamics between the parties tend to benefit them in fulfilling their goals of engaging in external labour activities. The power dynamic ranges from top-down to bottom-up and bi-directional approaches (Nardi, 2009) which are utilised to instantiate the goals for external labour.

Top-down power is established by senior officers and those at the helm of affairs at the Prisons Headquarters, which define the power and the relationship between the officer and the prisoners and what they have to do when they go out. Here, the officer is regarded as an authority figure who must give instructions to inmates to be followed without questions, thus doing the bidding of the prison service in accordance with the arrangements regarding external labour. In this regard, an officer had this to say:

> I am their master, in charge of everything, because they are my responsibility. Hence, I take all the decisions, whilst they follow, but anyone that disobeys me will be dropped from my selection and consequently affect their future prospects of ever going out again. (Philip, 32, Corporal)

On the contrary, the bottom-up power comes from the master and the gang leaders and the relationships they cultivate among themselves. Here, the way in which a master relates with a

gang leader influences their relationship with the gang and how the work is carried out. An inmate described this situation as follows:

> I have worked with some masters who have never spoken to me before, because they communicate with us through the gang leader, and we intend to send our feedback through the gang leader as well. They try to maintain these artificial barriers between us and them, hoping that it would somehow make us respect them. (Isaiah, 32, Inmate)

Similarly, an ex-offender indicated:

> I was a gang leader and had a strong bond with my master during my time in prison. Occasionally my master could send me on errands when we went out to work because he trusted that I would come back, no matter where he sent me, but he did not try the same thing with the other members of the gang. (Joel, 45, Ex-convict)

As a result of the unequal power dynamic between the two parties, interactions between them can affect the result of involvement in external labour in a bi-directional way, such that both parties can derive mutual benefits from the work. Thus, power could flow from either party or both parties, depending on which one has the bargaining power. For instance, research by Yin and Kofie, (2021) discovered that some inmates tell officers what to do when they go out to work and vice versa. This was affirmed by an inmate:

> When we go out and need anything, we tell the officers to get it for us, especially when we encounter an officer that we are on good terms with: we can talk to him to get us some things like food, provisions, and the likes. (Aaron, 25, Inmate)

Occasionally, officers will do the bidding of inmates to the extent that some officers conceal contraband on themselves for inmates when they go out with them because they know they can pass security. This was affirmed by a regional prison public relations officer:

> Prison staff engage in mobile phone smuggling and trade with inmates. These individuals mostly conceal the contraband in accoutrements like boots, caps and under their belts, as they attempt to outwit security at the gate. Gate security officers at the Ankaful Maximum Security Prison in the past two years have apprehended five prison staff who attempted to smuggle contraband, including mobile phones, into the facility. The trial and imprisonment of a prison officer in April 2018 to 13 years for hauling contrabands into prison is a testimony. (Machator, 2018, Regional PRO)

Similarly, an ex-offender stated that:

> Every so often when we go out and someone has some urges and wants to indulge in activities that are not permissible by the service, the inmate can have a talk with the

> officer, and depending on their relationship, he will allow them to do it. For instance, some officers did escort some of my gang members to meet their girlfriends in motels, and at times some also took inmates on unofficial conjugal visits to brothels. (Ishmael, 35, Ex-offender)

Consequently, this bi-directional relationship affects the traditional prisoner–officer relationship dynamics, reinforcing over-familiarisation and creating a quasi-friendship relation, which could be either positive or negative. The reciprocal interests between prisoners and officers can be exploited by one party to assert their (latent or) real power to 'get their way.' Prisoners are sent out to work outside with no source of power to influence decisions that concern them as a result of the absence of any contractual agreement between them and the employers but are compelled to rely on bi-directional relationships with officers, mostly fuelled by dull compulsion. This depicts a binary representation of prisoners as vulnerable victims or manipulative abusers (Ruhs & Anderson, 2010). Thus, as the prisoners have no direct employment contract with the people they work for, this implies that the employment relationship is very much governed by reciprocity and trust, which may have positive consequences, such as employment opportunities or exchanges, or negative consequences, such as control of labour (Thiel, 2012).

As one party (officers) creates an opportunity from which the other (inmates) benefits, it produces an obligation where the recipients (inmates) become indebted to the donors (officers) and will continue until he repays them. As a result, the prisoners see themselves as highly indebted to the officers because they feel that they go the extra mile to assist them to cope with their imprisonment through their gesture of looking for a job for them and consequently selecting them to stay on as part of their gang. Also, as there is an imbalance of power between prisoners and prison officers, reciprocity in their relationships is heightened by the art of giving—that is, officers sourcing for jobs for inmates—which creates symbolic violence on the part of the inmates to reciprocate the gesture made by the officers.

5.10 Reciprocating yaq!wima through Symbolic violence

The gifts given under potlatches created a system of exchange that permitted and nurtured social relationships but intensified the predilection to be manifested as an agonistic relationship (behaviour) that endorsed competitive and vicious types of behaviour (Kowalski, 2011). Thus Mauss, (2002, p. 7) asserted that the potlatch was 'the system of total services' where everything was efficiently wedged in the exchanges. It is obvious that a system of behaviour

grounded on the three phases of giving, receiving, and reciprocating, and where the latter is deferred whilst the extent of its generosity is essentially larger than the original gift, is a positive response scheme redolent of symmetrical schizmogenesis, which brings with it a panorama of cumulative contests that can be decelerated by the acknowledgement of harmonising themes such as supremacy, reliance, approbation, and the likes (Bateson, 1972; Kowalski, 2011). Due to the patronising nature of the generosity offered by the officers, inmates can be cast into a role which runs in parallel with that of infants (Carr et al., 1998). Thus, it is,

> …"the way of giving, the manner, the forms" as captured by Bourdieu, that separate a gift from a straight exchange, moral obligation from economic obligation. To 'observe the formalities' is to make the way of behaving and the external forms of the action a practical denial of the content of the action and the potential violence it can conceal. (1990, p. 126)

Therefore, the extent of the power disparity between the officers and inmates results in the creation of the possibility of 'symbolic violence,' causing the inmates at the receiving end to fulfil obligations far outweighing what the officers have given them. When power is mostly wielded from one individual (officers) to the other (inmates) in its elementary form, it occurs explicitly, though sometimes disguised under the cloak of enthralled relations, the legitimate means which prescribe the relationship among the participants of external labour, and it must be discombobulated to be recognised socially (Haggarty, 2010). The ideological lure of the officers sourcing jobs for inmates is pernicious, as it serves as a spur to performance enhancement (Kaplan, 2019) where the work serves to induce inmates to maximize their work performance. In this regard, the next section will explore the expectations and understanding of inmates concerning these gestures granted to them by the officers, as organised around the themes of back-scratching, competence, and natural selection.

5.11 Supervision by officers

Incarcerated inmates share some aspects of their external labour experiences, such as the work environment, equally, but the interactions that individual inmates have with officers, as well as their day-to-day experiences in the workplace, vary, which influences how inmates are supervised during external labour. For instance, inmates have different interactions with officers and the people they work with, which influence their work in the field. This is because the amount of responsibility offered to prisoners during external labour activities mostly

depends on the type of work, the type of prisoner, the type of prison, and the officer's management style:

> Some of the officers only interact with gang leaders, so any information we get from them is relayed through the gang leader to us. Such officers rarely interact with us at all. However, some of the officers are compassionate and good to all of us. They communicate with us, treat us like human beings, and assist us in so many ways, even in personal matters. (John, 42, Inmate)

Whereas some officers are seen as strict, others are viewed as having a laissez-faire attitude to supervision, but this normally depends on the relationship the officer has with the inmates, as iterated by Felix and Sophia:

> Sometimes the officer allows us some room to work freely; such officers even take decisions by consulting us when we go out to work. For such officers, we help them: we abide by whatever they tell us and understand that they are doing their jobs. (Felix, 23, Inmate)

> Usually, when I am working, my escorting officer is not strict with me: in fact, she leaves me to do the work anyhow I interpret it because she trusts me and knows I will do a good job. She barely supervises and leaves me to work and comes back when the job is done to sometimes inspect for me. I'm left to do things on my own, and I think it all comes down to the way I relate to the officers. (Sophia, 34, Inmate)

Similarly, an ex-convict confirmed that sometimes the masters were ultimately in charge, but his relationship with his master yielded trust to the point that he allowed him to work without any supervision:

> After working with my master for some time, I was able to earn his trust, and so he allowed me to go places when we went out to work. I remember there were times he would send me on errands because he knew I would definitely come back. There were other times too that he left me in charge so that he could take some rest or run some errands before the day ends. (Paul, 28, Ex-Convict)

During the supervision of external labour, some officers act as petty tyrants, lording their influence over inmates to propel them to work according to their specifications and targets by using any device in their arsenal. Thus, supervision during external labour activities is very strict because officers have a target to reach and a job to do, and they have to just do it. When

they get to the job site, all effort is geared towards the performance of the work, as described by two inmates in the following extracts.

> We start work at 8:00 am and work non-stop till 3:00 pm. Our masters give us pressure or strict supervision, so we don't get any moment of rest. The only time we get to rest is when we have to eat for thirty minutes. When we work with non-prisoners, they slow their pace, leaving all the work for us to do. Sometimes the person we are working for may empathise with us to request a few moments of rest for us, but the masters can shout at us to stop taking the rest and continue with the job. (Mark, 26, Inmate)

> We work like horses, and if you don't get a good master, he will shout at you all the time to finish. When we go to the farm, in the morning at 6:00 am and close at 12:00 pm, those who have qualified would go for external labour and those who are not qualified would stay in prison. When it is 3:00 pm, we would go back to the farm again, this time with a different officer, to continue, because the one who went with us in the morning would have finished his shift by then. When we come back, we don't get the time to properly shower because the time would be late, say 6:00 pm. (Joshua, 32, Inmate)

Based on the nature of the work environment, it is apparent that at times officers develop close relationships with inmates in order to garner their cooperation to work. Such close relationships, known in the prison discourse as *over-familiarisation* (Akoensi, 2016), are frowned upon by the service because they often disintegrate into wrangling and exchanges between inmates and officers, consequently inhibiting the effort to build and sustain positive officer–prisoner relationships in the work environment and ultimately in the prisons. To counteract this, some officers resort to valuing the order and security dimensions of their work more (Crawley, 2016) by engaging in strict supervision of inmates or preventing them from interacting with the non-prisoners with whom they work. Irrespective of the development of over-familiarisation between inmates and officers on the field, there is still an unequal power dynamic between the parties that gives officers an upper hand in the working relationship and results in strict supervision, which ultimately affects the pace of the work, as inmates are able to get much more done than required:

> When we get to work, the master tells us that each person is supposed to carry two rooms (600 blocks) worth of blocks for the day, so we may decide to work individually or in a team, so long as we get the job done. Hence, we start at 8:00 am; when it is 12:30 pm we break for lunch, which could be provided by the employer if they are generous or bought by us, and continue at 1:00 pm, till we close at 4:00 pm. (Elijah, 32, Inmate)

An officer also confirmed this assertion:

> The boys do work extremely hard: that is why most employers prefer them to non-prisoners, as what we can supervise them to do, the non-prisoners would have to do that in a week what my boys can do in a day or two. The employers love working with us, and they prefer us because we work for them to be please, but those outside, some of them may not even have supervisors, so that is the dynamics (Philip, 32, Corporal)

5.12 It's all about the money: Discretionary remuneration system

Aside from the working environment, the pace of work, training and tools used, and terms of engagement, another crucial aspect of external labour activities is the remuneration and the disputes over the amount inmates earn. Inmates who work are not considered to fall under the jurisdiction of labour laws, (whom a worker is supposed to be), and this is reflected in the system of payment used in the prisons. The participants in the study indicated that the prisons do not have a stipulated and explicitly stated system of payment for the work done by inmates. Thus, after paying the government fee of ¢10 Ghana cedis (£0.57) per prisoner, inmates are paid based on the discretion of the escorting officers. Consequently, officers are at liberty to pay inmates any amount using their own subjective criteria, without being imperilled to further scrutiny by anyone. In the words of an inmate:

> If you get a good officer, he/she would have pity on you and sort you out, but some officers can also say they did not make any money for the day or that inmates are simply not entitled to any payment as we were sentenced to hard labour. (Sampson, 40, Inmate)

Thus, inmates who engage in external labour activities are adduced working poor, because at the end of their working day, what they receive from the work is just a pittance that barely enables them to make ends meet. This is because the prison does not have any structured pay system implemented: therefore, officers normally pay prisoners based on their own discretion and their personal convictions, as confirmed by an officer in the following extract:

> When I take payment from the government, I tell the employers that I have taken the government's pay, so when you go, be nice to them. The people do take care of them because if you do not, they will not be willing to go with them subsequently, and also it can affect the type of work you would receive from them. They do take of them, and they become happy when they go. Also, some of the officers do give them something when they go out with them as well. (Nathanael, 58, Senior Chief Officer)

Granted, if an inmate comes across an officer who is generous, they can take into consideration the amount of work done by the prisoner, the distance involved, and the effort exerted, and remunerate the inmate accordingly:

> If you get a good master, he will give you 20 cedis, but if you don't get a good master, then you would be given 10, which is the unofficial fixed price. Also, the amount you are paid depends on your relationship with your master and the length of time you have been with them. At least somewhere, inmates are not paid at all for the work, but they do pay us here—they are really helping us. (Luke, 23, Inmate)

Still, the situation in the men's prison is better compared to the payment that women in prison receive for the work they do. Just as in the real world of work, where the gender pay gap remains problematic, the story in the prisons is no different. Female inmates tend to receive a fraction of what their male counterparts receive per week, as recounted by an inmate:

> For me, I am marked only 20 cedis a week for the work I do in the bakery, and the amount would be given to me on my day of release. (Anna, 35, Inmate)

Similarly, an officer reiterated:

> Most of the inmates here are not paid in physical cash, but they are paid in kind upon their release. For instance, those who work in the bakery are provided with ovens, flour, and the likes whilst those who work at the salon do get dryers and other items. Inmates are not paid because the funds generated from their services are used to run the prisons. (Judith, 34, Corporal)

Upon inquiry, it was deduced that the criteria used for payment of wages included: affinity to inmates (when an officer likes a particular inmate/s), merit (the hard-working nature of the inmates/s), stimulation for imminent performance (when an officer wishes to take an inmate or a gang out to work in the future), the amount received from the job, the position of the inmates (gang leaders or members) and the general disposition of the officers (whether the officer is pleased with the composure, discreetness and performance of the gang or an individual member). This was confirmed by inmates:

> Some of the jobs pay, whilst others don't. For instance, if the job is supposed to be 60 cedis per person, the officer negotiates with the employer, and at the end of the day, he gets paid and gives us 10 cedis each for our hard day's work. So, the officer determines how much we get paid, and these are the good ones because others do not give us anything, and when we enquire, they tell us that it is not in our right to do so. Hence,

> there are days we go out to work and come to the yard empty-handed. (Isaiah, 32, Inmate).

> For the payment, you need to accept whatever the officer will give to you because it is not your job—he has gone to look for his job and is giving you the opportunity to work, so you take what you are given. (Ebenezer, 35, Inmate)

This system of payment highlights the unfairness in wages, as some inmates iterated that they are sometimes paid differently for doing the same job. Another aspect of the remuneration system of external labour is that inmates are paid according to the amount of work done for the pay: in essence, the payment is regulated on an 'earn as you work' system where inmates are compelled to work more to earn more. Also, inmates narrated that they sometimes work on more than one job in a day to ensure that they get their targeted wage, as the faster they are able to finish one job and move to the next, the better their chances of being well-paid for their efforts, as described by the following two inmates:

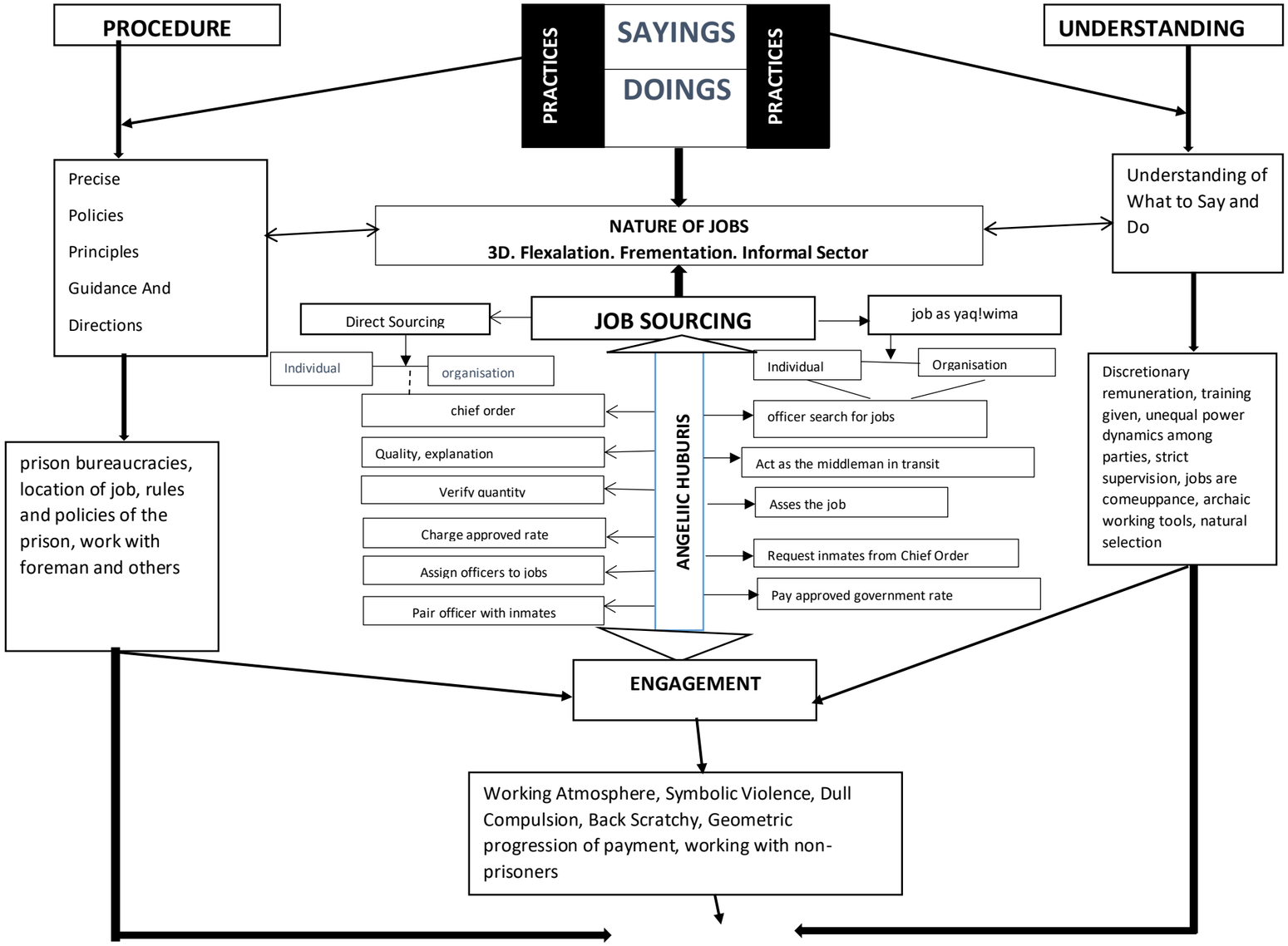
> As for the job, the payment is 10 cedis a day. It depends on the job: for instance, when we go for sweeping, we can get 10 cedis each, but sometimes we get 20 cedis for some mason work. Ultimately, the payment depends on the job, and the officer as well. (Cornelius, 21, Inmate)

> Some officers pay us per job instead of per day, so when we get such officers, we have to work extra hard and quickly so that we can complete as many jobs as we can for the day in order to get paid much on that particular day. (Collins, 35, Inmate)

This system of payment highlights the pace of work and the working environment of external labour, as inmates are propelled to put in more work to earn more money at the end of the working day. Therefore, inmates undertake copious amounts of work within the shortest possible time by upping the pace in the work environment. As a result, they find themselves working better and harder than the non-prisoners with whom they sometimes work at their job sites, which makes them more desirable to employers than non-prisoner colleagues (Lafer, 1999; Ramm, 2011; Thompson, 2012). Consequently, inmates work at a fast pace, sometimes forfeiting breakfast and even breaks, with no formal training, just to meet their targets and to make their masters happy.

Participants' perceptions of the work performed under external labour are depicted in Figure 5.1, below.

Figure 5.1: Understanding Of External Labour Activities



PERFORMANCE

Figure 5.1 depicts how inmates and officers understand external labour activities performed outside the prisons. The types and nature of jobs engaged are influenced by prison discourses and practices. There are two means by which jobs could be sourced for inmates, the first approach is through direct sourcing where employers (individuals or organisations) approach the prisons through the chief order and request for the quantity and quality of inmates. Also, sourcing of jobs can be done by the officers who go in search of jobs for the inmates and present it to them as gifts or yaq!wima. Here, officers serve as middlemen in transit who negotiate with the chief order for the number of prisons they would require to work for them. Thus, these practices involved in securing jobs for inmates influence the procedure employed in escorting them out of the prisons, the understanding of the inmates regarding the intents of the job and the engagement, commitment and effort inmates would be required to exert in the performance of the job**.**

5.13 Chapter summary and conclusion

The findings discussed in this chapter accentuate that the participants (both officers and inmates) deemed work (*yaq!wima*) as part of the obligations of the officers and were quite cognizant that the work did not just appear spontaneously in the prisons. Rather, jobs were made available after extensive and meticulous preparation through scouting job sites as well as making contacts with previous employers. Indeed, external labour is solely about important relationships directed on conditions of ambiguous meanings. Thus, the discrepancy and ambiguity linked with work, when combined with the bonds of authority founded on reward and punishment, are fertile grounds for reciprocity or double binds (Kowalski, 2011)**.** Therefore, the imbalanced officer-inmate relationship is engulfed in the principle that it is feasible for officers to control the process of external labour activities and yet consider inmates as workers. Nevertheless, the main dangers rest in the incapacity of inmates to withdraw from the reciprocal gift-giving system, as dealing with the angelic hubris that accompanies the jobs given by the officers is inevitable since it arises from the superior position of the officers. External labour, like the potlatch, typifies an exchange of unequal values whilst promoting dominance, as power relations eventually influence the conditions of the exchange. So, by focusing on external labour activities, it can be understood that the idiosyncrasies of the prison environment seem to enforce laws that put prisoners in disadvantaged positions with regard to requesting better conditions of service at work. Arguably, the nature of the jobs performed during external labour activities reflects the fragmentation (Rubery, 2015), flexibilization

(Berntsen, 2016) and 3D (Ahmad et al., 2018; Berkelaar et al., 2012) landscape of jobs, in which inmates either choose to engage in the informal sector or decline to pursue the lucrative and thrilling life of crime (Crook, 2007). In this regard, the low-waged jobs and poor working conditions offered by the prison service do not spark inmates' interest to learn anything; rather, their focus is on completing as many jobs as possible to accumulate more pay to enable them to survive their incarceration. Additionally, the widespread flexibilization and fragmentation in the external labour agreements turn officers into middlemen who perform two contradictory roles of supervising and employing inmates for jobs that ultimately seem to favour them (officers) because they are supported by the laws of the prisons.

CHAPTER 6

EXTERNAL LABOUR: REHABILITATION THROUGH TRANSGRESSION TRANSPARENCY AND PERSONAL NARRATIVE CONTROL

In this chapter, I will discuss how external labour activities contribute to the rehabilitation of inmates by delving into inmates' fatalistic attitudes towards rehabilitation, the sectors for which inmates are trained, and whether the work is punitive rather than rehabilitative. Using transgression transparency as an analytical gaze, the chapter explores some of the alternative strategies that are employed by the service to supplement punishment in the quest to transform the behaviour of inmates and whether this leads to inmates' rehabilitation. Additionally, the relationship between officers and inmates and how it facilitates rehabilitation is explored, as well as benefits other than rehabilitation that inmates derive from external labour activities.

6.1 Transgression transparency in prisons

The documentation of a wide variety of social and administrative behavioural control measures, labelled under the broad themes of transgression transparency and personal narrative control, provides a detailed exploration of the strategies employed by the prisons to ensure and enhance the rehabilitation of inmates. In an effort to stimulate character modification, the prison service supplements the punishment of incarceration with external labour activities, which serves to make the occurrence of prisoners' transgressions transparent in order to prompt rehabilitation for minor offences classified as '*misbehaiour*' such as bringing contraband to the prisons, laziness during work, indiscipline, disobeying orders from an escorting officer, and fighting or arguing with fellow inmates at work or in the yard. Such transparency stems from inadvertently delivering punishment, such as when transgressors—inmates who duly qualify for external labour activities—are not selected or are barred from participating due to their behaviour, about which other inmates are made aware, or when inmates are reallocated to work only in the prison and not in outside labour activities. Also, transparency follows from informal communication between an officer and a gang leader or gang member about the conduct of an inmate, or by the administration of the prisons, to make the behaviour of the inmates known to others. This serves as a deterrent to all the inmates, especially those who work outside the prisons, thereby fostering a sense of character modification among the inmates, eventually leading to

rehabilitation. Although making unacceptable behaviour transparent can be viewed as a step towards public shaming (Goffman, 1963), such transparency is conceptualised in this study as an enabling condition for the kind of open discourse that is necessary for external labour activities, as well as the self-narrative development that is needed to achieve the rehabilitation of inmates (Cain, 1991; Frey et al., 2022). Thus, transgression transparency allows inmates to tell their story as many times as they can (Boje, 2001) in an attempt to shape their narratives until the stories are embodied in their discourses, which help to shape their behaviour and that of others witnessing their transformation, instead of shutting down communications between inmates and their fellow inmates, escorting officers, and the prison administration as a whole. Thus, making inmates' transgressions transparent to other inmates and officers triggers a learning process that fosters inmates' rehabilitation.

The first step taken by the prisons to address transgression in an attempt to facilitate the rehabilitation of inmates through external labour activities is to combine the more traditional forms of punishment for inmates who 'misbehave' when they go outside to work with the transparency of denying inmates the benefits they would derive from participating in external labour activities. One Chief Order affirmed that external labour activities offered a lot of benefits to inmates both within and outside the prisons, and further explained that to instil discipline in the inmates who participated in the work and also ensure that the ultimate goal of rehabilitation is achieved, they have a system of suspending or even banning any inmate who is viewed as a transgressor:

> Inmates do get a lot of benefits other than the money they are paid from the job, because when they are in the yard, they are cramped up and don't do anything the whole day, so everybody loves going outside to work, irrespective of the conditions. If an inmate misbehaves, we take them out and replace them with someone else. Everyone who wants to participate or is participating in the work always tries to keep their behaviour in check. (Nathanael, 58, Senior Chief Officer)

Since the inmates are enthusiastic about participating in external labour, making the transgressions of those who are found violating the rules that govern external labour transparently serves as a deterrent to future behaviour violations, as well as dissuading others from engaging in anything untoward, and hence contributes to building positive behaviours espoused by the prisons, which the administration believe would contribute to the rehabilitation of inmates. The next section of this chapter explores some of the benefits of external labour activities that inmates are barred from enjoying if they are found to be violating the rules: a transgression transparency that is supposed to keep their current and future behaviour in check.

6.1.1 Profiting from prison work: The reasons to engage in external labour activities

The motives for engaging in external labour activities are very important because they predict inmates' level of involvement and engagement in the work. Throughout the interviews, the views expressed by inmates indicated that they were not overly concerned with the rehabilitative element purported by external labour activities, because they believed that the work did not really prepare them for legitimate work outside upon their release. Additionally, inmates in this case wanted more than just low-skilled, low-wage jobs, but felt that their engagement in external labour activities did nothing to cultivate these dreams and bring them into light and eventually into something fulfilling upon their release. Therefore, pathways to legitimate employment seem to be inaccessible and illegitimate work seems to be the only option available to inmates. Consequently, irrespective of the prison service's affirmation of rehabilitative intent for external labour activities, inmates stated that their participation in external labour activities had everything but rehabilitative intent, as displayed by the limited enthusiasm shown by the majority of the inmates:

> I think that it is better to go outside than to stay here because staying here means sitting still and doing nothing but going outside is different because I work and it helps me to exercise, as my sentence is five years, so if I don't do anything till then, by the time I get home, I'll become weak. If you sit in the yard, at times, luck will fall on you and the officers would call you to help with some stuff, but at the end of the day, those activities are not as serious and rigorous as what we do outside, and not frequent either. (Abigail, 23, Inmate)

In a similar vein, another inmate also explained:

> …most times I am not paid for my job, but the other benefits I receive, such as giving me everything I like whenever I go to the store, and having a preference for the food I eat here, make up the payment, so this is why I do this job. (Bernice, 32, Inmate)

An officer also expressed a similar view:

> First of all, external labour helps prisoners exercise their bodies with the nature of jobs they do. It helps them reduce boredom and the tendency to sit in one place in prison. This gives them the opportunity to have a healthy body when they live in prison. (Nathanael, 58, Senior Chief Officer)

From the informal discussions with participants, I discovered that the benefits of working outside the prisons during incarceration parallel the benefits of quality legitimate employment from outside. Hence, inmates explained that the main reasons for working outside the prisons are to help them build their self-confidence and occupy their time, and among other things, the structure and responsibility of work help to keep them out of trouble (Sampson & Laub, 2003). Therefore, if inmates transgress and their transgressions are made transparent, suspending or permanently banning them from engaging in jobs outside tends to affect their rehabilitation and dissuade others who may want to participate in the future from following in their footsteps.

6.1.2 Dealing with the abyss of time, social deprivation, and the pains of imprisonment

Many prisoners complain about the abyss of time where they are sunk into an endless loop of unending tedium, where all they do is sit around doing nothing until their sentence is completed. As a result, working during incarceration is necessary not so much for its rehabilitative purposes but rather because it occupies prisoners' time (Alós et al., 2014). Therefore, inmates appreciate engaging in any activity that will fill their time and also afford them some breathing space to forget about being incarcerated:

> The thing that is commonplace in prison is time. Here, we do get an abundance of time that we do not know what to do with it. Time is the most common commodity and its abundance can sometimes put people into a state of depression. Most days we get up in the morning and all we think of is what we can possibly do to make the days run faster than we can think of, but that is impossible. (Alexander, 43, Inmate)

Likewise, another inmate also intimated:

> For me, going out is better, because I love hard work. Even if they take me out to work every day, I like it and I will go, because when you look at the nature of the job I was doing, I used to work throughout the day and even sometimes through the night as well, so I was very much depressed when I wasn't working in my old prison, but now I am happy because I like hard work where I can sweat and exercise. (Lazarus, 35, Inmate)

Thus, it is evident that external labour activities enable inmates to deal with the endless time loop they face and provide some sort of distraction while they serve their time. This is because a typical day in prison involves sitting in the yard and doing nothing, playing games or chatting, which sometimes degenerates into arguments and worse fights. Hence, to curb this idleness and engage inmates in more productive ventures, the prison service utilises them in external labour activities to properly manage their time. These activities help inmates to kill time and

serve as a coping mechanism by distracting them from their sentences by engaging them in more meaningful ventures:

> I think that when I go outside, time runs very fast for me, because when I stay in the yard I think about my situation a lot, but when I go out, I sometimes forget at the moment that I am in prison, and by the time I realise, the day will be over. (Abigail, 23, Inmate)

Likewise, another inmate also stated:

> Time moves faster when I am outside working than when I am in prison. External labour helps me deal with the constant torture of time standing still and the overabundance of time on my hands. Take for instance, if I go out, we leave the prison by 7:00 am, set off to the site, get there around say 8:00 am and start work immediately till 1:00 pm, break for 30 minutes lunch, continue working till 4:30 or 5:00 pm, and get to the prison by 6:00 pm without realising the time or thinking about imprisonment. (David, 20, Inmate)

In a similar vein, another inmate also narrated:

> Going to the farm is better than staying in the yard because here, you just sit in one place, which is not helpful, and the time moves slowly in prison, but when we go out, the time moves quicker, because walking, working, and walking back all take some of the time off the day. (James, 29, Inmate)

Likewise, some participants were of the view that not only does external labour provide inmates with distraction to save them from the dangers of the abyss of time, but it also helps to keep them out of trouble in the yard:

> They say the devil finds work for idle hands, and in the yard, you would be tempted at some point to deal with this issue, especially when we all gather here and have nothing to do but wait till time passes by. Some jailmen are troublesome and always want to find trouble for you, and if you do not exercise patience, you may react to the situation and the result may not be pleasant. (Christian, 36, Inmate)

Similarly, an officer said:

> The program eases the tension in the prisons because if all the inmates were here every day, which is more than the capacity the prison should accommodate at a time, it would cause riots, disturbances and fighting in the prison. After all, they would be frustrated, coupled with overcrowding and inadequate resources. Hence, I feel inmates should go out because when they do go out, they avoid all the temptations that they may encounter in the yard. (Stephen, 38, Corporal)

From this perspective, it appears that external labour activities not only provide incentives for inmates to keep themselves in check but also help them to stay out of trouble and behave appropriately. This is because inmates know that their continued participation in external labour activities, which afford them the opportunity to go outside, is dependent on how they behave in the yard. As good behaviour is viewed as one of the most essential prerequisites of external labour, inmates are conscious of how they behave in the yard as well as towards their fellow inmates and officers to ensure that they do not engage in anything egregious to mar the pristine image they have carved for themselves over time, which can automatically disqualify them from going outside to work. Hence, for the better part, external labour keeps inmates in check and ensures that they behave as expected in order to enable them to continue to go outside:

> I don't talk to a lot of the people over here unless those who are serious about life. You see, a lot of the people here, especially those who don't go outside, are jealous of us because they know the benefits we get from working outside, so sometimes some people intentionally say or do things to make us aggrieved so that we can react and at the end of the day be barred from ever going outside, so for me, I don't talk to jailmen to get into any kind of trouble. (Andrews, 40, Inmate)

Similarly, another inmate narrated:

> Some people think we get some significant amount of money when we go out and don't tell them, so they try to do everything just to ensure that we find ourselves in trouble and are unable to go out again, so on days I don't go out, I keep to myself and don't relate to anybody. (Isaac, 37, Inmate)

Likewise, another inmate explained that he does not interact with other inmates because some just want to use every means to occupy his position:

> I do not interact with jailmen because those who have qualified and have not had the opportunity to go out may want you to bring in contraband goods just so you could be kicked out for them to replace you, or may also be jealous, especially when you give them something today and you do not get them something else tomorrow. To me, the most important thing is going outside the prison, which helps me pass my sentence quickly, and not about the job that I do when I go out. (Benjamin, 30, Inmate)

Again, an inmate who had served nine years of his fifteen-year sentence commented:

> When I get to the yard, I am more careful of the way I act, especially on days I don't go out, because there are some jailmen who would want to get you into trouble at all costs, especially the jealous ones who may want to occupy your position or want someone else to occupy that position, so I am mindful of what I say and do, especially in the yard, in order not to lose my place. (Barnabas, 43, Inmate)

Since there are few opportunities available in the prison at times for external labour activities, inmates have to be careful of their positions in order not to be replaced by others. Hence, external labour activities inadvertently put inmates in a position where they have to keep their character and behaviour in check in the yard in order to continue to be utilised by the service. So, in the quest to constantly kill time with external labour activities, inmates must change their behaviour to become model citizens and constantly maintain such a pristine image to ensure that they are always engaged. Thus, by dealing with the abyss of time, inmates are also able to cope with the pains of imprisonment.

6.1.3 Social deprivation: Coping with the pains of imprisonment

Typically, inmates suffer from social deprivation because they are precluded from engaging in meaningful and essential daily activities due to their incarceration. This situation weakens their health and self-efficacy by hindering their personal growth, adaptability, and general welfare (Buck et al., 2022; Wilcock, 2005). However, engagement in external labour activities provides them with a deviation from this norm of imprisonment. With external labour, inmates are able to engage in meaningful activities outside the prison, contribute to their keep in the prison, give something back to the community, and socialise by interacting with non-prisoners. From the informal discussions with inmates and ex-convicts alike, I realise that a lot of them engage in external labour for myriad reasons, one of them being to counteract social deprivation. During external labour activities, inmates are able to interact on a regular basis with non-prisoners, which helps their character transformation:

> I like working and interacting with non-prisoners because those interactions make me feel like a person again because I am able to interact freely with another person, and that is a refreshing feeling. (Cornelius, 21, Inmate)

Commenting on dealing with social deprivation, another inmate also explained

> Non-prisoners talk to us as human beings because some people express genuine concern by asking us what we are in for, and when they hear our story, they advise us, and that

> provides a refreshing perspective on our case. Again, during our interactions, they tell us about the latest trends and get us updated with what is in vogue, and that makes us glad. These interactions really get me and make me want to change and never want to be here. (Gabriel, 28, Inmate)

Thus, the positive vibes and relationships that inmates develop, in addition to the structure and routines provided by normal work, can promote the prosocial behaviour needed after their release. Therefore, by interacting with non-prisoners, inmates would be able to develop social skills with people other than their fellow inmates, which can help them upon release.

6.1.4 Panhandlers in service: An alternative source of income

Aside from the daily wages that are paid to inmates after the day's work, one of the main side-benefits of external labour activities is begging or panhandling. According to the inmates, panhandling is one of the most essential things they do which helps them to increase their gains from working outside the prison, without which the work does not look attractive to them:

> I have been to prison before, but this time it is different because I have made a substantial amount of money to the extent that I would not need my mother to help me out financially like she does now when I am released. (Matthew, 43, Inmate)

Inmates engage in begging to solicit funds to supplement their income or better still remunerate themselves for the services they render to the community during the period of their incarceration, which for all intents and purposes defeats the whole purpose of imprisonment, which seeks to deprive inmates of enjoying any benefits due to the crimes they have committed. From the narratives of inmates, it can be said that some inmates make substantial amounts of money compared to even some legitimate employment in the country:

> When we take them outside, the civilians pity them and sometimes give them gifts in the form of cash, and there are times that inmates come back to the prisons with 100 cedis cash as gifts from working outside. (Christabel, 39 Sergeant)

As a result, inmates prefer walking to job sites to taking transportation, because they believe that the more people they see, the better their chances of getting substantial amounts of money at the end of the day:

> We mostly prefer walking to taking public transport because when we walk, we would be able to see more people, talk to them, and they can give us some money. (Moses, 35, Inmate)

Likewise, another inmate explained:

> Even on the days, we do not go out to work, the only thing we regret is not being out there begging for money. Some people are so generous that the money they give us is more than what we would get by working for the entire day, so to better our lots, we beg, because there are some days we do not get any money at all from working, but benevolent people provide us with the cash we would need, and that makes us happy. (John, 42, Inmate)

Caveat to panhandling

The caveat to panhandling is that the inmates must notify the officer escorting them and gain his approval first, as officers can confiscate the money if they notice that inmates are begging without their knowledge. However, whether or not inmates inform officers depends on their relationship and also the values of the officer in question:

> They don't pay us for a lot of the jobs we do, so there are some officers when we start begging, they will shut it down completely; others too would pretend as if they do not know what is going on so that it can enable us to gather some funds. Sometimes by the time we come back, we will have 20 cedis each. For officers who allow us to gather as much funds as we possibly could, we like them so much that we give off our best anytime we go out to work, even on days they tell us they will not pay us because we know we can beg to get something back to the prison. (Daniel, 32, Inmate)

Similarly, an ex-offender also said:

> Asking for permission from the officers before begging is key, because if they see us begging without their concern, they can shut it down or pretend as if they have not seen us, and when we finish, they would confiscate the money. (Jones, 40, Ex-Offender)

From this discussion, it appears that inmates are motivated to engage in external labour activities because of the financial benefits they stand to gain to enrich their stay and enable them to cope with the harsh conditions of prisons. Thus, begging is paramount to external labour activities because it influences the extent to which inmates participate and is motivated to work hard and achieve the performance outcomes set by officers.

6.1.5 'You dey go Ghana come': Odyssey of external labour workers

Another area of interest during external labour activities is the chance to get out of prison and experience what is happening in the outside world. Inmates see themselves as living in a utopian world which is far removed from their country of origin, where, for the most part, the rules are made for and by themselves. Hence, inmates see themselves as citizens of a country of their own creation, and therefore tag their fellow inmates who go outside to work as individuals who have made a meaningful and useful journey to and from Ghana: hence the phrase 'you dey go Ghana come':

> When someone goes for external labour, we term it as 'Wo ako Ghana aba,' translated as 'You've gone to Ghana,' and since you have made a journey to Ghana, you need to tell us what is happening outside. Give us details of the new developments and changes that have taken place over the time period. (Isaiah, 32, Inmate)

Likewise, another inmate also reiterated this:

> For instance, this noise they are making with the metals means we have to go inside to be counted and stop everything we're doing, including even eating, but if I go outside, I would not experience this. Someone hasn't seen a car for the past 10 years, so you are even fortunate to be going out and feasting your eyes on the good things life has to offer. (Elijah, 32, Inmate)

Similarly, another inmate shared his opinion, stating that engaging in external labour activities and going to different places to work enables inmates to have a bit of variety in their lives and also in their conversation, as it gives them something new to discuss every day:

> Going outside even changes the conversational topics in the prisons. You get stuff to talk about other than the mundane stuff you are used to discussing. I do even teach some of my fellow inmates about the nature of the job, and talk about what is happening outside, and it helps me serve my sentence as well. (Aaron, 25, Inmate)

Seeing what is happening and gathering stories for their fellow inmates is so important to workers that officers sometimes use this as a source of motivation to encourage them to work hard when they go outside. Accordingly, some officers assure inmates that if they are able to work hard and finish their tasks, they would be allowed to go sightseeing or visit places where they would like to go:

> At times when we finish our work before the time we are supposed to, my master would escort us, or we can talk to the master and he would take us to see some places just to make us happy. (Barnabas, 43, Inmate)

Hence, inmates who make these apparently meaningful journeys are bombarded with questions about their odyssey into the outside world and the new developments that have occurred. As a result, some inmates even believe that other inmates try to get close to them so that they can tell them stories about their journeys after work. Again, inmates do not only engage in sightseeing when they go outside, but some do take the opportunity to see their families and get help with necessities to survive in the prison, as one inmate described:

> It helps us to change environment, get money, secure future job prospects, and have good air; helps to understand that as a man, you need to work hard, so you learn the work ethics. Sometimes you can see your relatives and friends as well. (Ebenezer, 35, Inmate)

Similarly, another inmate recounted his experience:

> I once called my family to meet me at the site where we were going to work since it was a three-day contract: they came around and brought me some items, such as singlets and boxers. Also, there was another time I went to town with my master, saw one of my classmates and called him, we had a chat and went our separate ways. (David, 20, Inmate)

Commenting on the sorts of questions they are asked by their fellow inmates, Jethro (33, Inmate) said:

> Sometimes those who are about to qualify would want to take notes and find tips on the nature of the job outside, so they come for consultation of a sort and we tell them all about the job and the working conditions.

Other inmates get lucky because they happen to see people they know, who can be generous enough to support them financially. An inmate narrated his experience:

> One day we were working right in front of the prison, and I spotted a friend of mine in a car, so I shouted his name and he came around, we had a chat and he dashed me money and told me he would pay me a visit someday. On the next visiting day, he came around with his wife to visit me, and this friend would never have known I was here and assisted me had I not gone outside to work. (John, 42, Inmate)

Some inmates are able to meet benevolent individuals who also support them in other ways:

> One day we went to the place where I hail from and was arrested, to work. I met so many known faces who didn't know about my incarceration and that made me feel very bad, but they empathized with me, advised me, and even gave me some money for my upkeep (Christian, 36, Inmate)

Another inmate also recounted her story of the benevolence of strangers through external labour activities:

> I was working outside one day when two strangers (mother and daughter) approached my lady and asked for her permission to talk to me. She granted them permission and we ended up having a good conversation, for which afterwards they asked if they could visit me, and I said they could. They did visit me in the prison with presents, even though I never knew them before, and we have been friends since then. (Dorcas, 34, Inmate)

An officer also confirmed the assertion of the inmates:

> At times some people ask for permission to talk to our inmates, which we grant them, and the results could be amazingly unimaginable. They speak to the inmates pleasantly and some even pledge to come and bail them out, and they do come to honour their promises. For instance, a woman came to bail out an inmate who was serving three years for GH¢ 1,000 cedis because she thought that amount of money did not warrant the sentence. Other inmates also get job offers from people who promise to employ them after their release. (Christabel, 39, Inmate)

Looking at all these benefits accruing to individuals who go outside to work, it comes as no surprise that many prisoners, including those who do not qualify, want to engage in external labour activities because they know the work makes their lives better. Thus, making their transgressions transparent can harm their participation, as well as their future prospects of engaging in jobs outside the prisons.

6.1.6 'High-muck-a-muck' of prisons

Inmates who work outside are treated as very important people in the prisons, who wield a lot of power and influence, are seen as individuals with authority in the yard, and are respected by their colleagues. These individuals ooze pride and attract great admiration because they are the ones who leave the prisons. Thus, inmates who work outside the prisons are regarded as very

important personalities in the yard, with numerous benefits and respect accruing to them, as they are viewed as the 'chosen ones' by their fellow inmates: hence, they are the 'high-muck-a-muck' of prisons:

> Not everyone gets to go out, so the few of us that do are regarded as VVIP of the prison because there are a lot of things that we can get that those inside cannot get, but just dream of. For us, we work and get paid, we can decide on what to eat, we can eat good meals from outside the prisons, and even if we decided to eat the prison food, we have the resources to improve the taste and make it more edible. (Moses, 35, Inmate)

Similarly, another inmate asserted:

> Those who do not go for external labour activity, some of them are sometimes happy for us because it is an opportunity everyone craves to have, as staying here is very depressing. They treat us as rich people because they think we have money, so at times when they ask us for something and we are unable to get it for them, they start making trouble for us. (Abraham, 28, Inmate)

Again, commenting on how special external labour makes inmates in the prisons, another inmate also commented:

> Some people wish they could go with us, but they can't, because of their case, as being here is like staying in a pit, so going out is better. Some wish they had a stealing case, which would qualify them to go outside with us. When we come back, they receive us with joy, reverence, and open arms, like we went somewhere important, or like how a child would welcome the parents when they come home after some time out, and they give us preferential treatment. (Cornelius, 21, Inmate)

Furthermore, inmates who go out are respected by their colleagues, because they believe they are rich due to the payment they receive from the work they do, and being rich in prison is a big deal. Consequently, inmates are able to afford to live in the prisons and can also influence the conditions of their incarceration as a result of going out. Commenting on this, an inmate who has been to prison three times said:

> For those inmates who do not go out to work, when they see us, they think we have brought the entire Bank of Ghana to the prison. If there is anything financial going on in the cell, you are the first person they would reach out to. Sometimes we gather our funds together to buy carpet or buy a new TV, so they like to ask us first when they want to make any financial commitment because they think we have money. (Matthew, 43, Inmate)

Similarly, another inmate also explained:

> Going out is necessary because there are some people who do not get any visitors here, and for such people, even eating is a problem if we do not get donations and things like that to supplement the food we eat here, as the food is not sufficient enough to satisfy us, so going out is all they have. At least when we are outside, we can buy the food we like to eat and also bring some to the yard. Again, other inmates can also tell us to help them get some things such as bread, pepper, onion etc. from the market, and at times, some food as well. (Christian, 36, Inmate)

Moreover, engaging in external labour activities means that inmates attract the attention of all the people around them. Thus, people need to be good to them in the yard because they can provide some assistance when they go outside to work. To exhibit their high-muck-a-muck status in the prisons, some inmates even become overbearing, and this makes it difficult for them to relate to others. Still, they get the best treatment and need to be consulted in all decisions, or else they would opt out, and that can affect the cells. This implies that they can veto unanimous decisions made by other members in the cells, and at times, they have to be waited on before the decisions can be made. Hence, not even the leaders in the cells (especially if they do not go outside) can influence or implement decisions without their say-so, because according to them, they do favours for them and those favours can cease abruptly if they feel they are treated unfairly in the cells or yard:

> When we get back to the cells, we spread the things we brought from outside, and fellow inmates, including the cell leaders, come around to have a share of the goodies, so everyone in the cell gets to benefit from at least one person engaged in external labour activities, so imagine if you are the only one in the cell—of course, you are automatically a king. (Felix, 23, Inmate)

Another inmate reiterated this:

> Not just the stuff we bring into the prison, but inmates who do not go out can send us on errands such as getting information, purchasing items, or even viewing the development of a particular area or project to report to them. Hence, if an inmate would like to get our help with something from outside, they would need to be good to us, accept our conditions, and kowtow to our demands. (Gabriel, 28, Inmate)

Other inmates also manipulate their colleagues by using their status as external labour workers to buy the affection of fellow inmates through offering gifts and performing favours for their colleagues:

> Some of them become jealous, so to appease them, I buy soup for them. Others too, I buy pepper and onion for them, so that they can also resell them for some profit to eat. (Aaron, 25, Inmate)

Another inmate also recounted his experience with inmates who do not go out to work:

> The challenge is when we come back with ingredients and others do not get some, they become aggrieved and start to misbehave towards you just to get you into trouble so that you do not get the chance to go out again. Hence, you need to ensure that at least everyone in your cell gets some benefits in one way or the other from you going out. (Gabriel, 28, Inmate)

Thus, after getting the opportunity to be selected for outside work, inmates are under pressure to constantly engage in activities that will help them keep their positions in the gangs, as others are in line to replace them and are persistently scheming and plotting their way towards doing so every day. Due to the prestige attached to external labour activities, the benefits inmates stand to gain from the work they do, and the inadequacy of the programme to cater to all the inmates that qualify to engage in it, selected inmates need to ensure that they do everything within and even beyond their limits to ensure that when selected, they do not lose their positions to other inmates who are plotting to occupy their position, as external labour tends to change the position of inmates in the yard. A prisoner's circumstances and position can change due to their involvement in external labour activities. Such inmates are always involved in decision-making and usually dominate or even dictate what goes on in their individual cells, and this power sometimes transcends to the yard. Also, they are given preferential treatment in terms of where they sleep and what they do with their time. When asked about the preferential treatment received, Isaiah (32, Inmate), who was sentenced to 10 years for stealing and was given the opportunity to go out after eight years of staying in the yard without any work, explained:

> At first, people did not respect me, but since I started going out, I'm told that there is this boy who washes my clothes, fetches my water, collects my food, and runs errands without me even asking him to. In the room I'm in now, they respect me a lot and treat me differently since I started work.

In the same vein, Barnabas (43, Inmate), who has served nine years out of his 15-year sentence and was chosen to go out just a year ago, recounted:

> Now that I am working, the section of the cell where I used to sleep or my sleeping position has changed. Before external labour, I used to sleep on just one side, but now there has been a rearrangement and I have been moved to a position where I can lie on my back. I hope that in the future months, I can get into a more comfortable position before I finish my sentence.

Consequently, an inmate who goes outside to work stands a chance of not performing any chores in the yard ever again. Additionally, respect for elders, which is part of the cherished values in the Ghanaian culture, is ignored and cut off from what happens in the prisons: this concept is susceptible to the prison culture, as age and maturity are viewed as a mirage rather than a reality. Thus, in the prison, status is not about maturity or age, but inmates' purchasing power, which is made possible by external labour. While it would be unacceptable to see an elderly person doing chores and running errands for a much younger person in the outside world, this perception is overshadowed by the power granted to inmates who engage in external labour activities and their ability to influence others to act on their behalf. Thus, if a younger person can afford it, an older person can run errands and perform chores, such as washing and ironing their clothes after work, as well as other tasks they may direct to do for a fee or payment in kind:

> Seniority in prison is more than age: it is all about what the individual can get and what you can offer the person. Some people want to help you out with your chores so that you can give them something to buy soup or be able to afford to live in prison. They sometimes wash my clothes and take like GH¢ 1cedi. So for a young person like me, I have people who are old enough to be my father doing things for me by choice because I can pay them off after work or offer to grant them a favour when I go out to work. (Cornelius, 21, Inmate)

Similarly, David (20, Inmate), the youngest inmate I interviewed, also said:

> The prison is no respecter of age. It is more about the person that can help you out in times of need, so even though I am young, when I do come back from working outside, I still get people who come close to me, want to be my friend, and want to serve me. They wash my clothes and perform some errands for me. The most important thing is respecting each other: not about their age or seniority but their affordability.

Another inmate reiterated this:

> The thing is that in the prison, the conditions are bad and something as basic as the food we eat here is horrible, so to be able to make the food edible, you would need to add something, or sometimes we may have the ingredients to prepare our own food, but the problem is that everything is monetised in here because if we have to cook, say, rice, I may have to give it to those in the kitchen who would take 2 cedis before cooking. So people need to contribute to earning their keep in prison. Hence, if you do not work but want to at least eat something edible, then you have to work for it. (Judas, 24, Inmate)

6.1.7 Fuelling the informal economy in the prisons: Enterprising inmates and the apparatus market

The informal economy in the prison exists to ensure the transaction of illegitimate goods and services. Goods traded in this economy are not readily available in the prisons, so they are smuggled in by inmates who go outside to work. The informal economy involves various participants, such as the buyers, sellers, traders and customers, and external labour participants may fall into any of these categories.

The buyers are inmates who do not have the privilege to work outside the prisons but have the money to purchase goods in large quantities for resale. Hence, they purchase goods in bulk from those who can work outside and resell them in bits for profits to other inmates:

> Yes, the buyers are the individuals who buy the smuggled goods we bring to the prison. Such people try to befriend us so that we can buy things they want for them. Sometimes they make payments in advance, and we enter into an agreement with them so that when they do sell the product, they give us our cut of the proceeds. (Elijah, 32, Inmate)

Customers are the end users of the products in the prisons. These inmates do not have the opportunity to go outside to work; neither do they have inmates with connections to outside labour, so they patronise the products already in the prison in larger quantities to create artificial shortages so that they can increase the prices of these products and resell them at higher prices for profit.

The sellers, on the other hand, are inmates who, through their involvement in external labour activities, patronise products when they go outside to work and sell them at higher prices to the

customers in the yard. Usually, inmates who go out to do external labour come back to the prisons late in the evening and even at times after the final lockdown, so these sales are done in the morning when the gates are opened for them to prepare to go to work again. When inmates get back to the prison after working, they show their cell mates the things they have brought from outside, and by the next morning, people get to know of the availability of the items through the grapevine, word of mouth and personal selling. Also, some people already have their customers, so they know who they will be selling to even before they make the purchases. Sellers buy items such as mobile phones, cigarettes, weed, and other hard drugs:

> The good thing is that even if we are not paid anything or fed when we work, we can engage in some business. You can buy something at 10 cedis and resell it at 50 cedis, making a profit of 40 cedis. There are some officers who wouldn't allow you to buy stuff to resell; neither would they pay you after work. When it happens like that, it's depressing. (Joab, 39, Inmate)

Similarly, another inmate also commented on the business side of external labour:

> For instance, if I have to weed for eight hours without any wage for the work, I wouldn't mind, because I can buy one king-size cigarette at 8 cedis, bring it to the yard and resell it for 50 cedis. At least I've made my profit, so these are some of the benefits, but some of the officers allow it whilst others don't. (Daniel, 32, Inmate)

Again, commenting on the profitability of engaging in external labour, Gabriel (28, Inmate), who has been to prison twice, said:

> The small Samsung phone called '*Boys abr3*' is sold at GH¢120 cedis outside, but we sell it here for GH¢600 cedis, so if you go out and have the money, it depends on how you can manage to get some, but if you are able to bring it inside, you can make a lot of profit. Also, if in a day I go out and I am able to bring three or four packs of cigarettes, which cost GH¢10 cedis outside, and I sell them for GH¢50 cedis each, or GH¢100 cedis each when there is an acute shortage in the prison, I can make a lot of money from this business alone.

Therefore, it appears that when joining a gang to work outside the prison, the work itself is secondary to the other benefits that inmates hope to derive from going outside. Inmates reiterated that going outside facilitates their business, especially with the help of an enabling officer. Hence, if an officer is willing to help them with their businesses, then inmates are ready

to do whatever he says. If officers permit such transactions, then inmates do not complain when they get to the site and will do any job the officer directs them to do, so it is a win-win situation, as the work itself is secondary to the main motive of the external labour.

6.1.8 Chop make I chop: Sharing is caring

The next set of people engaged in the informal economy are the traders. Traders are inmates who engage in eternal labour activities, use their remuneration to patronise products, smuggle them into the prisons, employ other inmates, and give them the responsibility for selling the products, for which they are remunerated afterwards. Informal discussions revealed that the traders' market was highly prevalent in the prisons, as a lot of the inmates do not have the time to sell their products after smuggling them in. Here, inmates who engage in external labour activities elect other inmates based on criteria such as friendships, honesty, or other considerations, and put them in charge of their goods. Thus, an inmate who works outside the prison can decide to purchase goods in large quantities and leave them in the care of the other inmates to sell for them. The sellers do so accordingly, especially when the owner is out on external labour activities, and render the account to them upon their return to the prison, at which point they are rewarded for their services. This is encapsulated in the phrase 'Chop make I chop'. This was confirmed by Judas (24, Inmate), who explained that he was involved in the practice for a year until he made a loss and decided to quit:

> I saved consistently from the money I was getting after work, and when I had enough money, I bought items such as cowbell coffee, milo, biscuits, sugar and other beverage items and gave them to a friend of mine who is not qualified to work outside. The business took off initially and was making a profit, but after some time, I was running into losses because my friend was being dishonest, so I decided to stop the business and focus on saving money instead.

Aside from these items, one thriving aspect of the informal economy that is famous among the inmates is the apparatus market. 'Apparatus' in prison discourse comprises ingredients such as pepper, onions, ginger and tomatoes, used by inmates as condiments or to prepare sauces for their food. Even though buying and bringing in such ingredients is not officially sanctioned, it is not frowned upon by the authorities, as officials lament that the budget of GH¢1 Cedi 80 pesewas is not enough to prepare a good meal, never mind three square meals, for inmates. Thus, inmates take advantage of this, although some abuse it by using external labour activities

as an opportunity to bring in such ingredients in large quantities to sell to their fellow inmates in the prisons. Every inmate I interviewed mentioned apparatus as one of the things they use their money to buy when they are remunerated because they intimated that the soup in the prison, popularly known as 'Zontoli', is tasteless and lacks nutrition, so they add these condiments to make it edible:

> When I get paid after work, I use the money to buy apparatus (pepper, onions, salt, tomatoes) to sell to some of the inmates and make a profit. (Ebenezer, 35, Inmate)

Similarly, another inmate also commented:

> In order to get extra cash, I use my money to buy some essentials like soap, toothpaste, some edibles like fish or soup to help me eat my food, and sometimes rice to cook during the weekend when I do not go to work. I save the rest, and when I have enough money, I buy apparatus for resale in the yard, because I need to take advantage of all the benefits that I can get from this experience. (Joab, 39, Inmate)

Again, another inmate narrated that the food and soup are brought separately, and sometimes with such a long interval that they are forced to eat the food before the soup arrives, so those who have apparatus can prepare their sauces to eat. Hence, inmates who engage in external labour activities have the financial means and the luxury to eat whenever they want, or better still, to prepare any food they feel like eating in the prison, or they can decide to buy soup from the prison as well:

> The nature of the prison food is that sometimes the *banku* comes at 9:00 am but the soup arrives at 12:00 pm. Some may be hungry and would not be able to wait, so if you have money like us, you can patronise fish and apparatus to prepare your own sauce to eat the food, because even if the soup is ready, you will still need apparatus as condiments before you can eat anyway. (Elijah, 32, Inmate)

6.1.8 Scratch My Back Make I Scratch Your Back

Aside from the physical products traded by the inmates in prisons, another booming sector of the prison informal economy is where inmates provide an assortment of services to other inmates for a fee. The monetisation of the prison economy makes it difficult and sometimes impossible for inmates who do not engage in external labour activities to survive. Thus, for such inmates to survive their incarceration, they need to engage in the provision of services for

other inmates, especially those who engage in external labour activities, who in turn remunerate them for their services. Hence, the phrase 'scratch my back make I scratch your back' conveys the way inmates provide services for other inmates for a fee:

> When we get back to prison, those who do not go for external labour provide services to us for a fee. Me, for instance: I can wash my clothes but I'll give them to them to wash so that I can pay them because they also need to earn their keep, so l can pay them money or give them ingredients or soup to eat. I can decide to pay them one cedi or two cedis depending on the services rendered. (Isaiah, 32, Inmate)

Another inmate also narrated his experience:

> Some inmates do take my clothes and shoes and wash them for me, so that if you buy something— say soup, 3 cedis for myself, I can buy 2 cedis for him. They also make sure they take care of things for me back in the prison, such as collecting my food when I go out to work and fetching water for me when I return from work. (Moses, 35, Inmate)

Moreover, inmates who engage in external labour can engage the services of other inmates, especially those who work in the kitchen, to cook for them for a fee:

> Sometimes we may have the money and will not get anything to buy, especially the food we really want to spend our money on, so when we go out, we can buy the ingredients, bring them to the prison, and give them to the inmates who work in the kitchen, who can prepare it for us for a fee. For instance, when you cook rice here, the fee is two cedis, so the price depends on the food we want to prepare. (Mark, 26, Inmate)

Here, to cement their superiority complex in the prison, inmates who engage in external labour activities are exempted from participating in the execution of daily chores by their fellow inmates who do not go out to work. Thus, although they are in prison, some inmates have servants, which in the Ghanaian discourse are called 'Boy-boy', to perform activities that they may not want to do. Again, external labour activities afford inmates to live a life in prison which parallels that of living outside as free men. External labour activities enable them to go outside the prison, experience what is happening outside, breathe some fresh air, make some money, and employ other inmates to perform tasks that they do not want to do themselves. Therefore, it gives inmates the semblance of living outside as free men, aside from sleeping in a cell with other inmates. For this reason, and largely for profit motives, most inmates intimated that it fuelled their enthusiasm to engage in external labour activities because it afforded them the opportunity to engage in and take active roles in the informal economy and also to live like

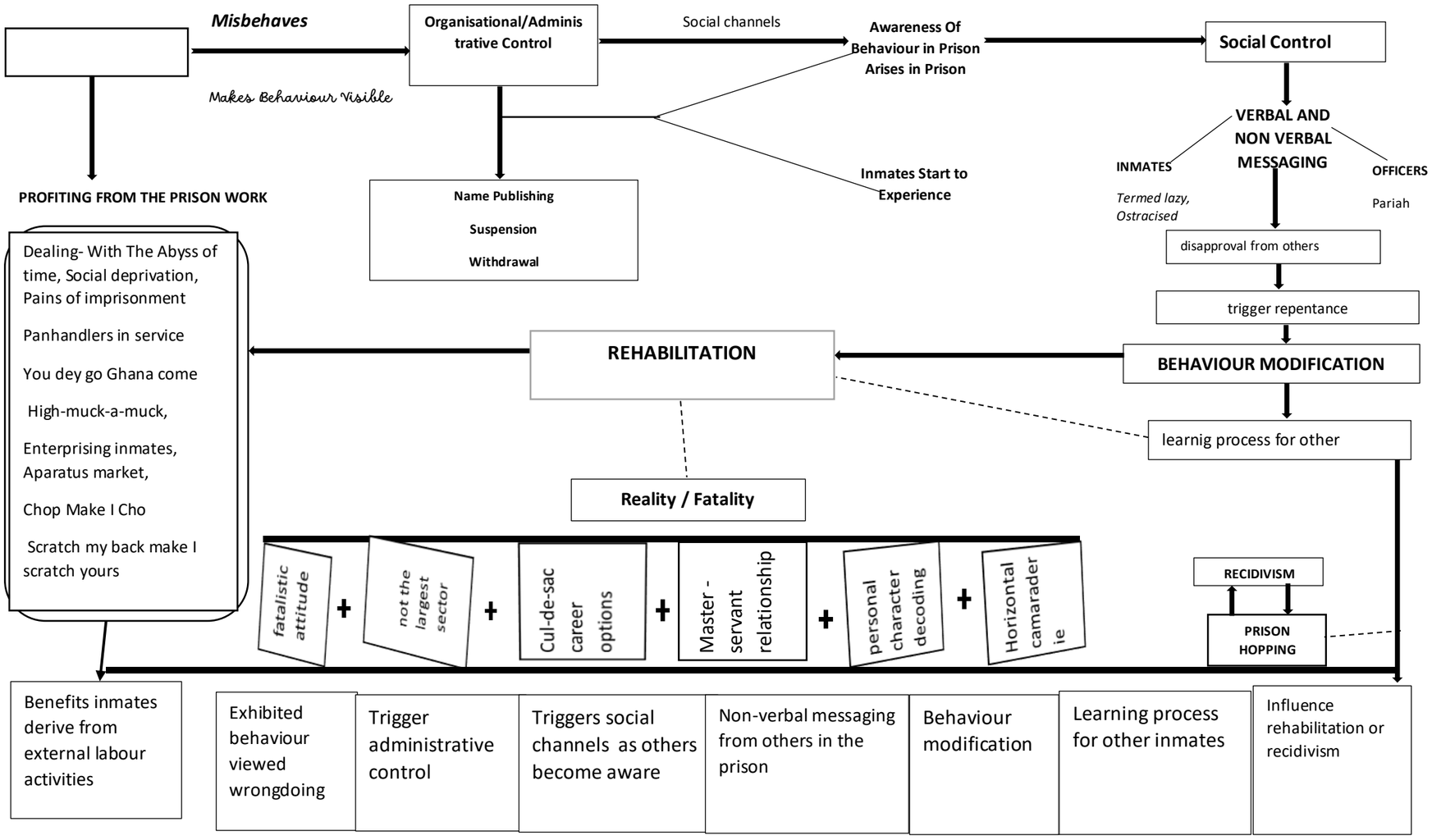
human beings, consistently stating that in prison, one is only highly regarded if one has the means to afford to stay there and be able to assert one's dominance on others to earn their respect.

Transgression transparency, such as suspending inmates who are found to be 'misbehaving' and publishing their names at the gate stems, from organisational/administrative channels which trigger social control: 'normative pressures and the force of social obligation' (Lange, 2008 p. 712), as explained by an officer:

> When you misbehave, you may not be allowed to go out again. Inmates who are caught have their names published at the gate and then everyone is made aware, as the offence and its consequences would be made known. (Theophilus, 48, ACOP).

As other inmates become aware of the transgression, they employ both verbal and nonverbal messaging, such as criticising and even at times ostracising those who have been suspended. Officers see such inmates as pariahs, not to be included in any gang, and other members do not want to work with them because they are viewed as lazy, and indicate their disapproval of the counter-normative behaviour of the inmate (Garud et al., 2010). Consequently, the transgressors, facing disapproval from fellow inmates, are motivated to repent of their counterproductive behaviour (Frey et al., 2022). Thus, making the occurrence of transgression or unacceptable behaviour transparent to the other inmates triggers a learning process that propels behaviour modifications and consequently rehabilitation (Garud et al., 2010). Figure 6.1 depicts how external labour activities contribute to the rehabilitation of inmates through transgression transparency and personal narrative control

Figure 6.1 Rehabilitation through transgression transparency and personal narrative control of inmates



When an inmate 'misbehaves' such as commits an offence such as disrespecting an officer, lazying about during work, and bringing contraband items to the prisons, the use administrative or organisational control mechanisms such as suspension, withdrawal, publishing the name of the said individual at the gate. These actions by the officers create awareness of the offence which informs other inmates of what happened. As a result of the awareness, the inmate starts to experience different treatment from the others as the action of the officers triggered their social channels. Thus, the other inmates and officers employ social controls such as (officers seeing the inmate as a pariah not to be touched) and the others seeing him as lazy or worst casting him aside through verbal and nonverbal messaging. Consequently, the disapproval from 'others' triggers repentance on the part of the inmate which may influence their behaviour positively and subsequently, their rehabilitation. Others who are already working outside or aspire to work can learn from this experience in order not to commit such an offence in the future. On the other hand, the inmate or the others may not learn anything from the experience nor allow it to influence their behaviour in any way. Such inmates could find themselves in the same pattern after their release, recidivate and consequently choose prison hopping as a career and a last resort.

The next section of the work explores whether rehabilitation through work in prisons is a reality or a fallacy that is used to justify inmates being used for work

6.2 Rehabilitation after incarceration: Reality or fatality?

The prison service prides itself in rehabilitating inmates by engaging them in various activities, one of them being prison work, or what is known in the prison discourse as external or outside labour. As a result, the word 'rehabilitation' is enshrined in the motto of the service—'safe custody, humane treatment, reformation, rehabilitation and reintegration of inmates—and the role of prison work in contributing to this motto was explained by an officer as follows:

> External labour helps inmates with work experience to practice and polish their skill set and also creates the opportunity for those without any experience to learn on the job. Hence, we as a service provide the needed environment that inmates need to thrive in order to ensure that they leave here reformed, and rehabilitated and can reintegrate within society, irrespective of the number of years they have spent here. Also, some of the officers are carpenters, bricklayers, welders—all sorts of vocational work—so inmates are able to learn, as some people who were apprentices are able to polish their skills. (Paul, 37, DSP)

An inmate also shared his view on external labour helping with rehabilitation:

> Sometimes I regret acting on the decision that brought me here, especially when I am doing a job that is more than what I can take or beyond my capacity: it makes me feel that harsh treatment is being given to me because I feel that I wouldn't be treated this way if I were outside. Even the jobs I can't do, I am forced to do, so that alone makes me regret my actions. (Moses, 35, inmate)

In a similar vein, another inmate recounted his story, emphasizing the importance of external labour activities. He believes that work is essential for rehabilitation and claims he recidivated because he did not engage in external labour during his first prison term, and hence did not feel the full impact of incarceration. In contrast, engaging in external labour activities during his second time in prison has made all the difference in his life:

> I have intentionally learnt the farming work so that when I go out, it would be the focus of my life. I would start a piggery, which is so very much important to me, and I can employ people as well. I think that because I did not experience the working aspect when I came here the first time, I didn't see this side of the prison and didn't feel the pain, so now this experience has made me cautious and realised the impact of prison. (John, 42, Inmate)

It can be argued that prison work is fundamental to the motto of the service, but the extent of its contribution to the fulfilment of these aims leaves much to be desired, as external labour is essential to the economic viability of the prison and involves an exchange between the service and contracting individuals and groups, from which inmates are excluded. Hence, the inmates who are directly involved in the work may not be the primary concern of the service, as some officers indicated that they engage them in the work in order to help in the running of the service:

> You know, we do not get enough financial support from the government, so external labour activities sustain us to run the prison, as it helps supplement the meagre budget we have as a service. (Nathanael, 58, Senior Chief Officer)

Again, an inmate also affirmed that their participation in external labour activities enables them to survive and live in prison:

> To be able to survive here, you need external labour, especially if you want to eat and feel the taste of the food on your tongue, so we work irrespective of the difficulty of the work, not because we like it or want to learn anything from it, but so that we can afford to stay here. (Andrews, 40, Inmate)

Another inmate expressed a similar sentiment

> My main focus and purpose in life are the clothes I was making before my imprisonment: that is my passion because the job I do here is very difficult and it is not a job for a woman, so if I should leave here, I don't think I would do this job again, but I'm just doing it to survive here. (Abigail, 23, Inmate)

In spite of the service's affirmation to rehabilitate inmates through external labour activities, the evidence gathered in this study indicates that the work carried out by inmates outside the prison has little or no bearing on their rehabilitation. This is because the work typically involves low-value, low-paid, monotonous and dangerous activities. This was confirmed by officers, who cited people's unwillingness to engage in such jobs, as they are not seen to be lucrative and therefore not attractive to people in the outside labour market:

> The work we do outside is not considered to be good, and for the payment we receive and the compromises we make, most people outside the prisons wouldn't do it. Sometimes some locations we go to and the kind of work we engage in, for the same fees or even less, most freedmen would not consider and not the least engage in them. (Peter, 43, Sergeant)

Another officer cited that it is not the case that employers cannot find people who will be willing to participate in such jobs, but that prisoners work better than non-prisoners. As a result, employers prefer to engage the prisoners:

> Usually, when we take the inmates out, we work extra hard, to the point that we are able to finish the job even before the time of the job's requirement, which makes employers prefer us to those from outside because we are able to do a fine job for them to be happy. We always get happy customers. (Philip, 32 Corporal)

Similarly, an inmate also commented that the officers ensure that they finish the jobs early to encourage future job recommendations as well as to benefit their own self-interest:

> Some of the masters make us work without breaks in order to be seen by their seniors as hard-working. Sometimes, some of them refuse to give us breaks when we ask, and others make us work beyond the time required to the point where we mostly get to the yard after the final lockdown, just so they would be praised by their bosses. (Cornelius, 21, Inmate)

During the interviews, one of the main issues of concern was establishing whether and how external labour contributed to or even served as a stepping-stone towards rehabilitating and re-integrating inmates into society and away from the life of crime upon their release. However, evidence from the data gathered indicated that prior to entering the prisons, the majority of the inmates had been trained in various professions but were not gainfully employed, which reflects the greatly increased likelihood that offenders will not be engaged in gainful employment compared to the general population. As discussed by Bushway, (2003), many inmates are far removed from the lawful world of work prior to their incarceration. Moreover, inmates often have little or no education or few vocational skills, particularly if they happen to originate from backgrounds that are remote from the legal world of work, whilst some of them have no experience in working at all (Hunter & Boyce, 2009). Still, of those inmates interviewed who had been employed in the months prior to their incarceration, all but one participant had worked in unskilled jobs, such as construction, manual labour, transportation services and farming, and most of them just mentioned their occupation without necessarily stating that they had been in active employment. Only one of the inmates interviewed had a well-paid, highly-skilled lawful occupation. This reflects prisoners' socio-cultural disadvantages and overall low ranks of educational attainment (Pandeli et al., 2019). A handful of the participants held certified or recognised qualifications beyond the minimum school leaving age of JHS, although some had dropped out of school before this point and others did not have any formal education at all. In this framework, the work assigned to inmates during external labour activities provided them with a little new experience in skills acquisition or goals through work. Yet, for the majority of inmates, external labour activities seemed to function as a tool to help them muddle through their incarceration. Also, in as much as inmates have erratic work experiences, external labour does little to persuade them of the underlying fulfilment that can be derived from legitimate work or of how such can be financially rewarding to them. This point was clearly articulated by the inmates, who described how ineffective external labour was in preparing them for work upon their release:

> Working outside does not give me a reason to be remorseful and envious of the privileges enjoyed by people with their freedom, because I don't see the point of the work we do here. I just go along because I am here and I need to engage in it, but I do not think I would pursue this job when I go outside. (Enock, 26, Inmate)

Another inmate expressed a similar sentiment:

> I am more interested in the beadwork that they do here, but I was not considered for it due to inadequate resources; yet I think that is what would help me do something with my life when I leave here, not the farming I am made to do. I am less interested in the job I have been assigned to do because I know I am not learning any life-changing meaningful skills, but what can I do in my current situation? … I'm trying my best to get it done, serve my time and leave in peace. (Candance, 27, Inmate)

Another inmate recounted:

> I am more interested in the shoe shop and the vocational training they have over here, more than the external labour, but due to inadequate resources and also the fact that those who engage in it do not get any incentives for their work, I think I have to just go along with this work until I leave here. (Gabriel, 28, Inmate)

Instead of engaging inmates in jobs that provide valuable skills and reliable work experience to perform a rehabilitative function, the work rather influences idealistic and unsophisticated experiences of the real work environment. In the prison setting, I observed that work exists in part as a constative element and also as performative. Thus, the practice of external labour can be viewed as a manoeuvre between two competing discourses: the constative (the here-and-now) and the performative (rehearsal) (Thompson, 2000).

The performative element rests on the assumption of how prison work prepares inmates to develop meaningful skills and build acceptable characteristics that they will need for life after imprisonment, and thus provides an environment that enables them to rehearse the skills that they acquire during their incarceration. Consequently, inmates are given the opportunity to work in farming, construction, and the likes, which, although unskilled, may prepare them for the future by enabling them to learn work skills and ethics:

> Yes, we know the work we make them do here, but for some of them it is the first time they are working or doing any type of job, and it is an experience they can carry with them outside. A lot of the inmates learn so many skills that can influence them professionally and personally. Can you believe some people come here with no idea of how to sweep? They learn these skills here, so it is a good endeavour to teach them how to live and take care of themselves. (Solomon, 56, Chief Officer)

On the other hand, the constative element rests on the assumption that inmates pass their time during incarceration by enduring the pains of imprisonment and therefore engage in tasks that help them to cope with their imprisonment. Here, inmates work in any job that is identified by

the service as one that can help them to cope with their incarceration, and sometimes under working conditions that merely mimic the actual work environment, rather than doing work that will genuinely prepare them for the legitimate world of work after their incarceration. Moreover, these sorts of work, such as sweeping, cleaning, and loading and offloading goods, are based on unskilled labour, in which many of the inmates were involved before they were incarcerated anyway:

> What I do here is the same as what I did before I came here, which is pointless anyway. I don't think I have learnt anything anyway because when I go out, I will just engage in tasks which would normally be different from what I am doing here. (David, 20, Inmate)

Thus, the constative, here-and-now element treats external labour as something that helps inmates to pass their time in prison, whereas the rehearsal element actually prepares inmates for their release. It seems apparent that as part of a discourse that says prisons should provide a stimulating environment for the practice of skills, external labour activities must intervene to provide literal moments of rehearsal for inmates to practice the skills they learn during their incarceration. However, by examining the outcomes from the interviews, it appears that most of the inmates engaged in external labour for anything other than rehabilitation. For instance, the work on the farm is used to assess the inmates' viability to engage in work beyond the walls of the prisons, and is assessed by officers to see how they would perform if they were taken to work in places that are not prison-owned, and not necessarily to rehabilitate them, as asserted by an officer:

> Normally when they work on the farm, we use it as a form of trial period to look at how they work, their character and attitude towards work, as well as their ability to listen to and obey instructions. So if someone is not good at working on the farm or disobeys instructions on the farm, then how can we take him along when we go to other places? So justifying your inclusion starts from the moment you qualify to work on the farm. (Solomon, 56, Chief Officer)

Again, the work in which prisoners are engaged does not help to prepare them for the future, because when prisoners are in prison, they are classified and seen by employers as 'special workers', as they are supervised by officers and work extra hard whilst on site. But, upon their release, they are no longer special and form part of the general population of people with whom employers may not like to work because they are ex-convicts, and they are no longer strictly

supervised by officers to ensure that they finish their work on time. Hence, employers prefer to work with people without any criminal records, rather than with ex-convicts, even if they possess the same skill set as employees without any criminal record:

> When you get tagged 'ex-convict', that is the end of the story for you. No one is willing to accept you or work with you: sometimes even people who you used to work with would not want to work with you once you are out of prison, and that is my problem. (Emmanuel, 25, Ex-convict)

In a similar vein, an officer also reiterated:

> We do our best to get them working here, but when they go out, society does not give them a chance to practice the things learnt here, so we see them here again. When we ask them, they tell us they do not need them, but I don't understand how they would prefer them when they are here but would tend to reject them when they leave here as free citizens. (Priscilla, 52, Senior Officer)

Nonetheless, some ex-convicts recounted that they usually get the opportunity to work if they are recommended by their former masters, or if the employers personally handpick them to work with them after their incarceration:

> It is not easy getting any job outside the prison because you need to have been picked by the employer himself or an officer, else all that we learnt during our time in prison is wasted. But sometimes, when I am lucky, my master can call in a favour for me and that can afford me some opportunities because learning what to do is not enough. (Joel, 45, Ex-convict)

Therefore, working outside upon release becomes an issue for ex-convicts, as they are no longer supervised, and employers perceive that they may be no more productive than any other employee. Hence, they switch to hiring employees without criminal records instead. Again, the dilemma posed to ex-convicts is that jobs are moved into the prisons for cheap labour and performance, but once inmates are freed, they are no longer part of that category and thus do not qualify to work in these jobs. Consequently, inmates are likely to face disappointment further down the road, because their perceptions of the rehabilitative impact of external labour are not reflected in what actually happens in the labour market. However, inmates also believe that their rehabilitation is not up to them and that it takes a higher power (God) to turn their lives around. This will be discussed in the next section.

6.2.1 Fatalistic attitude of inmates towards rehabilitation

The potency of external labour activities in facilitating rehabilitation among inmates in prisons is inhibited by their belief in the fatalistic nature of their actions, which renders them incapable of taking responsibility and atoning for their actions. The belief in the power of God to get inmates out of trouble and turn their lives around is uncanny. This belief of inmates even supersedes the rehabilitative power of external labour activities. For many of the inmates interviewed, the power of God to turn their lives around was more evident in their convictions than the benefits of any external labour activities in which they engaged. For this reason, many inmates refused to acknowledge responsibility for their actions, which is supposed to be an essential step in any rehabilitation. They believed their incarceration was a test, which, when they passed, would grant them some reward of a better life at the end of their imprisonment, without necessarily learning from their mistakes and engaging in the work to learn skills for their future:

> If I hadn't come to the prison, I would not have known what God could have done. God knows best because I could have died if I weren't here: maybe God is keeping me here for bigger plans in the future. If there are too many eyes watching you, He hides you where no one can harm you, so whatever happened for me to be here would never have happened if God did not have bigger plans for me in the future. (Lazarus, 35, Inmate)

Similarly, another inmate explained:

> As for prison, I pray that God should never allow me to come here again. I have learnt a lot and can share and advise my children in the future. For me, it is the prison and prison life that I don't want to experience again, not the work I do here. I'm happy they take me out and make me work and sweat because it's a good practice and fits well with my job and lifestyle I used to have before I came here. Even if I don't get anything from the job, the fact that I have the opportunity to go to work and come back, I appreciate it, but God is my helper. (Barnabas, 43, Inmate)

Similarly, others also believed that they can engage in any activities proposed by the service, but that only the power of God can rehabilitate them, and not the work itself:

> I pray to God not to allow me to come back here, even though mistakes can occur, but it is the prison environment that would make me not want to come back again, and the fact that everything I do I need to be told. Also, the gospel we listen to has changed me,

> and that is what will make me not come here again, not necessarily the work that I do here. (Benjamin, 30, Inmate)

Again, another inmate also narrated:

> I have learnt some skills in construction, food preparation and even church (drumming, worship and praises and things about church) but I have been taught here that everything happens for a reason and God knows best. I cannot say specifically that I would not be here again because anything can happen in this world and it is only God who can decide: you can do everything you can well and still end up in jail. (James, 29, Inmate)

The inmates' sensitive and outwardly fatalistic acknowledgement of their belief in rehabilitation without personal effort in some ways mirrors and legitimises their illegitimate activities, and to some extent their criminal routines. This, in itself, is a fascinating commentary on the rehabilitation of inmates through external labour activities, but it does not suggest that it prevents inmates from achieving rehabilitation: rather, it sometimes clouds their judgment during moments of epiphany in their incarceration where they need to take responsibility for their actions and subsequently take an active role in their rehabilitation. Still, some inmates believe that although they sometimes fail to assume responsibility for their rehabilitation, the work that is supposed to facilitate the process is punitive rather than rehabilitative.

6.2.2 External labour activities: Punishment enough or rehabilitative?

Undeniably, although prisons are regarded as places of rehabilitation for which the service engages inmates' labour in external activities to foster the rehabilitative status of the prisons, the prisoners' perceptions of the work they do are not directly aligned with the proclamations of the service. Therefore, in spite of the rhetoric, which stresses the role of prisons as places of reformation and rehabilitation, the perceptions of inmates and ex-convicts drew my attention to how, as an institution, the prison service is failing to embed the principles, social processes and practices that have been discovered to enable the efficient implementation of rehabilitative regimes through external labour activities. As a result, throughout my informal discussions, one aspect that I wanted to clarify was how inmates viewed the work in which they were engaged. Accordingly, many of the inmates iterated that their understanding of the tasks they performed during external labour activities was that they were made to engage in these tasks

as a means of punishment rather than rehabilitation. They were convinced that the purposes of the tasks were punitive rather than rehabilitative:

> I see the job as more punitive because once in a while you do have to learn from whatever you went through, so even though we feel tired and weak at times, if we complain, nobody can do anything about it, so we bottle it all in. The tasks that have been assigned to us are difficult, especially for those who engage in more than one task, as it adds extra burden to the punishment and eventually affects us when we get back to the yard. It causes our bodies to ache, which results in sleeplessness. (Dorcas, 34, Inmate)

The officers also believed that work and the systems in place served as a form of punishment for the inmates and helped to boost deterrence rather than reforming them for work outside the prison after incarceration:

> I think the work is enough punishment because the sort of crimes they engage in are not so serious, as those who have committed serious crimes are laying waste in the cells, not doing anything, as they are not allowed to go out. They are just there spending our money and wasting resources. So the work they do is hard labour, and it is enough punishment for them. (Theophilus, 48, ACOP)

Here, the parties involved in the work believed that for all intents and purposes, external labour serves as a deterrent against crimes and dissuaded inmates from engaging in a life of crime, but does not necessarily reform them for their future life after incarceration. Moreover, they believed that the payment system in place at the prisons is also supposed to serve as a form of punishment to deter inmates from committing future crimes. As a result, there is an institutionalised punishment scheme through payment of wages to ensure that inmates are paid meagre sums compared to what they would otherwise earn if they were working outside the prison:

> It is punitive enough because the work the prisoners do is not that easy and you could see that if the person was a free man and working outside, he could be charging, let's say, GH¢200 cedis for the same job, but here he is just given GH¢10 cedis as motivation, so will feel that you have worked enough to warrant higher remuneration, but had it not been prison, you would have received higher, but you take it and are happy you even got paid, so the system of payment itself is punitive enough. (Thomas, 38, ASP)

Another officer confirmed this:

> Even the system of payment itself is punishment enough because they know very well that this is what the work pays, but at the end of the day, the amount they are given is nothing compared to what they are supposed to get, so that encourages them to learn so that they can apply the skills when they get out to receive the correct amount due to them. (Solomon, 56, Chief Officer)

The downside of this approach is that since the service does not have a stipulated system of payment, the payment of wages to inmates is based on the discretion of the officers to ensure that this punitive element of external labour is applied. Consequently, some officers may decide to pay inmates according to the unofficial agreed rate of GH¢15 cedis a day, whilst others give only GH¢10 cedis a day, or even worse, GH¢20 cedis per week. Still, some officers are generous and pay GH¢20 cedis or more per day, hence diluting the punitive element of the pay that inmates are supposed to receive for their work. Hence, although utilised, this approach tends to be ineffective in some instances because of the pay variations in the service.

In contrast to the above, some inmates do not see the work they perform outside the prisons as punitive or rehabilitative. They believe that the work is not punitive enough because it is something they are used to, and not rehabilitative because they will be unable to utilise it when they are released from prison. Some officers expressed the belief that such inmates are inured by the jobs to the extent that they sometimes encourage them to commit further crimes because they are accustomed to the prisons and know that even if they are re-incarcerated, that is what they would do anyways. Hence, the work is not punitive enough to dissuade inmates from committing crimes, and not encouraging enough to enable them to secure legitimate employment and stay out of trouble:

> Some people feel that if they are to come back to the prisons, this is the job they would be doing, so they do not regret their actions and have no sense of remorse. Some people are hardened by the system and feel that it is the ultimate tasking job the prison can make them do, and they are used to it, so they are not bothered at all. Others are also disappointed by the nature of hard labour the system offers because they don't see it as difficult enough to deter them from engaging in future crimes. (Moses, 35, Inmate)

Irrespective of how inmates view the work they do during external labour activities, or how they participate in this work, all their effort can come to nothing, as the sector of the economy for which they are trained may not have the capacity to absorb them upon their release.

6.2.3 Not the largest sector in the economy: How would ex-convicts cope?

Most of the work in which inmates engage when they work outside the prison is geared towards the construction sector, which accounts for just 15 per cent of Ghana's GDP (International Trade Administration, 2022), and thus cannot absorb all the inmates who are released from prison as well as the skilled employees without criminal records who work in the sector. In some cases, inmates are trained in the service sector, which is the biggest sector of the economy; yet ex-convicts are at a disadvantage because they do not exude the features and values needed to work in the sector. According to McDowell, (2003) work in the service sector demands that employees possess features such as meekness and reverence, as opposed to the machismo and bravado preferred by other sectors like construction. Consequently, the cultural norms and work ethics, such as masculine demeanour, crude sense of humour and fast-paced work, are not compatible with the requirements of the work environment in the service sector. The sector requires people with the skill set and personalities which are parallel to the masculine demeanour mostly purported by ex-convicts. Thus, Ex-convicts may possess the skills needed, but their personality, influenced by their past and the time they have spent in prison, may prevent them from being employed in this sector:

> Sometimes I go from house to house seeking employment to render any type of service. Most of them decline, especially when they get to know my status as an ex-convict. It is sad really, because I know how to do all these things, but I cannot do it because I have been to prison or learnt them in prison and people assume that skills are not valuable once learnt from the prison. (King, 35, Ex-convict)

Ex-convicts who succeed in securing jobs in the service sector often end up frustrated by a system that does not appreciate their efforts, and fail to work well in this sector because the companies and customers may not be willing to be served by them.

Consequently, the size of the industries for which inmates are trained results in high competition for the limited jobs available. This implies that inmates would have to join the queue behind ex-convicts who were released before them, as well as competing with

individuals without criminal records and professionals with a wealth of experience, as affirmed by an ex-convict:

> I was released two years ago, and I have not worked or had the opportunity to practice any of the skills I learnt whilst incarcerated outside, because there are no opportunities. When I was released, I was eager to work, so I started moving from one site to the other for a year, but I realised I wasn't getting any luck with work, so I stopped and decided to stay at home. (Emmanuel, 25, Ex-convict)

Moreover, some inmates, especially those in the camp prisons, are trained in farming, which although, smaller than the service sector and comes with its own challenges. Unfortunately, the tools that are employed in external labour are archaic and outdated, as most farmers do not use them anymore. Therefore, although inmates acquire skills and have the opportunity to practice them during external labour, they are unable to work when they get out because they are not familiar with the tools used in contemporary work settings. The small-scale farmers who use the tools with which inmates are familiar are unable to employ them because they do not have the capacity to absorb their labour, while those who could do so are large-scale farmers who use sophisticated farm machines and equipment with which ex-convicts are not familiar. Thus, their performance becomes a problem when they try to work with these new tools and machines but find themselves handicapped, unable to work, and consequently unattractive to employers:

> When we go out to the farms, we work with cutlasses and hoes, which are provided by the service. (Deborah, 26, Inmate)

An officer also affirmed this:

> The problem is that when they get out, they are not able to find work or utilise the tools that are being used these days at work, as the work environment has evolved so much over the years, and so they find themselves frustrated, because it's not that they cannot perform the job, but it is just that they cannot work with the new tools and equipment being employed. (Theophilus, 48, ACOP)

Prisoners exemplify the outdated calibre of employees engaged in the sectors for which they are trained, especially due to the way they are trained and the tools used in this training. Moreover, jobs are relatively unstable in these sectors. Therefore inmates find themselves in industries that already experience high redundancies, even among employees without criminal records and with years' worth of work experience. This goes to show that many of the jobs

available in the prisons are not required or are somewhat redundant in the labour market, which lessens their rehabilitative effects. The issue here is not with lack of training, but that prisoners are trained in low-skilled, less automated jobs in farming, construction and service, with a high-paced regimen within a highly controlled and strictly supervised scenario. The pace of work and the tools used have long been phased out in the labour market, and inmates are introduced to the performance of work which bears little or no resemblance to the workplace and may to some extent provide false insight into the performance of these jobs actually entails. The disparity between the training obtained and employment opportunities available in the community reduces prisoners' capacity to transfer the competencies acquired. Consequently, this can lead to cul-de-sac career paths for ex-offenders, as the career paths they can follow with the skills they have acquired tend to be blocked immediately after their release.

6.2.4 Cul-de-sac career options for inmates learning low-skilled and low-paid jobs

There is something intriguing about external labour activities. Even though their ability to rehabilitate inmates and re-integrate them into society is debatable, they do perhaps prepare inmates for the job market to an extent by offering them the opportunity to engage in and learn from low-skilled, low-paid jobs which are overshadowed by hierarchical conflict, with little or no autonomy and limited opportunities: the nature of jobs that are most likely to greet them upon their release. This puts inmates in a position to accept any job offered to them after their release because they are exposed to a routine of work where they are made to accept without question any work that is given to them. Hence, they do not take their time to analyse the working conditions and may normalise them as how work is supposed to be, especially those who did not work before going to prison:

> There is pressure when it comes to working as a prisoner as compared to working as a free man, so when I go out, I make sure that I would accept any job offer that I would get irrespective of the conditions because all I need is to get something that can provide me with some financial means to feed myself so that I would not come back here again. (Adam, 27, Inmate)

Another inmate reiterated this:

> Before coming here, I used to reject jobs with meagre salaries or wages and poor working conditions, but having worked here in poorer conditions and wages lower than what I was rejecting, I have realized to appreciate the wages that are given to me after

> work. I would not reject a job because the wage is small or the working conditions are bad. (Andrews, 40, Inmate)

It could be argued that the inmates' experiences of external labour activities expose them to the negative aspects of low-skilled work, which in turn might rekindle their antipathy towards more legitimate types of work. This factor, coupled with the earnings they generate from illegitimate forms of employment, might dissuade them from entering any type of legitimate work and draw them back to the illegitimate careers in which they found themselves before their incarceration. In this light, an inmate said:

> No, I haven't received any benefits from the work I do, but I accept what the judge said and I know I'm serving my sentence with hard labour, but for me personally, I don't think I have gained or learnt anything from the jobs I do here, especially when I have not been remunerated for my effort, so I don't think I'll use it when I go back—I'll just go to what I did before coming here. (Isaac, 37, Inmate)

Similarly, another inmate explained:

> I went home in May and came back in August. Although I engaged in external labour the last time I was here, my problem is that when I went home, I couldn't get enough money from the work (masonry) to fund my addiction, so I had to go back to what I know how to do best (stealing): that is why I am here. Also, I do not like being bossed around, and with all the work I did, I was told what to do and did not get the chance to make my own decisions regarding the work, but with the stealing, I am my own boss and make all the decisions. (Elijah, 32, Inmate)

This statement is a testament to the issue of inmates preferring illegitimate work to legitimate jobs due to factors they think they cannot control and also the nature of the jobs to which they are exposed, thus bolstering their antipathy towards work. However, research by (Buck et al., 2022) indicates that inmates are able to transform their lives when they visualise and commit to an ideal future. Accordingly, the inmates I interviewed had a mental image of how they envisioned their lives after incarceration, especially with their involvement in external labour activities, but their visions were not backed by a commitment to change in the future. Inmates realised upon reflection that the desire to change their lives, but the actions needed to incorporate those changes are crippled by the nature and the type of jobs for which they are trained during their incarceration. Rather, this work leaves them pessimistic because they fail to see its value to their lives after their release. Thus, the work is good in that it can afford them

the opportunity to live comfortably in prison, but upon their release, such jobs cannot sustain them and their lifestyles in the real world. Hence, the jobs do not provide many opportunities to live legitimately beyond the prison walls, thus creating a cul-de-sac in the careers of ex-convicts and landing them back on the illegitimate path they were on before incarceration. Yet, the general consensus was that the relationship between inmates and their masters fosters a sense of mutual respect, which enables inmates to transform their behaviour and impact their rehabilitation.

6.2.5 Master-Servant relationship: How relationships with officers contribute to rehabilitation

Relationships in prison comprise officer–prisoner relationships and those among prisoners themselves. Officer–prisoner relationships are crucial to grasping the moral quality of life in prison as well as the impact of work on the rehabilitation of inmates. Thus, the relationships between prison officers and inmates are critical, as they affect the order in prison as well as the well-being of inmates. Due to the strict supervision, poor terms and working conditions, as well as the remuneration received by inmates, I had anticipated that they would be indignant about the exploitation of their labour during external labour activities, as they evidently viewed its goal as a rehabilitative tool as futile. However, many of the inmates I interviewed, even those who thought the work was exploitative, considered it as having some impact on their lives because they believe they have learnt some tangible skills that they can apply upon release:

> I've learnt about how to use a pickaxe, 'dawn' mortar and other petty things about construction, such as how to start a foundation. For me, I know my trade, and the things I have learnt here are also there. Also, whichever one I will get, I'll do, because the construction work I did whilst I was here for the first time helped a lot in my galamsey work upon my release, until the clamp down on the job by the government, resulting in me stealing again. (Jethro, 33, Inmate)

Similarly, an inmate who used to be a mason also commented:

> For someone like me who has been here for a long time, I think external labour helps me to sharpen my skills so that I don't forget. I have learnt some skills such as the measurement for making concrete, blocks and mortar, how to lay blocks, broken tiles, foundations, etc., that I did not know how to do before I came here. When I go out, I can add it to my work, or I will be willing to offer my services should I get any job like this in the future outside. (Barnabas, 43, Inmate)

Another inmate, who had been a farmer before incarceration, commented:

> Even though I was working as a farmer, I think I have learnt a lot from the job I have done here because I've learnt about the rubrics of the job, the measurements I need and all the requirements of my job. I have learnt how to plant onions, garden eggs and other vegetables, and when I go out, I can plant something like that. I don't understand why people would come and do this hard work and still decide to come back again. (Mark, 26, Inmate)

In a similar vein, the cook in one of the prisons also commented on the multiple skills he has acquired through external labour activities:

> Yes, I think I have learnt how to cook for a lot of people and also help with domestic chores in the house, so when I go out, I can also open a small kiosk where I can sell food at any given chance. Also, I have learnt some skills in construction as well. (Mica, 29, Inmate)

A senior officer who is in charge of the external labour activity at his prison explained

> Through external labour, inmates are able to pick up some skills, especially masonry. Some are taught on the job and there are times we get the NVTI certificate for them so that they can set themselves up when they go out. Some people have never held a cutlass before they learn to weed here, and when they go to their villages, they acquire lands and start farming. Some also have not learnt about poultry farming and can start poultry farming when they go home. (Nathanael, 58, Senior Chief Officer)

Likewise, others also believed that their engagement in external labour activities has not just provided them with the skills they need to survive upon their release but also helped to shape and mould their character:

> I've learnt to be a hard worker and learnt the ethics of work because, in my previous job, I was sacked for being lazy and tardy at work. But for the job itself, I cannot say what I have learnt specifically, because mostly we were handed over to the foremen to be taught, so I have learnt some of the basics of construction work. (Abraham, 28, Inmate)

Similarly, another inmate recounted:

> I don't want to lose my job, so I behave as it is expected of me in the yard. I am less confrontational these days and try my best to walk away, especially during heated arguments, which has built my character and helped me become more patient as a person. (Luke, 23, Inmate)

Therefore, external labour activities have the potential to reduce inmates' tendency to get into trouble, because the routine and schedules of the work help them to build a work ethic, which is an essential quality that they will need to live and work in legitimate jobs upon their release. Thus, external labour activities enable inmates to acquire qualities that are deemed as being a 'better person' to enable them to find and hold onto a legitimate job because they provide the tools they need to survive after incarceration (Richmond, 2014).

During the interviews, when asked about exploitation, most of the inmates expressed their disdain towards the work, the pace required and the contemptible wages they receive, but had a lot of respect and admiration for the involvement of the officers:

> I think the masters do all they do so that when prisoners are discharged, they would remember everything and would not want to come back again. We work continuously under pressure and strict supervision because the masters are also working with time and are under a lot of pressure to perform as well. I'm a gang leader, so I do talk to my boss, and sometimes he asks me 'Can you see the job I am making you do?' and that if I were at home, I wouldn't be doing this type of job, or even if I were, I wouldn't be taking this amount of money, so I should advise myself and my colleagues and others when I go out. (Isaac, 37, Inmate)

Notwithstanding their admiration for the officers, from the informal discussions, it was clear that inmates believed that it was the officers and the service that were exploiting them for their own personal gains, and not the employers. According to the inmates, the employers pay the officers the amount due to them, but the service has a chain of command that officers who go out to work must follow and they have to render accounts to their respective senior officers. They believed they were the ones exploiting them, and not the employers:

> With a construction job, if I were to be doing it outside, I would have been paid at least GH¢80 cedis a day, but because I am in prison now, the officers take the money meant for the work and give us just GH¢10 cedis, but we are not bothered because the job helps us to exercise. (Elijah, 32, Inmate)

Again, another inmate intimated that:

> Some of the jobs pay whilst others don't. For instance, if the job is supposed to be GH¢60 cedis per person, the officer negotiates with the employer and at the end of the day he gets paid and gives us GH¢10 cedis each for our hard day's work. So the officer determines how much we get paid. The officers come and render accounts to the senior officers, or sometimes the senior officers go for the contract themselves and organize

> the boys to work, but payment for such jobs goes up directly, so we do not get any money, not even the GH¢10 cedis a day pay. (Caleb, 29, Inmate)

Even though the inmates believe that the officers exploit them for their labour, they still admire them for the role they play:

> My master has done a lot for me since I started working with him and I can't thank him enough. He has helped me turn my life around and made me see so many aspects of my life differently. In spite of the conditions of the work, he motivates me a lot and encourages me through difficulties in my life. When we go out, I don't care what he tells me to do, I'll just do it, and at times when he tells me we did not make any money from the work, I believe him, because he will never lie to me. (Daniel, 32, Inmate)

This admiration eventually extends to influence the actions of inmates, as it makes them understand that the officers are just doing their job and trying to help them. This was evidenced when inmates had the opportunity to escape when the officer with whom they went out collapsed, but they decided to stay to help him instead:

> Some officers have very cordial relationships with inmates, which helps them a lot. For instance, we have a reported case where inmates rushed an officer who took them out to the hospital because he took ill and came back to the prison to report it without escaping. (Philip, 32, Corporal)

Moreover, from the officers believe in a cordial relationship where they treat inmates as brothers and sisters—an affiliation which they believe fosters rehabilitation among the inmates:

> We have a very cordial relationship, like brothers; the only difference between us is our uniforms, but we also know our individual roles as well, especially when we go out. We talk like the way we are talking, and if there is anything they tell me that I can't handle, I tell my boss after work. The interactions we have with inmates help, but the point is that in front of the officers, they pretend that they have heard everything, but the real test occurs when they go to their various homes. (Peter, 43, Sergeant)

Another officer also shared his account:

> The relationship helps them to share their problems, and even if one of them plans to do something bad, they would report him. This has helped to transform the lives of inmates. For instance, one guy changed and is now a pastor, one is even a journalist,

> and the other is a driver, but all of them used to work at the palace, and sometimes the chiefs also advise them as well. (Philip, 32, Corporal)

These stories show that the close relationships and affiliations between inmates and officers can be considered a positive source of reinforcement which propels inmates to change their actions, as they see the officers as role models. Hence, officers are held in high esteem and are accountable for the actions and subsequent behaviour of inmates in the service. The consequences of these relationships are linked to inmates' future behaviour upon their release. Hence, external labour activities should be recognised not as any other prison activity but as a comprehensive activity that builds a network of meaningful experiences for inmates during incarceration. It creates social relations by melting and rekindling others. It also blurs the lines of authority between inmates and officers, which allows inmates to be comfortable enough to talk to officers in informal settings. These social settings and discussions profoundly impact the prisoners and often encourage them to turn their lives around upon their release. However, the rehabilitative intent of the work itself is highly debatable, as I discovered during the interviews and informal discussions that many inmates engage in external labour for anything but rehabilitation.

6.2.6 Personal character rebranding through character moulding

The environment of the prison is such that it influences inmates to want to work and remain employed because the alternative is to stay idle in the yard, which most of the inmates detest. Accordingly, many of the inmates narrated that the jobs that they performed during their incarceration would not motivate them if they were outside and that they would usually quit a job if they did not like it. Thus, prison work helps prisoners to work through a lot of issues and make the effort to overcome some challenges they may have to encounter when working outside the prison upon their release. Through external labour activities, inmates learn how to work well with others, which eventually leads to a noticeable change in their disposition and also how they relate to other people:

> Before I came here, I would quit a job for the slightest issue, such as not liking my co-workers, but here I am paired with people I do not necessarily know and like, and I am supposed to tolerate them enough to work well with them or stay in the yard. This experience has taught me how to work well with people even if I don't like them. (Judas, 24, Inmate)

Therefore, prison work enables inmates to develop their work ethics by putting them in a situation where they are forced to work and interact with people they would otherwise not work or interact with in the yard or on the streets. This enables inmates to develop the patience and character needed to work efficiently with people from all walks of life, which is something they need in order to lead a crime-free life and engage in legitimate work outside the walls of the prisons. Again, participants narrated that when they go out to work, they are given the opportunity to have some alone time, which affords them the opportunity to think and reflect on their actions, which they stated is something they cannot do when in the yard. The work environment is different and less tense compared to the climate of the prison, which can be described as 'survival of the fittest', but in external labour, they put their differences aside and work towards the common goal of finishing the tasks assigned to them, with everyone pitching in to ensure that the job is carried out accordingly. This enables them to develop strong ties amongst themselves, like a family, because there is a sense of camaraderie.

6.2.7 Horizontal comradeship, quasi-family relationships and brotherhood of trust

The prison is a community with deep horizontal comradeship that binds together all of its inmates irrespective of who they are or their statuses in society. In fact, the prison is the only place where there is supposed to be no categorisation of people because all inmates are rendered to the same class and treatment regardless of their positions outside the walls of the prisons. Hence, prisoners share a set of 'sacred' characteristics that connect them together as a community. This sense of connection enables inmates to relate well with one another, to the extent that they start to see themselves as relatives and thus build quasi-family relationships among themselves:

> We are all brothers here and see ourselves as one people, so sometimes when I work on the farms and do not get paid or directly benefit from the proceeds from the produce, I know that my brothers in the prisons who do not have a farm will get something to eat and thus benefit from my hard work. (Joshua, 32, Inmate)

Again, there is a level of trust and camaraderie that comes with being in prison, which enables inmates to work cohesively together and support each other in their personal lives as well, because external labour activities take inmates out of the prison environment and onto neutral

ground where they are supposed to work well and thus to be motivated to finish the tasks ahead of them, irrespective of their differences:

> During external labour activities, we begin to get on well with other inmates, as the work affords us the opportunity to work in close proximity with one another for not less than eight hours a day, which fosters our feeling of brotherhood and the chance to know each other very well and take care of ourselves. When we are in the yard, it is always about our individual interests, thus each one for himself, but during work, we put our differences aside and work towards our common interest. (Ebenezer, 35, Inmate)

Consequently, prisoners expressed interest in changing their mindset and personality for good during external labour activities and moving towards becoming more reliable and more sociable by expressing interest in and showing concern for the feelings of other inmates, thus emphasizing the brotherhood of trust among them. This prompts them to teach new inmates about the work and also to create the environment for new recruits in the gangs. Again, this brotherhood of trust is not only felt towards inmates who work together but is also sometimes extended to those who do not work at all. As a result, those who can afford to do so are able to show their love, commitment and support to their fellow inmates by providing for them:

> We have people in prison whose family members are not aware they are here, so we use the money we get from external labour to support ourselves. Also, when a new admission comes and he looks destitute, I sometimes take him under my wing and help him out financially. (Andrew, 40, Inmate)

Furthermore, horizontal comradeship and its resulting family ties between inmates prompt them to enter into saviour mode, where they individually or collectively come up with wide-ranging interventions that offer packages of assistance to the neediest and most vulnerable inmates among them. Likewise, another inmate also explained:

> Going out is necessary because there are some people who do not get any visitors here, and for such people, even eating is a problem if we do not get donations and things like that to supplement the food we eat here, as the food is not sufficient to satisfy us, so going out to work and getting money to support them is all they have. At least when we are outside they can tell us to help them get some things from the market and food as well. (Gideon, 31, Inmate)

Consequently, this horizontal camaraderie felt by inmates during their incarceration can empower and embolden them to counter and resist the vertical hierarchies of power in the

prisons and do things on their own terms, instead of following the rules stated by the prison administration. This reduces the potency of external labour activities in achieving their main goal of rehabilitation:

> All the things I am telling you about our operations are open secrets to the officers, but they find it difficult to catch us every time, as we smuggle items into the prison all the time. The only way officers can catch us is when they get the hint that we are bringing something inside by an inmate telling on us; otherwise, we do this operation every day. I mean, it is the reason we go out to work every day. (Isaiah, 32, Inmate)

Eventually, this bond among inmates binds them together as a family even after their release, which can invariably impede their rehabilitation and reintegration into society and subsequently turn them into career prisoners. The next section explores how some inmates prefer to be imprisoned rather than rehabilitation through external labour activities and subsequently released from the prisons.

6.3 Prison-hopping, the story of career prisoners: When life as a prisoner is the better option

Life in prison is notorious for making inmates obey set rules as well as acclimatising to the environment of prisons, which often renders inmates incapable to deal with life outside the prison walls. This is because every mundane activity that they used to carry out before incarceration, such as routines, habits and daily behaviours, is altered to favour successful assimilation of the culture in the prisons rather than the general culture and lifestyle that exists in contemporary societies outside the prisons (van Dooren et al., 2011). Consequently, most inmates grow to accept and absorb these prison-specific customs as their way of life, which leaves a continual, negative post-prison effect on them (Chikadzi, 2017). As a result, some inmates are unable to cope with the realities of living outside, and they often end up back in prison, where they want to continue living because of their familiarity with the prison environment. This is reinforced by a news article in which Mr Charles Boamah Domfeh, a 70-year-old ex-convict who was released from prison willingly went back, stating that:

> Life outside the prisons is very difficult, so I came back to the prisons, as I felt that is the place I can get the help I needed and also that is the life I now know, because I was facing so many difficulties living after my release so I realised that the best option was for me to come back to the prison (Crime Check Tv GH, 2020).

This was confirmed by an inmate who told me a similar story about his cellmate:

> I know a guy in my cell who engaged in external labour some time back, was discharged and is now recidivated. His reason was that he did not feel like working because he thought he could not match up with what was happening outside. He went to steal again and came back, but the person I'm talking about is not someone who is lazy: he is hard-working, so I was surprised to hear him say that. (James, 29, Inmate)

An officer shared a similar story, which was corroborated by a senior officer:

> There is this guy who likes staying in prisons, as he cannot cope with staying outside in the real world because he values life in prison, so whenever he is released, he reoffends and takes himself to the police station, hoping to be jailed, and even if the officers at the station refuses to charge him, he persuades them to at least arraign him before a court because he knows what he would tell the judge to prove he is guilty when he gets there. (Peter, 43, Sergeant, confirmed by Solomon, 56, Chief Officer)

This indicates the fragile, mystify and baffled state in which some inmates find themselves upon release, as they struggle with reintegration and adjustment, propelled by the conflicting outlooks and experiences of life inside and outside prison. Therefore, irrespective of the skills that inmates develop in prison, it becomes difficult for them to live a fully legitimate life outside, so they prefer life in prison. At some point, prisoners grow to acknowledge the prisons as a pseudo-safe space where they are able to persevere and abstain from criminal behaviour, which is difficult to replicate outside owing to the social impediments that confront them upon their release (Larsen et al., 2019).

6.3.1 Prison as a safety net for Inmates

Although most people abhor the idea of imprisonment as an alternative form of living, for some women, the idea of living a happy and lucrative life outside prison is a mere illusion, as the majority of women who are incarcerated have faced some form of abuse. According to (Bradley & Davino, 2002; Bucerius et al., 2021), some incarcerated women may view prison as a relatively safe place with a secure environment, as the rate of abuse recorded by such women can be compared to the rate reported by people rendered homeless (Browne & Bassuk, 1997). Hence, some women who are imprisoned feel safer after their incarceration than when they were living as free citizens. It is on this basis that some of them have made imprisonment a lucrative business where they can cash in on the benefits that prison has to offer. Thus, some

women prefer to be imprisoned, not necessarily for rehabilitative purposes, but because the benefits they would derive from being imprisoned rather than being free members of society:

> For others, they just love it here because there are some things they get for free, such as toiletries, sanitary pads and others, that they would never get outside. Sometimes people bring their used clothing here, which could be fairly new, and because some of them can't even afford these things back home, getting them free of charge here makes them appreciate here more. (Dorcas, 37, Sergeant)

From the information gathered from these inmates, it stands to reason that numerous benefits can be derived from being imprisoned, which people outside the prisons have worked out. For instance, women who were not financially able to afford a decent room for their families and had to squat in makeshift rooms, or worse, were rendered homeless, now live in prisons with the opportunity to sleep comfortably on a bed in a hassle-free room with a television, whilst being guarded by officers, without having to pay rent or utilities, as stressed by an officer:

> Here, they live comfortably, unlike the men, who have to arrange themselves every night. We even have more female officers than inmates, so they get to sleep in a comfy bed every night without paying for anything. (Priscilla, 52, Senior Officer)

Similarly, an inmate also recounted her experience:

> Aside from freedom, which I am deprived of, I feel comfortable and well-treated here. No need to worry about what to pay my landlord at the end of my tenancy or pay for utilities at the end of the month. The officers are good, and we are treated as one big family over here. (Candence, 29, Inmate)

Again, people who would have starved if they were outside are fed freely throughout the day and are sometimes able to choose what to eat:

> Inmates here enjoy themselves really well because they eat good food, unlike the men. Sometimes we can have food in abundance and even donate to the male prison. Also, at times, inmates complain of eating the same food every day or can decide on the food they would like to eat. As you can see for yourself, this is the quality of the food prepared by the inmates themselves to be consumed by them. (Mary, 35, Lance Corporal)

Aside from having a choice of food from the prison administration, inmates are also given considerable donations by people from outside the prisons, as I witnessed on one of my visits on 4th January 2022, when a beauty queen decided to celebrate her win with inmates in the prison. As confirmed by an officer, many people are moved by women being imprisoned and decide to help with anything they have, be it cash or in kind, and as frequently as they can:

> They do get a lot of free items from here because people really donate to them. For example, all these items you can see in front of me are all donations from people who came here today and wanted to help them. So inmates here get a lot of stuff freely. (Dorcas, 37, Sergeant)

Another officer expanded on this:

> Sometimes people come here to celebrate their birthdays with inmates and donate to them afterwards. Others are also directed by their pastors and churches to come around to donate to them: hence, they are engulfed with gifts all the time. (Naomi, 33, Lance Corporal)

As a result of these gifts and donations, some inmates find it necessary to stay in prison because that is where they can be resourceful, taking advantage of such donations to provide for their families:

> … because they get a lot of things, most of them send bags and packages to their families all the time. During these festivities, a lot of people would come around and give them stuff, and afterwards, they would take what they need and send the rest back home to their families. (Christabel, 39, Sergeant)

Similarly, another officer also recounted:

> We see it all the time in instances where inmates pack sanitary pads, soap, clothes, and other provision items for their families. They would gather what they are given, and when they have enough, would hire a taxi to take them to their homes or give them to their families when they come for visitations. I believe this is how they can cope with taking care of their families. (Priscilla, 52, Senior Officer)

Based on these benefits enjoyed by inmates, to which they would not be accustomed if they were living outside, some prisoners prefer to stay imprisoned, because their quality of life is better than if they were free but had responsibilities and financial commitments. Therefore,

how women perceive the prisons as better than life in the community is eventually a subjective matter, purely contingent on their assessment of their overall life circumstances before incarceration. Consequently, inmates hop from one prison to another to keep themselves incarcerated. To facilitate their lucrative careers by engaging in prison-hopping, they commit the same or similar crimes from one region or section of the country to another just to be caught and imprisoned. In addition, such inmates commit crimes in the cities, because the goal is to be imprisoned in the central or bigger prisons to enable them to get the treatment they seek, as the bigger prisons are far more lucrative than the smaller ones. During the interviews, I met some inmates like this, of whom one in particular (Abigail, 23, Inmate) stood out because she was identified by an officer who had formerly supervised her in her previous prison. This inmate was involved in a child kidnapping in one region, served her one-year sentence, and then went to another region to commit the same crime just to be sentenced again for five years. When I asked her why she was in jail for committing the same crime for which she had served a previous sentence, she explained:

> Before I came here, I was sent to prison for child kidnapping … but the thing is that you know, in our society, the moment you commit one crime, they tag you with any subsequent ones even if you were not involved in it, and besides, the prison is not such a terrible place after all. Taking everything into consideration, it is better than my living conditions outside. (Abigail, 23, Inmate)

This would not have been recognised by the service had there not been a transfer of the said officer to her current prison:

> I know her because I used to work in the prison where she served her first sentence. I recognise her and others like her whenever I get transferred to other regions. This is what they do, and I am sure she would go to another region to start over there again … they do not want to work, as they have seen that there are some advantages to imprisonment after all (Priscilla, 52, Senior Officer)

Commenting on the prospects of career prisoners, Priscilla (52, Senior Officer) narrated:

> Some people don't have anything like any source of subsistence, so most of them do anything just to be sent here. Most inmates are at their best when they are here, as they look very good in terms of their health and everything, but when they are released, you realise that they look miserable physically, emotionally and mentally, so you realise that it's very difficult living outside: they have a very hard life … it is only when you are outside that

you observe that staying here is terrible, but when they arrive here, they realise that it is different and they can move freely, do whatever they like and are happy.

Similarly, an inmate who has been in jail many times stated that he felt healthier both physically and emotionally when in prison than out of prison:

> I am a drug addict, but when I come to prison, I stop and look really healthy, but the moment I'm released, I go back to my old ways, as I was released on 1st May but came back on 3rd August. (Elijah, 32, Inmate)

Moreover, the tasks engaged in during external labour activities are not readily available to inmates should they find themselves outside the prisons. Recently, it has become challenging to find a lucrative job with the right experience and qualifications, even for people with legitimate career paths (Aryeetey & Baah-Boateng, 2016; Dako-Gyeke, 2016; Honorati & Johansson De Silva, 2016) so it would even be harder for those with criminal records. But, when inmates are imprisoned, their services are in demand from both individuals and organisations due to their work ethics, among other things. Therefore, as an institution, individuals and organisations elect to bring their jobs to the prison for which inmates are selected to work. Hence, it is easier to be employed whilst in prison than after release, as affirmed by an ex-convict:

> When I was in prison, I used to work six days (from Mondays to Saturdays) a week, but I have been at home for more than a year and I haven't had any job yet, so I rely on my family for my upkeep. (Jones, 40, Ex-convict)

Furthermore, being incarcerated and engaging in external labour activities enable some inmates to set themselves up for life. Such inmates are able to gather enough money to start their lives anew upon their release because the prison environment is such that it forces them to save, as they are not permitted to legally keep a lot of money on themselves at any time in the yard, which would result in impulse purchases like they would make if they were outside the prison:

> Whenever I am paid, I make sure I save at least half of the payment so that I would not go home empty-handed. (Christian, 36, Inmate)

Another inmate shared a similar view:

> The work in prison can sometimes be good because it gives us some financial benefit. When we are able to save the money we get from the work, it helps us to get something small to carry along with us when we are released. (Cornelius, 21, Inmate)

An officer also intimated that he only works with inmates who are ready and willing to save the money they earn from working outside in order to get at least some capital to take home upon their release:

> If an inmate buys a lot of stuff with the wages I pay them, I just see through them that they are not serious with their lives and also do not want to get something to take back home to start their lives upon their release, so I will just drop such individuals. (Philip, 32, Corporal)

As a result of this saving pattern encouraged in the prisons, inmates are able to gather more money than they would not ordinarily get, were they working outside the prisons. This saving culture encourages inmates to want to come back to prison whenever they need some significant amounts of money for their work:

> The reason why I am here again is that the last time when I came here, I was able to gather enough money, but the problem is that I wasn't able to utilise it well and lost it all when I went out, but since I didn't find any work outside the prison, it makes sense to come back to the place that offered me the financial assistance that I needed in the first place. (Elijah, 32, Inmate)

Moreover, another reason why some inmates are encouraged to become career prisoners is to help them fulfil their financial obligations to their families back at home. Accordingly, some inmates intimated that they still fulfilled their financial obligations of paying rent, school fees, and housekeeping money to their families from prison, as it is much easier and more lucrative than being outside:

> Some of us here have a lot of bills to pay, so we have to do everything we can to ensure we get the money for it. For instance, I have to work hard to take care of my wife and children right here with every little money I make, because not working when I was at home prompted me to steal, which landed me here, so once I have something to do which gives me money, that's all I do to enable me to take care of my family. (Barnabas, 43, Inmate)

The many entrepreneurial ventures and opportunities available in prisons propel inmates to want to remain incarcerated in order to reap the benefits thereof, rather than to encounter the

dauting life as a free person on the streets. Thus, if individuals or organisations would give ex-convicts the opportunity to take advantage of their latent entrepreneurial skills and improve their economic position, this would enable ex-convicts to subvert the conditions in which they find themselves over time and experience financial freedom for legitimate employment. Additionally, inmates who engage in external labour activities are financially equipped to the point where they are able to gather enough money to settle their debts upon their release. This is made possible by their incarceration, as recounted by the officers and inmates themselves, who believe that it would not have been possible had the inmates not been imprisoned:

> Yes, we've had a prisoner who was able to save up enough money to pay back his founder as he saved up the wages he received whilst incarcerated (Philip, 32, Corporal)

Another officer also gave an example:

> Some time back, we had a prisoner who collected firewood from the farm we were working on and sold them and was able to make enough money to pay back what he owed when he was released from prison. (Theophilus, 48, ACOP)

Moreover, some inmates also choose to benefit from imprisonment by getting the needed attention and assistance from their families:

> Families come to the prisons to post bail for their relatives, but inmates usually opt to rather stay in prison because their perceptions about life in prison are different from their experiences, and rather, request the family to save the money for them so that upon their release, they can use it to start their lives anew. (Judith, 34, Corporal)

Again, inmates who take part in external labour activities are not just remunerated in cash, but also in kind. Some officers recounted instances where female inmates are provided with tools to start their lives and careers after their incarceration:

> After serving their prison term, some inmates are given equipment to start their new life. For instance, one woman who was convicted for five years was presented with hairdressing tools such as a dryer, towels and seed money by a church to start her own hairdressing salon after serving her sentence. Similarly, inmates who served in the bakery are given an oven, baking pans, flour, other baking items and seed money to start their own bakery business. (Dorcas, 37, Sergeant)

With all these benefits accruing to inmates whilst incarcerated, it comes as no surprise that some decide to make a career out of staying imprisoned. Consequently, their lives are transformed from imprisonment, and over time, these inmates realise that the jobs, routines and experience offered are not meant to help keep them on the right path as compared to the wages and other benefits that these jobs offer them, which they do not want to jeopardise.

6.4 Recidivism

Upon their release from prison, ex-convicts' reputations are often ingrained in their past, based on their criminal records and the ensuing perceptions of untrustworthiness. This perception intensifies and coagulates when ex-prisoners decide to reintegrate into society to work legitimate jobs and lead a crime-free lifestyle. Consequently, as a result of their inadequate capacity to create legitimate income, limited support from their community, an overall shortage of usable life and work skills, experiences, and constrained perception of current societal patterns (Brown, 2008; Soeker et al., 2013), ex-prisoners find it very difficult to desist from the life of crime:

> I know one here who spent less than two months outside after his release and was incarcerated again. I don't know why they don't value the freedom they get and commit offences to be brought back. Also, another was released in November and in December he came back with a much higher sentence than what he had before. (Ebenezer, 35, Inmate)

Furthermore, in recounting his own experience and those of his friends, an inmate who had been to prison twice stated:

> I recidivated even though I engaged in external labour during my first time in prison and most of the people I did time with who also engaged in external labour have also recidivated as well. (Gabriel, 28, Inmate)

Another officer iterated that some inmates recidivate not because they want to but because their deplorable economic conditions force them to seek constant imprisonment:

> Sometimes it has got nothing to do with the job but the circumstances of the inmates because a lot of inmates are homeless and sleep outside, so the prison is some kind of refuge to them, as they have nowhere to go. (Dorcas, 37, Corporal)

In a similar vein, an officer reiterated that it is not only released inmates who go on to engage in a life of crime, as there have been instances where inmates who were sent outside to work have engaged in criminal activity:

> We had a guy here who was released recently and has been back to the prison again. Such a person has made up their mind not to change because the change depends on the person and not necessarily their involvement in external labour activities. For example, we have had instances where some prisoners who were sent outside to work rather chose to steal again instead. So you, the officer escorting them, have to be vigilant. (Nathanael, 58, Senior Chief Officer)

As an alternative to creating new routines alongside non-criminals and thriving people, ex-offenders are confronted with stigma, which stems from the opinion that they no longer fit into society, and the resultant pessimism that accompanies societal denunciation (Buck et al., 2022). Brown, (2008) found that the absence of acceptance and the means to be accepted can be the catalyst for a variety of emotional reactions that can lead to relapse into the maladaptive activities that preceded ex-offenders original sentence. During the process of community reintegration, many ex-offenders attempt to adopt the lifestyle of productive and prosperous citizens. However, the new social identity of ex-offenders can result in significant discrimination and social deprivation, which in turn negatively impacts successful community reintegration:

> Oh! That is very common. Even I have personally experienced it: I've had people who I have personally escorted outside to work many jobs, been released and been back for the third or fourth time because when they go out, they don't get jobs and so are unable to apply the skills they acquired whilst incarcerated. (Philip, 32, Corporal)

This results in ex-offenders exhibiting what (Patzelt et al., 2014) refer to as *high levels of learned helplessness*, which leads to the idea that after punishment or failure, as in imprisonment, people become passive and continue to display this passivity even after future environmental changes (from prison to the outside world), which impedes their future successes. Therefore, irrespective of the skills that inmates are able to acquire through external labour activities, these social barriers prevent them from utilising and benefiting from them, and that brings them back to prison:

> We know that the kind of training and hardship they have experienced here would deter them from engaging in crime, but the skill application depends on the individual. I don't

> think we have documentation which shows those inmates who have participated in external labour and have recidivated, but the truth is that we see them every day. Some have recidivated six, seven, eight times, and others we have lost count. (Theophilus, 48, ACOP)

Similarly, another officer also explained:

> Some inmates recidivate based on societal stigmatization, others due to the unacceptability of family members and friends. A lot of prisoners leave the prisons without money; all the years of staying here, the only friendships they would have cultivated would be their fellow prisoners, who accept them for who they are and with whom they can go and engage in illegal activities, eventually ending up back in prison. (Solomon, 56, Chief Officer)

Therefore, even though engagement in external labour activities may be effective at first, inmates may be unable to utilise these skills in their daily activities to achieve the goals they set, because even if they are said to be rehabilitated after their incarceration, reintegration and utilisation of their skills becomes another hurdle to negotiate. This is because when inmates are released, they are left to their own devices, as the service has no program in place to support their release. The stories gathered from the respondents suggest that the service only caters to inmates when they are imprisoned, and not much is done after their release. Thus, when inmates finish their sentences, they are asked for their place of arrest, the service takes back its jumper, gives the inmate their clothes, escorts them to the gate and provides transport back to their place of arrest:

> When prisoners are released, we say goodbye to them at the gate, give them their transportation to the place they were arrested, and that's all until we see them back here, or never. (Samuel, 46, Chief Officer)

Thus, reintegration is an essential facet of released prisoners' lives, and as such, there was increased concern among the participants because they believed that irrespective of the training they were given during their incarceration if society did not receive them and accept the skills that they have acquired in prison, all the effort exerted would have been a waste of time:

> When I inquired from most of the recidivists, most of them said it wasn't the job but the society's unwillingness to accept them, as some preferred to be here instead of their homes because their family, society and everyone see them as pariahs: hence, they want to be in the prison where they are received and welcomed by the prisoners, officers and

> environment. It is not about the job, so alternatively, they would just go and look for something to bring them back, because some of them see the prison more as a home than their home itself. (Stephen, 38, Corporal)

Therefore, it stands to reason that it is the inclusion and participation of ex-convicts into their communities and the processes aimed at empowering them to partake once more in the economic, cultural and social lives of their communities that facilitate their continual rehabilitation and consequent integration. Yet, although a lot of ex-convicts have been released over the years, many find it difficult to reintegrate with their communities because of the lack of support programs for ex-convicts. This hostile experience of ex-convicts is likely to make reintegration difficult, if not impossible, and create some incentives to commit further crimes in order to return to prison.

6.5 Conclusion

Working whilst incarcerated has been seen as one of the strategies that can help inmates to manage the abundance of time they have in the prisons by keeping them engaged rather than leaving them idle in the yard all day. There have been some discussions about how this works to help foster rehabilitation and further reintegration of inmates into society upon their release. From the discussions so far, it is evident that the rehabilitative intent of the work remains questionable, as many of the inmates enjoyed the other benefits of the work, as opposed to its role in rehabilitation. Granted that the methods used and the tools employed are archaic, for many prisoners, engaging in external labour activities affords them the opportunity to make changes in some aspects of their lives that they found challenging or even impossible before their incarceration. For such prisoners, external labour imbues a feeling of self-confidence that they may not have had before or had lost upon imprisonment. Additionally, engagement in external labour activities improves inmates' health and well-being, assists them in finding a sense of equanimity amidst the stress and chaos of imprisonment, enables them to give back to the society which they hurt by getting involved in crime, and enhances their self-worth and self-esteem, which invariably fills them with the hope to imagine a meaningful future upon their release. Hence, external labour activities project prison as a place that prepares inmates for a more positive life post-release. Even though some people still view the work as an appropriate tool used by the prison administration to enable inmates to pass time, others see it as an opportunity for inmates to receive the ramifications for their actions. Still, external labour

activities have several purposes within the prison environment, although the rehabilitation of inmates is often not a focus. Yet, the opportunities offered by the work in which inmates engage can have some value in their lives, as this work teaches prisoners some skills, grants them the opportunity to work in a professional setting applying those skills and engenders the soft skills that are required by contemporary employers. Although external labour activities offer these benefits, which are valued whilst incarcerated, their efficacy in enhancing prisoners' outcomes upon release remains unclear, as ex-offenders are often unable to apply the skills gained in their communities or find legitimate employment afterwards, resulting in subsequent re-incarceration.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

The initial observation of the study was that for incarcerated inmates, engaging in outside work can lead to the discovery of behaviours and skills needed for rehabilitative purposes. As a result, the study sought to explore the understanding of work carried out by inmates as narrated by prisoners, ex-offenders, and officers in the Ghanaian context. In this regard, the study draws on extant literature on prison work, prison labour, rehabilitation, and the general framework of prison labour, in order to position prison work and its rehabilitative impact in the context of a developing country through the lens of practice theory. As observed by authors such as Brace & Davidson, (2018), Browne, (2007), De Jonge, (2018), LeBaron, (2015), Pandeli et al., (2019), factors such as invisible discrimination, coercion, and slavery claims have confounded the comprehension of prison work, relegating it to the bench in the mainstream literature on work. The focus of this research was to explore how the outside prison work in which inmates engage during incarceration is organised and experienced by prisoners. Employing discursive practice as a lens, I drew upon Schatzki, (2002) three elements of understanding, procedures, and engagement to practice, which reinforce 'sayings' and 'doings', as analytical starting points to exploring prisoners' external labour activities by placing emphasis on inmates' experiences, opinions and needs. Delivering a fine-grained account of the external labour activities of prisoners, three main questions emerged from the research: (1) How is the work done by prisoners outside their prisons organised and labelled in the discourse on prisoner labour? (2) How do prisoners experience the work they do outside their prisons during their incarceration? (3) How does the work prisoners do outside the prisons contribute to their rehabilitation?

This concluding chapter of the thesis is structured as follows. First, each of the research questions driving the empirical inquiry is revisited by providing an overview of the key findings as revealed from each area of focus. Next, the contributions made by the thesis to the literature on prison work are discussed by exploring the key themes that emerged from the research. Following this, an account of the research conclusions is presented, summarising the main findings, after which the implications of these findings and their contributions to relevant literature and policy are presented. Finally, recommendations are made for interventions on the current and prospective external labour activities, and the research is positioned within the scope of current policy and practices of work.

7.1 Restatement of findings

Prison labour presents a paradox for scholars studying the relations and differences between market and non-market work (Zatz, 2009). Prison work programs are distinctive correctional programs that give prisoners both vocational training and real work experience. Their origins can be traced to the early reformatory model, where hard labour—which inculcates self-restraint and offers skill development—was held to be transformative for prisoners (Cullen & Travis, 1984; Dwyer & McNally, 1993; Garvey, 1998). The idea that work can be a transforming experience for prisoners was first propounded in the late 18th century, strongly inclined to the Quaker conviction towards moral rectification through silence and labour (Richmond, 2014). Originally, prisoners were sentenced to hard work as punishment and to discourage future wrongdoing (Cullen & Travis, 1984; Garvey, 1998). Since then, many countries have made strides in modifying the objectives of such work to serve rehabilitative purposes. Consequently, many theories from psychology, criminology and sociology, such as structural strain theory (Merton, 1938) social control or bonding theory (Hirschi & Stark, 1969), economic or rational choice theory (Becker, 1968; Cornish & Clarke, 1987; Ehrlich, 1973; Freeman, 1999), anomie theory (Cloward, 1959; Merton, 1938), social control theories (Kornhauser, 1978; Laub & Sampson, 1993), opportunity theories (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Osgood et al., 1996), and inviable theory (Pandeli et al., 2019), have been employed in studies related to prison work and prison labour and its rehabilitative impact on inmates. Although the extant literature addresses the rehabilitative impact of in-prison work on the lives of prisoners, there is a real gap in regard to how work outside prison influences the lives of inmates, as well as centring on the accounts of *little people* (Boje, 2001; Boje et al., 2015) - in this case, inmates, officers, and ex-offenders from Ghana; how the work is sourced; how inmates interpret the work they do outside the prisons during their incarceration; how inmates relate to each other as well as to the officers during and after work; the interdependencies of inmates and the assignment of tasks; the rules to be obeyed; and the coordination and fulfilment of obligations by all the parties involved, which can positively influence the lives of inmates while they are in prison and also after their release.

Thus, through the lens of practice theory, this study has explored the accounts of inmates, officers, and ex-offenders from five prisons in Ghana. The findings from the research were subsequently divided into three chapters, each providing a response to one of the three research questions.

7.1.1 Beyond cheap labour: How work is organised in prisons

The findings of the first research question sought to unpack how work is organised in prisons, referred to here as the call-up. The stories from the participants demonstrated that the climate of the prisons, as well as their individual experiences, contributed to the organisation of jobs. This was organised through five key themes; (1) external labour, (2) drafting of constituents (subthemes—prisontopia: the fleeting prison environment and work; the formal prison climate: regiments, rules and routines; informal climate: values, norms and culture, selecting officers), (3) gang formation (subthemes: matchmaking, scouting the prisoners, cherry-picking), (4) gang genre (subthemes: temporary gangs—persona non grata, rough-and-ready, ecomock; permanent gangs—special gangs, location gangs), (5) justify your inclusion.

The first aspect of the chapter explored the nature of prison work practices in the prisons and captured prison work (or 'external labour', as used in the prison discourse) to describe work done by inmates outside the prisons during their incarceration. From the discussions, participants indicated that such work is divided into two types under the Prison Service Decree 1972 (N.R.C.D. 46):

- Prison work: the work carried out by inmates that benefits them and the prisons service as a whole, such as farming, cleaning, and engaging in any other activities as directed by the service, in the immediate vicinity of the prisons.
- Hard/outside labour: work outside the confines of the prison that benefits the inmates individually by providing them with skills and financial support for their stay in the prisons.

Also of crucial importance was the exploration of the selection criteria that are used in picking inmates to perform the work and officers to escort them. The participants' stories demonstrated that inmates needed to clearly articulate their perceived behaviour, such as good interpersonal relationships and reasonable use of the autonomy granted (Auty & Liebling, 2020) to describe a model prisoner. The exhibition of this good behaviour should be vouched for by fellow inmates and leaders in the prisons and should be evidenced in the attitudes of the inmates in the yard, as witnessed by officers before they can be considered for work outside the prisons. Thus, the prison climate influences acceptable behaviour in prisoners—a crucial aspect in the selection of inmates for external labour activities. Therefore, for inmates who participated in external labour, two subthemes were uncovered to describe the factors embedded in the climate

that was employed in their selection. The first was the formal prison climate (comprising the regimens, rules and routines formulated by the prison administration that routinise the activities of inmates in the prisons, such as waking up at 5:30 am and going to bed at 5:30 pm, what inmates eat and when, and what inmates do inside and outside the prisons). Second, underneath these formalised practices of routinised life, inmates have also created their own values, cultures, and norms, captured here as the informal climate, which mostly aligns with the formal climate and contributes to shaping their behaviour into model prisoners. These seemingly perfect climatic conditions, where inmates follow the rules stipulated in the formal climate and acclimatise to the cultural values of the prisons to be considered model prisoners for selection to work outside the prisons, were termed 'prisontopia', as the prisoners believed that they existed in their own world outside the country, which made more sense to them than being considered prisoners of crimes hidden away from society. Yet, with perceived accepted behaviour so narrowly defined, inmates felt compelled, encircled by 'eggshells'(Crewe, 2011, p. 520), and held accountable for even the smallest misdemeanours, as they are required to 'constructively engage' (Attrill & Liell, 2007, p. 195) in an institutional activity for which they have little or no real voice. Consequently, Jacobs, (2016) asserts that many prisons fail to convince inmates that they are morally lucid, but for the inmates involved in this study, it is an obligation bestowed on them to be morally upright, as the climate in prison impacts their opportunities for involvement in external labour activities, which in turn impact their need for change and development in prisons.

Also, although working during incarceration is a widespread practice for inmates, as it is legally mandated under the Prison Service Decree 1972 (N.R.C.D. 46), the onus to work is not enforced in the prisons because of the inadequacy of job opportunities and limited production capabilities available (Ivanics, 2022). Thus, to be included in external labour activities is considered a privilege which provides a means of control, usually employed by prison officers (Nuttall, 2000; Van Zyl Smit & Dunkel, 2018). To participate in this seemingly clandestine operation, inmates need to qualify and be examined through rigorous processes developed by the prison administration. For the qualification of inmates for external labour activities, three themes were uncovered: gang formation (this includes the processes that are involved in gang formation); gang genre (the different types of gangs subsequently formed); and justifying one's inclusion (this is where inmates need to constantly prove to themselves and officers their justification to be included in the gangs).

To qualify for the work, inmates must serve one-fifth of their sentences for prison work and one-third for hard/outside labour jobs before they would be considered for any gang (comprising four inmates allocated to one officer). However, the main feature of external labour activities has to do with the involvement of inmates and the freedom they have in picking the gangs to work with, captured under gang formation as matchmaking, scouting the prisoners, and cherry-picking. This reflects the voluntariness (strategies, manoeuvrings, and autonomy) of inmates involved in the selection process of the composition of gang members for the work. Though incarceration, by definition, robs inmates of their autonomy (Bosma et al., 2020), there are still some variations in the degree to which inmates experience freedom in decision-making, especially when it comes to decisions about whom to work with. Therefore, through soft power, inmates are able to manoeuvre and make their way with regard to the type and calibre of people with whom they wish to work. Although inmates have this autonomy of selection, they need to be qualified in terms of how much of their sentences they have served, and must also be perceived as model citizens in order to be considered for selection. Consequently, inmates may be qualified in terms of how much time they have served, but if they are not perceived to be of good character by the standards of the prisons, they could be barred from ever engaging in external labour activities. Subsequently, two genres of gangs emerged to classify how inmates are selected to work outside the prisons: temporary gangs (comprising inmates who are not intentionally selected for any particular job, such as persona non grata, rough-and-ready, and ecomock); and permanent gangs (inmates selected specifically for certain jobs, such as special gangs and location gangs).

When inmates are eventually selected to join a particular gang, they have to constantly justify their inclusion to their gang-mates and the officers alike, or else they risk being ousted or touted as lazy, which can have an impact on their future chances of participating in external labour activities. Taking this cumulative dimension has culminated in the formation of a more solid understanding of how external labour is organised in prisons. Hence, this helps in answering the first research question: 'How is the work done by prisoners outside their prisons organised and labelled in the discourse on prisoner labour?'

7.1.2 Work, labour, and incarceration: How prisoners experience work

The second research question focused on 'how' the motivation, procedures and engagement of inmates play out in the understanding of the work they do outside the prisons. The second

findings chapter thus addressed the practices by which the jobs for external labour activities are sourced and explored how the processes involved in the sourcing of the jobs translate into the understanding of inmates and eventually into the performance of the work. Participants highlighted the practices surrounding external labour activities in terms of how the work is sourced for the inmates, the working environment, the remuneration they get for their work, and the general disposition of inmates towards the work they do outside. They intimated that the jobs are sourced by officers themselves by leveraging their personal and professional networks to ensure that inmates are constantly engaged throughout the week. Consequently, the way and manner in which the jobs are sourced influence the inmates' perception and work ethics. To this end, inmates are compelled to reciprocate the favours bestowed upon them by the officers in personally getting involved to source jobs for them, to the extent that they feel bound to increase the pace and volume of work done to be commensurate to the favours given. The prevalent perception that 'there are no free gifts' propels inmates to want to reciprocate the honour bestowed on them by the officers, as they are driven by their personal ethical qualities and life courses to want to give something in return in this art of gift-giving. This perception, albeit somewhat misplaced, showed that the incorporation of the concept of gift-giving and receiving in external labour with fractured and fragmented work activities fosters altruistic acts of kindness towards inmates and officers alike, as it reflects the quality and quantity of work done by inmates. Additionally, as if socially enacted, the securing of jobs by officers was discovered to coalesce the intentions and work ethics of inmates, as it serves as an essential tool for signalling reciprocation among inmates with regard to the analogous help (work) inmates have or might receive in the future. Indeed, it is evidenced from the display of power and the features of how the jobs are sourced that it is always about establishing and maintaining important relationships, mostly facilitated by ambiguous meanings (Kowalski, 2011). There is no lack of understanding on the part of both the officers and inmates, although there is an effective and deliberate attempt to rebuff a clear declaration of the intentions of both parties: a double standard that is equal and tacitly accepted as the norm, with no foundation except a solid prescription that foils reference to duty—a gift must be freely given (Godbout & Caille, 2000, p. 187). As a result, the more the parties explicitly declare their intentions, the less the act of reciprocating the gift (work) would be free, and this would make a dent in the relationships so cultivated, as leaving the intentions open to interpretation is essential to ensure that the gifts (work) bestowed embody the bond of future commitments.

Furthermore, other crucial aspects of external labour are the working environment, the pace of work, the training and tools used, the terms of engagement, remuneration and the inmates' disposition towards the amount they earn. Inmates who work are not considered to fall under the jurisdiction of labour laws, and this is reflected in the system of payment used in the prisons. The participants in the study indicated that the prisons did not have a stipulated and explicitly stated system of payment for the work done by inmates. Thus, after paying the government fee of GH¢10 cedis (£0.57) per prisoner, inmates are paid based on the discretion of escorting officers. Consequently, officers are at liberty to pay inmates any amount using their own subjective criteria without further scrutiny. In the words of one inmate, '*If you get a good officer, he/she would have pity on you and sort you out, but some officers can also say they did not make any money for the day or inmates are simply not entitled to any payment, as we were sentenced to hard labour*.' From the discussion, it was deduced that the criteria used for payment of wages included: affinity to inmates (when an officer likes a particular inmate/s), merit (the hard-working nature of the inmates/s), stimulation for imminent performance (when an officer wishes to take an inmate or a gang out to work in the future), the amount received from the job, the position of the inmates (gang leaders or members) and the general disposition of the officers (whether the officer is pleased with the composure, discreetness and performance of the gang or an induvial member). This system of payment highlights unfairness in wages, as some inmates iterated that there are times when others are paid differently than them for doing the same job. Another aspect of the remuneration system of external labour is that inmates are paid according to the amount of work done for the pay: in essence, the payment is regulated on an 'earn as you work' system where inmates are compelled to work more to earn more. Consequently, this highlights the pace of work and the working environment of external labour, as inmates are propelled to put in more work to earn more money at the end of the working day. Therefore, inmates seek to complete copious amounts of work within the shortest possible time by working at a fast pace. As a result, inmates find themselves at job sites working better and harder than the non-prisoners with whom they sometimes work, which makes them desirable to employers and preferred to their non-prisoner colleagues (Lafer, 1999; Ramm, 2011; Thompson, 2012). Also, inmates explained that they sometimes worked on more than one job in a day to ensure that they received their targeted wage, as the faster they are able to finish one job and move to the next, the better their chances of being paid well for their efforts. Consequently, inmates work fast, sometimes forfeiting breakfast and even breaks, with no proper or formal training offered to them, just to meet their targets and to make their masters happy. Arguably, the nature of the jobs performed during external labour activities reflects the

fragmentation (Rubery, 2015), flexibilization (Berntsen, 2016) and 3D (Ahmad et al., 2018; Berkelaar et al., 2012) landscape of jobs in which inmates either chose to engage in the informal sector or rejected, preferring to pursue the lucrative and thrilling life of crime (Crook, 2007). In this regard, inmates are not motivated to learn anything from these low-paid jobs with poor training and working conditions; rather, their focus is on completing as many jobs as they possibly can to accumulate enough pay to enable them to survive their incarceration.

The findings from the research mirror the experiences of inmates, as widely recorded in the extant literature on the experiences of prisoners working in prisons. This provides a glimpse into the reality of the experiences of inmates who work outside the prisons of Ghana. Thus, the findings of this work are consistent with those of prior research (Chennault & Sbicca, 2022; Crewe, 2011, 2012; De Jonge, 2018; Fletcher, 2011; Guilbaud, 2010; Ivanics, 2022; Jung & LaLonde, 2019; Moses & Smith, 2007; Pandeli, 2015) which shares the views of inmates who work in prison during their incarceration, thus reinforcing our knowledge of the experiences of inmates who work as part of their sentences in prisons. Although the experiences shared by the inmates in the aforementioned studies were based on inside-prison work, rather than the work outside prison examined in the current study, the findings are consistent with each other and demand continuing conversations regarding how inmates should be perceived in terms of the work they do whilst incarcerated and the conditions under which they have to perform such tasks. Taken together, this helps in answering the second research question: 'How do prisoners experience the work they do outside their prisons during their incarceration?' This is demonstrated in how the motivation, procedure and engagement of the participants culminate to influence the performance of the work inmates do outside the prison by underscoring the power dynamics between the parties involved in the work and how the sourcing of the work plays a role in influencing its performance.

7.1.3 External labour: Rehabilitation through transgression transparency and personal narrative control

Through the documentation of a wide variety of social and administrative behavioural control measures, labelled under the broad themes of transgression transparency and personal narrative control, the findings on the third research question provide a detailed exploration of the strategies employed by the prisons to ensure and enhance the rehabilitation of inmates. In an effort to stimulate character modification, the prison service supplements the punishment of incarceration with external labour activities, which serves to make the occurrence of inmates'

transgressions transparent in order to prompt rehabilitation for minor offences such as bringing contraband into the prisons, lazing about during work, indiscipline, disobeying orders from an escorting officer, and fighting or arguing with fellow inmates at work or in the yard. Such transparency stems from the indirect delivery of punishment, such that transgressors are not selected or are barred from participating in work for which they are qualified due to their behaviour, of which other inmates are made aware, or when inmates are reallocated to work only within the prison and not in outside labour activities. Also, transparency follows from informal communication between an officer and a gang leader or gang member about the conduct of an inmate, or by the administration of the prisons to make the behaviour of the inmates known to others to serve as a deterrent to all inmates, especially those who work outside the prisons, thereby fostering a sense of character modification among the inmates, eventually leading to rehabilitation. Although making unacceptable behaviour transparent could be viewed as a step towards public shaming (Goffman, 1963), such transparency is conceptualised in this study as an enabling condition for the kind of open discourse needed on external labour activities as well as the self-narrative development that is required in order to achieve the rehabilitation of inmates (Cain, 1991; Frey et al., 2022). Thus, transgression transparency allows inmates to tell their stories as many times as they can (Boje, 2001) in an attempt to shape their narratives until the stories are embodied in their discourses, which help to shape their behaviour and that of others witnessing their transformation, instead of shutting down communications between inmates, their fellow inmates, escorting officers and the prison administration as a whole. Thus, making inmates' transgressions transparent to other inmates and officers triggers a learning process that fosters the rehabilitation of inmates.

To this end, the discussion from the participants yielded three dimensions towards the rehabilitation of inmates: the individual, the institutional, and the macro level.

Individual level

At the individual level, external labour enables inmates to gain some job-relevant skills during incarceration to equip them to secure jobs post-incarceration, apply the skills to their jobs, and live a crime-free life. Another individual-level goal is the cultivation of good work ethics among inmates, especially those who were not economically and professionally engaged before incarceration, who are afforded the opportunity to participate in jobs that expose them to the ethics of the working environment and imbue in them a sense of responsibility and the skills

that are needed in the outside professional world. Through the work, inmates gain the experience needed for better employment prospects and consequently better life choices after incarceration. Additionally, inmates are enabled to learn a vocation, such as farming or construction, and at times the prison service facilitates the process of getting them licensed before their release. Behaviour modification is another individual-level goal to enable inmates to cultivate good and acceptable behaviour, espoused by the prison and society at large, through the work they do outside the prisons. Therefore, the change in inmates' behaviour in both the long and the short term is viewed as a result of their resolve, their experience of working with non-prisoners, and the settings and influence of the working environment they experience outside the prison, which helps to shape their behaviour (Kolb, 2015; Lewin, 2013). As inmates assimilate the factors from their working environment, it provides them with the capacity to accommodate and adjust to their immediate environment, which involves working and being productive with their time, and this is believed to help shape their character to conform to societal standards. Hence, inmates' experiences in external labour serve as a central feature in their reformation, which potentially exerts a marked influence on their behaviour in prison and after their release. Therefore, it is the perceptions held by inmates and their individual experiences about external labour activities that contribute to their development and change in behaviour, not necessarily how the working environment actually is in reality. Thus, the constative practice of external labour, being an act in itself, coalesces with the performative practice (Thompson, 2000) to enable inmates to rehearse for a future crime-free lifestyle. This behaviour is exhibited and enforced in good citizenship, which forms the pole around which inmates are selected for the work, and which they are required to make apparent whenever they go outside to work. Therefore, rather than seeking a position between external labour activities and individual behavioural change, this study has explored avenues to marry these two positions by proposing that the discursive boundaries of the two influence each other, as the richness of experiences offered by the work ethics opens inmates to the possibilities of learning new positive qualities that they can practically incorporate into their lives after imprisonment.

Organisational level

At the organisational level, reducing idleness has been one of the primary goals of external labour activities, as idleness is known to be one of the most pernicious problems faced by inmates, as recounted in the findings (McBride, 2003). Therefore, keeping inmates occupied

by engaging them in economic activities outside the prisons helps to disengage their minds from the fact that they are imprisoned and provide them with something to do to occupy their time. Thus, external labour activities help to reduce idleness by structuring inmates' daily activities and putting them into a routine of active engagement that serves to utilise the extra time they have on their hands, as was reiterated by Lazarus (35, Inmate), who emphasised that he is happy to go outside to work even if he is not paid for his effort. Another organisational-level goal of external labour activities is the management of overcrowding in the prisons, as officers recounted that since the number of inmates is greater than the capacity of the prisons, holding all the prisoners in the yard on a daily basis can create a lot of challenges, such as riots, fights, and other unhealthy behaviours that are counterproductive for the inmates they are trying to reform. As a result, external labour provides the administrative opportunity to manage the number of inmates present in the yard at any one time, thereby averting some of these repercussions.

Macro level

The macro level goal rests on the idea of external labour activities framed in hard labour, which constitutes tedious, arduous, and strenuous jobs performed by inmates, which they believe are meant to make them pay for their crimes and the costs they have caused society as a result of their criminal behaviour. Thus, most of the inmates interviewed were of the view that the jobs they performed, the environment, and the structure are fashioned in a way that propels them to repay the debt they owe to society. Inmates emphasised that this statement was echoed by the officers throughout the performance of their jobs, especially when they complained of being tired or unable to perform. Thus, the statement that people are sent to prison as punishment, and not for punishment, is reflected in this scenario, where inmates think that being selected for external labour activities is punishment in itself for the offences they have committed, as they see imprisonment and the jobs they do as some kind of 'black box' which is punitive in its very nature, and as such, is relatively equivalent in its impact on the payment for their crimes (Ross et al., 2008). Consequently, inmates who engage in external labour activities are of the opinion that working these jobs provides an avenue for them to repay their debt to society.

Also, discussion with the participants demonstrated that apart from the direct rehabilitative impact of external labour activities, the jobs facilitate economic utilisation of inmates as a workforce and personal financial gains for the parties involved in the work, which are not direct

goals of the program but inadvertently impact the behaviour of inmates positively, thus contributing to rehabilitation.

Economic utilisation

External labour is favoured as sound economics because the returns gained from the work done by inmates are used to offset the cost of their incarceration, which in turn pleases taxpayers. As managing inmates in prisons place a heavy financial burden on the government, the work they do serves as a reward for keeping them out of the public arena. Consequently, prison work—an aspect of the external labour activities performed by inmates—is used to run the prisons. For instance, produce from the farms is used to feed the inmates and the surpluses are sold to the public to raise funds to maintain the prisons. Also, in hard labour, inmates work with individual employers and businesses on various projects, for which the government is paid for the work done by the inmates, who are subsequently remunerated. However, private individuals and organisations may not have a firm idea of the intents of external labour, as they tend to have a narrow perspective of offending and how to treat inmates and may end up blurring the lines between responsibilities and rehabilitation.

Personal financial gains

Although involvement in external labour is usually linked to desistance from crime (Duwe, 2015; Farrall & Maruna, 2004; Sampson & Laub, 2003), inmates intimated during the interviews that their main purpose for involvement in external labour is not the work per se, but the opportunities that it affords them to pursue their personal and financial gains. Thus, the degree to which work subsidizes or is a consequence of criminal desistence is a contested phenomenon, as inmates who participated in the work expressed their disdain for the work itself but elation towards the personal benefits they derive from the freedom it offers them. This concurs with the turning point hypothesis, which emphasises that inmates who engage in productive work inadvertently desist from engaging in criminal behaviours and enter into a stage where they entertain an objective phase in their lives and situation (Laub & Sampson, 2001). Thus, external labour activities serve as a default ‘start’ button where inmates are thrust into the world of work and skill learning without even realising it, and consequently invest so much time and effort in building up skills and work ethics that at some point upon their release,

they may not want to risk losing this investment, thereby desisting from a life of crime through 'structurally induced turning points that serve as the catalyst for sustaining long term behavioural change' (Sampson & Laub, 2003, p. 149).

However, to desist from a life of crime and absorb the full benefits that external labour has to offer, inmates need to exhibit personal agency by recognising the need to start saving and developing a high level of commitment to a life course transition strategy, which can only manifest when they express a strong personal desire to commence a conversion effort, which will materialise if tangible hooks for change are discovered in the everyday activities of external labour practices. However, the inmates who participated in the study did not share in this view; rather, they saw the jobs they performed outside as a means to an end and not an end in themselves. They intimated that the work enabled them to earn income and save up to start their own businesses in the prisons, thereby contributing to and enhancing the informal prison economy (Yin & Kofie, 2021). Additionally, others also participated in the work to help them to earn their keep and gain preferential treatment in prison, as their earnings enabled them to afford to be in prison by paying their way to gain some leeway in the cells and the prisons in general.

Again, some inmates participated in external labour because they saw it as a better alternative to living freely outside, as most of them were economically engaged in prisons but not financially obligated with the responsibilities of paying expenses such as rent, food and other commitments that go with life outside the prisons, hence enhancing their capacity and relevance in prison compared to life outside. Similarly, officers also participated in external labour to enable them to assert their authority, be in good standing with the inmates, and earn some financial rewards and other benefits that go with the performance of the work. From the 'hook for change' perspective, the starting point for inmates is to signal their readiness for change, as work is not likely to support desistance from a life of crime unless it is heralded by inmates' commitment to stop offending and reoffending (Skardhamar & Savolainen, 2012). Still, it is possible that some of the inmates interviewed are unable to capitalize on the 'tangible hooks' such as the acquisition of skills, work ethics and other development provided by the work opportunities offered to them during external activities to ensure their desistance from their life of crime in favour of legitimate employment. Consequently, instead of contributing to the rehabilitation of inmates, the work usually ends up being a motive to recidivate to the prisons for more lucrative jobs that provide them with income, self-respect, dignity, and influence over others, even as they stand to lose their freedom, instead of staying outside and

facing the harsh realities of life and the unbearable conditions that accompany freedom and liberties.

Although the rehabilitative intent of external labour activities was key to this study, as it defined the boundary between the non-economic intensive work carried out outside the prisons and the labour-market work on the outside (Pandeli et al., 2019), the outcomes from the inquiry offer contrasting results from the different participants in external labour activities regarding its rehabilitative intents. The majority of respondents who performed hard labour activities did not perceive their work as a rehabilitative bridge to social and financial inclusion. Rather, they viewed the jobs they performed as just a means to an end to help them cope and survive in the prisons. Arguably, the work performed by inmates reflected the jobs themselves, which inmates perceived as adding no additional skills for their development, but rather as ways to while away time as they awaited the end of their sentences. Perhaps, then, external labour activities cannot be said to be the panacea to all criminal lifestyles, as inmates did not regard hard labour as a means to bridge the gap between their current state as prisoners and lawful post-release economic work and lifestyle.

On the other hand, the inmates who engaged in prison work showed an awareness of the external labour market and how their skills could be relevant in securing them a job or starting their personal ventures upon release. Analogous to the labour market, inmates also expressed their intrinsic motivation, which would facilitate a positive outcome of their relationship with work and their choice of lifestyle after incarceration. Although it would be quite a stretch to analyse the perception of such inmates as a reflection of the impact of external labour activities on their lives, this finding does indicate the positive influence of skill acquisition and development among inmates. Consequently, it is feasible to imagine possible positive changes, such as being accorded dignity in society as a result of such positive self-affirmation. Ideally, the role of external labour is to reform inmates by enabling and equipping them to reframe their bonds with and perceptions of the prospects of legitimately paid jobs to support their reintegration into society. As a result, external labour must encompass activities that support behavioural restructuring to offset the thorny and commonly negative relationships that some inmates cultivate with legitimate work before and after their incarceration (Green, 2008; Pandeli et al., 2019). In this regard, it is argued that the more closely external labour activities are moulded after real work experiences, the greater their rehabilitative impact on inmates. Taken together, this helps in answering the third research question: ‘How does the work prisoners do outside the prison contribute to their rehabilitation?’

7.2 Study contributions

The study answers the call for more research to highlight the intentions, understandings, and motivations of inmates who work while incarcerated in prisons. The study makes substantial contributions to knowledge and theory through the use of practice theory and prison discourses to shed more light on the experiences of inmates as they work outside the prisons of Ghana. The study demonstrates the experiences and external labour practices that coalesce to enable inmates to develop behaviour that is acceptable in the prison and is viewed as a contributing factor to their rehabilitation.

7.2.1 Contribution to knowledge

Investigation into and theorisation of prison work practices—presaged as practices that enable behaviour modification, character transformation, and rehabilitation—has posed many challenges to scholars and practitioners over the years. Thus, this study conceptualises prison work as a social practice that is continuously changing and transforming, and serves as a yardstick that helps to fill the gap in rehabilitation and bring to the fore prison work practices in an attempt to extend our understanding of these practices for four important reasons.

First, the study provides a detailed account of external labour activities, which have been mostly overlooked by previous works on prisons, and explores how these activities influence the lives of inmates and how the performance of such work may contribute to their rehabilitation. These accounts could augment studies on prison work and infuse them with some new perspectives. Additionally, this is the first study to offer a thick explanation of inmates who carry out work outside the prisons whilst incarcerated by chronicling the stories of inmates to give a detailed account of how the work is organised and the processes and parties involved. It uses the climate of prisons to explain the nuanced prison culture and how it influences the selection of inmates for work outside the prisons. Thus, it provides an account of how the behaviour of inmates is shaped by their experiences of being confined in a totally controlled environment and also how lax some of the influences are, which is incorporated in inmates' selection for work outside the prisons. Secondly, the study also explores how prisons source work for the inmates and examined the intentions of the parties involved in sourcing such work. Journalistic reportage was employed to assess how inmates make meaning of the sourcing of the work and how the process used in sourcing jobs influences their understanding

of the work they perform outside the prisons. Third, this study questions the essence of external labour activities in the rehabilitative journeys of inmates by exploring the processes, intentions, perceptions and involvement of officers and inmates. The analysis of this aspect is centred on stories gathered from inmates, officers and ex-offenders, moving from a simple cost–benefit analysis of imprisonment (DiIulio & Piehl, 1991) to a more detailed exploration of the understanding of the participants and nuanced perspectives on the work inmates do outside the prisons to deliver an empirical and normative analysis of issues that have been either addressed weakly or totally ignored by earlier studies on prison work. Fourth, the study highlights the various facets of external labour and its complexities by shedding light on how invisible groups such as prisoners, who are often marginalized (Giustini, 2022; Pandeli et al., 2019; Rabelo & Mahalingam, 2018) and unnoticed by mainstream society, may turn this into their advantage by manoeuvring their way in the prisons and societies unnoticed. Due to the nature of the work and the expectations of officers during external labour, inmates are required to work obtrusively, reproducing copious amounts of work in a self-annihilating process (Apostolou, 2009). In this regard, the study opens up new potentialities for reconsidering the impact of prison labour on behaviour modification, rehabilitation and recidivism, and calls into question the very nature of the work carried out by prisoners and how it influences society as a whole. So, through the stories of inmates, officers and ex-offenders, the interconnecting debate about the nature and significance of work, the purpose of external labour and its rehabilitative impact become apparent. In particular, the multiple layers of advantages and disadvantages experienced by inmates as a result of the work in which they engage outside the prisons are brought to bear to add to the existing literature on prison labour.

Prior studies on prison work and rehabilitation (Atkinson & Rostad, 2003; Chennault & Sbicca, 2022; McBride, 2003; Ramm, 2011) have concluded that inmates engage in prison work to while away time rather than for rehabilitation. Thus, instead of the work introducing and reminding prisoners of customs and practices associated with the world of work and linked to rehabilitation—such as punctuality and responsibility for time, the connection between individual performance and financial rewards, self-discipline and perseverance—inmates rather use the work as a coping mechanism to occupy their time whilst incarcerated. This study extends our understanding of prison work by going beyond these findings to state that inmates engage in external labour activities to enhance their personal financial gains as well as other profiteering activities, as well as to pass time. As such, this study exemplifies the dimensions of external labour activities by taking into account the compound nature of inmates'

understanding of the work they do outside the prisons, as an empirical departure point on prison labour, demonstrating that inmates engage in prison work to enrich themselves, rather than for rehabilitative purposes or to while away the time.

7.2.2 Contribution to theory

By employing practice theory (Schatzki, 2002), a new theoretical framework for understanding the rehabilitative impact of prison work has been presented. Drawing on the overall framework of prisoner rehabilitation, theorising about prison work practices, organisation of work, and the power dynamics between officers and inmates, the study engenders a number of valuable theoretical contributions in the areas of practice theory, gift-giving and reciprocating, rehabilitation, organisation, and motivations for work.

Practice theory

The study operationalises Theodore Schatzki's (2002) most influential version of practice theory, which regards practices as temporally and spatially evolving sets of doings (actions) and sayings (discourses) organised by three major elements: practical understanding of what to say and do (inmates interpreting the tasks, knowledge and experiences required, training and tools employed in the performance of the job), engagement of what to say and do (feelings and dispositions of inmates, respect and self-esteem issues, motivation for the work, remuneration and contributions to rehabilitation, and reduction of recidivism), and procedures of what to say and do (supervision given and received, rules of engagement, rules and policies of the prisons, and how they influence the work outside). Consequently, inmates blend these elements into external labour dynamics to accomplish tasks that are deemed satisfactory by prison officers (Giustini, 2022). A practice-based approach to work permits the framing of external labour as a processual, social accomplishment embedded in the actions of inmates, sanctioned in accordance with the prisons' regulations and framework of work. It engenders broader theoretical insights into external labour as comprising a pragmatic, motivational base for behaviour modification, rehabilitation, and wider societal impact (Miettinen et al., 2010). This study argues that practice theory affords re-framing external labour as constituted according to the factors that organise and stimulate work, adding further knowledge to our understanding of how and why inmates might be steered towards working whilst incarcerated. Throughout the study, external labour is conceptualised not as an unethical/ethical category, but as a well-

designed dialectic employed to navigate the lives of inmates and the performance of work outside the prisons. Thus, through Schatzki, (2002) practice-based approach, external labour is re-framed as the competent accomplishments of the participants (inmates, officers), negotiated against the regulations, goals and situationality of the prisons. From this stance, the study repositions our attention on prison work by refocusing external labour as a mode of knowledge and actions which emerges from the dynamics of social interactions among officers and inmates in prisons. Hence, by focusing on interpreting and illuminating external labour activity in an interestingly atypical institution which is still not visible to a lot of social inquiry, this study augments the mounting sociological literature on the essence of prison labour and work and its implications for the prisoners, prisons and the wider society.

Ultimately, this study offers a theorisation of prison work by drawing from inmates' and officers' co-ordinated experienced activities, as they attempt to problem-solve patterns imbued with meanings and understandings taken from a prescriptive, situational framework. This is an advantageous approach because it permits the framing of prison work 'practically' as an activity that inmates and officers do, employing their skills to achieve goals within set rules, with (and against) other people (non-prisoners and employers) in the wider frame of the labour market. Eventually, practice theory welcomes scholars to unravel the intricate inner workings that proliferate throughout external labour, as practices are organised through matching overarching reasoning, focusing on the performative interrelatedness of the various aspects of work, permitting an examination of prison work as well as numerous other forms of work. The proposition here is that by looking at the collective influences that proliferate within the dynamics of prison work, it is conceivable to adopt an additional complex sociological understanding of the subtleties and specificities that render external labour rehabilitative.

Gift-giving and reciprocating as a source of work

Furthermore, the study also advances theory in relation to the art of gift-giving and reciprocating. Reciprocity in external labour relations not only augments the agency of inmates but also results in parallel outcomes, as the power dynamics between officers and inmates are unequal (Kowalski, 2011; Mauss, 2002; Nardi, 2009). This study makes a contribution by showing how the art of gift-giving and reciprocating plays an exceptionally significant role in spurring efforts geared towards tackling recidivism, rehabilitation, and skill acquisition. While the burgeoning literature on prison work offers many pathways to rehabilitation, recidivism,

and skill acquisition, none of them has included consideration of how the work is sourced and presented as a gift to be reciprocated by inmates at some future time.

In addition, the influence of the prison environment on decision-making and selection criteria is shown. Rather than conceptualising inmates individually as purely economic actors in the prisons, it is proposed that their agency and behaviour are shaped by the environment of the prisons collectively. As a result, the commitment to external labour activities may be shaped differently by circumstantial features (prison policies, selection criteria, controls or leniency, and the informal prison economy), locational issues (location of working sites: i.e., prison work or hard labour, located near to or far away from the prisons) and mundane activities (working relationships with non-prisoners, relationship with officers, working more than one job at a time).

Prison work

Prior scholarly research on prison have focused mostly on in-prison work (Milman-Sivan & Sagy, 2020; Richmond, 2014; Van Zyl Smit & Dunkel, 2018), or privatised prison work (Pandeli, 2015) and how it is performed in prisons. Ideally, inmates are given the opportunity to work on projects and tasks assigned to them in prisons, on which they mostly work for a few hours each day. Findings from this current study looked at outside-prison work performed by inmates who work for eight or more hours per day—an aspect of prison work that has been ignored by prior research. Examining prison work in this light enables us to gain a better perspective of the complexities of such work by shedding greater light on the tasks performed by inmates, which opens a new avenue to reconsider what constitutes prison work.

Rehabilitation

The study contributes to the rehabilitation literature by examining how outside-prison work leads to behaviour modifications and positive attitude development. Although past research has highlighted the rehabilitative impact of in-prison work, the current study has demonstrated how rehabilitation could be achieved with external labour activities. Thus, by using transgression transparency and personal narrative as learning tools to enable inmates to form and change their behaviour to suit the performance of work outside the prisons, this study extends our

understanding of how rehabilitation could be achieved through the work inmates perform outside the prisons.

7.3 Implications for policy and practice

The study also has the following practical and policy implications.

Clarity on the nature of work that constitutes external labour

This study echoes the conclusions drawn in other works (such as Bouffard et al., 2000; Bushway, 2003) by reiterating the need for a clear definition of the work done by inmates in prisons. Previous research aligning with the study highlights the rhetoric within the law ILO Convention No. 29 (Milman-Sivan & Sagy, 2020) and the Prison Service Decree 1972, (N.R.C.D. 46) of prison work, without stating categorically what constitutes external labour activities. Also, there is no categorisation of the constituents of hard labour, which gives a confusing and contradictory perspective of the nature of the work in which inmates should engage. Thus, without a clear definition and comprehension of the nature of the work that constitutes external labour and what that work is for, officers and inmates are left to draw their own inferences and develop their own interpretations of the nature of the work. As a result, external labour is carved in ambiguity, which leaves participants, particularly inmates, to ascribe purposes such as punishment, passing time, helping them to cope with imprisonment, and facilitating the informal prison economy, rather than contributing to their personal development. Officers, on the other hand, made their own efforts to improvise by engaging the inmates as best they could because the judges have sanctioned this work, so they must comply by finding any form of work for the inmates. Therefore, there should be a review of the definition of external labour activities in which the nature of the work is clearly spelt out, and the sources of the work, the processes involved in sourcing it, and the parties involved are clearly defined. Aside from defining the work, it is vital to state its purpose clearly, so that participants are aware of the context in which they are working and the regimes within which the work is carried out, as this influences their approach to the work.

Uniform and equitable systems of payment

Another suggestion for the improvement of external labour activities pertains to the wages paid to inmates. Unlike other countries, such as the UK and the USA (Jacobs, 2018; Pandeli et al., 2019) which have established systems of payment, the prison service in Ghana does not have an explicitly stated system and method of payment for inmates. Therefore, officers are encouraged to remunerate inmates based on their subjective judgements. Situations like this could be disheartening to the inmates, as most officers pay them per their prerogative, which does not foster the intent of external labour. To ensure that the work achieves its aim of reforming inmates, they need to perceive their remuneration by the officers as fair, as pay equity has an impact not only on the performance of their work but also on their perception and eventual skills acquisition from the job. Therefore, the prison service should institute a uniform pay system (whether a daily, hourly, or monthly wage) to ensure that inmates are paid fairly, in order to prevent employers and other parties from taking advantage of their efforts in the name of hard labour without any form of compensation.

Adequate and sophisticated logistics for work

Another concern that runs through the views of officers and inmates alike is the logistics used in the performance of the work. Officers stated that they have to provide inmates with the tools they need to work when they take them outside, and inmates claimed that at times, the tools provided were inadequate or primitive, but that they had to just make do with what they had been given. Consequently, providing their own equipment and tools gives officers an upper hand in terms of their jobs and their performance, which may in some instances run counter to the rehabilitative intents of the prison. To capitalise on the outcomes of external labour activities for rehabilitation, the service needs to be equipped to inculcate the rehabilitative intents of the work from its sourcing to its performance. Also, if inmates are expected to apply the skills they learn from the work after their release from prison, they need to be exposed to the inner workings of the contemporary work environment through the tools they employ in the performance of their work. Inmates should be enabled to learn the skills and permitted to practice with the types of tools and equipment that are currently employed in the contemporary work environment so as not to find themselves handicapped by a situation where they can do the work but do not have the skills to apply modern tools and equipment to do so adequately.

The gradual integration of inmates into society upon their release

Again, the manner in which inmates are discharged from the prisons reduces the efficacy of the skills they learn on the job, thereby affecting their rehabilitation. Usually, the best practice is that when inmates are released from the prisons, officers escort them to the gate, give them sufficient money to get them to their place of arrest, and bid them farewell. Indeed, ex-offenders also supported this view by confirming that although they had acquired some skills in the prisons, the application of these skills and even where and how to start was a challenge. In this regard, there should be a strategy for graduation transitioning of inmates from the prisons into society to facilitate rehabilitation. As the prison service does not currently have any means of transitioning inmates into society, inmates are left to find their own paths, which is difficult to do in a society where they are marginalised for being ex-convicts. Therefore, as a best practice, the prison service should be equipped with halfway houses to ensure that inmates are given the time and support to integrate into society gradually, especially if they have been in prison for a long time. Alternatively, due to resource inadequacy, a section of the prison could be demarcated for such a purpose to transition inmates who are nearing the completion of their sentences. This would enable inmates to have some time apart to disassociate themselves from fellow inmates who are still serving their sentences, reflect on their lives and choices, and prepare themselves mentally and physically to face a different set of people with characteristics different from what they have come to know and grown accustomed to in prison. Integrating officers could also be trained to help facilitate the process of gradual integration.

Equipping officers to deal with the work

External labour requires an investment of high levels of discretionary authority in the management of inmates. In this regard, endeavours to curb reciprocity and the art of gift-giving in external labour activities might discourage inmates from bringing their all-important efforts to the performance of the work and thus damage their efforts to cultivate and sustain the treasured trusted relationships they have built with the officers and non-prisoners, which perhaps facilitate the performance of work outside. As the art of giving and reciprocating is imbibed in the culture of prisons, the senior officers should take an active role in managing the efforts of external labour activities whilst actively monitoring the detailed processes to ensure that parties, though operating on their own, still conform to the prison regulations, rather than leaving everything to the discretion of the escorting officers.

Also, escorting officers requires adequate training and preparations to enable them to handle specific issues related to external labour activities. At present, the training given to the officers is incorporated into their nine-month recruit training, after which they are expected to learn from the job. Hence, officers have short training and subsequently a one-year probationary period to learn on the job, which usually covers security protocols and tasks related to the performance of their roles. The officers intimated that their training was too short and they were sometimes thrust into the role of escorts without adequate training and facilities. Thus, without wider knowledge of external labour activities and their purposes and aims, they found it challenging to view work within a wider context of rehabilitation, which could lead to an inadequate understanding of how to steer inmates towards the right path. This is because officers need adequate knowledge of external labour activities so that it can inform their practical experiences when escorting inmates. As a result, officers must be provided with a broader over-arching perspective of the context and content of external labour, not only in terms of their roles as escorting officers but also as officers of the entire prison system, in order to promote inmates' and help incorporate the goals of the work into their daily activities

Another area of prime concern is the emotional load and pastoral care of escorting and catering to four prisoners at a time. The gang system, which ensures that four inmates are assigned to an officer at a time to be escorted outside, can be somewhat dangerous, as officers are proscribed from carrying a gun or any other deadly weapon when escorting inmates outside. The negative effect of this system can be felt in situations where inmates exhibit volatile, aggressive, or unexpected behaviour, with four inmates to manage and control at the same time and no weapon at their disposal, as in the case of Nathanael (58, Senior Chief Officer), who recounted that he was once attacked by an inmate he escorted. In this regard, officers can find themselves in difficulty when they are required to deal with such situations with minimum force. Hence, a different skill set is needed to manage these emotional outbursts, as they go beyond behaviour management, where officers are accustomed to managing the day-to-day behaviour of inmates, to controlling unmatched behaviour. Therefore, all officers should be provided with counselling training, as this is an essential skill for dealing with such situations. It is clear that the officers would value the extra support that the skill would add to the performance of their work. Nevertheless, the challenge is recognising that counselling or pastoral care does not take precedence over security concerns: hence, officers need special knowledge and skills to ensure that safety and security concerns are not sacrificed or compromised as they respond to emotional outbursts and other distressed behaviours with

understanding and compassion. Additionally, reducing the size of gangs from four to two would enhance effective gang management, such as gang formation, performance, monitoring and control during external labour activities, eventually facilitating rehabilitative ideas among participants.

7.4 Research limitations and directions for future study

This work has established that acquiring data from the principal stakeholders within the prison system is a possible, reasonable, and effective way of deepening our understanding of external labour activities, and most importantly, that the perceptions and intents of participants actually matter and contribute to the outcomes of the work. However, the study did not run smoothly and without limitations, because external labour activities are rife with piloting incongruities in theory and practice since there are a lot of limitations linked to dismantling the bricks, mortar, and fences of prisons and the work inmates do outside.

Generalisability issues

This study presents explorative qualitative research into external labour activities specifically, in five prisons in Ghana, and may not reflect the experiences of all prisoners with similar demographic backgrounds. Again, the findings from the study do not imply that the prison climate, working conditions, or behavioural outcomes are pervasive throughout all prisons. The sample size used in this study cannot be said to represent the views of prisoners, officers, and ex-offenders in Ghana. Therefore, findings from the data could not be employed to develop a theory that can be applied to all of them.

Theoretical sampling technique and mixed methods approach

Theoretical sampling was employed in this study in an effort to diversify the participants and ensure that the data gathered was reflective of external labour activities and relevant to the theory. Nevertheless, it is possible that some of the key individuals who needed to be contacted were missed. Again, the majority of the respondents who participated in the work were selected with the help of the Chief Orders and Yardmasters, who served as gatekeepers, as they regarded

those selected as relevant to the study. Thus, the individuals selected may have painted a more utopian depiction of the external labour activities than what actually exists in practice. Additionally, the use of the snowball approach to contact the ex-offenders could have affected the data collected, as it is likely that the first person contacted chose people with similar narratives and experiences, which may not have been a true reflection of the overall views of the work done outside the prisons. Therefore, a different sampling technique that ensures that all members of the relevant population have an equal chance of being selected without the influence of the prison gatekeepers would have been more appropriate.

Furthermore, findings from the study indicated that relationships with officers and the climate of the prisons influence the job performance, skill acquisition and behaviour modification of inmates in contrast to those without any form of relationship. Thus, the findings showed that the participants believed that having a good climatic relationship in the prison is somehow related to having good relationships with the officers, which yields good outcomes when they work outside the prison. These findings may imply that positive inmate–climatic conditions yield positive officer–inmate relationships, which are associated with positive work outcomes such as job performance, skill acquisition, behaviour modification, and rehabilitation. On the other hand, a negative inmate–climatic relationship yields a negative inmate–officer relationship, which is associated with negative work outcomes such as recidivism. Hence, future research on prison work could employ a mixed-method approach to test the relationships among these variables.

Gender of the participants

The gender of the participants can be conceptualised as a further limitation of the study. Even though both females and males were interviewed for the study, the male participants formed the majority, and in some instances, such as the ex-offenders, only males were chosen for their input. Although in most cases the sample size reflects the demographics of prisoners and officers of the Ghanaian prison service, this study alludes to the importance of external labour activities for both men and women in the prison service and as such should have included, if not equal proportions of participants from both genders, then at least more women, in order to generate a balanced discussion. As a result, a more varied or balanced sample could have influenced the outcomes of the discussion and provided a much more detailed analysis of the impact of prison work on the lives of inmates. Therefore, future research on prison work may

consider involving more female participants (both inmates and officers) to generate a more balanced argument.

Involvement of non-prisoners

I have demonstrated, within this thesis, the impact of non-prisoners on the lives of inmates and how working with non-prisoners during external labour activities help in facilitating the behaviour modification and reformation that are needed and expected from the work they do. However, non-prisoners were not contacted for their input to explore how they feel about working with inmates and what their contributions were regarding the work they did with inmates. Therefore, a study incorporating the narratives of non-prisoners who have had the opportunity to work with inmates on projects would provide a valuable perspective to our comprehension on how external labour helps inmates to develop and rehabilitate.

Role and understanding of officers

The findings from the study have demonstrated that considerable modifications need to be made to external labour activities, especially when it comes to the role of officers in ensuring that the activities are developed and implemented according to plans in order to achieve their goal of rehabilitating the inmates who participate in external work programs. Unfortunately, the findings showed that officers do not receive any direct training on external labour activities and have to rely on their experience and intuition to keep the program running, although enhanced and wide-ranging training of officers is needed to achieve a rehabilitative impact. Therefore, a better training program geared towards expanding the understanding of officers on the nature of external labour activities, its intents, the potential risks and challenges associated with the jobs, and the roles of the officers in ensuring that the program achieves its goals is a necessary ingredient for effective rehabilitation of inmates. Hence, future researchers may explore the role and understanding of officers in external labour activities and how they influence the achievement of rehabilitation of inmates.

Career prisoners and recidivism

One interesting finding from the study was that certain inmates purposely choose to be in prison and have made it their job to live their lives in the prison system instead of shouldering their responsibilities or being unemployed outside. Hence, despite the intent of the work in helping inmates to develop useful skills that can help them to live a crime-free lifestyle outside the prisons, some inmates stated that they preferred to live and work in the prisons, as the work comes with financial rewards, respect, and recognition among their peers, and helps them to live the way they want in prison. Therefore, future researchers could explore how external labour activities contribute to recidivism in prisons.

Covid-19 restrictions and prison regulations

The study was affected by the restrictions put in place during the Covid-19 pandemic, which made it nearly impossible to get the approval of the prison service to engage in the research. Interviews with inmates were held in separate, dedicated rooms, which restricted my ability to see the inmates act in their natural habitats, although I did have opportunities to observe them at work. Also, during the observations, I had to respect the guidance of the prisons by maintaining social distancing, which sometimes obstructed my view and ability to obtain a detailed record of what was happening. During this period, having conversations with inmates proved difficult, as social distancing was required.

Furthermore, based on the prison regulations, inmates were not allowed to talk to anyone outside the prisons without the authorisation and supervision of officers. Therefore, during some of the interviews, officers were placed at vantage points in the rooms to supervise the process and ensure that it ran smoothly. This put pressure on some of the inmates, who did not want to speak freely due to the presence of the officers, even though they were assured of their confidentiality.

Although the processes were carefully thought out and the steps meticulously planned to ensure a fair approach to the collection of data, it is undeniable that the imbalance of power dynamics between my status as a researcher and the inmates' status as prisoners may have influenced the responses given, as researcher bias would have influenced or possibly altered the way in which participants decided to respond to the questions asked. Bearing this in mind, I relied on the advice of Corbin & Strauss, (2015) to ensure that I provided sufficient quotes from the participants to support the views expressed in the work and also to serve as proof for sceptical readers. In spite of these limitations, the study is far from unusable, as the information produced

from the findings enabled me to give a detailed empirical description which offers a snapshot of the participants' understanding of the external labour activities and their efficacy in generating rehabilitative outcomes.

7.5 Personal reflections

This study embodies my journey to engage in telling the stories of the lived experiences of inmates inside prisons in Ghana. With this in mind, I sought to contribute to the academic scholarship on prison work and work in general, but most importantly, one of my key points of focus was to build knowledge that would help to humanise individuals deemed as 'criminalised objects' by all accounts of society. In this regard, my purpose is to encourage responsiveness to external labour by attempting to create perceptible ties between the work done by the people living outside and those living inside the prison but working outside. Theoretically, I attempt to contribute to the discourses on prison work and labour from a practice theory perspective by considering the sayings and doings of inmates and officers in five prisons in Ghana, as well as ex-offenders. In this light, the analysis revolves around the stories of inmates, officers, and ex-offenders and what they can tell researchers about imprisonment and reformation in Ghana. Hence, rather than endeavouring to paint a picture of storied accounts by locating the debates about the perilous state of prisons in a developing country such as Ghana, which I do not mean to curtail, overlook or make undistinguishable, the framing of this work dwells on the work inmates do outside the prisons whilst incarcerated. The study treats prisons as a 'challenged modern establishment' by questioning the intentions of external labour activities and their constituents, including how the work is sourced and organised, how inmates and officers are selected to participate in the work, inmates' perceptions regarding the performance of the work, and its overall goal and accomplishment.

I have shown that external labour offers both methodological and epistemological prospects for unravelling the relationships between working outside prisons and the rehabilitation of inmates. In the study, I worked in contrast to the heroics of epistemology, which would classify the problem of external labour, seeking instead to fine-tune and answer the requirements for creating detailed analytical themes that attend to various perceptions on the issues of external labour. I have problematised external labour activities and considered that the intentions, perceptions, and understandings of the parties involved influence how the work is performed,

which replicates and perpetuates the eventual rehabilitation of inmates in the prisons and also their lives after incarceration.

7.6 Conclusion

External labour activities comprise one of the major programs in the prisons that lead to skills acquisition and development by inmates and are thus presumed to contribute to their rehabilitation. As such, working whilst incarcerated is seen as an investment whose returns would be reaped by the individual and society in the long term. Therefore, this work needs to be understood by conceptualising its nature and significance in a detailed fashion in order to scrutinise how it is sourced and organised, the working environment, the intensity of the job, as well as its meaning to the individuals involved in its execution. However, working whilst incarcerated is a unique and highly complex experience, as this work is shaped by elements such as the age, gender, and social status of inmates; the environment and culture of the prisons; and the management style of officers, such as personality, perception, style of escorting, relationships, and commitment to communication with inmates. Consequently, external labour is characterised as a quandary between two junctures of rehabilitation of inmates on one hand and the perceptions and understanding of the participants on the other, which have been known to plague each other for the attention of the work. Nevertheless, the logic of participants' perceptions and understandings of this work is an inherent one which makes a significant contribution to its performance. Thus, the significance and logic of external labour cannot be grasped if these understandings and perceptions are not clarified, as they can sabotage every progressive effort made in the performance of the work. To achieve this, the prison administration must be actively involved in restructuring the work and in every step of its implementation to ensure that the work achieves its intended purpose of rehabilitating inmates. The role of the prison administration is not only to act as a crucial actor in external labour activities but also to manage the various avenues through which different prison values and cultures are incorporated into the entire practice of external labour.

With or without any direct impact on rehabilitation, inmates' engagement in external labour activities of their own volition with the intention to actively participate and commit to learning skills signals that they are reaching out to reform their criminal lifestyles and start a new relationship with work through forming a positive association with legitimate employment, both in prison and after their release.

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APPENDIX

A. Ethics letter of Approval

University Research Ethics Committee
Brunel University London
Kingston Lane
Uxbridge
UB8 3PH
United Kingdom

www.brunel.ac.uk

19 November 2021

LETTER OF APPROVAL

APPROVAL HAS BEEN GRANTED FOR THIS STUDY TO BE CARRIED OUT BETWEEN 15/01/2022 AND 31/12/2023

Applicant (s): Ms Eunice Aidoo

Project Title: UNDERSTANDING HOW PRISONERS EXPERIENCE WORK: A DISCURSIVE PRACTICE APPROACH

Reference: 30487-MHR-Oct/2021- 34488-4

Dear Ms Eunice Aidoo,

The Research Ethics Committee has considered the above application recently submitted by you.

The Chair, acting under delegated authority has agreed that there is no objection on ethical grounds to the proposed study. Approval is given on the understanding that the conditions of approval set out below are followed:

- **Approval is given for remote (online/telephone) research activity only. Face-to-face activity and/or travel will require approval by way of an amendment.**
- **Please use the updated documents provided to the REC by you via email on 9 November 2021; these are considered appropriate.**
- **The agreed protocol must be followed. Any changes to the protocol will require prior approval from the Committee by way of an application for an amendment.**
- **In addition to the above, please ensure that you monitor and adhere to all up-to-date local and national Government and institutional health advice for the duration of your project.**

Please note that:

- Research Participant Information Sheets and (where relevant) flyers, posters, and consent forms should include a clear statement that research ethics approval has been obtained from the relevant Research Ethics Committee.
- The Research Participant Information Sheets should include a clear statement that queries should be directed, in the first instance, to the Supervisor (where relevant), or the researcher. Complaints, on the other hand, should be directed, in the first instance, to the Chair of the relevant Research Ethics Committee.
- Approval to proceed with the study is granted subject to receipt by the Committee of satisfactory responses to any conditions that may appear above, in addition to any subsequent changes to the protocol.
- The Research Ethics Committee reserves the right to sample and review documentation, including raw data, relevant to the study.
- You may not undertake any research activity if you are not a registered student of Brunel University or if you cease to become registered, including abeyance or temporary withdrawal. As a deregistered student you would not be insured to undertake research activity. Research activity includes the recruitment of participants, undertaking consent procedures and collection of data. Breach of this requirement constitutes research misconduct and is a disciplinary offence.

Kind regards,

Dr Derek Millard-Healy

Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee

Brunel University London

Page 1 of 1

B. Participants Information Sheet

(i) Participant Information Sheet for Prison Officers

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Study title

Exploring How Prisoners Experience Work: A Discursive Practice Approach

Invitation Paragraph

You are being invited to participate in a research study which will contribute towards my doctoral thesis. Before you decide whether you wish to participate, it is important you understand why the research is being completed and what it entails. Take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Kindly ask the researcher if there is anything that is unclear or if you wish for information, and take time to decide whether or not you wish to participate. Thank you for your time.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of the study is to understand how prisoners interpret and understand the work they do outside the prisons whilst incarcerated, the motivation behind their involvement in the work if any and how the work contribute to their rehabilitation and reduce recidivism. This research is expected to be completed by 31 December, 2024. The findings from the study will help evaluate and inform policy on prison work and how it contributes to rehabilitation of prisoners.

Why have I been invited to participate?

You have been invited to participate in the study because you are an officer in the Ghana Prisons Service and you have participated or continue to participate in prison work by logging, and supervising inmates who work outside the prisons.

Do I have to take part?

Prison Officers requested to participate may decide whether or not they wish to do so, and can withdraw from the study at any point in the data collection process. Participating Officers in the research study will be given copies of this Information Sheet and a copy of the Interview Guide, on signing the Consent Form to agree to their participation. However, the original copies of the Participant information sheet and consent form will be collected by the researcher before the start of the interviews. Even

if an officer decides to take part in this study, they are still free to withdraw at any time up until 31st December, 2023 and without having to give a reason.

What will happen to me if I take part?

This is an interview that will last for about an hour. No expenses would be incurred by you as a result of your participation in this research. Data will be collected via interview, that is the researcher and you will have a one on one discussion about your participation in prison work program and that will be all. None of what you share individually would be discussed with anyone but the researcher. However, if during the course of the research evidence of harm or misconduct come to light, then it may be necessary to break confidentiality. The researcher will tell you at the time if she thinks she need to do this, and let you know what will happen next

Are there any lifestyle restrictions?

No, there are no lifestyle restrictions

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There are no anticipated disadvantages or risks associated with taking part in this study. The only disadvantage would be the time you would spend with the researcher instead of using it for something important to you. Aside this, no known disadvantages or risks would be encountered by participants.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

There are no intended personal benefits to be derived from participating in this research. However, the knowledge you share with the researcher will help her come out with findings that could be used to change prison work, its impact and possible remuneration structure.

What are the measures taken to reduce the risk of covid-19?

All Covid-19 protocols will be strictly adhered to during the data collection in Ghana. I and all the participants will be required to wear face coverings. The interviews will be conducted in a room which will be divided by a plain shield. I will be at one end and the participants will remain at the other end of the room. Each of the participants would be interviewed separately. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers will be made available at the interviews. I and the prison officers will undergo the case definition symptom screening and temperature checks and hand hygiene protocols. The interview room will be sanitised after each interview. Should any of the research participant and/or myself, show symptoms or test positive for Covid-19 within 10 days of the interview, all other participants, including me (the researcher), will be required to take Covid-19 test and adhere to the self-isolation rules and guidelines necessary.

What if something goes wrong?

The researcher should be advised by email should a participant choose to withdraw from the study. In cases where participants want to make a complaint or have a concern about the research and would like to discuss with someone, the researcher and the College of Business, Art and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee Chair (Professor David Gallear) whose contact details are given at the end of this document should be contacted. Participants are advised to talk to the researcher if they are unhappy with the conduct of the interview or other matters directly related to the research study. They may also wish to contact the College of Business, Art and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee Chair (Professor David Gallear).

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

All information which is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential till 31st December, 2024. Any information about you which leaves the University will have all your identifying information removed. With your permission, anonymised data will be stored and may be used in future research – you can indicate whether or not you give permission for this by way of the Consent Form. If during the course of the research evidence of harm or misconduct come to light, then it may be necessary to break confidentiality. The researcher will tell you at the time if she thinks she need to do this, and let you know what will happen next

Will I be recorded, and how will the recording be used?

Yes, interviews will be recorded electronically, i.e. via a voice recorder. The recordings would be used just for the purposes of the research and discarded afterwards.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of the study will be written up as part of my studies and submitted to Brunel University London. Also only aggregate data no direct quotes would be sent to the Ghana Prisons Service. You will not be identified in any report or publication unless you specifically request it

Who is organising and funding the research?

The research is being organised by Eunice Aidoo in conjunction with Brunel University London

What are the indemnity arrangements?

Brunel University London provides appropriate insurance cover for research which has received ethical approval

Who has reviewed the study?

The research would be reviewed by the researcher's supervisor Dr David Sarpong and the College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee Chair – Professor David Gallear (David.Gallear@brunel.ac.uk)

And Brunel Business School

Research Integrity

Brunel University London is committed to compliance with the Universities UK Research Integrity Concordat. You are entitled to expect the highest level of integrity from the researchers during the course of this research

Contact for further information and complaints

Researcher name and details:

Eunice Aidoo, Eunice.Aidoo@brunel.ac.uk

Supervisor name and details:

Dr David Sarpong, David.Sarpong@brunel.ac.uk

For complaints, Chair of the Research Ethics Committee:

College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee Chair – Professor David Gallear (David.Gallear@brunel.ac.uk)

Thank you for your participation

(ii) Participant Information Sheet for Prisoners and Ex-Offenders

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Study title

Exploring How Prisoners Experience Work: A Discursive Practice Approach

Invitation Paragraph

You are being invited to participate in a research study which will contribute towards my doctoral thesis. Before you decide whether you wish to participate, it is important you understand why the research is being completed and what it entails. Take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. If you cannot read, the researcher will read and interpret its content in a local language to you. Kindly ask the researcher if there is anything that is unclear or if you wish for information, and take time to decide whether or not you wish to participate. Thank you for your time.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of the study is to understand how prisoners interpret and understand the work they do outside the prisons whilst incarcerated, the motivation behind their involvement in the work if any and how the work contribute to their rehabilitation and reduce recidivism. This research is expected to be completed by 31 December, 2024. The findings from the study will help evaluate and inform policy on prison work and how it contributes to rehabilitation of prisoners.

Why have I been invited to participate?

You have been invited to participate in the study because you are an inmate of the Ghana Prisons Service and you have participated or continue to participate in prison work by engaging in work activities outside the prisons.

Do I have to take part?

Prisoners requested to participate may decide whether or not they wish to do so, and can withdraw from the study at any point in the data collection process. Participating Prisoners

in the research study will be given copies of this Information Sheet and a copy of the Interview Guide, on signing or thumb printing the Consent Form to agree to their participation. However, the original copies of the Participant information sheet and consent form will be collected by the researcher before the start of the interviews. Even if an inmate decides to take part in this study, they are still free to withdraw their participation at any time up until 31st December, 2023 and without having to give a reason. Your withdrawal from this research will not result in any form of punishment such as loss of privileges, isolation, increase in sentence, denial of their basic rights and hash working conditions.

What will happen to me if I take part?

This is an interview that will last for about an hour. No expenses would be incurred by you as a result of your participation in this research. Data will be collected via interview, that is the researcher and you will have a one on one discussion about your participation in prison work program and that will be all. None of what you share individually would be discussed with anyone but the researcher. However, if during the course of the research evidence of harm or misconduct come to light, then it may be necessary to break confidentiality. The researcher will tell you at the time if she thinks she need to do this, and let you know what will happen next

Are there any lifestyle restrictions?

No, there are no lifestyle restrictions

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There are no anticipated disadvantages or risks associated with taking part in this study. The only disadvantage would be the time you would spend with the researcher instead of using it for something important to you. Aside this, no known disadvantages or risks would be encountered by participants. Also if the researcher notice any distress during the course of the interview, the data collection will be stopped and the needed support provided to the participant until such a time when they are comfortable to part take in the research of withdraw their participation altogether

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

There are no intended personal benefits to be derived from participating in this research. However, the knowledge you share with the researcher will help her come out with findings that could be used to change prison work, its impact and possible remuneration structure.

What are the measures taken to reduce the risk of covid-19?

All Covid-19 protocols will be strictly adhered to during the data collection in Ghana. I and all the participants will be required to wear face coverings. The interviews will be conducted in a room which will be divided by a plain shield. I will be at one end and the participants will remain at the other end of the room. Each of the participants would be interviewed separately. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers will be made available at the interviews. I and the prisoners will undergo the case definition symptom screening and temperature checks and hand hygiene protocols. The interview room will be sanitised after each interview. Should any of the research participant and/or myself, show symptoms or test positive for Covid-19 within 10 days of the interview, all other participants, including me (the researcher), will be required to take Covid-19 test and adhere to the self-isolation rules and guidelines necessary.

What if something goes wrong?

The researcher should be advised by email should a participant choose to withdraw from the study. In cases where participants want to make a complaint or have a concern about the research and would like to discuss with someone, the researcher and the College of Business, Art and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee Chair (Professor David Gallear) whose contact details are given at the end of this document should be contacted. Participants are advised to talk to the researcher if they are unhappy with the conduct of the interview or other matters directly related to the research study. They may also wish to contact the College of Business, Art and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee Chair (Professor David Gallear).

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

All information which is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential till 31st December, 2024. Any information about you which leaves the University will have all your identifying information removed. With your permission, anonymised data will be stored and may be used in future research – you can indicate whether or not you give permission for this by way of the Consent Form. If during the course of the research evidence of harm or misconduct come to light, then it may be necessary to break confidentiality. The researcher will tell you at the time if she thinks she need to do this, and let you know what will happen next

Will I be recorded, and how will the recording be used?

Yes, interviews will be recorded electronically, i.e. via a voice recorder. The recordings would be used just for the purposes of the research and discarded afterwards.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of the study will be written up as part of my studies and submitted to Brunel University London. Also only aggregate data no direct quotes would be sent to the Ghana Prisons Service. You will not be identified in any report or publication unless you specifically request it

Who is organising and funding the research?

The research is being organised by Eunice Aidoo in conjunction with Brunel University London

What are the indemnity arrangements?

Brunel University London provides appropriate insurance cover for research which has received ethical approval

Who has reviewed the study?

The research would be reviewed by the researcher's supervisor Dr David Sarpong and the College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee Chair – Professor David Gallear (David.Gallear@brunel.ac.uk)

And Brunel Business School

Research Integrity

Brunel University London is committed to compliance with the Universities UK Research Integrity Concordat. You are entitled to expect the highest level of integrity from the researchers during the course of this research

Contact for further information and complaints

Researcher name and details:

Eunice Aidoo, Eunice.Aidoo@brunel.ac.uk

Supervisor name and details:

Dr David Sarpong, David.Sarpong@brunel.ac.uk

For complaints, Chair of the Research Ethics Committee:

College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee Chair – Professor David Gallear (David.Gallear@brunel.ac.uk)

Thank you for your participation

C. Fieldwork Risk Assessment

College/ Service /Institute: Business, Arts & Social Sciences **Individual Traveller:** Eunice Aidoo **Position:** Doctoral Student

Dates of Overseas Travel (where relevant): January 15, 2022 to June15, 2022 **Number in party (students)**: 1

Brief description of work activity being assessed
Here you should briefly outline the type activity that will be occurring (travel, lab work, interviews of campus etc.).

I am a Ghanaian National and I started my doctoral studies at Brunel University London in January 2021. Prior to joining Brunel, I worked as a Lecturer at the Baptist University, Ghana. As part of my role, I delivered in-prison literacy training workshops for prisoners around the country. My doctoral studies seek to explore how prisoners experience the work they do outside the prisons while incarcerated. The study will be conducted in Ghana and the data for the empirical inquiry will include interviews with prison officers and prisoners who have experienced work outside the prisons while incarcerated.

I plan to travel to Ghana from January, 2022 to June 2022 to collect the data for the study. I have already negotiated access with the Ghana Prison Service to enable me collect the data I require from the prisons (I have attached a copy of this letter to my application). While the Prison service has given me access to six prisons in Ghana, I plan to collect my data from four of these prisons which are widely known to send prisoners' out for work: One medium security prison (Nsawam Male prisons), One Female central prison (Kumasi), and two other prison camps (Jamestown and Amanfrom).

A. Sampling strategy recruiting prisoner participants

iv. The prisoner should have not more than six months left to completing their sentence
i. II. The prisoner should have been taken outside the prison to work not less than twice during their incarceration
ii. III. The time the prisoner worked outside the prison should be verifiable from the prison work time log book.

B. Sampling strategy recruiting prison Officers

iv. The Officers should have worked as a prison officers for Ghana Prisons Service (GPS) for not less than a year
v. They should have accompanied prisoners to work outside prisons
vi. They should have had experience with planning, scheduling, and logging of prisoners for external labour activates

C. Data collection:

The main data sources for the thesis will be collected via semi-structured interviews. I plan to interview a minimum of five prison officers and 20 prisoners in each prison. In total I expect to interview 20 Wardens and 80 prisoners across the four prisons.

i. All Interviews with the Prison Officers will take place at the Prison Officers Mess in a designated board room with a plain shield separating the room. The researcher will have no contact with the participants at all
ii. All interviews with prisoners will be conducted individually in a designated room within the prison complex. I will remain behind a plain shield throughout the interviews with no contact at all with the prisoners
iii. Each interview will last approximately 1.5 hours, and the consent of the research participants would be sought to allow for the audio recording of the interviews

Before the interviews

I will visit the various prisons and meet with the Officers-in-Charge (OICs) to discuss the data collection approach and how the prisons can facilitate the process smoothly as well as explain the contents of the consent forms and participant information sheets to them. On my second visit to the prisons I will meet with the participants who meet the criteria set out in the sampling strategy. In order to protect the privacy right of prisoners, I will not have access to prisoner records. The only record that I will be requesting to go through with the Officers-in-Charge (OICs) will be the prison work time log book which contains only prisoner numbers and can confirm the involvement of participants in external labour. The Officers-in-Charge will be briefed and helped to understand that the participation of the prisoners and Officers in the research is voluntary and that prisoners have the right to participate in the research or refuse to. This will be clarified with the officers-in-charge before their involvement in the research. Once a prisoner or an Officer is identified as eligible, they will be invited by Officers-in-Charge to take part in the research. I will give them copies of the participant information sheet and consent forms. I will put the forms an open space and stand at a distance whilst the Officers-in-charge distribute them. For those who can read I will leave the forms with them till my next visit which should be in two weeks time. For those who cannot read, I will tell the Officers-in-Charge to bring them (one after the other) to a room designated for that purpose and remain behind a plain shield, read and explain the contents to them and give them time to make their decisions till my next visit in two weeks time. One my third visits to the prisons, I will contact the potential participants (Prison Officers and Prisoners) through the Officers-in-Charge to collect the signed copies of the consent forms and participants information sheets for those who can read and write and thumb printed copies for those who cannot write. For those who accepted the invitation, signed the consent forms and participant information sheets, a convenient time for interviewing would be arranged with them and their Officers-in-Charge. For individuals who declined my invitation to participate in the

research they would be made aware that their refusal will not result in any form of punishment (such as loss of privileges, isolation, increase in sentence, denial of their basic rights and hash working conditions), and it is within their rights to refuse to participate.

During the interviews

During the interviews, participants (Prisoners and Prison Officers) will be informed that they are free to answer the questions asked and that it is not compulsory to answer all the questions. Also, participants will be informed that they are free to choose not to answer any question they are not comfortable with or they can decide to stop answering the questions altogether at any point during the interview. They would be made aware that there is no material or financial incentives for taking part in the research.

I will talk to the participants alone in a room with a shield separating the room and with no contact with the participants at all. During the interviews with the prisoners, an officer will be stationed outside the door and will not be permitted in the room to enable the participants answer the questions freely and openly

Possible Risks and appropriate mitigations

As a result of my previous engagements with the prisons where I taught in mates, I am very conversant with the potential risk of violence or aggression from inmates. First, I will take a refresher training course on managing aggression and violence in prisons before I start my data collection. In addition, All the prisons I will be visiting have lifeline personal alarms which I will be allocated one. This personal alarm which I will always have on me in the prisons is designed to help Officers and Researchers to ask for assistance when they face any threatening situation in the prison. That notwithstanding, the following potential risk and their appropriate mitigations would be put in place during the data collection

1. Risk: Aggression

Mitigation- The prisoners I will be interviewing are those in the last months of their prison sentences

-Only individuals who have been deemed to exhibit good behaviour and thus allowed to go out of the prisons to work would be interviewed.

-I will try to be compassionate, and show some good level of empathy to prisoners during the interviews.

2. Risk: Violence

Mitigation -Prisoners would be searched to make sure they have no weapons before they are ushered into the interview room.

- No unnecessary item or materials would be kept in the interview room. Ideally, there will only be a table and chair in the interview room.

-The doors to the room where interviews would be conducted will be left open at all times. In addition, the rooms are themselves designed as a panopticon, which enables Officers on duty to see what is happening in them at all times. In this regard, I will not be left alone with prisoners, as prison officers stationed in the main room would be visible and the interview room would be within the reach of prison officers.

Exemption criteria as set out in paragraph 4 of the policy.
a) It is not possible to conduct the research remotely (full reasoning and justification must be provided);

It is impossible to conduct the research remotely as the main research participants for the study are incarcerated. They do not have access to electronic devices like phones and computers that could enable me to do to contact them and collect the data remotely.

b) The research is of sufficient importance that the benefits may outweigh the risks;

This research is focused on exploring how prisoners experience the work they do outside prisons during their time of incarceration. Findings from the study has the potential to extend our understanding as to how prison work is organised, whether the work prisoners do outside their prisons have any influence or whatsoever on their wellbeing, futures, and potentially on recidivism. The research and its findings are expected to inform decisions about improving prisoners experience, and feed into policy making in the areas of prison work, rehabilitation, and re-integration into society.

c) Government guidelines for the relevant location can be fully adhered to at all times, by both researchers and their participants (evidence of this must be provided);

The Ghana prison service has agreed to provide me with unrestricted access to the prisons in Ghana. The service has specified in their access letter that I will have their full support to conduct the study. At this point, I am dealing directly with the Ghana prison service, not individual prisons. Each prison is likely to have some context specific guidelines, for e.g. times that researchers

may be allowed in the prisons. I will normally be expected to sign a document to confirm I will adhere to these guidelines at all times.

While I am double jabbed, I understand I could still be infected by covid19. In this regard, I plan to adhere to the government of Ghana's guidelines on covid-19 which involves the wearing of face coverings in open spaces, regular hand washing and social distancing. A copy of the Ghana Prison Service Covid19 guidelines and protocol to my ethics application.

I reckon each of the prisons I will be visiting is also likely to have their own Covid19 guidelines. I have now only been given access by the Ghana prison service, who will manage my visits to the various prisons so I currently do not have any prison specific covid19 guidelines to hand. Being very conscious of Covid19 myself, I have requested for the individual prison guidelines but have been promised that would be made available to me by the Ghana Prison service when I report to them. I plan to get these guidelines for each prison, when I report to the Ghana Prison service so I can read and fully understand their protocols. and adhere to them when I visit them.

Within or beyond the protocols, I will make sure I have a nose mask on at all times when I visit them. I plan to engage in regular hand washing or use hand sanitizer where necessary, before and after each interview. With regards to social distancing, I will not have any direct contact with the prisoners as the interviews will be conducted in a room separated by plain shield. I will be interviewing them from the other end of the plain shield. The chairs, and tables in the room I understand will be sanitised after each interview.

d) Participants and/or researchers will not be expected to travel to or enter any new environment or interact with any new people which would not be encountered in daily life and which may pose risk of exposure to Covid-19;

I plan to travel to the prisons by private transport. All interviews will be conducted in a room designated for the purpose of interviewing the research participants. The researcher and participants will not be travelling out of the prisons.

e) The researcher is already based in the country within which they wish to conduct research (for example, the researcher is in their home country), or approval for international travel has been sought from the relevant Vice Provost and Dean;

I am a Ghanaian Citizen and lived in the country until I came to study here in Brunel in April, 2021. I have in the past as a Lecturer in a local university done various trainings for in-mates and Officers in the country's prisons. I have visited every one of the prisons I will be conducting the research before, and have a very good understanding of the prisons processes, protocols, and safety guidelines. In addition, I sought for permission to travel to Ghana to conduct this research. The Vice Provost and Dean for College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences, Professor Thomas Betteridge on 30th September, 2021, gave me the approval to travel to Ghana to collect the data. I have attached a copy for your perusal.

f) The FCDO does not advise of any current limitations to normal activity or movement within the relevant country

I am a Ghanaian Citizen, and Ghana is my home country. I only Left the country to come and study here in Brunel in April, 2021. The FCDO does not advise against travelling to Ghana but advises travellers to adhere to covid-19 directives and guidelines in place. The FCDO also encourages the wearing of face coverings, social distancing and hand washing.

Things to consider within the assessment – this list may not be exhaustive

- **Personal safety** e.g. Social distancing; Lone Working; Escape from fire; physical/verbal attack; disability or health problems; delayed access to personal or medical assistance; failure of routine or emergency communications; security of accommodation and support; getting lost, or stranded by transport; terrorism/kidnapping/civil unrest; cultural or legal differences. Please also consider any disposal of PPE.
  - List aspects of the work with significant hazards, and give brief details of how foreseeable harm/injuries could occur.
- **Equipment hazards - Storage, handling and use of equipment and materials** e.g. Tools; machinery; vehicles; manual handling; noise; work at height; electricity; fire; vacuum; high pressure; high temperature; ultra violet; laser; vibration - List equipment and materials with significant hazards, and give brief details of how foreseeable harm/injuries could occur.
- **Biological and or Chemical hazards that may be associated with your project** : Blood or blood products from humans or animals; sterilisation or cleaning equipment and/or chemicals

Hazards	Who might be harmed	Controls - What are you doing	Outline any other steps to manage the risk	Action by whom	Action by when
1 Lack of planning	**Individual traveller (IT) and/or group (G)**	**Please summarise below the steps that you are taking**			
Travel arrangements to and	Student	I will travel to Ghana by air upon the approval of my ethics application to conduct semi-structured interviews with inmates and prison officers of the Ghana Prisons Service. At the moment, Ghana is still on the Amber list and as such there are no restrictions for travelling there	I will follow all DVT / dehydration precautions as well as all covid-19 safety protocols advised by aircraft cabin crew.	Student	Before, during, and after the data

from the location		I have taken my first jab of Covid-19 vaccine (Pfizer) and hope to take the second jab before January, but given that Covid-19 travel protocol remain in place; I will take Covid-19 PCR test within 72 hours before my departure to Ghana. When I get to Ghana, I will have to show them my negative PCR Test result, complete additional health declaration forms and undergo a further COVID test on arrival. After collecting the data, I will take Covid-19 PCR test within 72 hours before my departure to the UK on June 15, 2022. I will also complete a passenger allocator form before boarding my flight. Ghana is on the amber list, so I am not required to go into quarantine on my return. I will rather do a day 2 and a day 8 covid-19 PCR tests.			collection
Internal travel arrangements at the destination, if applicable.	Student	It is a legal requirement to wear a mask in public and private places and in vehicles with more than one occupant I will use my own car whilst in Ghana and will adhere to all Covid-19 safety guidelines provided by the Ghana Health Service, including wearing of a face mask in public places, social distancing and washing of hands regularly	I will use her own vehicle as I have a valid driver's license from Ghana. I will engage in regular hand washing, social distancing and masks use		During data collection
Accommodation arrangements at the destination	Student	I am a Ghanaian national; I have lived in Ghana throughout my life and have all my family living in Ghana. I will be residing in my family homes in Accra and Kumasi during my time in Ghana	I am a Ghanaian National and have lived in Ghana all my life. I am therefore familiar with the current conditions and all precautions have been duly considered since the I use to live in these homes before moving to the UK	Student	Before and during data collection
Insurance and medical cover arrangements	Student	All safety protocols, particularly regarding Covid-19, will be strictly adhered to during the data collection in Ghana. I and the participants will be required to wear face coverings and remain behind a plain shield throughout the interviews. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers will be made available at the interviews.	I have been a tutor in Ghana prison for the past three years so I am fairly conversant with the standard personal safety protocols in the prison. Should any of the research participant and/or myself, show symptoms or test positive for Covid-19 within 10 days of the interview, all other participants, including me (the researcher), will be required to take Covid-19 test and adhere to self-isolation rules and guidelines if necessary. Also, I am fully aware of the Healthcare services arrangements and safety requirements and practices in Ghana. I have insurance cover in the country, as I am a Ghanaian, and therefore do not require additional insurance and medical cover arrangements	Student	Prior to and during the research

			Also, I have received an insurance cover from Brunel University Insurance for a Travel Insurance Policy with Number RTT 306251/LUPC03		
All participants have up to date travel documentation for the destination	Student	I have checked my passport details and it is valid until 15th November, 2030. I also have a valid Biometric Residential Permit (BRP) which is valid until 31st December, 2024 for my return to the UK in June, 2022.	I have already sent copies of my Biometric Residential Permit (BRP), visa and passport to the University and I have copies stored on my evision and clouds as well	*Student*	Prior to conducting the research
Participants details and next of kin	Student	Brunel University London has all contact details and passport details stored in a secure location on Campus.	I have electronic copies of all my documents stored in the clouds passport	*Student*	Prior to conducting the research
Covid secure measures (please indicate the safety measures in place to reduce the likelihood of infection for both researchers and participants)	Student Ghana Prisons Service	Covid-19, protocols will be strictly adhered to during the data collection in Ghana. I and the participants will be required to wear face covering and remain behind a plain shield throughout the interviews. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers will be made available at the interviews. The Ghana Prisons Service has reduced prisons visitations and all visitors are required to wear nose mask, undergo the case definition symptom screening and temperature checks and hand hygiene protocols. I have read and understood the prisons covid19 protocol policy documents and have attached same to my application	Ghana Prisons Service ICPA	Student, Ghana Prisons Service	Prior to and during data collection

2 Lack of Personal fitness to travel					
Individuals declared fit and healthy to travel with no underlying ill health conditions raised	Student	I do not have any pre-existing medical conditions or any known disabilities.	I will consult my GP two weeks before I travel to Ghana	Student	Prior to and during the data collection
Detail any relevant disabilities that may require additional controls to be put in place	Student	*No known disability*	N/A	N/A	N/A

3 Lack of Staffing control / conduct of the group					
Terrorism and Personal safety	Student	I have checked FCO website to be sure there are no travel restrictions in Ghana. However, safety precautions are advised. Also, at present there are no terrorist activities in Ghana. However, as a Ghanaian National who has lived and worked in Ghana throughout my life and I am familiar with the safety precautions to engage in whilst living in Ghana and I intend to take all the necessary steps to ensure my safety whilst in Ghana.	I will observe all safety protocols as advised by FCO website and the Ghana Police whilst in Ghana I am a Ghanaian Citizen, and Ghana is my home country. I only Left the country to come and study here in Brunel in April, 2021. The FCDO does not advise against travelling to Ghana but advises travellers to adhere to covid-19 directives and guidelines in place. The FCDO also encourages the wearing of face coverings, social distancing and hand washing.	Student	Before and During data collection
4 Health matters					
Appropriate vaccinations for the destination(s)	Student	I took my first jab of the Covid-19 vaccine on the 21st of August, 2021 as attached to this application and I plan to take the second jab in the next 3 months which will be done before I travel to Ghana in January	I will adhere to all the covid-19protocols put in place by the countries (both the UK and Ghana), airlines and the various airports (Ghana and the UK). Hand washing, wearing of face coverings, social distancing, PCR tests, and passenger locator forms. I will adhere to all measures put in place.	Student	Prior to data collection
Food poisoning advice regarding travel to the destination	Student	I am fully aware of the food safety conditions in Ghana but the food I will consume whilst in Ghana will be prepared at home by me. Nonetheless, I will be careful of what I eat and drink whilst in Ghana. I will always wash my hands after going to the lavatory, before handling food and before eating.		Student	Prior to and during data collection

Local conditions					
Outline of local customs to be observed	Student	I am a Ghanaian national. I have lived in Ghana for most of my life. I understand the local customs, traditions, and religion.	There are no restrictions on dressing and taking of photographs in Ghana	Student	Prior to and during data

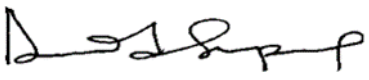
i.e. dress, religion and culture					collect ion
Weather and special equipment required	Student	I am medically fit for adverse weather conditions. Weather conditions in Ghana unlikely to lead to a medical or other emergency for me. However, I will make sure to pack appropriate clothing, sunscreen etc	The student is familiar with the areas where the prisons are situated	Student	Prior to and during data collect ion
5 Emergencies					
Communicat ion during visit with UK and vice versa	Student	I have shared my emergency contact details with my research supervisors, the University and relatives in Ghana. I will share my emergency contact with the Ghana prisons service when I start the data collection	I have my emergency contact details stored on Brunel student portal. I will brief all the parties on the communication plans during the trip in a face to face meeting prior the trip.	Student	Before data collect ion
Response to an emergency requiring travel to the UK	Student	The Ghana Prisons Service will have access to my emergency contact and would contact them should anything happen. Also, I would always be accompanied by a prisons officer (who would stay 2 meters apart) and would report anything that may crop up during the data collection	Review access to emergency funds and Check the supervisor's capacity to obtain money	Student, Ghana Prisons Service	During data collect ion

Have you included risks relating to Covid-19 and set out appropriate mitigation?

Person(s) completing this assessment:
(Person carrying out or managing/supervising the activity day-to-day)

Name	Eunice Aidoo	Title	Miss	Signature	EA	Date	05/10/2021

Other person(s) commenting on this assessment
(Line Manager or Supervisor responsible for the activity, others involved in the decision-making process)

Name	David Sarpong	Title	Dr	Signature		Date	06/10/2021

Person approving this assessment:
(Person with overall responsibility for the activity Director of Professional Service (or delegated individual, e.g. manager or head of department), Senior Academic or Manager/Supervisor). If the research involves overseas travel, this section should be completed by the relevant Vice-Provost and Dean of College.

Name		Title		Signature		Date	

D. Amendments

- **Risk Assessment: At present this document does not include risk of violence or aggression - it is noted that you will remain in a room with an individual prisoner during their interview (although an officer will be posted outside the door). Given the significant number of prisoners you wish to interview (80 interview scenarios), please include this risk and appropriate mitigation within the RA.**

  As a result of my previous engagements with the prisons where I taught in mates, I am very conversant with the potential risk of violence or aggression from inmates. First, I will take a refresher training course on managing aggression and violence in prisons before I start my data collection. In addition, All the prisons I will be visiting have lifeline personal alarms which I will be allocated one. This personal alarm which I will always have on me in the prisons is designed to help Officers and Researchers to ask for assistance when they face any threatening situation in the prison. That notwithstanding, the following potential risk and their appropriate mitigations would be put in place during the data collection

  1. Risk: Aggression

  Mitigation- The prisoners I will be interviewing are those in the last months of their prison sentences

  -Only individuals who have been deemed to exhibit good behaviour and thus allowed to go out of the prisons to work would be interviewed.

  -I will try to be compassionate, and show some good level of empathy to prisoners during the interviews.

  2. Risk: Violence

  Mitigation -Prisoners would be searched to make sure they have no weapons before they are ushered into the interview room.

  - No unnecessary item or materials would be kept in the interview room. Ideally, there will only be a table and chair in the interview room.

  -The doors to the room where interviews would be conducted will be left open at all times. In addition, the rooms are themselves designed as a panopticon, which enables Officers on duty to see what is happening in them at all times. In this regard, I will not be left alone with prisoners, as prison officers stationed in the main room would be visible and the interview room would be within the reach of prison officers.

- The following comment from your previous feedback does not appear to have been addressed:

Exemption criteria: The document you have supplied detailing how your project meets the criteria for exemption is not yet adequate. You have not addressed the requisite criteria set out at paragraph 4 of the policy. **a) It is not possible to conduct the research remotely (full reasoning and justification must be provided);**

It is impossible to conduct the research remotely as the main research participants for the study are incarcerated. They do not have access to electronic devices like phones and computers that could enable me to do to contact them and collect the data remotely.

b) The research is of sufficient importance that the benefits may outweigh the risks;

This research is focused on exploring how prisoners experience the work they do outside prisons during their time of incarceration. Findings from the study has the potential to extend our understanding as to how prison work is organised, whether the work prisoners do outside their prisons have any influence or whatsoever on their wellbeing, futures, and potentially on recidivism. The research and its findings are expected to inform decisions about improving prisoners experience, and feed into policy making in the areas of prison work, rehabilitation, and re-integration into society.

c) Government guidelines for the relevant location can be fully adhered to at all times, by both researchers and their participants (evidence of this must be provided);

The Ghana prison service has agreed to provide me with unrestricted access to the prisons in Ghana. The service has specified in their access letter that I will have their full support to conduct the study. At this point, I am dealing directly with the Ghana prison service, not individual prisons. Each prison is likely to have some context specific guidelines, for e.g. times that researchers may be allowed in the prisons. I will normally be expected to sign a document to confirm I will adhere to these guidelines at all times.

While I am double jabbed, I understand I could still be infected by covid19. In this regard, I plan to adhere to the government of Ghana's guidelines on covid-19 which involves the wearing of face coverings in open spaces, regular

hand washing and social distancing. A copy of the Ghana Prison Service Covid19 guidelines and protocol to my ethics application.

I reckon each of the prisons I will be visiting is also likely to have their own Covid19 guidelines. I have now only been given access by the Ghana prison service, who will manage my visits to the various prisons so I currently do not have any prison specific covid19 guidelines to hand. Being very conscious of Covid19 myself, I have requested for the individual prison guidelines but have been promised that would be made available to me by the Ghana Prison service when I report to them. I plan to get these guidelines for each prison, when I report to the Ghana Prison service so I can read and fully understand their protocols. and adhere to them when I visit them.

Within or beyond the protocols, I will make sure I have a nose mask on at all times when I visit them. I plan to engage in regular hand washing or use hand sanitizer where necessary, before and after each interview. With regards to social distancing, I will not have any direct contact with the prisoners as the interviews will be conducted in a room separated by plain shield. I will be interviewing them from the other end of the plain shield. The chairs, and tables in the room I understand will be sanitised after each interview.

d) Participants and/or researchers will not be expected to travel to or enter any new environment or interact with any new people which would not be encountered in daily life and which may pose risk of exposure to Covid-19;

I plan to travel to the prisons by private transport. All interviews will be conducted in a room designated for the purpose of interviewing the research participants. The researcher and participants will not be travelling out of the prisons.

e) The researcher is already based in the country within which they wish to conduct research (for example, the researcher is in their home country), or approval for international travel has been sought from the relevant Vice Provost and Dean;

I am a Ghanaian Citizen and lived in the country until I came to study here in Brunel in April, 2021. I have in the past as a Lecturer in a local university done various trainings for in-mates and Officers in the country's prisons. I have visited every one of the prisons I will be conducting the research before, and have a very good understanding of the prisons processes, protocols, and safety guidelines.

In addition, I sought for permission to travel to Ghana to conduct this research. The Vice Provost and Dean for College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences, Professor Thomas Betteridge on 30th September, 2021, gave me the approval to travel to Ghana to collect the data. I have attached a copy for your perusal.

f) The FCDO does not advise of any current limitations to normal activity or movement within the relevant country

I am a Ghanaian Citizen, and Ghana is my home country. I only Left the country to come and study here in Brunel in April, 2021.

The FCDO does not advise against travelling to Ghana but advises travellers to adhere to covid-19 directives and guidelines in place. The FCDO also encourages the wearing of face coverings, social distancing and hand washing.

- **As the Officers-in-Charge will be assisting with identifying individual prisoners eligible for participation, please ensure they are made aware of the voluntary nature of participation and avoid any undue pressure placed on any individual prisoner to take part. Due to their vulnerable status, prisoners must not be placed at risk of coercion or undue pressure by officers in charge (even if inadvertently).** The Officers-in-Charge will be briefed and helped to understand that the participation of the prisoners and Officers in the research is voluntary and that prisoners have the right to participate in the research or refuse to. This will be clarified with the officers-in-charge before their involvement in the research.
- **Please ensure prisoners are made aware of their right to refuse or withdraw without detriment BEFORE you seek consent. This should also be clear to the officers in charge, who will have influence over the prisoners.**

  Every prisoner participant would be made aware of their right to refuse or withdraw without detriment BEFORE I seek their consent to even interview them. This would also be made clear to the officers in charge, who will have influence over the prisoners.

  This statement has been clarified in the risk assessment

- **PIS (both) - these documents should contain safety measures to be taken to reduce the risks posed by Covid-19.**

Covid-19 measures to be taken have been included in the both PIS and have been attached to this email

- PIS (Prison Officers):
  - **Please clarify why you are asking participants to give a week's notice to withdraw from the study. This is unusual and some**

participants may wish to change their minds just before their interview or even during - which is within their rights. Please provide your reasoning behind this (or amend).

This statement has been amended in the PIS.

- **You state that the data will not be shared with anyone except the researcher - are you planning to provide a copy of the results to the Prison Service? Please be absolutely transparent about this; you may need to re-word to be clear that only aggregate data (and no direct quotes) will be provided to the Prison Service.**

This statement has been clarified in the PISs

- **You have indicated that participants should contact the Chair of the REC (Prof David Gallear) in case of emergencies - what do you mean by this? Participants should contact Prof Gallear to discuss complaints or concerns about the research, but it is not clear what constitutes an 'emergency' and participants may think they should contact him if they need to reschedule an interview (for example).**

This has been clarified in the PISs

- PIS (prisoners):
  - **As per my previous comment, please do not expect participants to give you notice in order to withdraw (unless you have a robust justification for this, which should be communicated in the PIS).**

  This statement has been amended in the PIS

  - **Will prisoners be allowed to keep the PIS? Please clarify.**
- This statement has been clarified in the PIS
  - **Please add a clear, comprehensive no-detriment statement to this document to ensure it is absolutely clear that declining to participate (or withdrawing from the study at any time) will have no negative consequences.**
- This statement has been amended in the PIS
  - **You state 'None of what you share individually would be discussed with anyone but the researcher' - however this may not be possible if evidence of harm comes to light. You mention this caveat later in the document, but it is important to be consistent, particularly if some participants may have difficulties with literacy.**
- This statement has been clarified in the PIS
  - **Is there no risk of distress? You have not mentioned this under the heading on possible risks - please include it along with suitable mitigation (e.g. right to withdraw, access to support).**

- This statement has been amended in the PIS

    - **Please see my earlier comment with regard to 'emergency' contact and asking for notice if a participant wishes to withdraw.**
- This statement has been amended in the PIS
    - You must consider ways for prisoners to complain about the research without approaching you, and without having the means to email the Chair of the REC. Please give this some thought and revise.

- **D29: Where will data be stored (you are advised to store all research data on secure Brunel servers)? Will data be transferred between devices? What about recording devices? What about electronic transfer? Will all devices be in line with GDPR and UK data protection law? How long will you retain data before anonymisation? How will you protect hard copy consent forms? Please give details specific to your study.**

  The researcher will ensure compliance with the legal requirements of the DPA and GDPR with regards to the safe acquisition, storage and transmission of personal data during and after the data collection. All personal information will be coded or rendered anonymous as far as is possible and consistent with the needs of the study, and as early as possible immediately after the collection of data. All data from which an individual is identifiable would be destroyed when no longer required. In a situation where the researcher may need to retain data beyond completion (particularly for external scrutiny purposes), all relevant persons (particularly the research participant) would be made aware of the reasons for retention, and the circumstances where disclosure might occur. In such cases written consent would be obtained from the participants. Once the research has been completed, confidential data relating to participants (such as consent forms, recording device and PISs) would be destroyed and assurances would be given to this effect. Data would be secured against unauthorized access and no individual would be identifiable from the published work without their explicit consent. Research data would be stored on secure Brunel servers and encrypted where necessary. The principles of data protection such as fairness, lawfulness, and security of data would be adhered to accordingly

- **D30: Please provide information specific to your study. Who will you approach if you are witness to harm or a disclosure of harm? Will you tell the participant and if so, at what stage? Will the incident be formally recorded?**

All information collected about the participants during the course of the study will be kept strictly confidential. My procedures for handling, processing, storage and destruction of data are in compliant with the Data Protection Act 2018; however, if evidence of harm or misconduct comes to light, then, in line with research guidelines, confidentiality will have to be broken. I will tell the participants at the time if I think I need to do this, and let them know what will happen next.

In exceptional circumstances, where there is sufficient evidence to raise serious concern about the safety or interests of participants, or about others who may be threatened by their behaviour, it would be necessary to inform appropriate third parties (such as the Officers-in-charge) without their prior consent. This would only be done after consultation with my Supervisor, unless the delay caused by seeking this advice would involve a serious risk to life or health

E. Permission letter

In case of reply the number and date of this letter should be quoted.

HEADQUARTERS

GHANA PRISONS SERVICE

P. O. BOX 129, ACCRA

DIGITAL ADDRESS : GL-045-8990

GHANA, WEST AFRICA Tel: 233-302 777 830

Your Ref. No: ..... **Fax: 233-302-772865**

Email: info@ghanaprisons.gov.gh

My Ref. No: **HRG..……..……/0183/V.3/21/26/180M…….**

Date:

……20TH SEPTEMBER……..., 2021

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE GHANA PRISONS SERVICE

Reference your letter dated 15th February, 2021, be informed that the Prisons Administration has granted you permission to conduct research in the Service. Consequently, Ms Eunice Aidoo, a student of Brunel University London (Brunel Business School) will interact with some inmates and officers of the under-listed prisons to collect data:

- James Camp
- Kumasi Central (Male)
- Kumasi Female
- Amanfrom Camp
- Nsawam Medium Security (Male)
- Nswaman Female

2. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its related issues, the researcher is required to liaise with the officers-in-charge (OICs) of the above prison facilities to discuss the modalities of the data collection. However, station commanders are reminded to ensure strict adherence of all the safety protocols.

3. By a copy of this letter, the OICs of the affected prisons are informed and directed to assist the researcher without compromising security.

4. A copy of the student's research work must be submitted to the Prisons Headquarters for further analysis and record purposes.

5. Accept for your information and necessary action.

ERNEST A. ADOFO
DIRECTOR OF PRISONS/HRD
For: DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF PRISONS

HEAD OF RESEARCH GROUP
STRATEGY, ENTREPRENEURSHIP,
AND INTERNTIONAL BUSINESS (SEIB)
BRUNEL UNIVERSITY LONDON
KINGSTON LANE
UXBRIDGE, UB8 3PH
UNITED KINGDOM

Cc:

1. MS EUNICE AIDOO (+233507506117/ +233550621869)

2. THE AFFECTED STATIONS

Encl.

/asa/

F. Participants Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

Exploring How Prisoners Experience Work: A Discursive Practice Approach

Eunice Aidoo

APPROVAL HAS BEEN GRANTED FOR THIS STUDY TO BE CARRIED OUT BETWEEN 15/01/2022 AND 31/12/2023

The participant (or their legal representative) should complete the whole of this sheet.		
	YES	NO
Have you read the Participant Information Sheet?	☐	☐
Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study? (via email/phone for electronic surveys)	☐	☐
Have you received satisfactory answers to all your questions? (via email/phone for electronic surveys)	☐	☐
Who have you spoken to about the study?		
Do you understand that you will not be referred to by name in any report concerning this study?	☐	☐
Do you understand that:		
• You are free to withdraw from this study at any time	☐	☐
• You don't have to give any reason for withdrawing	☐	☐
• Choosing not to participate or withdrawing will not affect your Access to service	☐	☐
• You can withdraw your data any time up to 01/12/2023	☐	☐
I agree to my interview being audio recorded	☐	☐
I agree to the use of non-attributable quotes when the study is written up or published	☐	☐
The procedures regarding confidentiality have been explained to me	☐	☐
I agree that my anonymised data can be stored and shared with other researchers for use in future projects.	☐	☐
I agree to take part in this study.	☐	☐

Signature of research participant:	
Print name:	Date:

G. Interview Protocols

(i) Interview protocol for Inmates and Ex-Offenders

- Name (optional)
- Age
- Name of Prison
- Educational level
- How long is/was your sentence? What is the period left of your sentence?
- Have you been to prison before? How many times?

1. So tell me about the work you do, your role at the site?
2. Describe a typical day at in the prison and what you do before, during and after you go outside to work
3. What do/did you think about the work you do?
4. Do you like the work? Is/was there a job you would prefer? Or a task about the job you would particularly not want to do?
5. What other jobs have you done outside the prison or other prisons?
6. Did you work before coming to prison? If so, what did you do?
7. What is your pay, if any, in prison?
8. What do you think of work (generally)?
9. How did you get this job?
10. What is/was the atmosphere like at the job site?
11. Would you rather spend your day in your cell, or would you instead work full time? Why?
12. What passes the time most quickly? How do you make time go more rapidly during your working hours?
13. What is/was your relationship with your instructor? What do you think the other prisoners feel of the instructor? Do you think this relationship is meaningful?
14. What is/was your relationship with the other workers (non-prisoners, if any)? How does working with them influence your life and decisions from now on
15. Apart from the obvious reasons, what motivated your participation in this program?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME!

(ii) Interview Protocol For Prison Officers

- Name (optional)
- Age
- Educational level
- How long have you worked for the Ghana prisons Service
- Name of prison
- Rank

1. How long have you been involved in external labour
2. How long has the external labor program been carried out in this prison?
3. Can you please walk me through a typical day in the prisons and explain the preparations before, during and after working outside the prison
4. How are inmates selected to partake in the work program?
5. How are the prisoners rewarded after work?
6. What difficulties do you think inmates face when participating in this program?
7. What challenges, if any, do you face with implementing the program?
8. Do you believe that the attitudes of prison officers when supervising prisoners affect prisoner rehabilitation?
9. How do you think this program helps prisoners inside the prison and upon their release?
10. Do prisoners acquire any skills needed for a crime-free lifestyle through participation in this program?
11. Is there any research or documentation on prisoners who have participated in external labor in the past and now released from prisons? Have many of them recidivated?
12. Apart from the obvious reasons, in your opinion, what motivates the prisoners to participate in the external labor program?