

**CARCERAL MOBILITIES, GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL
NETWORKS: CONCEPTUALIZING TRANSFERRED PRISONERS'
EXPERIENCES IN GHANA**

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Philosophy.*

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DECLARATION

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my family, Mubarikata Dawonu and Asheera Mwinikuubu Unusah, for the support given to me throughout my studies.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the transfer experiences of prisoners and how they affect prison governance, the prison economy, and the wider social relations of the prison system in Ghana, thereby contributing to critical debates in carceral geography. Despite increasing attention to prisons as a significant area of empirical investigation within carceral geography, there is a dearth of research on the Global South, particularly in Ghana. I advance three claims, particularly from the Global South perspective about carceral mobility: First, I demonstrate the interconnectedness between mobility and confinement, which are often studied separately. Second, the findings reveal the chaotic and unsettling nature of prisoner transfer in Ghana while also recognising the diversity of experiences and challenges among prisoners. Third, as the first empirical research into prisoner transfer in Ghana, this study contributes new knowledge about the rationales, experiences, and impacts of prisoner transfer in Ghana, considering its implications related to mobility (including forced migration), networks, and power dynamics. Employing a mixed-methods approach, I administered questionnaires to 164 transferred prisoners and conducted 48 semi-structured interviews with key informants in Ghana. Unlike previous studies that described prisoner transfer as a punitive measure, this thesis unveils the pivotal role transfer plays as a temporary solution to the structural challenges of a resource-constrained prison system in Ghana. The transfer process and family members' engagement with prisoners' post-transfer are characterised by interrelated power dynamics, as seen in the procedural discretion exercised by prison officers, in the selection and transportation of prisoners, and during visitations. Furthermore, by focusing on the transfer experience of prisoners, I draw attention to what I characterise as a pervasive sense of 'blurriness' across different spaces of the prisons in my study. In my usage, 'blurriness' signals embedded ambiguities, which are driven by an individual's distinctive experiences of incarceration and the spillages within the prison's economy (i.e., the formal and informal exchange of goods among prisoners). This sheds light on the need to reconsider some of the consequences of incarceration and transfer, and the intricate workings of the internal micro-capitalism of the prison economy. Additionally, the findings contextualise the agency of individual prisoners, which is intertwined with the collective suffering experienced during incarceration and transfer while contributing to the complexities of the formal and informal economies of prisons. Based on these findings, a series of recommendations are identified, these include the development of a comprehensive transfer policy, which must be accompanied by a Digital Data Management Plan (DDMP) to guide the

practises and management of prisoner transfer in Ghana. The structural challenges of the Ghana Prisons Service require a national dialogue and government commitment to allocate funds to revamp the dilapidated conditions of the prisons and ensure the provision of basic necessities for prisoners. Logistical support is also needed to minimise the exercise of discretion by prison officers during transfers.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Full Meaning
AMSP	Ankaful Maximum Security Prison
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
DDMP	Digital Data Management Plan
GPS	Ghana Prisons Service
GP	Ghana Police Service
GNF	Ghana National Fire Service
GIS	Ghana Immigration Service
GRB	Ghana Refugee Board
GCG	Gaming Commission of Ghana
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
GHC	Currency of the Republic of Ghana (Ghana Cedi)
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IOM	Organisation for Migration
NADMO	National Disaster Management Organisation
NCC	Narcotics Control Commission
NCSALW	National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NMSP	Nsawam Medium Security Prison
NPC	National Peace Council
NRCD	National Redemption Council Decree
OIC	Officer-In-Charge
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
£	Currency of the United Kingdom (exchange rate as of April 17, 2023 - https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/convert/?Amount=1.8andFrom=GHSandTo=GBP)

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Reframing of the research focus

This thesis contributes new knowledge to carceral scholarship, particularly from the Global South (e.g., Ghana) perspective, on the phenomenon of prisoner transfer. It explores the transfer experiences of prisoners, how transfer affects prison governance, the prison economy, the social networks of the transferred prisoner and the wider social relations of the prison system in Ghana. Specifically, I spotlight the rationales, experiences, and impacts of prisoner transfer in Ghana and their relation to carceral mobility, the relationship between the transferred prisoners and family members post-transfer, and the various prison spaces of the manifestation of power dynamics.

The empirical findings I present regarding the transfer process go beyond the original scope of the thesis, which initially focused on the conceptualization of transferred prisoners as forced migrants. The initial research idea (i.e., theoretical conceptions) for this thesis was anchored on two key grounds: 1) the historical changes, inconsistencies in defining, and narrow application of forced migration; and 2) using this conceptualisation to spark a political discourse aimed at attracting policy and public attention to the rarely discussed resource challenges prisoners are facing, particularly in Ghana. For the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), there is no explicit and universally accepted definition of forced migration (2016). The notion of this conceptualisation was to construct a theoretical framework within the prison space, which could serve as an entry point to the political power structures in *defining who is a forced migrant* to engender the necessary attention from the public, political actors, and policymakers towards prisons.

Despite the intentions and perceptions underlying this conceptualisation, the theoretical connection between transferred prisoner and forced migration could not adequately be achieved in this thesis. The shift in research focus and the inability to conceptualise transferred prisoners as forced migrants can be attributed to the numerous challenges confronting the Ghana prison service (Chapter 4) and the challenges I faced in gaining access to the transferred prisoners (Chapter 3). Additionally, the significance of various discourses such as prison labour/economy, solidarity, resistance, and multiple mobilities other than forced migration, that arise from the transfer process and the experiences of transferred prisoners, play a crucial role in the reframing of the research

focus. Nevertheless, the experiences of the transferred prisoners shared some parallels with forced migrants (e.g., asylum seekers, refugees, and Internally Displaced Persons) and this will be discussed in the thesis.

In this chapter, I introduce the research background to contextualise the research gap, the historical overview of the prison system of Ghana, justify the study, outline the research questions and objectives, describe the significance of the research, and provide an overview of the study thesis structure.

1.2 Background to the Study

This study is a two-part research inquiry from a theoretical and practical standpoint. First, from a practical standpoint, I investigate the practises of prisoner transfer in Ghana, delving into the rationale, actors, transportation, challenges, and, importantly, the effects of transfer on the relationship between prisoners and their networks (e.g., family members, friends, and co-workers). The term ‘transfer’ is used here to describe the movement of a prisoner from one prison facility to another within the national boundaries of a country, which tends to serve as a temporary fix to the systemic challenges of the carceral system of the country. The movements of the transferred prisoners proceed in a series of spatial-temporal phases, revealing various procedures and specific prison sites (e.g., departure, transit, and destination prisons), which contextualise transfer as an ongoing process rather than a one-time event. Several studies reveal that prisons across the world are fraught with many challenges, including but not limited to overcrowding, deplorable health conditions, and violation of inmate rights through officer brutalities (Jacobson, Heard, and Fair, 2017; Scharff-Smith, 2016; Sarkin, 2008), and Ghana is not exempt from these challenges (for further details, see Chapter 4 of this thesis). Brooks and Best (2021, p. 459) argue that prison transfers are used to fix (some of these) “carceral crises.” Similarly, prison transfers are disciplinary measures used to respond to infractions committed by prisoners (Haesen et al., 2023; Brooks and Best, 2021; Moran, Piacentini, and Pallot, 2012). As states continue to use incarceration as a response to crime, social structures, especially family relations, are also being reconfigured through carceral processes and experiences. Despite geographical distinctions, the scholarly discourse on the effects of incarceration on the families of inmates is analogous. These effects include financial constraints, psychological strain, societal stigma, marital dissolution, and labour market exclusion (Beckett and Goldberg, 2022; Condry and Minson, 2020; Hutton and Moran, 2019; Condry and Smith, 2018). This thesis expands our understanding of the ramifications

of incarceration by acknowledging how transfers are reshaping the experiences, including the coping strategies, of inmates and their social networks in Ghana.

Second, from a theoretical standpoint, I examine the transfer experiences of prisoners in Ghana through diverse concepts, including mobility (e.g., forced migration), prison labour/economy, resistance, etc. This examination serves to contribute to critical debates in the domains of carceral mobilities. Conventionally, prisons are considered static and fixed spaces. Recent studies suggest otherwise, as different movements continue to characterise these spaces. The field of carceral geography continues to explore and understand the configurations, including the movement across these spaces (Martensen, 2020; Moran and Schliehe, 2017; Moran, Gill, and Conlon, 2016; Moran, Piacentini, and Pallot, 2012). Although the field of carceral geography is witnessing growth, perspectives from African countries regarding this field are seldom accessible, with only a few exceptions (such as the works of Braatz, Bruce-Lockhart, and Hynd, 2022; Morelle, Le Marcis, and Hornberger, 2021; Sarkin, 2019). Prisons have recently come under scrutiny globally, garnering considerable attention from local and international organisations and academia, primarily due to the escalating number of individuals being incarcerated, and the conditions under which they live. While there is an increasing body of literature aimed at understanding various prison practises (Skarbek, 2020; Moran, Turner, and Schliehe, 2018; Mountz et al., 2013), the majority of these studies have concentrated on Euro-American countries, with little consideration given to African countries.

This study, therefore, considers the overlaps and contradictions across the concepts of mobility (including forced migration) and confinement (i.e., prisons) and that are connected through power relations. Considering these concepts together, the thesis reveals instances of ‘blurriness’ across various spaces of the prison that engender the need for further research on these concepts.

This study sheds light on the interconnectedness between mobility and confinement, which are often studied separately. Furthermore, the study contextualises the role of transfer in prison management in Ghana, a system characterised by varied challenges (Chapter 5). In this vein, by critically evaluating the transfer of prisoners, the findings direct our attention to the subtle complexities and diversities inherent in inmates’ experiences of incarceration (see Chapter 6 for further details), which entail what I identify as a pervasive sense of “blurriness” across distinct spaces within prisons. I posit that the presence of blurriness illuminates the intricate workings of

the internal micro-capitalism of the prison economy, which transferred prisoners exploit to enhance one of their coping mechanisms (see Chapter 7 for an in-depth analysis of this matter).

1.3 Historical Overview of the Penal System of Ghana

In this section, I provide a brief historical overview of the GPS that has evolved through pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial periods. I highlight the varied forms of punishments, source of enforcing the various punishments, and the changes that have occurred within the various periods.

Punishment in pre-colonial Ghana (period before 1471)

In pre-colonial Ghana, historically referred to as the Gold Coast, justice delivery system can be characterised as predominantly informal and under the authority of traditional authority figures (Atiemo, 2013). Those individuals granted the power to punish wrongdoers included kings, fetish priests, chiefs, elders, landowners/tendaabas, and clan leaders. The penalties imposed varied depending on the nature of the offence and the social status of the offender. These penalties encompassed fines, flogging, the sale of the criminal into slavery, banishment, ostracism, mutilation, and even capital punishment (Kwaku, 1976).

Punishment in colonial Ghana (from 1471 – 1957)

Ghana's role as both a source and transit nation for enslaved individuals during colonial times led to the construction of forts and castles, some sections of which were specifically designated for the confinement of slaves. Initially intended for safeguarding and storing commodities like gold, ivory, and other goods, these forts and castles eventually housed slave dungeons where individuals were held before being transported forcibly to the Americas (Amoah-Ramey 2019). Since the country's independence in 1957, some of these forts and castles have been converted into prisons, such as the James fort, Ussher fort, Fort William, among others. Various research studies have brought to light the deplorable living conditions endured by these enslaved individuals within the dungeons (Apoh, Anquandah, and Amenyo-Xa, 2021). Apoh, Anquandah, and Amenyo-Xa (2021, p. 107) comprehensively captured the lived conditions of slaves in a questionnaire as "[...] what are your sentiments/opinions/feelings concerning the narratives that slaves ate, slept, and survived in their own urine and faecal matter (faeces/excreta) for several days, weeks, and months?"

Although the confinement of slaves was a common occurrence in the colonial era, the incorporation of prisons into Ghana's official criminal justice system commenced in the early 19th

century, largely influenced by colonial customs. The European impact on African penal systems, as highlighted by Bernault (2007), is significant, with Wood (2006, p. 211) asserting that “[...] there is little doubt that Europeans effectively imported the prison to Africa”. According to reports from the Ghana Prison Service, the establishment of prisons in Ghana served multiple purposes for the British authorities. These purposes included the imprisonment of debtors, troublemakers, and dissenting groups from other African regions (Havik et al., 2021; Scheipers, 2015). Bernault (2007) underscores that the rationale behind prison creation was primarily rooted in racial discrimination, political suppression, and the enforcement of forced labour, highlighting the colonial legacy that continues to influence Ghana’s justice system.

Punishment in post-colonial Ghana (period after 1957)

The origins of imprisonment as a component of Ghana’s justice system can be traced back to the influence of colonialism (see, for example, Hynd, 2014; Tankebe, 2008). The formal establishment of prisons within Ghana's mainstream criminal justice system began in the early 19th century and has become a product of the colonial legacy (Ghana Prisons Service, 2022; Appiahene-Gyamfi, 1995). Three principal institutions govern the criminal justice system in post-colonial Ghana: the judiciary service, the Ghana Police Service, and the Ghana Prisons Service. The highest legal framework in Ghana, the 1992 Constitution, clearly delineates the specific roles and responsibilities of these institutions in the dispensation of justice. For instance, the Ghana Police Service derives its authority and legitimacy from the Constitution, which mandates it to ensure and uphold law and order throughout the country. The service is empowered to make arrests and detain individuals under the legal procedures outlined in the Constitution of Ghana. Similarly, the judiciary, an independent branch of the government, as specified in Chapter 11 of the Constitution, is entrusted with the responsibility of overseeing all criminal matters and interpreting the Constitution.

The Prisons Service Act-72 (National Redemption Council Decree 46) Section 52 of Ghana provides a definition for a prisoner as ‘any person lawfully committed to custody.’ Furthermore, the Constitution provides guidelines for the management of prisons and the proper treatment of prisoners in Ghana (see, for instance, Chapter 16, Articles 205 to 209 of the 1992 Constitution). Specifically, Article 208 details the expected treatment of both the facilities (i.e., prisons) and the inmates. While the Constitution mandates the humane treatment of prisoners, there is room for improvement to enhance the living conditions of prisoners, as this research demonstrates. Ghana's

total prison population is estimated at 15,212, with a prison occupancy rate of 148% (World Prison Brief, 2023). According to data from the Ghana Prisons Service, the overwhelming majority (99%) of the prison population consists of males, while females represent a small fraction (1%) (Ghana Prisons Service, 2022). The country has various types of prison facilities, with a total of 43 prisons distributed throughout the country, ensuring that each region has at least one. Many of these facilities were constructed without adequate consideration for the specific needs of female inmates, a situation not uncommon in prisons across Africa (Sarkin, 2019; Van Hout and Mhlanga-Gunda, 2018).

The Ghana Prisons Services continues to face numerous challenges ranging from insufficient budgetary allocation, inadequate staffing, outdated equipment, to a lack of precise data (refer to Chapter 4 of this thesis for further elaboration). Moreover, the penal system of Ghana is not exempted from the challenge of overcrowding, a predicament that plagues prison systems worldwide (Cook, 2018; Elger, Ritter, and Stöver, 2017; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2015; Sarkin, 2008). The precarious conditions facing prisoners are prevalent across Africa, and according to Sarkin (2009), attention to prisons is ranks low among African governments.

1.4 Problem Statement

Mobility and confinement continue to impact society in numerous ways. There is a wide range of scholarship on various dimensions of mobility (Alessandretti, Aslak, and Lehmann, 2020; Sheller, 2018; Adey, 2017; Cresswell, 2010; Cresswell and Merriman, 2011) and confinement (Turner and Knight, 2020; Jewkes, Crewe, and Bennett, 2016; Wacquant, 2009; Gilmore, 2007; Foucault, 1977). While there are certain overlaps among these concepts rooted in power relations, studies that concurrently explore these concepts are rarely found. For instance, Moran, Piacentini, and Pallot argue that research on mobilities and carceral geography is “poorly integrated” (2012, p. 446). The ongoing practise of various forms of mobility within spaces of confinement has rendered the study of carceral geography highly significant and pertinent (Bloch and Olivares-Pelayo, 2021; Moran, Turner, and Schliehe, 2018; Turner and Peters, 2016; Morin and Moran, 2015; Mountz et al., 2013; Moran, Gill, and Conlon, 2016; Foucault, 1977). Moran, Piacentini, and Pallot (2012, p. 447) describe these forms of mobility among incarcerated individuals as ‘disciplined mobility’ (see also Moran, Gill, and Conlon, 2016; Packer, 2003). In general, this depiction of ‘disciplined mobility’ portrays all forms of mobility within the carceral space, which presents the tendency to

understand ‘disciplined mobility’ as unitary relevance to prisons. This present study expands the application of the concept by placing it in conversation with coercive movement, both conceptually and empirically.

Furthermore, a series of studies within places of confinement such as detention centres (Zayas, 2023; Hiemstra, 2019; De Genova, 2019; Conlon, Hiemstra, and Mountz, 2017; Hiemstra, 2013), camps and encampment sites (Brankamp, 2022; Martin, Minca, and Katz, 2020), and prisons (Follis, 2015; Moran, Piacentini, and Pallot, 2012) have identified characteristics of coercive mobility (i.e., movement, coercion, and uncertainty). However, these depictions and assertions can be of secondary importance to the focus of the studies. The objective of this present study is not to refute these claims and descriptions, as they provide a foundation for further research, particularly in the realm of carceral geography. Rather, through the lens of coercive movement and utilising transferred prisoners as a case study, this thesis integrates scholarship on mobility and confinement.

This thesis is also premised on the dearth of data and scholarly research on prisons in Ghana. There are disparities in geographical research on carceral spaces between Euro-American and African countries. That is, while research on different aspects of carceral spaces (i.e., prisons) continues to expand in countries like the United States of America (Lanskey et al., 2019; Wildeman and Wang, 2017; La Vigne et al., 2005), Norway (Bhuller et al., 2018), and the United Kingdom (Parkes and Donson, 2019; Condry and Smith, 2018), the same cannot be said for most African countries (Braatz, Bruce-Lockhart, and Hynd, 2022; Jefferson and Martin, 2016). According to Sarkin (2019), although prisons in Africa are the least-researched spaces globally, there is an uneven distribution of data and scholarship across African countries, with significant attention given to prisons in South Africa, Nigeria, and Rwanda. Prisons in Ghana have been sparsely studied, with specific focus on their historical development (Hynd, 2023; Asare, 2021; Akoensi, 2017; Appiahene-Gyamfi, 2009), the health conditions of prisoners (Parimah, Owusu, and Appiah-Honny, 2021; Baffour, Francis, and Chong, 2022), and religious activities in prisons (Routley, 2023; Yin, 2018). This thesis contributes to the literature on the carceral system of Ghana, for the first time, highlighting attention on the experiences of transferred prisoners in Ghana, being mindful of the impact transfers have on the relationship between prisoners and their networks (e.g., family members, friends), as well as the coping strategies of transferred prisoners. I also

acknowledge and examine the heterogeneities and complexities of mobility within prisons that have received limited study.

1.5 Research Questions and Objectives

The study has two aims: to examine the role of transfer in prisons governance/management in Ghana and to explore how transfers are reconfiguring the relationship between prisoners and their family members. To achieve these aims, the thesis addresses five research objectives (RO), as delineated below:

RO1: To assess the rationale and transfer processes of prisoners in Ghana and how such transfers affect prison management.

RO2: To examine the perceptions and experiences of transferred prisoners' movement between prisons.

RO3: To examine the experiences of the families of prisoners' and their access to transferred prisoners.

RO4: To examine the effects of incarceration and transfer on the relationship between transferred prisoners and their family members.

RO5: To explore the agency of transferred prisoners and family members post prison transfer.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study holds significance on multiple fronts. One of the intended outcomes is to provide insight into the role of prisoner transfer in the management of prisons in Ghana. This is immensely important considering the absence of any empirical study that critically examines prisoner transfer in Ghana, the lack of literature on prisons in Ghana (Sarkin, 2019; Jefferson and Martin, 2016), and the general absence of data on transfers. This lack of data is a result of the absence of a policy framework and the failure of various prisons to effectively document transfer information. Another intended outcome of the study is to make progress in our understanding of the peculiar challenges faced by prisoners following their transfer. In doing so, I emphasise the importance of recognising the intricacies and variations in prisoners' experiences during their incarceration. In that sense, the challenges of incarceration are not homogeneous experiences faced by all prisoners; thus, it is

imperative to pay particular attention to the severity inherent in the internal practises that affect prisoners differently. Furthermore, a third outcome I present is evaluating on a conceptual level, the experiences of transferred prisoners in relation to carceral mobility. In addition to arguing that the experiences of transferred prisoners largely overlap with those of forced migrants based on the findings of this study, their experiences also shed light on the interconnections between the fields of mobility (including forced migration) and confinement.

1.7 Overview of the thesis

This thesis comprises seven chapters in addition to this introductory chapter. In chapters 2 and 3, I contextualise the current study within relevant literature and establish the research methodology. In chapter 2, I provide a comprehensive overview of the prison system in Ghana. I conducted a multidisciplinary examination of scholarship on mobility (see Section 2.2), carceral spaces (such as detention centres and prisons), resistance, and prison economy (i.e., prison labour) with explications made on prisoners' everyday coping strategies following their transfer. I also explore two theoretical foundations on which I ground this study. These include Foucault's critical discourse of power, including the concept of "microphysics of power" (Foucault, 1977, p. 26) and social network theory (Knoke and Yang, 2019; Kadushin, 2012). Based on this analysis, I highlight significant gaps and questions. Chapter 3 addresses the study methodology, including research design and procedure, as well as descriptions of the research instruments utilised for data collection, analysis, and presentation. Additionally, I highlight the ethical considerations of the study, particularly in relation to field access, interactions with study respondents, and the protection of research participants.

I present the empirical findings in four separate chapters (4, 5, 6, and 7). Chapter 4 provides contextual explanations of concepts related to transfer in Ghana's prisons and delves into discussions on the processes, actors, and rationale behind prisoner transfer. I also shed light on the institutional challenges prisons face in Ghana, focusing on the transfer process. In Chapter 5, I expand on the experiences of transferred prisoners, including their background information, legal representation, awareness, preparation, reactions and resistance during transfer, and the transportation experiences of prisoners. Chapters 6 and 7 explore the post-transfer effects and coping strategies transferred prisoners explored, respectively. In Chapter 6, I situate the experiences of the transferred prisoners and their relatives within the framework of social network theory, with particular attention to the effects of incarceration, the reconfiguration of visitation

following transfer, and the visitor's experiences during visits. Chapter 7 delves into the internal micro-capitalism of the prison economy, in which I discuss the overlaps between the formal and informal economies of prisons that have become key to the coping strategies of the transferred prisoners. Finally, Chapter 8 encompasses the conclusions, recommendations, and theoretical evaluation of the study and suggests further avenues for research based on the findings and limitations of this thesis.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter synthesises pertinent literature, provides a contextual foundation for the research questions, and augments the research discoveries. I review relevant literature that is organised around the following themes: the historical overview of Ghana's penal system, the prison economy and solidarity, the embeddedness of power relations in im/mobility (including forced migration), and diverse forms of the carceral system (e.g., detention), and resistance within the prison system (e.g., 'everyday resistance'). Additionally, I delve into the theoretical underpinnings of the study, with particular emphasis on Foucault's discourses and microphysics of power, as well as on the social network theory. I conclude the chapter by emphasising the intricacies surrounding the concepts of mobility, particularly in spaces of confinement (such as prisons and detention centres). These intricacies, which I expound upon in this chapter, corroborate the findings of this study, as elucidated in Chapters 4 to 8.

2.2 Im/mobilities

Mobility is a significant aspect of human engagement; it entails subjecting bodies to various forms of movement. Despite the importance and extensive scholarship on mobility (Merriman, 2023; Alessandretti, Aslak, and Lehmann, 2020; Sheller, 2020), Adey argues that there is no definitive or singular definition of mobility. The author further contends that mobility should be approached in a "relational" manner (Adey, 2006, p. 83). Conventional studies perceive mobility as moving from one location to another (Adey, 2017, p. 65; Cresswell, 2006, p. 2; Salzman, 1980). Historically, the nomads' way of life, has characterised movement from one place to another (Levin, 2020). This has gradually given way to sedentarism. Deleuze and Guattari (1986, p. 52) describe nomadic societies as "de-territorialisation," suggesting that they lack a departure or arrival point, as well as paths or land (cited in Urry, 2000, p. 27).

Contemporary studies have called for an expanded understanding of mobility beyond its literal meaning as merely the movement of people (Merriman, 2023; Alessandretti, Aslak, and Lehmann, 2020; Sheller, 2020). For instance, Sheller (2018, p. 44) draws attention to the complexities of mobility that challenge the philosophical framing of mobility anchored on egalitarian thinking through the principles of "fairness, equity, and inclusion." Such egalitarian framing has the

potential to suggest that all individuals have equal opportunities to engage in various forms of mobility. However, multiple studies have demonstrated an imbalance in access to mobility opportunities by people (Adey et al., 2021; Sheller, 2018, 2016; Adey, 2017; Sheller and Urry, 2006; Skeggs, 2004). Discourses on mobility have produced diverse interpretations and meanings. Mobility is thus a complex and multifaceted concept that plays a crucial role in human endeavours (Sheller, 2018; Cresswell, 2006). According to Adey (2017) and Cresswell (2006, p. 1), mobility encompasses ‘everything’ and is omnipresent, entangling all aspects of human engagement. Adey further argues that mobility is an activity that communicates, carries meaning and significance, and both threatens and resists power, all within the context of space and time (2017).

Mobility as a form of engagement also presents a paradoxical understanding among diverse stakeholders. On one hand, mobility symbolises progress, freedom, and opportunity. On the other hand, it can also be viewed as an expression of deviance and resistance (Cresswell, 2006, pp. 1-2). As a result, individuals experience different forms of movement in varying ways. While some may face no challenges when engaging in a particular form of mobility, others encounter numerous hurdles and often find themselves immobilised (Bradley and De Noronha, 2022; Cook and Butz, 2019; Sheller, 2018; Adey, 2017; Cresswell, 2010; Elliot and Urry, 2010). These differences challenge the long-held perception of mobility as an expression of free will while also acknowledging the visible and invisible forces that contribute to uneven mobility across different spaces. Contextualising these differences in mobility, Doreen Massey advances the concept of “power geometry,” which undermines the assumed liberty and freedom individuals possess (2012, p. 60), thereby enabling the monitoring, restricting, and controlling of people’s movements across spaces. Such framing of mobility by Massey draws our attention to the power-relations that produces inequalities in people’s movement across spaces.

Contextualising mobility within class differences, Skeggs (2004, p. 49) described mobility as “a resource to which not everyone has an equal relationship.” Similarly, Shamir (2005) drew our attention to the immobility of a significant portion of the global population due to limited mobility opportunities. Several scholars framed these disparities and unequal access to mobility opportunities as a “mobility gap,” “mobility injustice,” and “uneven mobilities” (Lindberg et al., 2023; Kristensen, Lindberg, and Freudendal-Pedersen, 2023; Cook and Butz, 2019; Sheller, 2018, 2016; Adey, 2017). Building on the insights of Adey et al. (2021), recent times have seen the exacerbation of the disparities in mobility across different spaces due to the SAR-CoV-2

coronavirus that swept across the world (Cairns and Clemente, 2023). Beneath these unequal mobility opportunities lie external factors and power dynamics that impede people's mobility. This phenomenon, referred to by Doreen Massey as "power geometries," represents the interplay between mobility, politics, and power (2012, p. 60). The consequences of these power geometries have hindered the realisation of liberty and freedom, causing differences in who is allowed or denied the ability to move. As argued by Sheller, there are various approaches to classifying and conceptualising uneven mobility and its underlying causes. I devote the next sections to two independent fields of inquiry within the broader mobility studies. Specifically, I explore forced migration and carceral spaces (i.e., detention centres and prisons).

2.2.1 Forced Migration

Forced migration continues to be an integral part of human mobility. Despite the considerable body of empirical research on forced migration (Erdal and Oeppen, 2017; Castelli, 2018; Crawley and Skleparis, 2018; Zetter, 2015; Betts, 2013), the concept remains characterised by intricacies and contradictions. Undoubtedly, contentious, forced migration represents a fundamental aspect of human mobility (Piguet, 2018). It has consistently been a central phenomenon of importance to governments, policymakers, civil society organisations, and intergovernmental organisations. Consequently, forced migration has undergone several transformations in its forms, causes, and temporal dimensions. First, the institution of slavery continued to be one of the most remarkable forms of forced migration (see Inikori, 2022). While slavery took various forms (e.g., forced labour, domestic slavery) and occurred in diverse geographical and historical contexts, the coerced transportation of individuals from Africa to the so-called New World commenced in the fifteenth century (Patterson, 2018; Thornton, 1998). The slave trade held significance for colonial labour in industries and large plantations. Approximately 11.2 million slaves were forcibly transported from Africa to the New World between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries (Gates, 2011). Patterson (2018) contends that aside from being the most coercive mobile labour force of the era, slaves lacked autonomy over their own lives. They had no control over their place of residence, employment choices, or freedom of movement. Their circumstances were comparable to those of contemporary prisoners. Additionally, their connections to family, kin, and community in the countries of origin were non-existent.

A second approach identifying different categories of forced migration (i.e., refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced persons) emerged in the early twentieth century and continues to

generate extensive debate. For instance, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), reported that at the end of 2022, 108.4 million people were forcibly ousted from their homes (UNHCR, 2022, p. 23). This forced movement stems from human rights violations, armed conflicts, diseases, and climatic shocks such as floods, earthquakes, wildfires, and droughts. Those who undertake this form of forced migration require diverse assistance from host countries, non-governmental organisations, and civil society groups, given the inhospitable conditions under which they migrate. However, they often face challenges accessing essential social services such as employment, healthcare, and education (Esses, 2021; Strang and Quinn, 2021; Hellwig and Sinno, 2017; Ansar et al., 2017). In addition to the protracted predicament faced by refugees and displaced populations, some individuals find themselves confined in detention centres, in situations that undermine fundamental human rights (Bourbeau, 2019; De Genova, 2019; Coddington et al., 2012).

Scholarship on forced migration raises several concerns, debates, and discussions within the public, civil society organisations, policymakers, and the academic communities. The activities of forced migrants often involve crossing well-defined and international borders, and their presence affects all aspects of the host society (Sager, 2020; Eagly, 2020; Pooley, 2017; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh et al., 2014). As a result, forced migration carries legal, sociological, and political implications (Erdal and Oeppen, 2017; Blair, Grossman, and Weinstein, 2022; Lori and Boyle, 2015). However, De Haas (2023) argue that there is a lack of coherence among the legal, sociological, and political dimensions of forced migration. In addition, despite the diversity of interests in forced migration, there are inconsistencies in defining the term. The UNHCR (2016) states that there is no explicit and universally accepted definition of forced migration while, the International Organisation for Migration (2019, p. 77) defines forced migration as a “a migratory movement which, although the drivers can be diverse, involves force, compulsion, or coercion.”

Although the concept of forced migration is broad, complex, and contentious, up to this point, the discussions, programmes, and policies for forced migration have primarily focused on a limited set of categories, particularly refugees, asylum-seekers, and internally displaced persons (see also Dahinden, Fischer, and Menet, 2021; Hamlin, 2021; De Haas, Castles, and Miller, 2019; Gibney, 2013). Consequently, certain sections of the population are not part of the debate and policy attention, despite sharing commonly understood characteristics of forced migration, such as movement, coercion, and human and natural causes. This calls for a close attention to the concept

of forced migration, in particular attending to people who use a normative description of the concept but are not part of policy consideration (see also Pijneburg and Rijken, 2021). In a similar vein, Crawley and Jones (2020) called for the reconceptualisation of “migrant journeys”. In order to counter negative public perceptions of migrants, the authors argue that research should move beyond a simplistic representation of the journeys of refugees, asylum seekers, and economic migrants as a linear endeavour (2020, p. 3227).

Additionally, in their study on refugees and migrants, Crawley and Skleparis (2018, p. 50) acknowledge the “messy-ness” of categories within the framework of forced migration. The authors claim that categorisation within the context of migration is a tool employed by politicians and policymakers to serve their own interests. Similarly, Betts (2014) argues that the various forms of forced migration have become prominent themes in political debates, often under the guise of protecting national sovereignty and integrity against non-citizens. Underneath this political inclination, surrounding forced migration lies the justification for portraying them as threats to national security (Esses, 2021; Hiemstra, 2019; Hernández, 2019). Political undertones and nationalistic discourse by states towards forced migration create a disconnect between what is legally acknowledged and normatively practised (Strang and Quinn, 2021; Crawley and Skleparis, 2018; Zetter, 2015). These disparities create binaries of ‘inclusion’ and ‘exclusion’ and, to some extent, problematise and constrict the legal definition and classification of forced migrants. These binaries of inclusion and exclusion are relevant to this study, in that such binaries within forced migration scholarship overlap with movement in prisons which is often overlooked. The next section reviews literature exploring carceral spaces, such as (im)mobility within prisons and detention centres.

2.3 The Carceral System

This section provides a comprehensive survey of existing scholarly work on carcerality, with a specific focus on studies of detention and prisons. The scope of the carcerality, encompassing its logic, structure, function, and physical spaces (e.g., prisons, detention centres, witch camps, for instance), is vast and continues to expand as an autonomous field of empirical investigation (Mussell, 2023; Martensen, 2020; Moran, Turner, and Schliehe, 2018). Foucault’s (1977, p. 271) description of the “carceral continuum” directs our attention to the interconnected systems of discourses, architectural design, coercive regulations, and social consequences that constitute carceral systems, which possess the capacity to rectify or reinforce so-called deviant behaviours.

Foucault's proposed ontological foundation of carceral practises elucidates the intricate nature of the "carceral continuum" (1977, p. 303).

As the body of scholarship on carceral spaces proliferates, the number of individuals undergoing detention and incarceration also rises. Rates of incarceration vary across countries due to divergent governmental policies (Gilmore, 2022; Fair and Walmsley, 2021; Dünkel, Harrendorf, and van Zijl-Smit, 2021; Skarbek, 2020). For instance, policies directly contribute to increased rates of imprisonment in nations like the United States of America (Law, 2021; Sakoda and Simes, 2021; Pratt, 2018), El Salvador (Rosen, Cutrona, and Lindquist, 2023; Sviatschi, 2022), and Russia (Chatterjee, 2022; Clegg et al., 2023). A contrasting trend is observed in countries such as Sweden, Finland, Denmark, and Norway (Bhuller et al., 2020; Helder, 2023; Hyatt et al., 2021).

2.3.1 Detention

The rise and use of detention centres have been interpreted as a means of controlling and managing populations in terms of their movement across space (Zayas, 2023; Hiemstra, 2019; Conlon, Hiemstra, and Mountz, 2017; Mountz et al., 2013). Detention is a crucial element of the carceral system, thus prompting a growing body of scholarly work to comprehend its various dimensions. For example, Martin (2023), De Genova (2019), Flynn and Flynn (2017), and Mountz and Coddington's (2013) offer foundational theorisations and conceptualisations of detention centres. The logic, application, consequences, and internal practises of detention have extensively been examined (Coddington, Conlon, and Martin, 2020; Conlon, Hiemstra, and Mountz, 2017; Moran, Gill, and Conlon, 2016). Detention functions as a control mechanism that affects distinct categories of individuals (i.e., refugees, asylum-seekers, and irregular migrants) (Conlon, Hiemstra, and Mountz, 2017; Aas and Bosworth, 2013).

There are significant overlaps between scholarship on detention and prisons. For instance, detention and imprisonment serve as measures of spatial control. They are also sites where the state restricts or strips the freedom and liberty of people (Jerrems et al., 2023; Wittock et al., 2023; Conlon and Gill, 2013; Gill, 2009). Consequently, these sites function as containers, effectively immobilising the bodies within them (Martin and Mitchelson, 2009). However, in recent times, there have been varied forms of movement within prisons and detention centres (Mincke, 2020; Moran, Gill, and Conlon, 2016; Turner and Peters, 2016). A study by Mountz et al. (2013) also highlights the impact that the location of detention centres has on the relationship between

detainees and their families. The authors argue that detention centres are deliberately situated in remote areas, both within and outside the jurisdiction of the sovereign state. The purpose of locating detention centres far away is to sever the ties between detainees and their families and support networks, thereby creating a conducive environment for deportation (see also Lindberg, 2023; Hiemstra, 2019; De Genova, 2019; Peutz and De Genova, 2010). While deportation of detainees is a motive behind their movement, Conlon, Hiemstra, and Mountz (2017) and Hiemstra (2019) associate the transfer of detainees with issues of bed space, inadequate staffing, and medical reasons. Similarly, Conlon and Gill (2013) and Conlon (2011) view the transfer of detainees between detention centres as a form of punishment.

According to Hyndman and Mountz (2008), detainee transfers increasingly cross the boundaries of the independent state through the principle of “externalisation” of non-citizens, as cited in Conlon, Hiemstra, and Mountz (2017, p. 151). States also continue to rely on “interception” of asylum-seekers, refugees, and migrants at borders as a method of regulating movement (Walia, 2021; Mountz, 2020; Conlon, Hiemstra, and Mountz, 2017; Mountz and Loyd, 2014). A study by Mountz and Loyd (2014) demonstrates that the United States of America has continued to use offshore holding centres to control the movement of asylum-seekers and migrants from Haiti and Cuba since the 1980s (see also Tennis, 2020; Hiemstra, 2013). Similar practises have been observed within the member states of the European Union (Faist, Gehring, and Schultz, 2023; Van Dessel, 2023; Mlambo, 2020; Sager, 2018; Squire, 2016) and Australia (Barnes, 2022; Maley, 2019; Farrell, Evershed, and Davidson, 2016). In the context of the European Union, Sager notes the government of Libya’s role as a proxy agent for detaining refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrants seeking entry into Europe (2018). Likewise, the “Malta Declaration” exemplifies the European Union’s desire to restrict the movement of foreigners attempting to enter the bloc (Carrera and Cortinovis, 2019, p. 3). A familiar practise in the Australian context is the use of a network of islands to detain asylum-seekers, refugees, and immigrants from reaching mainland Australia (Crock and Parsons, 2023; Peterie, 2022; Phillips and Spinks, 2013).

It is recognised that whether within the sovereign state, at borders, or beyond borders, the power of the state is still exercised either by the state or by private entities (e.g., foreign governments, private businesses). The manifestation of these powers gives rise to contradictory logics such as immobilising and simultaneously moving non-citizens across different spaces. The next section explores how these contradictions manifest within prisons.

2.3.2 Im/mobility of Prisoners

Prisons are often spatially specific institutions that isolate individuals from the outside world (Wacquant, 2023; Jefferson, Turner, and Jensen, 2019; Dirsuweit, 1999). In that sense, prisons are places for confining individuals within defined boundaries, which tend to make them immobile. The primary purpose of prisons is to regulate the bodies of criminals (Wacquant, 2023; Mincke and Lemonne, 2014; Foucault, 1977). Consequently, in reforming the “soul” of the prisoner, prisoners are subjected to different forms of activities characterised by power dynamics (Foucault, 1977, p. 295). Conventionally, prisons create stasis and immobilise people. However, there is an increasing emphasis on various forms of movement within and around the prison system (Mincke and Lemonne, 2014). While not a recent phenomenon, prisoners are beginning to encounter different types of movement, which has attracted significant attention from researchers and other relevant stakeholders (Haesen et al., 2023; Moran, 2015). For instance, the transportation of prisoners has been an old-age practise since the eighteenth century. According to Anderson (2016), the transportation of criminals as a widespread punishment provided a source of inexpensive labour but this practise ceased with the decline of the industrial revolution.

The rapid development of technology has had a profound impact on the prison system, leading to more surveillance that is sophisticated measures. As a result, countries, particularly the U.S., are investing significant resources in acquiring these technologies. The emergence of modern technologies (e.g., biometric and electronic monitoring devices such as CCTV and GPS ankle bracelets) is changing the experience and management of prisons and prisoners (Gacek, 2022; Arnett, 2019; McKay, 2022; Marx, 2016; Moran and Jewkes, 2015; Moran, Gill, and Conlon, 2016). With the introduction of these technologies, the incarceration of individuals with criminal convictions extends beyond the physical confines of prisons. In this context, confinement involves not only placing prisoners within physical structures, but also entails social and psychological engineering in external spaces (Moran, Gill, and Conlon, 2016). This form of punishment creates a deeper connection between those with criminal convictions and the community, while their movement is under constant state surveillance.

2.3.3 Prisoner Transfer, Access, and Effects on Families

“Too often in prison work, the family is thought of as some external appendage, remote and irrelevant to the processes of treatment and training, rather than as a continuous influence upon the man in custody.”

(Pauline Morris 1965, p. 9)

Morris's (1965) large-scale study on the consequences of incarceration on families reveals an indication of the interconnected relationship between prisoners and their families. Conventionally, the primary focus of research was on prisoners and the incidents occurring within the confines of correctional institutions (Cheliotis and McKay, 2022; Gilani, 2021; Hutton and Moran, 2019; Crewe, 2012). There are many studies that shed light on how families continue to be reconfigured because of imprisonment. Scholars have considerably segregated these studies in terms of their focus. For example, research has examined the lived experiences of spouses of prisoners (Condry and Minson, 2020; Comfort, 2007, 2018); children with incarcerated parents (Codd, 2019; Scharff-Smith, 2014; Flynn and Eriksson, 2017; Ofori-Dua, Akuoko, and Kanwetuu, 2015); and parents of prisoners (Foster, 2019; Granja, 2016; Gueta, 2018). This diversity of inquiry is essential given that the family, which is one of the fundamental institutions of society, is intricately intertwined and seemingly generally undergoing transformation. Conventionally, the family has been conceptualised as individuals who are "related by blood, marriage, or adoption" (Franklin, 1990, p. 1029). However, various interpretations have been presented regarding the definition of family. The concept of the family now extends beyond adoption, marriage, or blood ties and tends to encompass networks formed on the principles of "commitment, togetherness, and home" (Chambers and Gracia, 2021; Knapp and Wurm, 2019; White, Martin, and Adamsons, 2018; Franklin, 1990, p. 1029). Knapp and Wurm (2019) acknowledge the continuous diversification of family dynamics in recent times. Prisons have contributed to the acceleration of this diversification of family structures in recent times where the institutional character of family is challenged due to the imprisonment of a member. Foucault (1977, p. 268) succinctly argued:

"Prison indirectly produces delinquents by throwing the inmate's family into destitution: 'The same order that sends the head of the family to prison reduces each day the mother to destitution, the children to abandonment, the whole family to vagabondage and begging.'" (Foucault, 1977, p. 268).

Similarly, families of prisoners have been described as "hidden victims of crime" and "sentenced by association," reinforcing how families of prisoners are affected by incarceration (Comfort, 2007, p. 9). Ideally, a person found guilty of a crime should solely bear the pains of imprisonment (see also Haggerty and Bucerius, 2020). Nevertheless, several studies have established that

families, although not legally incarcerated, are confronted with a myriad of challenges. According to Comfort et al. (2016, p. 786), the challenges faced by families of prisoners are more closely ‘similar’ than they ‘differ.’ Generally, families of prisoners are confronted with financial difficulties (Yeboaa, Mbamba, and Ndemole, 2022; Comfort et al., 2016; Murray, 2007), stigmatisation from the public (Lee and Wildeman, 2021; Codd, 2013; Condry, 2007), and psychological and emotional distress (Comfort, 2018; Foster, 2019). Drawing lessons from the Comfort et al. (2016) study in the United States, scholars have argued that the challenges encountered by families of prisoners are often interrelated. For instance, coupled with the lack of physical contact between some families due to incarceration, leading to emotional and psychological stress, non-incarcerated family members have to assume multiple roles of providing financial support to the household while at the same time maintaining contact with the incarcerated spouse (Comfort, 2018; Comfort et al., 2016; Codd, 2013).

Also, evidence has shown that the challenges faced by family members of prisoners extend beyond the household and the vicinity where they live or lived before being incarcerated. Consequently, maintaining family ties and access to their relatives in prisons has become tedious, distressing, and expensive (Berg and Huebner, 2011; Christian, 2020). For example, since prisoners and their families live apart, movement between the prison and home tends to compound the ordeals of the non-incarcerated family member and the household. Bedard and Helland (2004) identified the significant role the location of prison plays in the relationship between a prisoner and their family; the longer the distance between the prisoner’s place of incarceration and the home of their family member(s), the fewer visits they [prisoners] received. In a study to understand factors that hinder prison visitation, Christian (2005, p. 31) declared that “it is an exhausting, resource-intensive process for a family member to make one visit at a prison.” Specifically, the time, finances, and logistical arrangements (e.g., phone call, food, transport fare) are unbearable for prisoners’ families (Comfort et al., 2016; Christian, 2005). Apart from the difficulties families of prisoners encounter during their movement to and from prisons, experiences at the various facilities during visitation present a different phase of families woes within the prison system.

Prison, characterised as a ‘total institution’ by Erving Goffman (1961), encompasses various physical spaces, activities, and power dynamics. One such space within the prison system that intricately connects incarcerated individuals, and their families is the visitation centre. Interestingly, despite the notion that visits from family members to prisons and their interactions

with incarcerated relatives should ideally be positive and stimulating experiences due to the temporary closeness they foster, evidence suggests otherwise. The power dynamics within these spaces have impacted family members of prisoners (Foster, 2019; Comfort et al., 2016; Moran, 2013). Moreover, Comfort et al. (2016) argue that the constant surveillance of these spaces, particularly the visitation centres, eliminates any possibility of privacy for both prisoners and their families. While existing studies shed light on the influence that prisons exert on individuals outside of their confines, including families and communities, it is important not to overlook the role that families and communities themselves play in the rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners (van Ginneken and Palmen, 2023; Harding, Morenoff, and Wyse, 2019). Although the challenges of incarceration are similar, the coping strategies of family members of prisoners towards these challenges are diverse.

These differences in coping strategies stem from the different resources available to prisoners' families and the social structures of which they are a part. These resources and structures available to family members of prisoners are formal or informal sources of support and assistance. Informally, Codd (2013) observes that partners and children of prisoners often rely on relatives and friends for emotional and financial support, although this is not always guaranteed. Looking at West Africa as an example, it is apparent that the extended family system that permeates many communities plays a crucial role in supporting prisoners and their families. For instance, anecdotal evidence from Ghana reveals that grandparents, uncles, and aunties contribute significantly to the support of partners and children of prisoners by providing babysitting services and food supplies (Amankwaa, 2020; Raikes et al., 2019). In contrast to the informal system of entrusting the care of prisoners' children, as observed in the Ghanaian context, certain countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia involve the state in providing custody for these children (Raikes et al., 2019; Wildeman, Haskins, and Poehlmann, 2017; McCrickard and Flynn, 2016; Wacquant, 2009).

Similarly, the state, viewed as an official provider of care to children with incarcerated parents, also implements policies ostensibly aimed at alleviating the hardships faced by prisoners and their families. However, these policies are not universally applicable and differ from country to country. Scholarship in Western countries highlights various policies supporting vulnerable groups, including the families of prisoners (Ellis, 2023; Lowe, 2023). However, these differ from most non-western countries (e.g., Ghana), where evidence only points to support from informal and

non-governmental organisations (Routley, 2023). Ostensibly, the majority of these Western countries are recognised as welfare states, enabling the implementation of some of these interventions (Helder, 2023; Wacquant, 2009). While Wacquant suggests that there seems to be a decrease in financial support for families of prisoners in the United States, his observation reinforces the presence of these formal support systems (Wacquant, 2009, p. 49). In order to enhance family contact with incarcerated relatives, Christian (2005) observes that transportation services are provided within the vicinity of each prison facility in the United States to facilitate the movement of families to and from prisons. In addition, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) play a role in supporting prisoners and their families. NGOs offer extensive support services including legal counsel and counselling for prisoners, financial and housing assistance have been a primary focus for many (Condry and Smith, 2018).

After devoting the previous paragraphs to the connection between prisons and their familial relationships, it is apparent that families are significantly affected by incarceration. While the challenges faced by families of prisoners are similar across different contexts, the nature of support systems varies greatly, with states forming a core component of these differences. Despite efforts by the state and NGOs to promote regular contact between prisoners and their families, these efforts are hindered by the practise of prisoner transfers. It is particularly true when the transfers involve moving the prisoners far away from their families based on overcrowding, security concerns, or disciplinary actions, which often serve as the rationale behind most transfers (Minke and Vanhouche, 2023; Bali, 2022; Moran, Piacentini, and Pallot, 2012).

2.4 The Concept of Power

This research draws upon concepts of power. The concept of power pervades every aspect of human existence, spanning across social, political, cultural, and economic domains, among others. Although there are various approaches to the study of power (Christensen, 2023; Wacquant, 2023), I situate this study within Michel Foucault's social theory of power. The aim of this section is to present an overview of the broader discourse of power, homing in on Foucault's conceptualization of power, which I turn to in Section 2.6.1. The theory of power is well-developed in social research, including in mobility studies (Merriman, 2023; Sheller, 2016), carceral geographies (Martin, 2023; Moran, Turner, and Schliehe, 2018; Moran, Piacentini, and Pallot, 2012), and forced migration (Crawley and Skleparis, 2018; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh et al., 2014; Zetter, 2007).

Extensive literature exists about power, leading to a well-developed and comprehensive theoretical framework for understanding this concept (Buchanan and Badham, 2020; Fiske and Hancock, 2016; Lukes, 2021; Haugaard and Clegg, 2009; Beetham, 1991; Foucault, 1977). Scholars have provided valuable insights into the analysis, comprehension, and application of power, considering its various dimensions and manifestations. Power is examined and studied on different scales or levels, including the micro- (e.g., familial and community dynamics), the meso- (e.g., regional, state, and national institutions), and the macro-levels (e.g., bilateral and multilateral relations and international corporations). These diverse scales of analysis allow for a comprehensive exploration of power dynamics in various contexts. Traditional conceptions of power have highlighted principles of domination, coercion, subordination, and visibility (Buchanan and Badham, 2020; Lukes, 2021; Haugaard and Clegg, 2009; Foucault, 1977). Historically, these principles were often associated with the exercise of power by sovereign entities, whereby individuals passively adhered to the dictates of those in power. Consequently, the exercise of power was predominantly unidirectional, with little room for negotiation or resistance.

However, the traditional understanding of power has witnessed significant changes, leading to a more nuanced and complex understanding of power dynamics. Contemporary studies have embraced an approach where there is a transition from a unidirectional perspective to a multidirectional perspective. Scholars such as Sharp et al. (2000), Lukes (2021), and Clegg (1989) have contributed to this shift in perspective. As a result, the manifestation, interpretation, and exercise of power have come to be seen as a multidirectional engagement characterised by a dynamic interplay between domination and resistance. Lukes further expands on this argument by presenting a “three-dimensional” framework for understanding power, which emphasises the multi-layered nature of power dynamics (2021, p. 113).

There is a departure from the traditional perspectives of power, with a growing recognition of power as a relational engagement that necessitates negotiation. Lukes (2021), Buchanan and Badham (2020), and Foucault (1982, p. 780) advance the relational character of power that characterises social interactions and negotiations. In fact, Foucault argues that power should not be considered an entity possessed by individuals but rather a dynamic force exercised and negotiated within social relationships (see also Christensen, 2023; Wacquant, 2023). This perspective challenges the traditional understanding of power as something held exclusively by

those in positions of authority. Commenting on the relational character of power, David Garland declares:

“The property of particular classes or individuals who ‘have’ it, nor as an instrument which they can somehow ‘use’ at will. It [power] refers instead to the various forms of domination and subordination and the asymmetrical balance of forces which operate whenever and wherever social relations exist.” (Garland, 1986, p. 852)

The negotiation of power relations between diverse actors involves elements of contestation and resistance (Lilja, 2022; Johansson and Vinthagen, 2020, 2016; Katz, 2009). The state undoubtedly functions as one of the primary actors in the exercise of power, engaging with other entities and generating a plethora of power relations. However, it is crucial to note that state power is exercised through various institutions, each with their own distinct interests and objectives, such as the police mandated to ensure peace and order, and the prison service with the responsibility to provide safe custody of prisoners. Despite the varying interests of these state institutions in wielding their powers, Foucault argued that their operations often involve prioritising public interests over individual interests (1982, p. 782). The fundamental idea of valuing public interest over individual interest serves as a foundation for justification while reinforcing the asymmetrical power dynamics between the state and individuals.

One state institution that appears to exemplify asymmetrical power relations is the prison (Crewe, 2012). Prisons are spaces characterised by a distinct feature of dominant power, typically exercised by representatives of the state. However, numerous studies have revealed that dominant power within prisons does not exist without some form of resistance (Bosworth, 2017; Ugelvik, 2014; Katz, 2009; Sharp et al., 2000; Foucault, 1982). Sharp et al. (2000) argue that the concepts of power and resistance are hybrid rather than binary. Similarly, Clegg and Haugaard (2009) and Havel (1985) reiterate that resistance in social engagements reproduces and reinforces a new form of power, with resistance and power often operating in tandem (see Section 2.7 for further details on resistance). I now turn to a more detailed overview of Foucault’s approach to power.

2.4.1 Foucauldian Approach to Power Analysis

At the core of Foucault’s works lie the contours of power. Although the corpus of Foucault’s work illuminates the various dimensions of power (e.g., sovereign, disciplinary, and biopower), his *Discipline and Punish* vividly mapped out power relations within prisons and how such relations

are organised, configured, and altered, at the same time as the various structures that sustained and reconfigured these relations (Foucault, 1977). Foucault provided a schema of ‘carceral apparatus’ that succeeded in a more repressive system in which retribution was at the core of punishment within society (1977, p. 248). However, this new form of punishment, according to Foucault, aimed at a more “humane” treatment of offenders (Foucault 1977, p. 91). Consequently, disciplinary power became a key strategy of the state, in which the focus shifted to transforming the conduct of the criminal. The use of disciplinary power by the state to transform the conduct of individuals hinges on the notion that individuals, including criminals, are submissive to the dictates of the state. The prison space became crucial in the exercise of the disciplinary powers of the state. Prisons emerged as spaces where criminals could be monitored, reformed, and disciplined using methods such as confinement, surveillance, and regulated daily routines, rather than resorting to physical corporal punishment. Foucault contextualises these actions through the concept of ‘micro-physics of power,’ which reinforces the relational character of power. The ‘micro-physics’ of power presupposes that power is exercised rather than possessed. In exercising such powers, Foucault opined:

“The power exercised on the body is conceived not as a property but as a strategy, that its effects of domination are attributed not to ‘appropriation’, but to dispositions, manoeuvres, tactics, techniques, and functioning’s; that one should decipher in it a network of relations, constantly in tension.” (Foucault, 1977, p. 26)

This thesis draws on Foucault’s framing of power as a disciplinary action that the state used to control prisoners. The disciplinary dimension he espoused offers some theoretical foundations for contemporary scholars with an interest in carceral spaces (Moran, Turner, and Schliehe, 2018; Mountz et al., 2013; Moran, Piacentini, and Pallot, 2012). For instance, Moran, Piacentini, and Pallot (2012) employed the framework of disciplinary power to explore mobility and power within prisons. The authors expressed the transport of prisoners as a form of “disciplined mobility,” which has become a practise in carceral spaces. In the same vein, Follis (2015) argued that the traditional notion of prisons as spaces that immobilise people continues to reconfigure, and various forms of movement are occurring with underlying power relations (see also Mincke, 2020; Brookes, 2018). With the transfer of prisoners at the core of this study, it is important to explore how the state practise of transferring prisoners is embedded and counterproductive to power relations within the carceral space of Ghana. For instance, how are these power relations negotiated during the transfer

of prisoners in Ghana? Despite the rigour of Foucault's work on power, David Garland shared the view that Foucault's focus on the "structures of power" overlooks the actors and events that produce these structures (1986, p. 849). The downside of this stance (i.e., focusing on structures of power rather than actors and events) may partly account for the assertion made by Wrong (2017), Sharp et al. (2000), and Garland (1986) that the early writings of Foucault suggest that power was equated to dominance with little attention to the agency of prisoners as demonstrated in *Discipline and Punish*. The authors asserted that Foucault did not relent in stating that the distribution and exercise of power entail web of relations.

To this end, Foucault's conceptualisation of power, especially his perspective on discipline and dominating power in conjunction with views espoused by other scholars (Clegg and Haugaard, 2009; Wrong, 2017; Lukes, 2021; Sharp et al., 2000; Garland, 1986), on power help to critically illuminate the core dimensions of the study in many ways. First, the structures that continue to sustain and influence the transfer of prisoners often ignore the issue of consent by the prisoners. Such structures and the tactics and effects they produce do not occur uncontested. At the risk of showing the findings of this thesis early on, transferred prisoners draw on their social resources to contest and resist these power structures (i.e., the decision to transfer by the state), either covertly or overtly (see Chapter 7 for further details). Second, how is power distributed, as well as connected across the various structures (e.g., the Ghana Police Service, the Judiciary, the Ghana Prisons System) of the carceral system of Ghana? A third core facet of the present research is analysing the form of resistance, such as "power from below," shown by transferred prisoners before and during their transfers. Lastly, how relations (e.g., prison official *versus* (vs.) prisoner, prisoner vs. relative of a prisoner, prison official vs. relative of a prisoner during visitation, etc.) are reconfigured as the state continues to transfer prisoners under the networks of disciplinary power. I provide an overview of resistance, paying attention to the "everyday resistance" among prisoners' in the next section.

2.5 Contextualising "Everyday" Resistance among transferred prisoners

In this section, I draw upon existing research on resistance, which offers a contextual framework for understanding the experiences and coping mechanisms by prisoners during and after their transfer (see empirical chapters of this thesis for further details). Resistance continues to be examined within various disciplinary perspectives, including political science, anthropology, geography, and sociology (Hughes, 2023; Poulakidakos, Veniti, and Rovisco, 2023; Varvarousis,

2020; Johansson and Vinthagen, 2020; Katz, 2004; Gregg, 1993), among others. There is no singular definition of resistance (Lilja, 2022; Weitz, 2001, p. 669). This is because the circumstances and actions considered forms of resistance are contingent upon the specific social interactions within different contexts. Pertinent to this thesis is the understanding that resistance involves individuals acting autonomously in their own self-interests (Gregg, 1993), and engaging in active efforts to oppose, confront, and reject abusive behaviour and control (Profitt, 1996). The circumstances that engender resistance are power dynamics, inequality, injustice, and societal transformation (Checchi, 2021; Johansson and Vinthagen, 2020; Weitz, 2001; Gregg, 1993).

For Foucault, power is predicated on the assertion that “where there is power, there is resistance” (1978, pp. 95–96). The distribution of power relations within the prison environment has engendered various forms of resistance, which can manifest in overt or subtle ways depending on the specific conditions. Overt manifestations of resistance encompass material and physical dimensions such as social movements (e.g., marches, picketing, forming of unions), while the subtle nature of resistance involves symbolic behaviours (e.g., silence, hunger strikes) that can be challenging to discern (Johansson and Vinthagen, 2020; Hollander and Einwohner, 2004). Goffman emphasises that inmates seek solace in spaces that elude surveillance as a form of resistance against the powers exerted within prisons (1961). Similarly, hunger strikes, which have become a regular feature of prison life, are frequently utilised as a form of resistance against specific practises of the dominant powers, namely prison officials (also see Delmas, 2023; Norman, 2020; Sheth, 2016).

Baaz and Lilja (2017) contend that the boundaries between material and symbolic forms of resistance are intricate and indistinct. This thesis upholds the notion of this indeterminacy and situates prisoners’ resistance within the framework of what Johansson and Vinthagen describe as ‘everyday resistance’ (2020, p. 17). ‘Everyday resistance’ rests on principles of informal, non-organised, and, as the name suggests, everyday forms of engagement with power relations (also see Lilja, 2022). Thus, the concept of ‘everyday resistance’ aptly grounds a prisoner’s reaction to the structural power dynamics inherent in the prison system. In sum, in the context of the present study, it is pertinent to conceive of power relations within prisons as constantly shifting, reconfiguring, and negotiated by different actors (e.g., prison officer *vs.* prisoner, prisoner *vs.* prisoner, prisoner *vs.* family, prison officer *vs.* prisoner *vs.* family).

2.6 Prison labour, economy, and solidarity economy

This section broadly sits within the scholarship of prison economy, a very significant, expansive and intricate dimension of prison operations. There is an extensive scholarship on prison economy, encompassing diverse legal frameworks (Jarman and Heard, 2023; van Zyl Smith and Dünkel, 2018), prison labour (Gilmore, 2022; Melossi and Pavarini, 2018; Wacquant, 2009), solidarity economy within prisons (Laville, 2023; House and Rashid, 2022; Crewe, 2009). Significant is also the inherent extraction and exploitation embedded in various spaces of the prison system (Morris, 2023; LeBaron and Phillips, 2019; Foucault, 1977). The range of research on the prison economy is too expansive to fully be covered in this section; hence, I focused on the scholarship on prison labour and solidarity economy of prisons, which are underpinned by contestations and exploitations. The debate about the use of sentenced prisoners' labour presents a double-edged sword to respective governments, policymakers, intergovernmental organisations, and academia. On the one hand, it involves taking advantage of an untapped human resource that has been locked up by the state. This tends to reinforce arguments alluded to by restorative justice advocates to the effect that prisoners should be viewed as assets and not liabilities (Melossi and Pavarini, 2018). Along similar lines, providing prisoners' with work opportunities while incarcerated enables them to raise money to supplement the meagre resources (e.g., food, toiletries, phone calls, etc.) provided by the state, acquire skills that can benefit them post-release, enhance their remission chances (Gibson-Light, 2023; Ifeonu, Haggerty, and Bucerius, 2022) among others. For early prison labour scholars (Melossi and Pavarini, 2018; Wacquant, 2009), using prison labour helps to counterbalance the expenses involved in the incarceration of the prisoner.

Agomoh (n.d.) assesses how female prisoners are treated within the various penal system of Africa. The study reveals that the rearing of animals was carried out in Rwandan prisons. According to the author, milk produced from these animals were used to supplement the nutritional needs of women prisoners with babies. Aseidu (1999) reports that the labour of prisoners is largely used in farms and industries most at times with the objective to generate income for the state (see Chennault and Sbicca, 2023 for similar arguments in the U.S). In review of the 1972 Prison Decree No. 9 of Nigeria, Ume (2008) claim that one of the core functions of the prison service is to generate revenue for the government through prison farms and industries. In essence, prisons are sustained and functioned on the labour of prisoners (see also Laville, 2023; House and Rashid,

2022), this is particularly important in carceral contexts where resources are scarce, such as Ghana (see Chapter 4 for further details).

On the other hand, there is a burgeoning literature against the use of prisoners' labour during their sentencing period (Gilmore, 2022; van Zyl Smith and Dünkel, 2018). Gilmore (2022, 2007), Davis (2011), Davis et al. (2022), Wacquant (2023, 2009), and others connects the prisons to capitalisms in so many powerful ways, of which wealth and profit is extracted from persons incarcerated leading to further social inequalities. Underpinned by these capitalist ideologies, work and labour is fundamental to the functions and operations of prisons. Critics of the use of prison labour cite a system of exploitation being used by states to provide a source of cheap labour (Gilmore, 2022; Wacquant, 2009), as well as using the prisoners for monetary gains (Laville, 2021; Peterson et al., 2021). Although there is an increasing debate in Global North countries about the use of prisoners' labour, less is talked about the issue in Global South countries (including Ghana). Despite these differences within several (non)binding international legal frameworks advanced by the International Labour Organisation (i.e., Convention Number 29 of 1930, and Convention Number 105 of 1957), the forms of work and whether to pay prisoners for their labour or not is determined by the state.

van Zyl Smith and Dünkel (2018) report that the use of prisoners' labour is embedded in the various national prison policies, which tend to normalise the practice. Underneath this practice, however, critics of penal labour claim that states exert their powers on prisoners to make a profit out of their vulnerability. The conflicting claims of the two schools of thought with one group claiming that using prisoners labour form part of their reformation process, and the critics emphasising the exploitative system created by states on the use of penal labour still presents a grey area (van Zyl Smith and Dünkel, 2018). As a result, this begged for further empirical studies, especially in developing countries such as Ghana to unravel what is internationally accepted and how the internal dynamics of the state influence the way it manages prisoners labour (see Chapter 7 for further details).

2.7 Social Network Theory

In this section, I review scholarship on social network analysis, with particular attention given to its conceptualisation, practical application, and efficacy. I relate the core discourses about this theory to the specific context of prisons. In this study, the use of social network theory presupposes

that the prisoner is part of a web of relationships, a topic I will revisit later. The application of social network theory extends across a wide range of academic disciplines, encompassing mathematics, statistics, economics, international relations, biology, anthropology, political science, and sociology (Knoke and Yang, 2019; Newman, 2018; Doreian and Stokman, 2013; Scott, 2012). As such, an exhaustive typology of the social network theory is beyond the scope of this thesis. Of particular significance here are sociological and anthropological analyses of social networks, which are centred around principles of examining the embedded relationships within social structures such as familial ties, religious affiliations, social class, and community dynamics (Miller, 2020; Knoke and Yang, 2019; Borgatti, Everett, and Johnson, 2018; Marin and Wellman, 2011). These social structures are conceptualised as networks of individuals or groups that are interconnected through relationships. Putnam (2001, p. 1) draws attention to the valuable role of networks through his concept of “social capital.” Wasserman and Faust (1994) posit that the relational links between individuals or groups function as conduits for the exchange and flow of resources ranging from emotional and physical support to information (also see Knoke and Yang, 2019).

The field of migration studies has embraced the social network theory (Ryan, 2023; De Haas, Castles, and Miller, 2019). It allows for a comprehensive understanding of various aspects, including the decision-making process, integration, and a transnational engagement of migrants. Specifically, individuals rely on their networks to access resources necessary for migration, including information about job opportunities and assistance in finding accommodation at the destination (Kerr and Mandorff, 2023). Similarly, the theory gained currency in community research, revealing the significant role of networks in community solidarity formation (Wellman, 2018; White, 2011), as a means of consensus building (Gai et al., 2023; Ji et al., 2023), and in connection with survival strategies, particularly during violent situations (Dixon-Decleve, 2022; Aziz, 2018; Kadushin, 2012). Despite the significance of social network theory in studying complex relationships across social structures, particularly at both micro- and macro- levels, its application in prison contexts is scant. Concepts that come close to network analysis within prisons include “secondary prisonization” (Comfort, 2019, p. 66), “pains of imprisonment” (McKendry and Ricciardelli, 2021; Sykes, 2007, p. 63), and “courtesy stigma” (Goffman, 1963, p. 30). Conceptually, these frameworks are narrow in scope, focusing on inmates and their family members’ relationships in the face of imprisonment.

Critically applying social network theory in the context of prisons reveals the complexities of relationships within these spaces. For instance, apart from situating the prisoner within a network of relationships that extends familial ties, it also provides a framework for analysing their interactions with non-kin members, such as friends, fellow prisoners, and prison staff. Moreover, this theory contextualises the flow of resources within prison environments, highlighting the reciprocal exchanges between prisoners and the diverse array of individuals within and outside the prison space. The reciprocity and resource flow embedded in social network analysis are obscured in previous frameworks used in prison studies. By applying the social network theory in this thesis, I illuminate the flows of resources and reciprocities between the transferred prisoners and other actors within the prison space (these findings are discussed in more detail in Chapter 7).

2.8 Summary of chapter

This chapter emphasises the complexities of mobility and confinement. The discourse surrounding these concepts illuminates several contradictions. In terms of their legal and policy construction, comprehension, and implementation, the concepts create categories that exclude people across spaces. Despite their contextual and conceptual differences, certain similarities persist across the different concepts. One shared observation from the review of these concepts (i.e., mobility and confinement) is that power relations permeate through all of them. Consequently, these concepts cannot be rooted in principles of freedom and liberty in an uncomplicated way. There exist external and internal actors that continue to reshape, redefine, and renegotiate mobility (including forced migration) and confinement. Social network analysis offers a framework to study the relationship between these external actors and people whose mobility are affected, including prisoners. Social network analysis involves consideration of the concept of ‘centrality.’ This relates people’s position within a network or group to their social status, power, and influence (Fronzetti Colladon and Naldi, 2020, p. 1; Mizruchi and Potts, 1998, p. 353). According to Mizruchi and Potts (1998), a person’s position is significant in understanding their impact on the network or group, especially as networks are built on relationships through which resources flow. In network analysis, there is a debate about the relationship between centrality and power. For instance, the central position of a person in a network grants them power (Mizruchi and Potts, 1998). However, recent studies have challenged this claim (Fronzetti Colladon and Naldi, 2020; Scott, 2012). Thus, the structure and constituents, rather than the individual position within the network, determine the power relations among the network members. There is potential complementarity in relating social network theory

to Foucault's framing of power as dynamic, fluid, multifaceted, and webbed. The ensuing analysis in the empirical chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 aims to explicate these complementarities through the experiences of transferred prisoners and their family members.

CHAPTER THREE

STUDY AREA AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

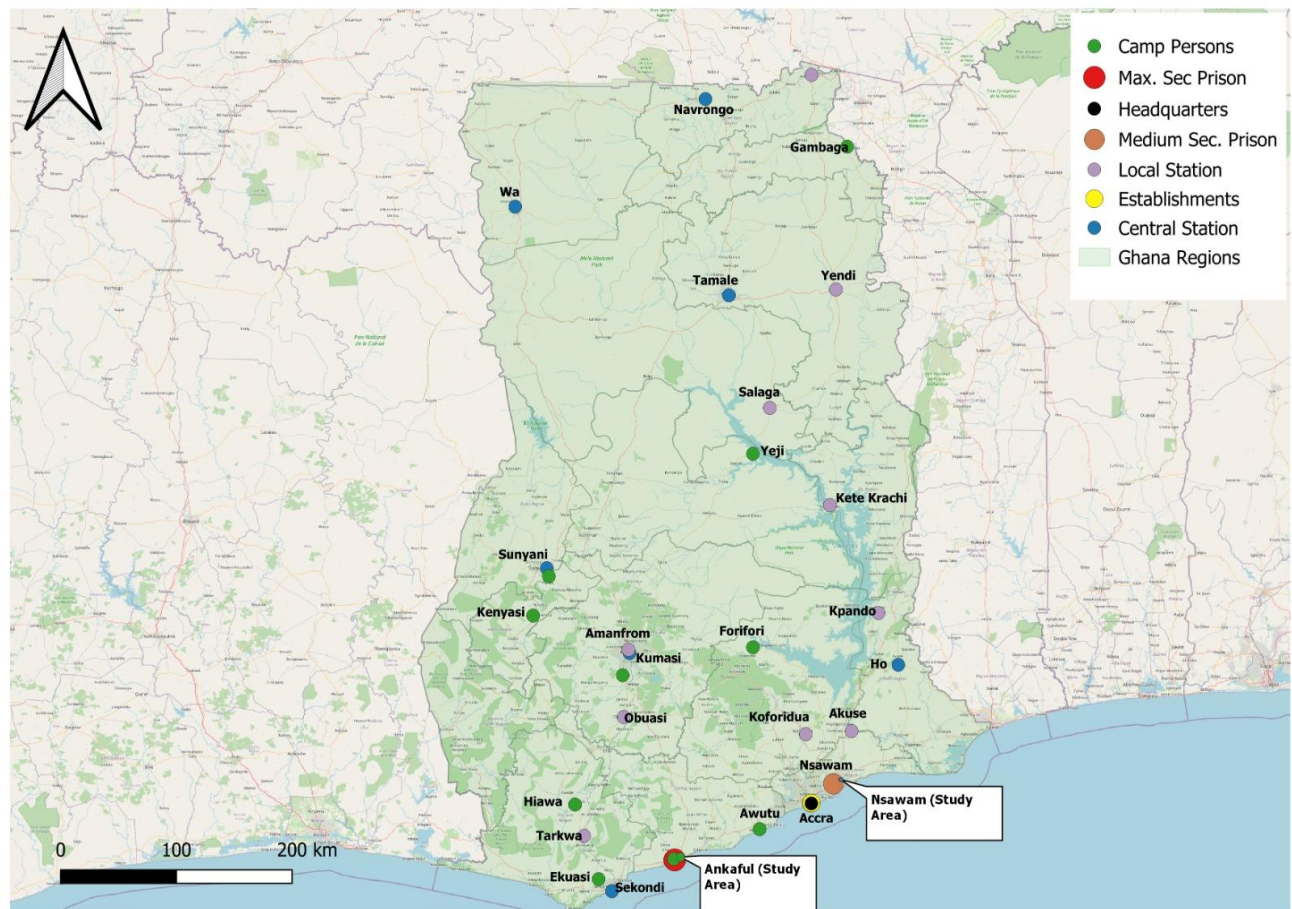
This chapter details the study area and the methodology of the study. It encompasses a concise introduction to the study of prisons in Ghana and the measures I undertook to gain access to the two selected prisons. Subsequently, I highlight the design of the study, followed by the description of the study population, and the socio-demographic characteristics of the transferred prisoners I selected for this study. The chapter also covers the techniques for data collection, the strategies I used in the identification and sampling of study participants, as well as the processes involved in analysing and presenting the data through tables, pie charts, bar charts, and vignettes. Vignette usage in this study provided contextual information to clarify some themes and transfer practices in Ghana and was an appropriate means of presenting sensitive experiences in a less threatening manner to the transferred prisoners I selected for this study. Furthermore, I reflect on the ethical considerations, limitations and challenges of conducting this study in the only maximum- and medium-security prisons in Ghana out of the 43 prisons spread across the country (see Figure 3.1 for further details).

3.2 The Research Field and Accessibility

The study focussed on Ghana, a country that emerged from the combination of the British colony of the Gold Coast and the Togoland Trust Territory (Manoukian, 2017). It was the first sub-Saharan African country to attain independence in 1957 (Frimpong-Manso, 2016; Thompson, 2015) and shares boundaries with Cote d'Ivoire to the west, Burkina Faso to the north, Togo to the east, and the Gulf of Guinea to the south. Spanning a total land area of approximately 238,533 sq. km², the country has a population of approximately 30,792,608, with slightly more than 51% being female and 49% being male in the 2021 Population and Housing Census (Ghana Statistical Service, 2021, p. 6). In November 2018, Ghana's parliament enacted the Constitutional Instrument (C.I. 109) that created new regions, thereby increasing the total number of regions from 10 to 16. They are 43 prison establishments spread across the country. Out of these 43 prisons, 9 are categorised as camps and settlement farm prisons, while 7 are specifically designated for housing female prisoners. Further breakdown of these 43 prisons includes, 1 maximum security prison, 1 medium

security prison, 8 central prisons, and 17 local prisons. It is worth noting that before the creation of these new regions, every region had at least one prison facility (Ghana Prisons Service, 2022).

Figure 3.1: Map of Ghana Showing Various Prison Establishments



Source: Adopted and modified from Ghana Prisons Service Annual Report (2013)

The primary focus of this study was to examine the transfer experiences of prisoners, and I purposefully selected the Ankaful Maximum Security Prison (AMSP) and Nsawam Medium Security Prison (NMSP) for this purpose. The decision to select these two prisons was based on their central role in receiving prisoners from other prisons across the country. In other words, the AMSP and NMSP largely serve as the final destination for most prisoners due to space (i.e., carrying capacity) and security purposes (see Figure 5.4 for the journeys of the transferred prisoners). The significance of AMSP and NMSP in the prison system of Ghana emanates from their carrying capacity and status. AMSP and NMSP are the only maximum- and medium-security prisons in the country. For instance, they are the only prisons equipped and designated to receive death row prisoners. As a result, prisoners from various regions of the country are transferred to

these two facilities, making them an ideal location to identify and interview prisoners who have undergone transfer. At the time of the fieldwork, approximately one-third (30%) of the total prison population in the country was housed in these two prisons. Furthermore, Mendez (2015) argues that prisoners are consistently transferred to the AMSP to alleviate overcrowding in other prisons in the country (see Chapter 4 of this study for further information on prison overcrowding in Ghana). Mendez's claim was confirmed during an informal conversation with one of the prison officers when he remarks:

This is the only maximum-security prison, and we receive prisoners from across the country. Even during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, when all the prisons across the country stopped taking new prisoners, our establishment continued to receive prisoners. You know, this is the last stop for inmates who pose significant challenges, so we receive such inmates from all parts of the country. (**Cudjoe, Prison Officer, AMSP**)

The AMSP and NMSP exhibit significant differences not only in their classification but also in their internal management practises. These variations encompass aspects such as the frequency of daily prisoner checks and counts, the number of permitted visits for prisoners, and the ways visitors are subjected to scrutiny (refer to Table 3.1 for a summary of the differences). Conditions in prisons across the country vary greatly, and this heavily influences the reactions of prisoners to transfers. For instance, while prisoners in the NMSP were allowed to prepare their own meals in addition to the prison rations, cooking was strictly prohibited in the AMSP. Additionally, the AMSP operated below its maximum capacity at the time of the fieldwork, allowing all prisoners to have access to beds. However, prisoners at the NMSP reported sleeping on the floor due to overcrowding. These distinctions and the comparisons drawn by prisoners generate various perspectives on transfers, as elaborated in Chapter 4.

Table 3.1: Differences between Ankaful and Nsawam Security Prisons

Ankaful Maximum Security Prison	Nsawam Medium Security Prison
Counting of inmates is >3 times per day	Counting inmates <3 times per day
Identification cards required during visitation	Identification card not compulsory during visitation
Prohibition of cooking	Inmates allowed to cook
One visit per two weeks	One visit per week

3.3 Field Accessibility

The fieldwork and data collection were conducted from January to October 2021, after ethics approval was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee at the University of Leeds (see Section 3.8 on ethical considerations). It took two months of preparatory work to gain access to the AMSP and NMSP. Part of the preparatory work involved informal visits to both prisons, during which the prison officers disclosed that authorisation to enter the prisons and engage with prisoners for research purposes requires approval from the headquarters of the Ghana Prisons Service (GPS), headed by the Director-General. To obtain approval from the GPS headquarters, I had a series of engagements with the GPS research unit at the headquarters, which was fraught with several challenges, as explained under Section 3.3. I was required to submit a letter of introduction from my university as well as a sample of the field instruments (i.e., questionnaire and semi-structured interview). Institutional affiliation (e.g., to universities and think tank organisations) has been identified as a useful tool in gaining access, obtaining data, and interviewing prisoners (Fox, Lane, and Turner, 2018; Lune and Berg, 2017). For Trulson, Marquart, and Mullings (2004), the networks and institutional affiliation served as valuable resources in gaining access to prisons by early sociologists such as Donald Clemmer, Gresham Sykes, and Erving Goffman. Following the submission of the required documentation, GPS headquarters sent approval letters to the two prisons, and access was granted.

Following the approval, a preliminary meeting was conducted with the prison management, which served two purposes. It presented an opportunity for me to formally introduce my research and make known to the management the specific groups of respondents I intended to interview, the internal protocols that should be adhered to and the necessary measures to follow in navigating through the COVID-19 restrictions at the time. These meetings were also used to agree on the days and times for conducting interviews, as well as the assignment of a prison officer to facilitate my entry and exit from the prison facilities, while also ensuring compliance with the internal protocols throughout my presence at the various prison establishments. Regarding data capture, the management prohibited the use of electronic devices (e.g., tape recorders, mobile phones, tablets, and cameras) within the main prison yard. Consequently, I printed and administered all questionnaires to the transferred prisoners, complemented with stationery such as a field notepad, pen, and pencils. Although the prohibition of electronic devices was within the prison yards, by

extension to only the transferred prisoners, the semi-structured interviews with visitors and prison officers outside the prison yards were audio-recorded.

Power relations inherently shaped the internal protocols outlined by the prison management. For instance, they maintained that all interactions with inmates should be within the agreed time and location and should be in the presence of a prison officer. The allocation of time to enter and leave the prisons and the prohibition bears resemblance to prior scholarship that has argued that researchers are equally subjected to the surveillance and restrictions imposed by prison facilities (Fumagalli, 2023; Ryan and Tynen, 2020; Bosworth, 2017).

Additionally, my field experience confirms the assertions made by Davies (2015), and Davies and Francis (2018) that simply gaining access to prisons does not guarantee complete support from gatekeepers, such as prison officers and prisoners. For example, even though the headquarters of the GPS approved the research to be conducted within the two prisons, the decision to grant access to the prisoners rested with the Officer-in-Charge (OIC) of each prison. One of the prison officers noted the excerpt below during an informal conversation about gaining access to the prisoners:

The COVID-19 situation has posed challenges for us at present. The letters have been sent to the respective prisons, which now allow you access to them. However, due to the pandemic, the OICs must evaluate their circumstances to determine if they can allow you to engage with the inmates. Considering this, I would suggest you start the interviews with the prison officers. Through this process, you would establish a certain rapport with them that could potentially facilitate your interview with the inmates. **(Fieldnote, Informal conversation with a prison officer)**

According to Joniak-Luthi (2016), the lack of trust, fear, and burden on limited prison resources occasionally results in the non-cooperation of prison authorities and prisoners. The challenges of accessing the transferred prisoners and visitors for this study were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. To overcome these challenges and gain access to the research participants (e.g., prison officers, transferred prisoners, and family members of prisoners), several factors and strategies were considered and employed. First, prison officers at both the GPS headquarters and the two prison facilities acknowledged the persistent lack of research in prisons across the country. This corroborates Sarkin's (2019, p. 1) observation that prisons in Africa, including Ghana, have been the "least-studied penal institutions anywhere in the world." The GPS headquarters underscored

the importance of empirical research leading to this study's approval. According to the officers, the findings and their ensuing recommendations, would enhance their operations, and serve as a means of educating the public on issues such as the significance of family members' visits, to incarcerated relatives (see Chapter 6 for further details) and the challenges confronting the GPS, as articulated in Chapter 4.

Second, gaining access to the transferred prisoners was also based on the rapport built during my informal visits to the various prisons, the preliminary engagements with the prison management, and the period of interviews with the prison officers. The authorisation granted by the GPS headquarters created an opportunity to enter various key spaces of the prisons, from the main yard, restaurants, visitors' waiting and searching areas, to prayer centres. Beyond the formal interviews with the officers, spending time at these areas also fosters informal interactions and conversations with the officers and visitors. The time spent with the prison officers helps me built trust. Scholars with interest in qualitative (or immersive) research methods have found *time* to be an integral part in building rapport between the researcher and the person being researched (see also Mayan, 2023; Bryman, 2016; Creswell and Poth, 2018; Creswell and Clark, 2017). Rapport was built through a shared commitment of using research to inform the public about the challenges confronting the various the prisons, praying together, particularly officers that share the Islamic faith, and one that was based on informal enquiries/chatting by/with the prison officers about my education, and their [prison officer] intention of furthering their education. Beyond the trust this creates between the officers and me, we also built relationships that continue to exist post-fieldwork. Such levels of interaction facilitated access to the transferred prisoners for this study.

Third, the OIC of the two prison facilities granted permission to interact with the transferred prisoners, subject to the fulfilment of various COVID-19 regulations. Notable among these regulations were the requirement to conduct interviews in an open-air place with a two-meter separation between the researcher and the prisoner, the provision of face masks and sanitisers for all selected transferred prisoners, and the researcher undergoing a regular temperature screening before engaging with the transferred prisoner. Upon adhering to all the stipulated regulations set forth by the correctional facilities, access to the prisoners was granted with the help of the designated prison officer in the recruitment of transferred prisoners (refer to Section 3.5 for details on the selection process of research participants).

Despite successfully gaining access to the different prison facilities and gaining the cooperation of the respondents, several challenges were encountered throughout the process. These challenges encompassed bureaucratic obstacles, a dearth of data on transferred prisoners, limited time availability for the research participants (i.e., visitors and prison officers), the intricacies, procedures, and transferred prisoners' suspicions about the research, and emotional hardships I faced in the field (see Section 3.5.3 for further details). Before turning to these challenges, the next sections delve into the study design, and methodologies used in the data collection.

3.4 Design and Methodologies of the study

This study employed a mixed-methods approach that involves the process of combining different techniques (i.e., qualitative and quantitative) for data collection and analysis (Leavy, 2022; Creswell and Clark, 2017; Bryman, 2016). While the study predominantly employed qualitative techniques, some quantitative procedures were also utilised. Combining both techniques in a study is useful because of their efficacy in addressing complex research problems within the social sciences (Creswell and Creswell, 2017; Creswell and Clark, 2017) and proves valuable in the domains of security and criminological research (Salter, Mutlu, and Frowd, 2023; Davies and Francis, 2018). Numerous studies have identified various advantages and disadvantages of employing either qualitative or quantitative techniques independently in research. The strength of the qualitative approach lies in its flexibility and efficacy in attaining a comprehensive and contextualised interpretation of events and experiences (Mayan, 2023; Saven-Baden and Major, 2013; Rose and Johnson, 2020). However, the qualitative approach has been criticised for its tendency to draw biased conclusions and lack of generalizability (Creswell and Poth, 2018; Dowling, 2005). The merits of the quantitative approach lie in the rigorous procedures employed in all stages of the study (Fischer, Boone, and Neumann, 2023; Creswell and Creswell, 2017; De Vaus, 2013), which often result in factual conclusions and the ability to generalize the findings. Nevertheless, this approach is inflexible and unable to fully explicate real-life situations and experiences (De Vaus, 2013).

To maintain the strengths and mitigate the weaknesses of the qualitative and quantitative approaches when used separately, the integration of both methods in a single study has been proposed (Leavy, 2022; Creswell and Clark, 2017; Denzin et al., 2023). In this sense, the combination of various methods in the study aids in offsetting their weaknesses. Several studies have concluded that a mixed-methods approach ensures the reliability, convergence, and validity

of the findings of a study (Noble and Heale, 2019; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). Despite its strength and adoption, certain assumptions of the mixed-methods approach have been challenged (Teye, 2012; Meeto and Temple, 2003). For instance, Meeto and Temple (2003) assert that the mere use of diverse methodological approaches in a study does not guarantee absolute validity and precise inferences. However, the authors emphasised that the multifaceted nature of social reality requires the use of multiple methods in addressing a phenomenon (cited in Teye, 2012; Meeto and Temple, 2003). This is concisely summarised by Devine and Heath (1999, p. 49): a mixed-methods approach “can be used effectively to explore the dynamics of complex social phenomenon, highlighting the multi-layered and often contradictory nature of social life.” Due to the strength of the mixed-methods approach, the use of such a design in this study is the most fitting in addressing the research questions, as seen in prior studies about the complexities of exploring movement characterised with coercion and diverse power relations (see, for instance, Hunkler et al., 2022; De Haas, 2023; Gibney, 2014).

The qualitative techniques employed in this study include purposeful, voluntary, and convenience sampling, semi-structured interviews, and non-participant observation. The importance of each of these techniques in the data gathering is outlined in Sections 3.4.1 (semi-structured interviews), 3.4.2 (observations), and 3.4.4 (secondary documents). Together the qualitative techniques I employed in the research helped to build a comprehensive, in-depth understanding of lived experiences of the research participants from different perspectives. The semi-structured interviews were further supported by direct observation of events and interactions within the prisons.

Furthermore, I conducted face-to-face questionnaires exclusively with the transferred prisoners to collect the quantitative and qualitative data (refer to Section 3.4.3 for more information). Questionnaires continue to be an essential tool in quantitative methodologies because of their flexibility, capacity to establish connections between variables, ability to reach a broader population, and cost-effectiveness (refer, for example, to Fischer, Boone, and Neumann, 2023; Creswell and Creswell, 2017). The use of questionnaires, for instance, enables the collection of data on the frequency of visits received by prisoners after being transferred, thereby enhancing our comprehension of the distance and time between the prisons and prisoners and visitors’ places of origin. Similarly, the questionnaires aid in documenting the transfer history of prisoners and gathering data on regional transfers, particularly when the two prisons were unable to provide

information on the total number of transferred prisoners or the transfer history of prisoners (refer to Section 3.6 for more details). The absence of data on the total number of transferred prisoners necessitated the modification of the sampling technique from simple random sampling (quantitative technique) to voluntary sampling (qualitative technique) of the transferred prisoners, as explained in Section 3.5. Before I delve into the specific steps, Table 3.2 provides a summary of the study design and the various techniques and instruments I employed to collect and analysis the data.

Table 3.2: Summary of research objectives, design, and methods

Research Objectives	Mixed Methods Design (Data collection tools)		Target Population
	Qualitative	Quantitative	
Assesses the rationale and transfer processes of prisoners in Ghana.	Semi-structured interview Secondary data		Key informants (e.g., prison officers, mobility scholars, NGOs, and legal professionals)
Examines the perceptions and experiences of transferred prisoners' movement between prisons.	Questionnaires	Questionnaires	Transferred prisoners
Examines families of prisoners' experiences and access to transferred prisoners.	Semi-structured interview, observation	Questionnaires	Transferred prisoners and their families
Examines the effects of incarceration and transfer on the relationship between transferred prisoner's and family members.	Semi-structured interview, Questionnaires	Questionnaires	Transferred prisoners and their families
Explores the agency of transferred prisoners' and family members post-transfer of prisoners.	Semi-structured interview, Questionnaires	Questionnaires	Transferred prisoners and their families

Source: Researcher's compilation

3.4.1 Interviews (semi-structured and informal conversation)

Interviews constitute an essential part of the qualitative data collection procedure. For this thesis, I interviewed visitors/family members of prisoners and key informants. Key informant interviews are qualitative research techniques through which researchers obtain valuable data from individuals based on their status or expertise in a particular field of investigation (Lokot, 2021; Kumar, 1989). In this study, the primary key informants I considered were as follows: i) prison officers, ii) legal professionals selected from the Ghana Judiciary Service, iii) representatives from non-governmental organisations, and iv) mobility scholars.

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges of researching the two prisons (see Section 3.9 for further details) caused me to use two types (e.g., semi-structured and informal conversation interviews) and mediums (e.g., face-to-face, telephone calls, Skype) of interviews with the research participants. Due to the diverse backgrounds of the research participants and the different research objectives that required their knowledge and experience, I adopted different informal and semi-structured interview for the visitors and key informants. All, except four interviews with visitors/family members, were in-depth and lasted between 50 and 60 minutes. Four interviews were interrupted and ended due to time constraints on the part of the research participants. Although the in-depth interviews were time consuming, the length of time enhanced the quality of the data (see also Denzin et al., 2023; Mayan, 2023; Tavory, 2020) allowing participants to freely express themselves, contextualise and rationalise their responses, expand the discussion, and reference real-life experiences. In the following paragraphs, I delve into the specific types, mediums, and themes of the interview guides used with each participant group.

I employed semi-structured interviews to create a clear and precise framework for dialoguing with the research participants. Consequently, the semi-structured interviews were conducted within a scope of matters related to prisoner transfer, resulting in data that directly addresses the specific research objectives of the study. Drawing insights from Mayan (2023), semi-structured interviews also enable researchers to pursue intriguing trajectories that may arise during the conversation. These are seen in the narratives of NGOs and family members about the treatment of prisoners (e.g., police brutality during arrest and lack of legal representation during trial), during the sentencing phase, as chronicled in Chapter 4. I used face-to-face and Skype calls to conduct semi-structured interviews with key informants; all interviews with the prison officers, staff of NGOs and legal professionals were face-to-face and held in the prisons and offices of the research

participants. The medium (e.g., Skype calls) for interviews followed COVID-19 guidelines and maximised cost effectiveness (see also Creswell and Poth, 2018; Davies and Francis, 2018).

All interviews with the key informants were semi-structured and contained overlapping, as well as distinct questions, peculiar to their experience and expertise (see Appendices II, III, and IV for further details). Specifically, the themes addressed by each interview guide are summarised in the Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Summary of themes for key informants

Key Informants	Themes
Prison officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasons and justification for the transfer of prisoners. • The processes involved in prisoner transfer. • The challenges of prisoner transfer in Ghana. • The reactions of prisoners towards transfer. • The awareness of prison officers about domestic and international legal instruments of prisoner transfer.
NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prison conditions and prisoners' rights in Ghana. ▪ Awareness of prisoner transfer and legal instruments concerning prisoner transfer. ▪ The types of assistance and services NGOs provide to inmates.
Legal Professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Sentencing and the assignment of inmates to prisons. ◆ The effect of transfer on prisoners' rights. ◆ The effects of transfer on the legal representation of inmates. ◆ Awareness and application of legal provisions on the transfer of prisoners.
Academia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Conceptual debates of forced migration (such as its application and limitations). ★ The connection (if any) between prisoner transfer and forced migration.

Face-to-face and telephone interviews were conducted with visitors and family members. While many interviews with family members were face-to-face, telephone interviews had to be incorporated. The rationale for using phone calls was because of time constraints and the interruption of interviews when visitors had to end their conversations to meet their incarcerated relative. Consequently, visitors and family members agreed that I should follow-up with phone calls to complete or conduct a new interview. Based on my field experience, I realised that time is a crucial factor for anyone involved in the prison system (see also Dennard et al., 2021), as evident in my interviews with visitors and family members. As highlighted by Edmond, one of the prison officers, “nobody has time here, including the prisoners; everyone is busy.” Furthermore, the officer emphasised the importance of seizing any available opportunity to engage with individuals relevant to my research, whether in the car park, canteen, or even on the street, as that might be their only available time.

I employed a combination of semi-structured and informal conversation interviews to gather data from visitors/family members. Apart from time constraints, the issue (or problem) of surveillance was identified by a number of visitors and family members. This led to the use of informal conversation interviews. For instance, a subset of visitors and family members expressed comfort in having informal conversations rather than structured or semi-structured interviews. In this situation, they did not feel formally accountable for their statements. Conducting an informal conversation interview requires a certain level of skill (for example, see Mayan, 2023; Turner, 2010), where questions are spontaneous and dependent on the interviewee’s responses. Based on my field experience, I posit that conducting an informal conversation interview requires the interviewer to possess both active listening and comprehension skills as well as mental agility.

Finally, the experiences of visitors and family members played a significant role in addressing the study objectives (i.e., RO3, RO4, and RO5). The interview guide for visitors/family members explored three overarching themes, which are as follows: i) family members’ access to prisoners after the transfer (e.g., effects of geographical distance, gaining entry, waiting, and interacting with incarcerated relatives), ii) effects of incarceration and transfer on family members, iii) coping strategies, and support systems.

3.4.2 Observation

The investigation of prisons presents several challenges, as previously mentioned, which necessitate the use of observation; Yin (2014, p. 186) argues, “For certain subjects [context], the only means of gathering evidence is through participant observation.” The authorisation to enter the various prisons facilitated the use of observation techniques during the fieldwork. Observation is a qualitative data collection technique in which a researcher immerses themselves in the activities of a group of people in each setting and systematically records events as they occur (Creswell and Poth, 2018).

To maximise the benefits of the observation technique, I integrated it with informal conversational interviews. Hence, I became what Mayan (2023, p. 166) describes as an ‘observer as participant,’ where my role oscillated between that of an outsider and an insider (see also Denzin et al., 2023; Seim, 2021). As an ‘observer as participant,’ I was subjected to a routine body search like any other visitor or family member upon entering the prisons. The time spent at various checkpoints provided an opportunity to engage in informal conversations with visitors and family members, while observing their responses and reactions to the challenges encountered during their visits (see Chapter 6 for further details). I could relate to the experiences of the research participants about various claims (e.g., access to food, body searches, waiting, denial of entry, etc.) raised during the interviews. Furthermore, such observation complements other data collection techniques (e.g., interviews, questionnaires, and secondary data) amid the stringent surveillance and prohibition of electronic recordings within the prison setting.

In summary, the combination of qualitative techniques was due to several factors. These included the intricacies of the study site due to asymmetric power dynamics, the exploratory nature of the research questions, and the endeavour to understand the complex relationships among the different research participants. Despite the significance of the qualitative data collection techniques used in this study, they have faced criticism because of their perceived subjectivity. To augment the subjectivity of qualitative techniques, I employed questionnaires to collect the experiences of the transferred prisoners.

3.4.3 Questionnaires design and administration

The data on transferred prisoners were primarily obtained through questionnaires, which I administered face-to-face. Questionnaires continue to serve as a key quantitative tool of primary

data collection, and they have been praised for their objectivity, capacity to show patterns within a population, and cost savings (Dornyei and Dewaele, 2023; Creswell and Creswell, 2017). Considering the advantages of questionnaires, I used questionnaires to obtain primary data (e.g., sociodemographic variables, frequency of visits, regional information, etc.) and to reach many prisoners with transfer experience. This is also particularly significant in a prison system that lacks a policy framework for transfers. Additionally, the use of questionnaires helped me reach many transferred prisoners, bringing nuances into experiences of transfer in the prison space. The anonymisation of the responses amid the considerable number of transferred prisoners I selected helped to protect the identities of the transferred prisoners.

In safeguarding the respondents while still obtaining their factual and behavioural experiences, I incorporated both open-ended and closed-ended questions. The inclusion of both open-ended and closed-ended questions aided in saving time and enabled the transferred prisoners to express themselves freely. According to Gregory et al. (2009, p. 613), closed-ended questions involve standardised responses, resulting in prompt feedback from respondents. Conversely, open-ended questions are valuable when addressing sensitive subjects. Consequently, both open-ended and closed-ended questions helped me explore the theoretical and individual transferred prisoner experiences about transfer, as well as the contextual meaning attached to them. I structured the questionnaires into four sections with both opened- and closed-ended questions, and I recorded all the transferred prisoners' responses on paper.

Summarily, the various themes covered by the questionnaire include the sociodemographic variables of the transferred prisoners (Section A), the perceptions and experiences of transferred prisoners' movement between prisons (Section B), the effects of incarceration and transfer on family members of transferred prisoners (Section C), the coping strategies of transferred prisoners and their social networks (Section D) (see Appendix I for further details).

3.4.3.1 Piloting of Questionnaires

The authorisation in terms of access by the headquarters of the GPS was exclusively restricted to the AMSP and NMSP. In an ideal scenario, I envisioned piloting the questionnaires at a central prison, which could have acted as an entry point and means of familiarisation for me as a novice researcher in prison spaces. However, the restricted access to the two prisons resulted in the denial of permission by various central prisons to conduct the questionnaire pilot. Consequently, I

purposefully selected students from the Centre for Migration at the University of Ghana for the pilot because of their availability and willingness to take part. Piloting the questionnaires ensured the clarity and appropriateness of the questions, as ambiguous questions were identified and revised. Through the pilot study, I monitored the time needed to complete a questionnaire, which subsequently helped me in the scheduling of interviews with other key informants.

3.4.4 Secondary Data

Secondary data was also used to provide background information on prison conditions in Ghana, which augmented the analysis and presentation of the findings. I relied on pertinent official documents from various local and international organisations. At the local level, I sourced relevant information from a range of policy and legal documents and reports from ministries and agencies, such as the Ghana Prisons Service, the Ministry of Interior, Ghana, the Ghana Statistical Service, and the Ghana Police Service. Internationally, I also drew upon policy documents and reports from esteemed organisations, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and United Nations agencies such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, International Organisations for Migration, and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Additional sources of secondary data included reputable journals, articles, books, newspapers, and websites.

3.5 Selection and Sampling Strategy of Research Participants and Respondents

Because of the many obstacles encountered in researching the various prison facilities, I employed non-probability sampling techniques for the selection of the research participants and transferred prisoners. Notably, I used purposeful, convenience, and voluntary sampling, in selecting the research participants (i.e., key informants and visitors) and the transferred prisoners. Non-probability techniques have been described as sampling techniques that create a zero chance of selection for some units or subjects within a population (Denzin et al., 2023; Maya, 2023; Leavy, 2022; Creswell and Clark, 2017). Consequently, these techniques have been subject to criticism due to their inherent bias and limited generalizability of findings. However, despite the shortcomings associated with non-probability methods, they proved indispensable for this study given the challenges I encountered in reaching the transferred prisoners, the uniqueness of the data I focussed on collecting (i.e., data on prisoners with transfer experience), and the knowledge and experiences of the key informants. Before I introduce the various non-probability sampling for this

study, Table 3.4 provides a summary and sample size of all the research participants interviewed, including the number of transferred prisoners I selected.

Table 3.4: List of Participants for In-depth Semi-structured Interviews

Institution	Specific Target	Number of person(s)	Description
Government	Ghana Prisons Service	8	1 administrator from each of the establishments, 3 prison officials with experience in prisoner transfer from each prison facility.
	Legal professionals	4	Private legal practitioner (1), State Attorney (1), District Court Judge (1), and Appeal Court Judge (1)
NGO's	Crime Check Foundation	1	
	The POS Foundation	1	
	Justice for All Programme	1	
	Prisons Ministry of Ghana	1	The Prisons Ministry of Ghana is a religious NGO that focus on visiting prisoners, providing physical and spiritual needs, and assist in the rehabilitation of prisoners.
Academia/Mobility scholars		2	
Families of prisoners	Ankaful Prisons	15	
	Nsawam Prisons	15	
Ankaful and Nsawam		164	Total transferred prisoners from both Ankaful and Nsawam prisons

Source: Researcher's compilation

3.5.1 Convenience sampling: visitors/family members of prisoners

Visitors and family members of incarcerated individuals were chosen to participate in interviews using the convenience sampling method. This sampling technique is rooted in the principles of easy accessibility, geographical proximity, and the willingness of individuals to partake in the research (see, for example, Creswell and Clark, 2017; Bryman, 2016; Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim, 2016). For Bryman (2016), convenience sampling is a suitable strategy for studying a moving population, such as families of prisoners who travel to-and-fro the prisons. Consequently, the selection of visitors and family members was convenient due to the less stressful and cost-effective nature of recruiting them while they were present and waiting in the visiting areas of the prisons. The efficacy of this technique in the present study can be attributed to the extensive amount of time that visitors and family members spent waiting during their visits (for further elaboration on visitor waiting experiences, refer to Chapter 6). Specifically, I approached visitors and family members in the designated visitor's area while they were awaiting their encounters with their incarcerated relatives. During this encounter, I introduced myself, explained the purpose of the research, and inquired if they would be interested in participating. While many of the visitors I approached agreed to take part in the research, a few declined because of inadequate time and other personal reasons as explained earlier. Through this approach, I conveniently selected and interviewed 15 visitors and family members from each of the two prison facilities (see Section 3.4.1 for further information on the types of interviews conducted). As stated previously, convenience sampling has faced criticism because of its potential for bias (Creswell and Clark, 2017; Hagan, 2014; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009).

3.5.2 Purposeful sampling: key informants

I selected the key informants (e.g., prison officers, NGOs, legal professionals and mobility scholars) for this study through the purposeful sampling technique. Several studies lauded purposeful sampling for engendering an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon under investigation (Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim, 2016; Suri, 2011). Campbell et al. (2020) argued that purposeful sampling ensures the trustworthiness of the data and findings of research because the researcher often aligns the sample and research aim(s) before the actual data collection. In implementing the purposeful sampling technique, scholars emphasise the knowledge and experience underpinning the selection of the research participants about the topic being researched (Campbell et al., 2020; Creswell and Poth, 2018; Patton, 2014). Consequently, the key informants

for this study were purposefully chosen based on their knowledge and experiences related to the research goals, specifically their involvement in prison management in Ghana and their contributions to the field of coercive mobility. For instance, prison officers who were directly involved in the transfer processes were purposefully selected. Focusing specifically on the transfer of prisoners, I purposefully selected specific units entrusted with the responsibility of handling prisoner transfers (refer to Chapter 4, Section 4.3 for an in-depth understanding of the functions of these units). In doing this, I sought direction from the management of the two prisons to sample officers who have knowledge in prisoner transfer (for more details on our meeting, please see Section 3.3). Subsequently, I contacted the officers in charge of these units, and they all willingly agreed to take part in the study. As a result, I interviewed 8 prison officers who were directly involved in the transfer process.

Similarly, I interviewed representatives from four NGOs that are working within Ghana's criminal justice system. To identify these NGOs, I carefully examined various websites and online news portals and targeted 7 NGOs that provide diverse forms of assistance to prisoners within Ghana's prisons. After contacting these NGOs to inquire about their willingness to take part in the research, 4 NGOs agreed to take part in the study (for more information, please see Chapter 6, Section 6.7). However, 3 NGOs declined, citing reasons such as the absence of staff with the necessary expertise to respond to the research question, time constraints, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, I sampled 3 judicial officers from Ghana and a private legal practitioner to collect specific data on the effects of transfers on prisoner's legal representation. Thus, I interviewed one state attorney, a district and appeals court judge, and a private legal practitioner. Lastly, I sampled 4 experts from academia, particularly mobility scholars. I selected the experts based on their significant scholarly contributions to the field of coercive mobility. Although I contacted 4 experts via email, during which I introduced the research, and myself, only 2 agreed and were interviewed. The other 2 experts did not respond to the emails; hence, I excluded them from the study.

3.5.3 Purposeful and Voluntary Sampling: transferred Prisoners

I employed a combination of purposeful and voluntary sampling to select the prisoners with transfer experience. To begin, I used purposeful sampling to select the transferred prisoners as a collective unit. I classified the prison population into two groups: transferred and non-transferred prisoners, and I subsequently selected the former group. To emphasise once more, I consider transferred prisoners as individuals who have been moved within the same country by the prison

officers from one prison facility to another during their sentence; therefore, they can provide an account of the movement. In contrast, I used non-transferred prisoner here to refer to prisoners who remain in the same prison facility since the time of their sentence and are not moved to another prison. Within the study context, they can potentially be transferred, but they have not undergone such a transfer since their sentence. The categorisation and selection of the group of transferred prisoners were based on the research objectives of this study, which explored transfer practises within the context of GPS. In a similar fashion, Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim (2016, p. 2) claimed that, in using purposeful sampling, “the researcher decides what needs to be known, and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience.” (See the preceding paragraph for further details on purposeful sampling).

Also, following the sampling of the transferred prisoners as a unit of analysis, I relied on the voluntary sampling technique to select individual prisoners with transfer experience. I justified the use of voluntary sampling for this study for three key reasons. First, I adopted voluntary sampling to minimise the asymmetric power dynamics and duress within prison space/research (see Section 2.4 for further details) (see also Joniak-Lüthi, 2016). In that sense, the technique was intentionally used to limit rather than eradicate, the influence of the prison officers in the recruitment of the transferred prisoners. Drawing lessons from Bourke (2014), attempting to totally eliminate the influence of the researcher and gatekeeper in research is akin to finding a needle in haystack. Second, the lack of data and the internal control measures of the prisons prevented me from creating a sample frame for transferred prisoners; hence, voluntary sampling became an ideal strategy for recruiting the transferred prisoners (see Section 3.9 for details on field challenges). Third, I adopted voluntary sampling to address the doubts and perceptions of the transferred prisoners about the study, particularly the notion of transfer (see Chapters 4 and 5 for further details on the manner of transfer). For instance, the transferred prisoners were initially reluctant to take part in the study because they felt they would be transferred to a new prison if they availed themselves to take part in the study. By following the guiding principles of voluntary sampling (see, for instance, Bryman, 2016; Murairwa, 2015; Patton, 2014), facilitated by my “insider” status (see vignette 1 for further details), I successfully recruited the transferred prisoners for questionnaire administration.

Vignette 1: Gaining Access to Transferred Prisoners: The Role of My 'Insider' Status

I spent two days at my designated table at the NMSP without a single transferred prisoner turning up to take part in the study. Upon my arrival on the third day at the prison, one transferred prisoner (hereinafter referred to as Hakim) was waiting to speak to me, curious about who had travelled from his hometown to come and speak to inmates. According to Hakim, one of the prison officers apprised him of a researcher from his hometown who had been frequenting the prison to talk to inmates who had transfer experience. Intrigued, Hakim decided to visit me at the designated table, not with the intention to take part in the study, but merely to ascertain the authenticity of where I come from. Once Hakim became convinced of our shared identity, familiarised himself with the purpose of the study, and, most importantly, understood that inmate participation was voluntary, he consented to take part in the study. Although they heard the information, according to Hakim, inmates are not coming because they thought it was a ploy by the officers to recruit prisoners for transfer. In the voice of Hakim, "I only came because upon learning that you hailed from my hometown, I said to myself, 'te jaa bonyeni,' which translates to 'we are all one.'" As I complete Hakim questionnaire and he was about to leave, he expressed, "I will inform the leaders of the cells that I have friends to let them know what this is all about. What I will suggest is that you tell the officers to inform the yard boys to let the inmates know that their participation is voluntary, and it is not for transfer purposes."

As is evident in the vignette, my encounter with Hakim played a significant role in the recruitment of the transferred prisoners, as he helped in dispelling the misconception of transfer and convincing other transferred prisoners to come and inquire about the study. As I adhered to the fundamental procedures of voluntary sampling, access to the transferred prisoners became much simpler. For instance, the purpose of the study, particularly emphasising the transferred prisoners' voluntary participation, were continuously announced to the general prison population. Subsequently, the prisoners began to present themselves to seek further information, with a section expressing their explicit interest at participating in the study. After I carefully noted prisoners with transfer experience, I explained the content of the Participant Information Sheet and a copy was given to each transferred prisoner. Inmates with transfer experience who agreed to take part in the study were told to return, and carefully consider their decision, and then return for the questionnaire

administration. For instance, Murairwa (2015) contended that a core principle of voluntary sampling is to grant potential research participants ample time to deliberate on whether or not they wish to volunteer for a study. As the transferred prisoners volunteered to take part in the study, I reiterated the available options for responding or declining a question, as well as the freedom to withdraw during the administration of the questionnaire without any adverse consequences (see Section 3.8).

Due to a lack of data on the total number and sampling frame of transferred prisoners within the two prisons, I determined the total number of transferred prisoners for this study based on the concept of saturation. Saturation is an ‘edict’ in qualitative research (cited in Saunders et al., 2018, p. 1894). It occurs when new data becomes redundant during the interview process. Sandelowski (2008, p. 875) refers to this state of data collection as “informational redundancy.” In order to achieve saturation for the transferred prisoners, I carefully considered the regional representation of prisoners and the diversity that such representation would bring to the data. In other words, all the prisoners I sampled for this study had at least being transferred once and were transferred from all 16 regions in Ghana to the two prisons. In accomplishing the representation, I allocated ten questionnaires to each region, resulting in 160 transferred prisoners targeted for the study. However, I administered an additional four questionnaires to ensure that, indeed, the experiences of transferred prisoners were repeating after reaching 95% of the total sample, suggesting the attainment of saturation. Consequently, the sample size of transferred prisoners who received questionnaires was 164.

3.6 Inclusion and Exclusion criteria of the respondents (i.e., transferred prisoners)

Prisoners were the broader target population; however, only those who had transfer experience formed the study population and were chosen to participate in the questionnaire administration. Therefore, prisoners without any experience with transfer were excluded from the study. Based on the findings of this research, approximately 98% of the visitors I interviewed were close relatives (such as parents, siblings, spouses, and children) of the prisoners, with a small number representing co-workers and friends. All participants in the study were aged 18 years; therefore, individuals below this minimum age were not included. Before I expound on the data analysis process and ethical consideration I followed, I present the descriptive sociodemographic characteristics of the 164 transferred prisoners (i.e., sample size, $N = 164$) in Table 3.5. Given the dearth of research on prison transfer in Ghana and the accompanying data challenges, I use the section on the transferred

prisoners' sociodemographic background to provide reference material on how the demographic features of prisoners' shape prison transfer.

Table 3.5: Descriptive characteristics of the transferred prisoners

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Frequency (N = 164)</i>	<i>Per cent (%)</i>
AGE		
18-28	37	22
29-39	53	32
40-50	38	23
51-61	26	16
62-72	9	6
73+	1	1
Total	164	100
Mean Age (40 years)		
Education		
No Education	48	29
Primary	40	24
Middle/Junior High School	38	23
Secondary	21	13
Tertiary	16	10
Non-formal	1	1
Total	164	100
Occupation pre-incarceration		
Unemployed	75	46
Student	6	4
Teaching	3	2
Farming	36	22
Trading	29	17
Others	15	9
Total	164	100
Religion		
Christian	102	62
Islam	50	31
Traditionalist	8	5
Other	4	2
Total	164	100
Nationality		
Ghanaian	149	91
Foreigner	15	9

Total	164	100
<i>Criminal History</i>		
First time offender	151	92
Second time offender	11	7
Recidivist	2	1
Total	164	100
<i>Type of transfer</i>		
Single transfer	131	80
Multiple transfers	33	20
Total	164	100
<i>Type of crime</i>		
Stealing	19	12
Possession of Narcotics drugs	4	2
Murder	13	8
Manslaughter	3	2
Armed robbery	82	50
Defilement	28	17
Rape	2	1
Other	13	8
Total	164	100
<i>Sentence length (Years)</i>		
1-10	30	18
11-20	61	37
21-30	20	12
31-40	9	6
41-50	12	8
51-60	1	1
61-70	5	3
71+	10	6
Life imprisonment	4	2
Condemned/Death row	12	7
Total	164	100
Mean (4 years)		

Source: Data from transferred prisoners, 2022

Prison scholarship has highlighted the significance of age in the prison experience of individuals. Prisoners' age has been explored in relation to various aspects such as prison suicides (Stoliker, Verdun-Jones, and Vaughan, 2020), health challenges and needs (Papa, Tafuri, and Vaccarezza, 2021; Combalbert et al., 2019), and coping mechanisms (Zamble and Porporino, 2013). Age plays

a crucial role in the classification of prisoners (see Section 4.6.1 for further details). Notably, all but one of the 43 prisons in the country are specifically designated to accommodate prisoners who are 18 years old and older. The age distribution of the transferred prisoners I interviewed ranged from 18 to 73 years and above, with an average age of 40 years, as indicated in Table 3.5. Many of the transferred prisoners are young, considering Stoliker, Verdun-Jones, and Vaughan's description of young prisoners as being below the age of 50 years (2020, p. 2). Also, the National Youth Policy of Ghana defines youth as individuals between the ages of 15 and 35. A significant majority (77%) of the total transferred prisoner population I interviewed falls within the age range of 18 to 50 years old (22% for 18–28 years, 32% for 29–39 years, and 23% for 40–50 years). Approximately close to half of the prison officers (49%) express concerns about the high number of young people being incarcerated throughout the country. In expressing her resentment regarding the incarceration of young individuals, Ivy, one of the prison officers, stated the following:

Something needs to be done about how young people, just like you, are brought to these prisons to waste away. If I take you around the facility and you see the kind of people in here, they are just at their prime ages: 19 years, 20, 30, 25, 18 years and they are all here. They are supposed to be working and building their future at this is time, but they are brought here because they have fallen afoul of the law. It is like that throughout the country, you go to some of the prisons, and you just see people below 20 years. What kind of country are we building, if they are supposed to be the future of this country? (**Ivy, Prison Officer**)

Valentine, Mears, and Bales (2015) argued that prison misconduct is common among young prisoners. While I contend that the act of transfer is associated with the misconduct of prisoners (see Section 4.6), the disparity in age holds no significant bearing on the correlation between transfer and prisoner misconduct in my study. The difference in age solely assumes significance when the transferred prisoners reflect upon the repercussions arising from the transfer. For instance, it was common to hear younger transferred prisoners citing the sports facilities and a few training programmes of the prisons they were transferred to. However, older transferred prisoners (i.e., aged 51 to 73 and above, constituting 23% of the transferred prisoner population) demonstrated indifference towards the influence of age on their transfer experience.

Religion plays a prominent role in the lives of incarcerated individuals and the administration of the country's prisons. In my interviews with transferred prisoners regarding their religious

affiliations, approximately 62% identify with the Christian faith, while around 31% practise the Islamic faith. It is worth noting that the religious affiliations of the transferred prisoners in this study exhibit similarities with the data provided by the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) on the religious affiliations of the Ghanaian population. The GSS data shows a significant majority of Christians (71%), a substantial minority of Muslims (20%), adherents of traditional religions (3%), individuals with no religious affiliation (1%), and followers of other religions (5%) (GSS, 2021). The activities carried out by various religious groups within Ghana's prison system bring both material and spiritual benefits to the general prison population. For instance, these groups provide financial assistance and donations of toiletries, food items, and religious texts to the prisoners (see also Routley, 2023). Similarly, the transferred prisoners claim to find solace through the religious activities they engage in during their incarceration, a theme I return to in Section 6.7. Routley's (2023) study in Ghana reveals that the activities of religious organisations augment the reformation programmes of prisons. A key informant from the Prison Ministry of Ghana emphasised in an interview that their work within the prison facilities extends beyond attending to the personal needs of the prisoners. He asserts:

Basically, we attend to the needs of the prisoners as well as the prison officers. Not just their spiritual needs but educational, medical, feeding, and so many things including their vocational training. In fact, when you talk of medical interventions, until 2 years ago, even the clinic at Nsawam was managed exclusively by this ministry, we set it up. But the government has taken over its administration. At AMSP, when you go there, you will see a 2-story building. We were invited to do the assessment and to advise the management on how to put it in to use as a clinic. That relationship is there, and our involvement is extensive. We built most of the small factories and workshops you will find in the various prisons, just so that they can train the inmates. **(Eric, Prison Ministry of Ghana, NGO)**

The majority (91%) of the total transferred prisoners reported their nationality as Ghanaians, while approximately one-tenth (9%) identified as foreigners. Comparing the nationality of the transferred prisoners to the 2021 Population and Housing Census data for Ghana, a higher percentage of foreign nationals are in prison. Specifically, the report shows that only 1% of the total population (30,832,019) of the country are foreign nationals. All the foreign prisoners, except one (from Asia), hail from other West African countries, specifically Nigeria, Niger, Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Togo. According to them, they migrated to Ghana to look for employment opportunities,

such as cattle ranching, scrap dealing, and small-scale mining known as ‘galamsey’ (i.e., a form of small-scale mining in Ghana). All the foreign prisoners maintain they do not have a specific preference for a prison within Ghana, but they express a desire to be transferred or extradited to their country of origin because of the proximity to their family members (see Chapter 6 for further details). Transferred Prisoners with Ghanaian citizenship exhibit a diverse range of preferences for places of incarceration. More than half (58%) of the transferred prisoners of Ghanaian origin prefer to be transferred to a prison of their choice but cannot choose a specific facility. While they prefer being close to their family members and friends, these transferred prisoners do not possess the authority to prevent a transfer, as one of them remarked.

There is nothing you can do. You do not have any power here; once you did nothing at the police station or the court, it is over when you enter the prison. What can you do? What choice do you have? You are under the law; every part of your life is within time. Sleeping time, which should even be your choice, is taken away from you. The officers determine your sleeping time, waking up, and eating. You cannot do anything once you are here because you are under the government. If I have the choice to choose, I will prefer to be sent to a prison closer to my family, and they are in the north. (**Yaw, transferred prisoner, Q36**)

The key informants commented on why prisoners’ views in the transfer process (e.g., preference for place of incarceration) are not considered. According to the prison officers and NGOs, there is a lack of consistency between court rulings and the practicality of enforcing those rulings due to the challenges the GPS faces (see Chapter 4). Furthermore, transferred prisoners become disoriented and prefer to focus on how they are going to survive in prison rather than preventing their transfer. Moreover, the prisoners are often “ignorant about their rights once they are pronounced guilty,” according to one of the legal professionals (see also Yin, Korankye-Sakyi, and Atupare, 2021).

Criminal history also plays a significant role in shaping a prisoner’s reaction to transfers. In my analysis of the criminal history of the transferred prisoners, 9 out of every 10 transferred prisoners (92%) I interview are first-time offenders. These first-time offenders often express feelings of fear, confusion, and sadness, which are themes that I extensively explore in Section 5.3. Conversely, 7% of the transferred prisoners identify themselves as second-time offenders, while 1%

acknowledge having more than two previous convictions, commonly referred to as recidivists. For their status and experience, they knew transfer is part of the prison experience and can occur at any time, although they have reservations regarding the manner of the transfer. Their reservations are rooted in the complex power dynamics that come into play during the transfer (see Sections 5.3, 5.3.1, and 5.3.2 for further details). To illustrate, one of the recidivists shared his experience:

Someone collapsed in front of me in this prison when his name was mentioned that he is going on transfer. He panicked. As for me, this is my third time in prison, and I have gone on two transfers. I would not panic or shake if you tell me I am going on transfer. As for the first time, you will panic because you think they are going to kill you, and some will even pee on themselves, especially if that is your first time in prison. **(Badu, transferred prisoner, Q45)**

I now turn to the type of crime and the corresponding sentence length of the transferred prisoners I interviewed for this study. All the offences committed by the transferred prisoners are liable to imprisonment (see the Criminal Code of Ghana, 1960, and the Criminal Procedure Code, 1960). For instance, half (50%) of the transferred prisoners' sentence is because of armed robbery, which, under Section 149 of the Criminal Code of 1960, warrants a mandatory prison sentence of not less than 15 years. Likewise, over one-sixth (17%) of the transferred prisoners faced charges of defilement, which carry a prison term of not less than seven years and not more than 25 years (Section 101 of the Criminal Code, 1960). Stealing accounts for a little over one-tenth (12%) of the transferred prisoners' incarceration. Also, less than one-tenth (8%) of the transferred prisoners are charged with murder and liable to death, as stated in Sections 46 to 49 of the Criminal Code of 1960.

Correspondingly, the sentence length of the transferred prisoners varies significantly, with a mean of 4 years. I calculated the mean based on the absolute number of prison terms (excluding life imprisonment and death row inmates), which contradicts the classification criteria of the two prisons, which are supposed to hold prisoners with a prison term of 10 years or more. For example, out of the 30 (18%) transferred prisoners serving sentences ranging from 1 to 10 years, four are serving just 2 years. I maintain that the approach to prison classification in Ghana directly relates to the type of crime and sentence length of prisoners (see Section 4.6.1). Furthermore, I claimed that the challenges of the Ghana Prison Service have resulted in an ineffective classification

system. Regardless of the type of crime and sentence length of the prisoners, they are housed in the same prison facility (i.e., AMSP and NMSP). Thus, despite the variance in the offences prisoners commit, they all serve their sentences in the same prison facility.

3.7 Data Analysis

I used different tools and methods to analyse the qualitative and quantitative data. In terms of qualitative analysis, data I obtained from interviews, field observations, open-ended questions from transferred prisoners underwent processing using NVivo, a computer programme designed to organise, transcribe, and analyse qualitative data (Bryman, 2016). Although the majority (95%) of the interviews and questionnaires I conducted were in English, a few were in local Ghanaian languages, specifically Waalii and Twi. I manually transcribed these interviews into English and subsequently transferred them to NVivo. Following this, I conducted a comprehensive examination and analysis of the transcribed data using NVivo software to identify themes and codes. I employed a combined approach of both inductive and deductive logics to generate the themes and codes for analysis. Informed by the theoretical assumption of this thesis, the data coding proceeded with some key themes (i.e., rationale and awareness of transfer, actors, transportation, challenges, and effects of transfer). Inductively, key themes emerged from the data that contextualised, engendered nuances, and expanded the initial scope of this study (as presented in Chapter 7). I interpreted the themes and codes alongside the quantitative data, which I had cleaned, inputted, and analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Through the SPSS software, I generated descriptive statistics, including frequency tables, percentages, and graphs for the quantitative data. I triangulated the qualitative and quantitative data and presented the final output in this thesis through direct quotations from interviewees, tables, pie charts, bar charts, vignettes, and other relevant diagrams.

3.8 Ethical Consideration

Access to the field and the research participants presents numerous ethical concerns because of the sensitive power dynamics within the prisons. The ethical concerns I identified in this study encompass adhering to the internal protocols of the various prisons, guaranteeing the safety of the research participants and the researcher, and managing the data (e.g., safeguarding, reporting, and publishing the research data). In order to ensure that the study met ethical principles, I obtained ethical approval from the University of Leeds Research Ethics Committee, with ethics number

AREA 20-039. As I previously explained, the participation of all research participants and transferred prisoners was voluntary; those who expressed their unwillingness to participate or exhibited doubts were excluded from this study to eliminate any form of duress within the recruitment process.

Informed consent was obtained from all research participants and transferred prisoners as an essential ethical practise in social research (see also Creswell and Poth, 2018; Davies and Francis, 2018; Lune and Berg, 2016). Due to the sensitive nature of the field, I employed both verbal and written informed consent. For example, all key informants, except for visitors and family members, agreed to provide written consent and signed the necessary documentation upon request. One-third of the transferred prisoners and three-quarters of the visitors and family members signed a written consent form. However, I obtained verbal informed consent from two-thirds of the transferred prisoners and eight visitors or family members. For the visitors or family members of prisoners, verbal consent became necessary since those interviews were conducted via telephone (see also Mayan, 2023). Regarding the transferred prisoners, the inability to sign due to illiteracy (see Chapter 5, Table 3.5 for further details) and the comfort they had in feeling safer to consent verbal rather than signing any document within the context of the prisons.

I undertook various measures to uphold the confidentiality and anonymity of the research participants and transferred prisoners throughout all stages of the study, ranging from data collection to analysis, protection, and presentation of the findings. I exclusively handled all the research materials, including field notes, consent forms, questionnaires, transcriptions, and recordings, without sharing them with third parties. I stored all study-related information on a secure, password-protected, networked computer during and after data collection. Upon returning from the field, I backed up the data on the University of Leeds protected data server (i.e., OneDrive) to mitigate the risk of data loss. Additionally, I used pseudonyms throughout this thesis to ensure the anonymity of the research participants and transferred prisoners. I now turn to my reflection on the research experience in the next section, paying particular attention to my positionality, the limitations, the ethical issues that emerged during the fieldwork, as well as how I navigated through these issues.

3.9 Reflections on the Research Experience: Positionality and Limitations

This section is about the reflections I have made throughout the various stages of the research process, including the development of the research idea, the collection of data, and the findings and their implications. Specifically, I delve into my positionality and the limitations of the study. According to Bourke (2014), a researcher's positionality (such as age, class, education, cultural identity, and other statuses) presupposes that they [researchers] need to be aware of their subjectivities when conducting research. Kezar (2002) also asserts that researchers have multiple overlapping identities as they navigate through the research process. This assertion supports my fieldwork experience in Ghana, where I assumed both insider and outsider positions at different times and spaces during the fieldwork. This oscillation between insider and outsider status further complicated my interaction with the research participants. These complexities largely stemmed from the power dynamics inherent within prison spaces.

Moreover, my multiple positions and identity as an insider and outsider created dialectic relations between the target population (i.e., visitors and prisoners) and me. As I mentioned in the methods chapter, these insider and outsider statuses served as both a resource in gaining access (see Chapter 3, Section 3.5.3 for this issue) and a limitation. For example, some visitors and prisoners perceived me as part of the prison system and therefore an outsider, leading to their hesitation in participating in the research. It was not uncommon to hear remarks like "I don't want to put myself in trouble" when I approached some visitors. On the other hand, my positionality was different for the research participants, particularly the prisoners and visitors who did participate in the study. They ascribed a privileged status to me, perceiving me as someone who could assist them with legal fees or provide a lawyer for their sentence appeal. These participant perceptions not only had the potential to impact their responses, but it also contributed to the emotional challenges I faced during the fieldwork. It is emotionally distressing in terms of anger, frustration, and a feeling of 'exploitation' when I reflect on my inability to fulfil the various requests made by the prisoner (some), the unjust legal system (see also Boateng, 2020), and the negative experiences they shared with me (which I present throughout this thesis). To cope with these emotions, my thesis supervisors consistently emphasise my role as a 'student-researcher' and, most importantly, encourage me to consider methods of disseminating the findings of the thesis to improve the difficulties faced by the inmates and visitors.

Apart from the positionality issues, some limitations also emanated from the very nature of the research topic and the inherent character of prison management in Ghana. First, the topic of the study had as its focus the experiences of transferred prisoners. I narrowed the selection of prisoners to only prisoners with transfer experience. Therefore, I did not examine the experiences of non-transferred prisoners. The exclusion of prisoners without transfer experience limited the analysis of coercion. As hinted already, transferred prisoners' perceptions about the forcibly or disciplinary character of transfer and their [transferred prisoners] responses thereupon is impacted by the diverse conditions (see Chapter 4, Section 4.5 on this issue), across prisons in Ghana and the effects of time on the memory of a cross-section of the transferred prisoners.

Second, language was another limitation of this study. The research participants of this study mirrored the multilingualism and diversity of the Ghanaian society (see Anyidoho and Dakubu, 2008). For instance, the research participants, particularly the transferred prisoners came from all 16 regions of Ghana (see Figure 5.4 for further details on transferred prisoners' journeys). Despite the nuances and diversity this brings to the data, it also engenders language challenges. In that sense, some inmates were excluded from the study because they could not speak English or Twi (the main languages used for the interviews). Additionally, there was no interpreter who could assist with the varied local dialects, cognisant of the power relations within the prisons. The few cases during which I employed the assistance of an interpreter are a potential impact on the data, as it was difficult in those circumstances to discern if our responses had been summarised or modified by the interpreter.

Lastly, the complete lack of segregated data on transfer of prisoners also forms a core source of limitation to this thesis. There was a lack of detailed information on transferred prisoners (e.g., total number of transferred prisoners, transfer history, regional data of prisoners). The availability of this data may have helped to minimise subjectivity from both the researcher and the participants. As Bourke (2014, p. 3) argues, achieving pure objectivity in research is a "naïve quest, and we can never truly divorce ourselves from subjectivity." However, we can strive for objectivity through methodological strategies, such as quantitative techniques, which were limited in this study due to the unavailability of data on transferred prisoners. Despite these limitations, they have not significantly impacted the overall quality of the data presented in this study. The methodological rigour, including various sources of information such as GPS annual reports, reports from

international observers, and accounts from NGOs, has collectively contributed to ensuring the high level of validity of the data presented in this research.

3.10 Concluding remarks of chapter

This chapter explains the procedures I followed in addressing the research questions, encompassing the study design, access to the field and research participants, and the array of ethical considerations. Three factors influenced the methodological design of this study. First, the sensitivity of the study posed several challenges that required mitigating. Second, it was imperative that the study did not expose the research participants, particularly the visitors/family members of prisoners and the transferred prisoners, to any risk, considering the power dynamics within the observed spaces. Lastly, and most importantly, it was crucial to ensure that I collect appropriate data that addressed the research questions. Considering all these factors, the triangulation of qualitative and quantitative techniques in this study proved suitable as it engendered flexibility (refer also to Mayan, 2023; Saven-Baden and Major, 2013; Bryman, 2016), a strategy I maximised whenever a challenge arose in the field. It is significant to reiterate that the dominant techniques I employed were qualitative, although I also used quantitative tools such as questionnaires. The use of multiple methods and data sources in this study provided a comprehensive understanding and contextual interpretation of the findings, as presented in the subsequent empirical chapters.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONTEXTUALISING PRISONER TRANSFER IN GHANA: CONCEPTS, REASONS, PROCESSES, AND CHALLENGES

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on RO1, which explores the role of prison transfer in the operations and management of prisons in Ghana. To do this, I delve into the internal practises and perceptions among transferred prisoners, prison officers and NGOs about transfer in Ghana. The chapter holds importance due to the lack of a policy framework, data, and empirical studies on prisoner transfer in Ghana. As my study appears to be the first to examine prisoner transfer in the country (see Chapter 1 for further details), the findings I present here further provide contextual information on transfer practises in Ghana's carceral space and its related impact. Before I delve into the role of transfers in prison management in Ghana, including the rationale, processes, and actors involved, as well as the challenges facing the country's prisons, I first provide contextual information to help illuminate the empirical findings of this study (Section 4.2), followed by the decisions and processes of prisoner transfer (Section 4.3). In Section 4.4, I explore the typologies of transfer, which I frame through the experiences of transferred prisoners. I further analyse the perception of the transferred prisoners about their transfer experience, which reveals dialectic discourse of transfer as punishment vs. reward (Section 4.5 for further details).

The typologies and dialectic framing of prisoners' perceptions of transfer draw our attention to two issues: the heterogeneities in prisoners' experiences and the complex and unsettling character of transfers in prisons, particularly in Ghana, which I return to throughout this thesis. In this study as I describe in Chapter 1, transfer refers to the moving of a prisoner from one prison facility to another within the boundaries of Ghana, a consideration shared by both prison officers and prisoners.

Transfer is a common jargon and experience among the transferred prisoners I selected for this study who have all been transferred in the past. Several studies conducted across different geographical settings such as the U.S. (Shelden and Young, 2020; Western and Wildeman, 2009), the United Kingdom (Cox and Abrams, 2021; Jewkes and Johnston, 2006), and Africa (Morelle, Le Marcis, and Hornberger, 2021; van Zijl-Smit and Dunkel, 2021; Coyle and Fair, 2018) have established the punitive nature of prisoners mobility. With the continuous exploration of carceral

spaces, evidence supporting the punitive nature of prisons is heightened by attention to the coercive movement of prisoners by the state. For instance, Turner and Peters (2017) and Moran, Piacentini, and Pallot (2012) draw our attention to the concept of ‘disciplined mobility,’ which depicts the various forms of movement within prisons, including the kind of movement I described above. While the framing of ‘disciplined mobility’ overlaps and shares similarities with my findings, the rationale and processes behind prisoner transfer in Ghana and the concomitant experiences among the prisoners reveal a nuanced and innovative perspective on mobility within carceral spaces, particularly in prisons, which I chronicled throughout the various empirical chapters. In the next sections, I shed light on the context, decisions and processes, typologies and dialectic perception of transfer among prisoners, as well as the rationale (Section 4.6), and institutional challenges faced by the Ghana Prisons Service (Section 4.7).

4.2 Contextualising the empirical findings within the carceral system of Ghana

We have our own culture and our own way of doing things, and transfer is part of them [...] and this culture sustains the operations of the prison service [...] (Cynthia, Prison Officer, NMSP)

In this section, I provide contextual information along with the prison officers ‘own culture and way of doing things’, which contribute to a deeper comprehension of the procedures and impacts associated with prison transfer in the GPS. Specifically, I focus on the following key areas: 1) the absence of a formal policy/legal framework on prison transfer in Ghana; 2) the geographical representation of resource challenges of the GPS; and 3) the spatial importance of the selected prisons – AMSP and NMSP (see Section 3.2 for further information). First, despite the crucial role that transfers play in addressing the systemic problems such as logistics, overcrowding, healthcare needs, and inadequate nutrition within the GPS (see Section 4.7 for more details), there is no formal policy/legal framework to govern the transfer process in Ghana. The absence of such legal guidelines results in a lack of accountability regarding officers’ responsibilities in relation to transfers, bestows discretionary powers upon officers, which tends to complicate the transfer process and engender power imbalances between officers and transferred prisoners. Despite the lack of policy/legal framework on prison transfer in Ghana, there are several international legal frameworks. These include the UN Model Agreement on the Transfer of Foreign Prisoners, the Nelson Mandela Rules, the Bangkok Rules on the treatment of women prisoners, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which countries, including Ghana, are

signatories in the management of prison transfer (see Section 4.6.2 for further details). While the UN Model Agreement provides a framework for bilateral and multilateral conditions, agreements, and guidelines regarding prisoner transfer between countries, the Nelson Mandela Rules offer guidelines on the general treatment of prisoners, including their rights and treatments pre- and post-transfer within a country (Article 21). It is noted that a significant majority (69%) of the key informants (i.e., prison officers, NGOs, and legal professionals) of the study possess some understanding of the international legal frameworks but claim that the implementation of these international standards is unfeasible due to the distinctive resource challenges facing the GPS. The majority of these international legal frameworks/instruments, such as the Nelson Mandela Rules, and the Bangkok Rules, are non-binding on member states, including Ghana

Second, the findings I present in this thesis, specifically the resource challenges of the prisons that prisoners are transferred from offer a geographical representation of the resources problems confronting the country's prison system. The resource problems of the country engender a system in which the prison officers formulate their 'own culture and way of doing things' to manage and sustain the prison system. The contextual framing of 'own culture and way of doing things' involves transporting prisoners in unofficial vehicles (e.g., private vehicles of officers, public vehicle – taxi, trotro), compelling transferred prisoners to pay for their transportation, delaying transfers, officers and prisoners contributing monies to transfer a prisoner to a different prison for treatment, among others. The many resource challenges confronting the GPS and the informal practices that they produce complicate the transfer process. For instance, it is a carceral system whereby prison transfer is largely driven by availability of space, a transferred prisoner is uncertain of having access to a bed in the new prison they are being transferred to, fuel and vehicle of transports are rationed by the prison headquarters. Furthermore, prisoners are fed with GH¢1.80/£0.13 per day, making them rely on family members for food, among others. In this situation, the prisoner's perception and reaction to transfers are influenced by individual circumstances. Putting all these together, transferred prisoners perceive the official duties perform by the prison officers as a favour rather than a legal obligated responsibility.

From the contextual information provided above, it is imperative to appreciate, interpret, and understand that the empirical findings outlined in this thesis concerning transfer is within a carceral system that functions without a distinct policy or legal framework regulating prisoner transfers and the rationing of resources due to inadequate financial support from the central government. The

embedded informal practices hinder the adherence to due process and effective implementation and enforcement of international rules and regulations, ultimately obstructing a more transparent and humane prison transfer.

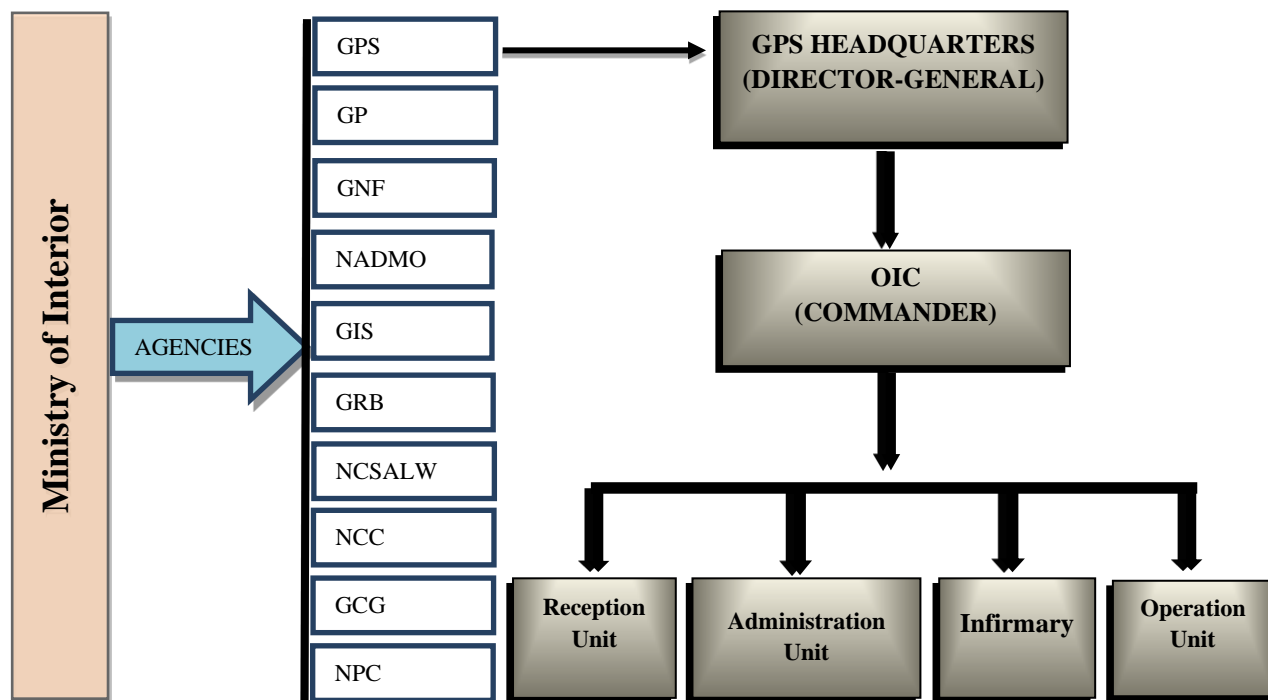
4.3 Decisions and processes of prisoner transfer

This section is focused on the transfer process, with particular attention to the flow of transfer information. It follows a hierarchical system, as illustrated in the organogram below. I identified units within the respective prisons and the functions they play in the transfer process. Several statutes guide the GPS operations, most significantly the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, the Prisons Service Act 1972 (NRCD 46), Prisons Standing Orders 1960, the Criminal Procedure Code 1960 (Act 30), and Prison Regulation L.I. 412/58. For instance, Chapters 5 (Article 14; Clauses 6 and 7) and 16 (Articles 205–209) of the Constitution directly make provisions for the constituents of the GPS. These provisions specifically address the establishment of the GPS, the composition and functions of the prison service council, the appointment of the Director-General of the GPS, the humane treatment of prisoners, and the computation of prisoners' sentences. Together with the Constitution, the Prison Service Act 1972 implicitly recognises prisoner transfers as part of the GPS operations; however, the decree failed to provide a framework or procedure for prisoner transfer (see Section 32 of the Prisons Service Act 1972, NRCD 46).

The Director-General grants approval and exercises supervision over all prisoner transfers taking place in Ghana. Any prison facility with empty beds or that desires to carry out transfers is required to seek authorisation from the Director-General. Similarly, prison facilities such as open-camp prisons and farm stations, which do not directly receive prisoners from the court, are required to submit their transfer requests through the headquarters of the GPS. The Prisons Service Act of 1972 further confers discretionary powers upon the Director-General, enabling them to delegate certain functions to the officer in charge (OIC). OICs oversee the management of each prison facility across the country and, by extension, the selection process and medical screening of prisoners for transfer. Nevertheless, the GPS headquarters, with the approval of the Director-General, provide the vehicles for transportation, fuel, and escorting officers for the transfer of prisoners between different regions. These layers of bureaucratic procedures affect the operations and administration of various prison facilities, a theme I return to in Section 4.3.

Insights from the internal organisational structures of the two prisons show that four units are primarily engaged in the transfer process. The reception, administration, infirmary, and operation units each possess distinct responsibilities and are directly involved in various aspects of the transfer process, such as prisoner selection, screening, behaviour monitoring, and the safekeeping of records and valuables. These units, while occupying the same hierarchical level, are all under the supervision of OIC, as depicted in the organogram provided. Before I delve into the specific duties of these units, it is essential to enumerate the principal agencies, including the GPS, which operate under the auspices of the Ministry of Interior. The primary function of this ministry is to uphold and maintain the country's law and order.

Figure 4.1: Organogram of transfer information flow



Source: Researcher's own construct (see list of abbreviations for further information)

Reception Unit

The reception unit plays a critical role by serving as a point of entry and exit for prisoners. In this capacity, the reception unit performs the functions of classification, assigning cell blocks, profiling newly admitted prisoners and prisoners selected for transfer (i.e., recording prisoners names, number of years of incarceration, place of origin, next of kin, age, marital status, date of sentence, and discharge), safekeeping prisoners' belongings (e.g., clothing, mobile phones, watches,

money), and processing inmates for release. Regarding the precise role the reception unit plays in the transfer process, they undertake the selection of the prisoners for transfer. Moreover, the reception unit collaborates with the operations unit and infirmary to oversee the conduct and well-being of prisoners, all of which are grounds for transfers.

The reception unit also controls prisoners' accounts, such as the money they receive from visitors and other menial jobs (see Chapter 7). Although prisoners receive money from their networks through visitation or electronic transfers, there is a cap on the amount (i.e., GH¢450/£33) they can receive. The harsh and unfair restriction on the amount of money prisoners can receive is the manifestation of the internal and formal restrictive tactics that continue to characterise carceral spaces (Akenhead, 2017). Insights from the transferred prisoners I interviewed show that prisoners transferred from far distances are adversely affected. For instance, networks of prisoners transferred from faraway places because they are not visiting sometimes give money above the threshold, but they are often restricted to the amount inmates, irrespective of their circumstances are allowed to receive (see Chapter 7 for further details). Next, I turn to the administration unit, which manages the day-to-day movement and activities of the prisoners.

Administration Unit

The administration unit carries out a broad range of duties; however, relevant to this study is their role in managing the day-to-day mobilities of the prisoners and addressing complaints and grievances from both prisoners and officers. The experiences of the prison officers in relation to the forms of movement they control corroborate the scholarship that contests the conventional framing of prisons as static spaces (Mincke, 2020; Moran, Gill, and Moran, 2016). These movements include court attendance, visiting hospitals, and working outside the prison facility (see Section 4.6). The administration unit assigns work to prisoners both within and outside the prisons and keeps records of prisoners who require medical attention outside the prison and prisoners who need to attend court. Additionally, the administration unit assigns officers to supervise prisoner movement outside the prison.

Moreover, the unit plays a role in resolving tension and conflict within the prison facility. They receive complaints and grievances from both prisoners and prison officers. Drawing on insights from Moran, Jewkes, and Turner (2016, p. 125), prison spaces are characterised by different “encounters,” which sometimes engender tensions and conflicts between different actors, such as

prisoners, prison officers, and visitors (see also Laws, 2022). These tensions and conflicts are prevalent in under-resourced facilities (Steiner, 2018), as is the case across the GPS. Because of the unit's role in conflict resolution and complaint handling, they identify and recommend prisoners for transfer. The administration unit also revokes and suspends the work privileges of prisoners who appear to have miscondacted themselves. For example, I use vignette 5 to highlight a case I observed during my visit to one of the administration units.

Vignette 5: Researcher's observation of conflict management by the administration unit

On March 25, 2021, I observed an incident during an interview with the head of the administration unit of one of the prisons. An officer in the company of four inmates came to report an inmate, whom he took outside the prison to work. As part of the internal rules and regulations for the prisoners, inmates are prohibited to drink alcohol irrespective of where they are (i.e., either inside or outside the prisons). According to the officer, the inmate claimed he wanted to go and drink water from the restaurant where they were working but went and drank alcohol instead. He became less productive and abusive towards his fellow inmate, according to the officer. One of the inmates corroborated this narration of the prison officer. Hence, the officer requested that the inmate's name be removed from the group because he was not prepared to take the inmate outside to work again.

In attempting to respond to the claims levelled against him, the inmate was instructed to keep quiet. The head of the administration unit told him that his work privileges are been revoked. Despite his attempts to explain, he was not allowed to speak. He left the office disgruntled, soliloquizing about the unfairness done to him by not hearing his side of the story.

Probing further with the head of the administration unit that oversaw the case I described in vignette 5, the officer maintained that prisoners with such behaviours are unpredictable and can easily escape with the least opportunity or attack a passer-by. Although the officer's claim may be valid, inherent in the encounter are asymmetric power relations between the officer and the prisoner, whereby the officer ignores the views of the prisoner and subjectively revokes the

working privileges of the prisoner. This asymmetric power dynamic transcends the administration unit, as I found similar observations in the activities of the operations unit, which I turn to in the next section.

Operation Unit

The primary responsibility of the operation unit is to uphold the security of the prison facility through surveillance, visitor screening, quelling prisoner disturbances, and accompanying prisoners during visits to courts, hospitals, and work assignments outside the facility. According to the prison officers, the operation unit is the authorised unit tasked with handling weaponry (such as batons, firearms, handcuffs, riot helmets, and radios) despite the dearth and obsolescence of these weapons, as I expound in Section 4.7. In terms of operational structure, all the prison facilities I visited have operation units. Nevertheless, both prison officers and inmates affirmed the existence of a central operations unit established at the GPS headquarters. In addition to overseeing the daily movements of inmates, the internal operation unit of each respective prison facility also provides transportation services for intraregional transfers. However, transfers between regions are coordinated and escorted by the operation unit from the correctional facility headquarters.

The centralisation of interregional transfers to the operation unit at the GPS headquarters compounds the bureaucratic bottlenecks of the service (see Section 4.7 for further details). Frequently, there are delays in interregional transfers because the escort officers have to travel from the headquarters to the prison facility from which the prisoners are to be transferred from. However, the internal operation unit of the prison provides escort during emergency cases, such as transfers related to health reasons. Besides the operational bottlenecks, the use of officers from the prison headquarters reinforces the asymmetric power relations between the prison officers and the prisoners during transfers. From the transferred prisoners' experience, the escorting officers are strangers, which limits their interactions. Hence, they can neither have a conversation with them nor make any requests during the transfer (see Section 5.3.3 for further details). Such a level of unfamiliarity between the officers and the prisoners minimises empathy from the officers, according to the inmates. Sena, one of the transferred prisoners, succinctly noted, "You don't know the person. What will you talk about? It would be different with the officers from the main yard. We have been with them for many years. At the very least, we would have something to talk about."

Infirmary

Both the AMSP and NMSP, where I interviewed the prisoners, are equipped with infirmaries. The prisoners shared their experiences regarding the conditions of the infirmaries in their previous prison facilities, revealing that many prison infirmaries in the country are fraught with logistical challenges and a shortage of qualified healthcare professionals. Despite the obstacles faced by the prison infirmaries (as mentioned in Section 4.6), they serve a dual purpose by recommending that a prisoner be transferred to a different prison facility with an equipped infirmary and providing medical certificates for those selected for transfer. In the next paragraph, I elaborate on the dual roles of the prison infirmaries related to the transfer process.

First, except for health-related circumstances, it is imperative for prisoners to be medically fit prior to their transfer. The Prisons Service Act 1972, Section 32(2), stipulates the requirements for prisoners' medical fitness before transfer. The section mandates that a medical professional must evaluate the physical fitness of the prisoner and grant a certificate to travel during the transfer process. All the prison officers attest to the validity of the medical evaluation stipulation set forth in the Prisons Service Act. However, it is merely a facade that prisoners undergo medical assessments prior to their transfer. As previously mentioned, a significant number of prisoners are not even aware of their impending transfer, and many officers share the belief that informing prisoners about the transfer is unnecessary. Furthermore, the handling of prisoners during the transfer, which includes instances of harassment and physical assault, serves to reinforce the notion that inmates are seldom subjected to medical assessments prior to their transfer (see Chapter 5 for additional specifics).

Second, the infirmary intermittently suggests the transfer of prisoners because of health-related factors (refer to Section 4.6.3 for transfers linked with healthcare). The infirmary's recommendations for prisoners' transfer are primarily influenced by the exigency of specialised medical attention that the prisoners need. John, a transferred prisoner, shares his personal encounter regarding the role of the infirmary in his previous correctional facility.

For the 5 years I spent in the previous prison, I did not receive a single visit. I really find it difficult to get food to eat, apart from the prison food. The doctor suggested I be sent to this prison because there is a hospital, and inmates have access to good food. I used to go to the prison infirmary all the time because I repeatedly had thoughts that someone wanted

to kill me in the prison. The thoughts are all gone since my transfer to this prison. I have been taking the medicine that the prison hospital provides to me. The doctor in the previous prison really helped me. If not for him, I would have died of hunger over there. He said the food here was good, and when he told me he would tell the in-charge for them to transfer, I did not believe him until they came and said I was going to a different prison. (**John, transferred prisoner, Q3N**)

To conclude, the prison officers argue that in order for transfers to be successful and effective, logistics and decision-making, including prisoner transfers, must be decentralised. The hierarchical system of transfer approval I present in this study confirms David Garland's assertion that to understand power relations, we must study and interpret the diverse actors and events within respective structures (1986, p. 849), such as the carceral space. It is insufficient to just focus on the power dynamics between prison officers and prisoners; instead, we must analyse the entire carceral system, which includes the police and the judiciary responsible for arresting and sentencing offenders. The findings presented in this section reveal a continuum of power relations among the prison officers, ranging from seeking permission from the Director-General for transfers to delegating interregional transfers to the escorting officers at the prison headquarters. According to the prison officers, this arrangement does not grant autonomy to the prison facilities in terms of management; instead, it poses a series of challenges to the operations of the various prisons, including the transfer of prisoners, a topic that I further discussed in Section 4.7.

4.4 Typologies of transfer (i.e., temporary and permanent transfer)

In this section, I discuss two typologies of transfer: temporary and permanent, that raise both theoretical and practical considerations. The section focuses on the practical considerations of the typologies of transfer. Theoretically, the typologies of the transfer sit within the broader scholarship of space-time analysis and the diverse forms of mobility within carceral spaces (see also Brooks and Best, 2021; Mincke, 2020; Turner and Peters, 2016), which is not within the scope of this section (see Section 4.4 and Chapters 5 and 6 for details on this issue). Next, I will delve into the material consequences that arise from the temporary and permanent classification of transfers, with specific attention given to the reasons behind such transfers, the formal processes involved, and how both typologies impact the prisoners. In essence, the typologies exemplify distinct characteristics and experiences among prisoners in relation to their movement across different spaces, including prison, hospital, court, and work sites.

Temporary transfer of prisoners

Temporary transfer of prisoners presupposes that an inmate who is moved out of a prison facility to another prison, court, hospital, or work site under the supervision of designated prison officers will be brought back to the previous prison facility. Hence, unlike the permanent transfer, prisoners are often transferred without their belongings (e.g., original official documents, clothes, bowls, and cups). The temporary transfer of prisoners is predominantly contingent upon their need to attend court proceedings for their appeal, seek medical treatment, or engage in work-related activities (see Section 4.6 for additional information). Unlike for health and work purposes, transferred prisoners must pay for transportation costs when attending court for their appeal (see Section 4.7 for institutional challenges). Asked whether it is appropriate to charge transferred prisoners before they [transferred prisoners] are transported to go to court for their appeal, one-third of the prison officers mention that, appealing a sentence is a personal decision by the prisoner, which is often against the state. Hence, prisoners should bear all the costs (including transportation) related to the appeal. Commenting on the appeal process, Esi, a prison officer who offers paralegal services to inmates, says:

Indeed, inmates pay for the transportation when they file their appeal. It is really a problem for them, especially when some of them do not even have money to buy medicine and food. However, the issue is that most of them are here because the state, through the attorney's general, was the prosecutor leading to their sentence. There is no way the state will want to pay the cost of the inmate to come and challenge their decision. It is a bit tricky, but the state too has a point, if I may say. (**Esi, Prison officer, NMSP**)

The imposition of charges on the movement of transferred prisoners hinders their rights, particularly in seeking redress through appeals. For instance, it potentially discourages transferred prisoners from filing an appeal, as well as transferred prisoners being absent from court proceedings (a phenomenon I observed during one of the appeal hearings) due to their inability to afford transportation expenses (see Section 4.6.4 for more comprehensive information on transfers related to court attendance).

Moreover, the charges also blur the boundaries between permanent and temporary transfers. As claimed by the prisoners, temporary transfers sometimes transition into permanent transfers. For instance, although transferred prisoners often pay money to the officers to be transported to other

regions for their appeal hearings, they occasionally face difficulties in financing their return journey. Consequently, they find themselves stranded at the new correctional facility, a situation aptly described as “stuckness” by Jefferson, Turner, and Jensen (2019, p. 2). In that sense, until the transferred prisoner can gather enough funds to cover the transportation expenses back to the previous prison, they are left in the new prison without their belongings. Bashiru, a 38-year-old transferred prisoner share his experience:

So, when I was brought to NMSP, it took about 2 months before my lawyer send a note that I should be brought back to the previous prison where we filed the appeal. I was transferred back to the previous prison after I paid GHC400/£29 for the officers to buy fuel. After the appeal, I was asked to pay GHC900/£65 for them to bring me back to NMSP. That time I was not having money, so I was left at Sunyani prison for 2 years before I was brought back to Nsawam prison. There was this guy I went with, he is still there because he cannot pay the GHC900/£65 and his things are here, in the yard. **(Bashiru, transferred prisoner, Q60)**

However, it is important to acknowledge that inmates who are temporarily transferred due to health reasons are exempt from paying for the transportation cost. Once the prison infirmary is not able to treat to the inmate, they are recommended for transfer and the inmate is transported to and from the hospital or new prison (see Section 4.6.3 for further details).

Permanent transfer of prisoners

The permanent transfer of inmates proceeds on the assumption that there are no intentions or plans to move the inmate back to the previous prison they were transferred from. Permanent transfers stem from overcrowding, security concerns, and health reasons (Section 4.6). In contrast to temporary transfers, permanent transfers are periodical and coordinated with the Ghana prison headquarters. For permanent transfers, inmates are occasionally allowed to carry their belongings during the transfer (Chapter 5). Furthermore, the official procedure for permanent transfers requires that original documents be included in the transfer of the prisoner. These documents ranges from a ‘warrant’ document (i.e., court records containing information about the prisoner such as their name, offence, and name of the court), Form 2 Small or Form 2 Large (a form created by the prison authority that provides a detailed description of the prisoner), a cover letter, to a

certificate of fitness to travel, be given to the transfer team. However, photocopies of these documents are used during the temporary transfer of inmates.

4.5 Prisoner Transfer as a form of Punishment versus Reward

In this section, I draw out the dialectic perceptions of transfer among the prisoners I interviewed. The prisoners consider their transfer either a *punishment* or a *reward* within the Ghanaian context. The dialectic framing of transfer as a punishment or a reward stem from two considerations: the comparison prisoners make between the various prisons of their incarceration and the rationale of their transfer (Section 4.6). In that respect, transfer as a punishment or reward mirrors the different conditions (e.g., disparities in access to bed space, water, medical services, and quality food, among others) across the prisons in Ghana (see also Yin, Korankye-Sakyi, and Atupare, 2021). Notably, there are significant variations, both formal and informal, between prisons across the country (see, for instance, Table 3.1, Section 4.6, and Chapter 7 for further details on these variations). Along these same lines, Fassin (2017) contends that the reality of transfer, along with the disconnection between the outside and inside of prisons, becomes apparent when transferred prisoners reach the arrival unit, as well as when they compare their previous cells to newly assigned cell blocks amidst interacting with different cellmates. Thus, the transferred prisoners I interviewed compared the different prisons of their incarceration and the accompanying (dis)advantages to characterise their transfer as either a punishment or a reward.

Transfer as Punishment

The prisoner's description of their transfer as a punishment directly sits within the 'disciplined mobility' framework in carceral spaces (Moran, Piacentini, and Pallot, 2012). Among the 164 transferred prisoners I interviewed, 3 out of every 8 (38%) transferred prisoners described their transfer as a punishment. Whereas transferred prisoners cite the magnification of the difficulties of the new prison as compared to their previous prison, the misconduct of transferred prisoners also informs such a description, which I return to in Section 4.6.5. For instance, the transferred prisoners claim that transfers serve as a tool of punishment (see also Kaufman, 2019; Fassin, 2017), and prison officers continue to use transfers to threaten and punish inmates. Relating his transfer to punishment, Qabir, a 42-year-old transferred prisoner describes the circumstances leading to his transfer:

My transfer was because of a dispute I had with the officers at the previous prison. I saved about GH¢800/£58 from the small business I was doing. I gave the money to a colleague inmate to keep for me. The officers conducted a search and seized the money and a mobile phone. My friend told them the money belongs to me, but I have nothing to do with the phone. The officers interrogated me about how I got the money, and I told them the source. I did not give the money to the reception unit because you cannot get it when you urgently need it. They also don't accept more than GH¢450/£33 from us. They [officers] refused to give me back the money after I explained everything to them. I even said that they should just give me half of the money. A few days later, they transferred me. When I asked why, they said I disrespected them during the meeting. They said many things, including insults. **(Qabir, transferred prisoner, Q43)**

The characterisation of transfer as a punishment by the transferred prisoners corroborates assertions made by more than half (59%) of the key informants, particularly the prison officers and lawyers. Offering insight as an operational officer, Sako, one of the prison officers, notes:

Ideally, transfers should not be used as a form of punishment. However, we can consider our current transfer as a punishment. I have witnessed fights between inmates and officers. And officers have lodged complaints against such prisoners because they feel the inmates have disrespected them. In such scenarios, we will transfer you [the inmate] to a place, and you will see. You may have all the opportunities here, but you would go to a different prison, and you would not even get a place to sleep. Your family members may not be able to see you again. **(Sako, Prison Officer, NSMP)**

Fassin (2017) found similar evidence in the U.S., where transfers are used to settle disputes between prisoners and correctional officers. Unlike in Ghana, where prison officers directly employ the threat of transfer against prisoners, Fassin argues that transfers are authorised to prevent retaliatory attacks from officers and to assure officers that their safety is of utmost importance. In that sense, inmates who pose threats to the officers are often transferred (see also Reginal and Jannetta, 2021; Maier and Ricciardelli, 2019). Despite the evidence I present regarding transfers as a punitive measure, transferred prisoners also hold divergent perspectives on their transfers. Next, I shed light on the experiences of transferred prisoners who perceive their transfer as a reward rather than punishment.

Prisoner transfer as a form of reward

In this section, I explore the relational encounters and circumstances that define the transfer of two-thirds (62%) of the prisoners as a reward. The framing of transfer as a reward emerged from two dimensions of the transferred prisoners' experience. First, the improved conditions that transferred prisoners experience in the new prisons as compared to the previous prisons (see Chapters 6 and 7 for further details). Second the benefits and favours (such as having a transfer request approved or to be added to a transfer list) for demonstrating *good* behaviour, as defined by the prison officers. Contextualising the prisoners' experience of transfer within the classical definition of reward as "the return for performance of a desired behaviour; positive reinforcement" (Aksakal and Dagdeviren, 2014, p. 147), only the latter (i.e., the benefits transferred prisoners get for good behaviour) aligns with the definition. Despite the prisoners characterising their transfers as rewards, they actually embody power dynamics in which such rewards are contingent upon certain conditions (e.g., exhibiting good and disciplined behaviour). For instance, interactions between prison officers and inmates occasionally assume an informal nature, where inmates pay monies to officers to have their names added to transfer lists for them to be transferred to prisons considered to have better conditions (see Chapter 7 for further details on informal transactions). Also, transferred prisoners who display good behaviour by demonstrating submissiveness towards the prison officers have a greater chance of having their plea granted in terms of either having their names included in/left off transfer rosters. In this sense, it leads to their total submissiveness within the carceral space of Ghana. The excerpts by a transferred prisoner and a prison officer serve as portrayals of submission and the ideal behaviour exhibited by prisoners:

I do not have my mother and father here. As I said in the beginning, all my family members are in Nigeria. So, the officers here serve as my family, and I must give them the same kind of respect I would ordinarily give my parents. Because they determine where I should sleep, and if I fall sick now, they will have to take me to the hospital. When these people tell you something and you obey, you will not have problems. If they tell you to sit, you sit; if they tell you to stand, you stand. But once you are told to sit and you stand instead, you will suffer for it, and you will not get any form of help from them. (**Ike, transferred prisoner, Q83**)

The following excerpt illustrates an *ideal* behaviour expected of an inmate according to one of the prison officers:

The inmates are from different backgrounds with diverse behaviours. Some are exceptionally good, and some are bad. An incident happened just last month. An officer took some inmates out to work' and a concrete block fell on the officer's head, and he became unconscious. It was an opportunity for the inmates to run away. We have reports from different prisons where inmates attempt to escape, although they mostly fail. But in this case, no one was there to stop them if they wanted to run. But could you believe that they took the officer to the hospital and asked the nurses to call us? When we got to the hospital, they were all there. So, what I am trying to say is that this officer was probably good to the inmates. If such inmates request anything and you can help, why not? Apart from that, they are respectful. **(Karim, Prison Officer, AMSP)**

Now, I turn to the comparisons transferred prisoners make between their current and previous prisons to label their transfer as a reward. As I already mentioned, the experiences of the transferred prisoners, when based on the comparison between prisons, do not align with the traditional definition of reward. However, their analysis draws our attention to the significant role of disparities in prison conditions when analysing prisoners' perception of transfer (Liebling, 2011). For instance, the comparison prisoners make between various prisons complicates the punitive character of transfer. The positive portrayal of transfer among a subsection of the transferred prisoners only emerges when they arrive at the new prison facilities and realise that the conditions (such as access to water, beds, food, work, and training programmes) were superior to those of their previous prison. According to transferred prisoners with experience of being incarcerated in more than a single prison, the conditions in certain prisons are so appalling and unsuitable for holding people, regardless of the crimes they have committed. Liebling also posited that "some prisons are more survivable than others" (2011, p. 530). Echoing this, in commenting on the differences between prisons, David, one of the transferred prisoners in my study, said:

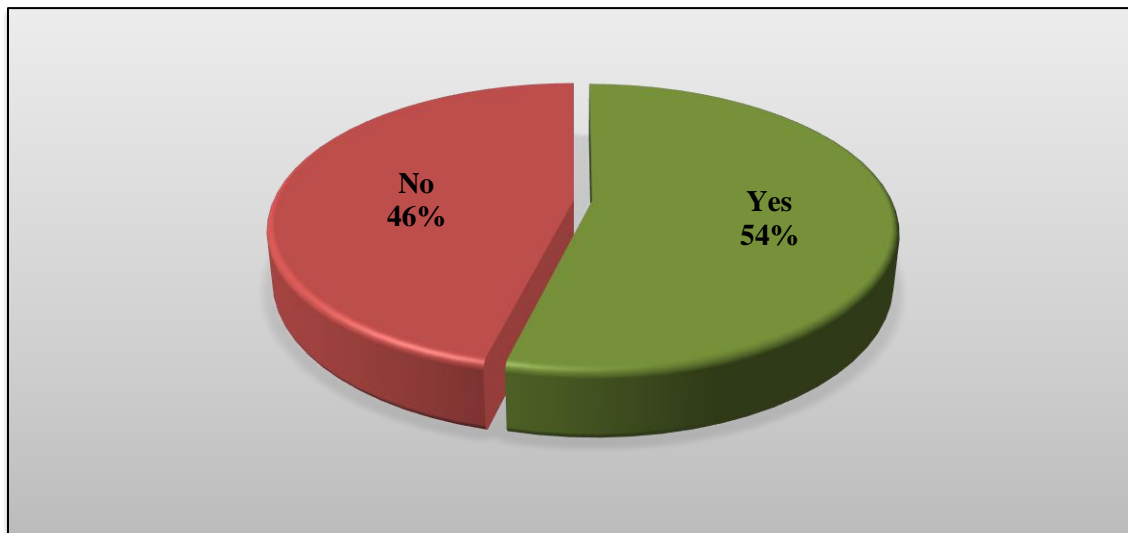
Initially, I did not know the conditions of the prisons in Ghana. I thought all prisons were the same, but that is not true. You cannot compare my previous prison to this place. When I got here, I thought I was being released. You cannot see a tree in the previous prison. That place is not fit to be a prison. In fact, if you have money here, you will live and think you are not serving a sentence. **(David, transferred prisoner, Q17)**

The disproportionate conditions across the prison facilities experienced by the transferred prisoners in this study corroborate the findings of Juan Mendez, a UN Special Rapporteur, who reported on Ghana's prisons. Significant challenges raised in the reports range from disproportionate overcrowding across prisons in the country, insufficient feeding, and inadequate access to medical treatment (2015). In the next section, I examine the reasons influencing prisoner transfers in the country.

4.6 Prisoners Perceptions of the Reasons for Transfers in Ghana

This section addresses the question of the rationale for prisoner transfer in Ghana. The reasons for the transfer of prisoners I present in this thesis are mainly symptoms of the institutional challenges of the GPS. Before I delve into the specific reasons that led to the transfer of the 164 prisoners I interviewed, I set out to ascertain if transferred prisoners knew the reasons for their transfer. Hence, I posed the following question to all the transferred prisoners I interviewed: “*Do you know the reason(s) for your transfer?*” I present the responses they provide in Figure 4.2. The findings from this question contribute to the growing scholarship on prisoner participation in prison management (Schmidt, 2020; Brosens, 2019; Nacro, 2014).

Figure 4.2: Transferred Prisoners Response to “Do you know the reason(s) for your transfer?”



Source: Data from transferred prisoners, 2022

In addition, ascertaining if transferred prisoners know the reasons for their transfer contributes to delineating the vestiges of coercion (further explored in Chapter 5). The evidence of coercion in the movement of prisoners forms an integral part of mapping the asymmetric power relations

between the prison officers and the transferred prisoners. Coercion in the transfer process is evident in various ways, such as the concealment of relevant information regarding the transfer, manipulation of transfer dates, and the physical assault of transferred prisoners without regard for their opinions or circumstances. As a result, this gives rise to uncertainties, a disrupted relationship with family members, and a lack of integration into the new correctional facilities (see Chapters 5 and 6). These experiences bear similarities to those endured during instances of forced movement, especially among refugees, asylum seekers, IDPs, etc.

The participation of prisoners' in the management of prisons is gaining traction in prison research. Previous works on levels of participation among prisoners identified participation along the general themes of prison activities, democratic participation, and peer-based programmes (Brosens, 2019, p. 2; Taylor, 2014; Nacro, 2014). Telling prisoners' reasons for their transfer aligns with the principles of democratic participation, which promote the inclusion of prisoners in the decision-making process. However, more than half (54%) of the total transferred prisoners I interviewed do not know the reasons for their transfer, as shown in Figure 4.2. According to the transferred prisoners' accounts, their involvement in the transfer process is generally limited, as they are neither informed about the destination nor the timing of the transfer (transferred prisoners' experience I return to in Chapter 5). The restrictions on informing prisoners about the reasons for their transfer relate to the coercive character of prisoners' mobility (Moran, Piacentini, and Pallot, 2012; Packer, 2003). Consequently, tensions sometimes arise between the prison officers and the prisoners during the transfer due to a lack of preparations and an inability to inform their networks (issues I extensively explore in Chapter 5). For instance, Essien and Kweku, two transferred prisoners, when discussing how they received information about the motives behind their transfer, remarked:

Huh! You have no idea. I was in a condemned cell for 14 years, 6 months, and life imprisonment for 11 years, and I have served 7 years out of 20 years of sentence. So, I have gone on so many transfers. Throughout all the transfers, they have never informed me why they are transferring me, not even once. They will just come mostly at dawn and say, "Hey Opoku, come out." If you don't talk to them well, they will not even allow you to take your bag. **(Essien, transferred prisoner, Q20)**

I was taken back to my previous prison after my sentence. I was there until some officers from the NMSP came to court with some inmates. Upon their return to NMSP, they picked me up. When they called my name first, I told them I would not go. Initially, I thought that in prison, the officers could kill you at any time because you had committed a crime. They did not tell me anything, and I did no wrong. So, I did not know why they were taking me to a different place. When they told me to pick up my things, I said I would not. The officers came, dragged me out of the cell, and put the handcuffs on my hands, and I was taken to the pickup. They told one of my cellmates to bring my bag, and they threw it into the bucket of the car. **(Kweku, transferred prisoner, Q74)**

Furthermore, an overwhelming majority (94%) of the prison officers argued that transferred prisoners should not be informed about the reasons for transfer, despite the potential tension that may arise from such a practice. The prison staff firmly believe that informing transferred prisoners about the motives behind their transfer is equivalent to making them cognizant of the transfer itself, which has security implications. For instance, one cannot ignore the fact that prisoners are still in contact with their networks outside the prison (an issue I discussed throughout this thesis), some of which are deemed to be dangerous (see also Pyrooz, 2023; Bloch and Olivares-Pelayo, 2021). It is even more so when prisoners have access to prison phone booths and contraband mobile phones (Chapter 7). Hence, they endeavour to conceal such information from the transferred prisoners to avert any potential coordination or attacks during the transfer. However, the prison officers hastened to point out that the issue of overcrowding and physical altercations between officers and inmates, which serve as the basis for transfers, is so conspicuous that some transferred prisoners are even aware when they initiate transfer proceedings.

Contrary to the evidence that many of the transferred prisoners are unaware of the reasons for their transfer, a little over two-fifths (46%) claimed to have knowledge of the reasons behind their transfer. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that those who know the reasons for their transfer obtained this information primarily through informal channels, often on the day of the transfer. Despite informing the transferred prisoners about the transfer, the timing of such notification unsettles the prisoners, according to the transferred prisoners (also see Cochran, 2020). In other words, transfer awareness among the transferred prisoners gives rise to diverse emotions, reactions, resistance, preparations, and challenges, all of which I explore in the subsequent sections. According to the transferred prisoners' accounts, they are frequently left uninformed about the motives behind their

transfer. However, it is through prisoner's close relationships with the prison officers that they inadvertently discover transfer information, including the reasons behind it. Additionally, certain prisoners who perform auxiliary duties such as being an 'office boy' or providing barbering services and shoe polishing for officers inadvertently come across transfer information (see also Sykes, 2007), which I consider an unofficial source. For instance, Abu, one of the transferred prisoners puts it this way:

I was not informed about the transfer, but I have a friend who use to clean and repair the officers' shoes. He told me that he overheard the officers saying there was going to be a transfer and that people with 30 years and above were going to be transferred. He said I should prepare because he is sure that my name will be part. After all, I am serving 35 years. I started packing my things and true, true, the following morning around 3:30 am, my name was mentioned. I had already packed, so I just picked up my things and left the room. **(Abu, transferred prisoner, Q73)**

Based on the rationale behind the transfer of prisoners, more than one reason causes their transfer. It is primarily due to the number of transfers the inmate has experienced. For instance, while an overwhelming majority (80%) of the transferred prisoners I interviewed claimed to have undergone a single transfer since their imprisonment, approximately one-fifth (20%) maintained that they had undergone multiple transfers (see Table 3.5 for additional specifics). Next, I turn to the primary motives for these transfers, ranging from the classification of prisons for security purposes, overcrowding, prisoners' behaviour, health concerns, court attendance for appeal applications to farm camps.

4.6.1 Transfers associated with classification of prisons

"My sentence was too high [...]"

"I was told I can't serve all my years here [...]"

"My friends told me I will be transferred because of the length of my sentence [...]"

(Selected responses of transferred prisoners)

The excerpts above are recurring expressions among half (50%) of the total transferred prisoners whose transfers are associated with classification. These expressions anchored in high sentences relate to the principle of prison classification as applied across the GPS (for further details on categories of prisons, see Chapter 3, Section 3.2). Prison classification relates to the placement of

prisoners in custodial spaces in line with the person's "risks and needs to correctional resources and an appropriate supervision regime" (see UNDOC, 2020, p. 3; Montford and Hannah-Moffat, 2021, p. 1). Campbell, French, and Gendreau (2009) have argued that effective prison classification relies heavily on adequate resources (e.g., rehabilitation programmes, officers with expertise in prison classification, appropriate spaces, and equipment). However, the prison system of Ghana is fraught with many challenges (including the issues mentioned above), which I have explored in Section 4.7. Amnesty International Ghana, for example, has identified the lack of space as the fundamental cause of the inability to achieve a comprehensive and proper classification and separation of prisoners in Ghana (2012). Thus, the approach to prisoner classification in the country presents a complex system and contradicts international good practices (see UNODC, 2020, and the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners or the Nelson Mandela Rules). Next, I discuss the approach to prisoner classification and its associated influence on prisoner transfer to NMSP and AMSP.

Half of the prisoners' transfers are associated with classification purposes (see Figure 4.3), mainly occasioned by the high number of years prisoners are sentenced, according to both transferred prisoners and the officers. In this sense, they ought to have been transferred to a much larger and more secure prison (i.e., NMSP and AMSP) following their sentence. Nonetheless, inmates who posed a threat to the facility and other prisoners, in addition to having lengthy sentences, frequently remained at local or less secure prisons for an extended period before being considered for transfer to a more secure facility. For instance, Adamu, a transferred prisoner had this to say about his transfer:

When we arrived at the maximum prison, we were told that our sentences were too high and that we could not serve them there. I am serving 100 years. When I was sentenced to 100 years, I was really disturbed and confused. We were first taken to a local prison before they moved us to another prison before this one. The in-charge at the previous prisons said that the sentence was too high and that their facilities could not contain us. But it was not until after one year that they then transferred us to NMSP. (**Adamu, transferred prisoner, Q18**)

The legal framework of Ghana empowers the prison officers to superintend the classification of prisoners, as expressed by 3 out of the 4 legal practitioners I interviewed for this study. Speaking

to the prison officers, the majority (77%) maintain that the connection between transfer and classification primarily depends on the length of the sentence and the potential threat that prisoners may pose to the facility. The officers assert that transferring inmates deemed a security risk to the prison is essential to fulfilling the core mandate of the GPS, which is the safe custody of inmates. Commenting on the prisoner's transfer related to classification purposes, Edmond, one of the prison officers, offers the following perspective on the transfer of prisoners:

If you remember, the Takoradi kidnappers attempted to escape from police custody. When they were finally sentenced and sent to one of the central prisons, the Head Office immediately sent a note that they should be sent to the NMSP because the central prison does not have a condemned cell. They were seen as a threat to the security of the central prison because of their previous attempt. Considering their sentence and the security of the central prison, they are now in the condemned block. (**Edmond, Prison Officer, NMSP**)

The country's approach to classification is narrowly conceived, taking into account the experience and views of the transferred prisoners and officers I interviewed. For instance, for transfers related to classification purposes, assessments are mainly through the length of the inmate's sentence and a pre-emptive rationalisation of security risk (e.g., prevent coordination among transferred prisoners, escape attempts, and interference with prison operations). Duwe (2020) argued that prison classification should be informed by data, grounded in research, and based on a careful assessment of the risk posed by each inmate (see also Campbell, French, and Gendreau, 2009). According to these authors, such principles cannot be determined solely at the time of admission or based solely on the length of the sentence, as is the case in Ghana. Employing a research-based and data-driven approach to prison classification minimises the influence of officers' subjective judgements, a factor that has been a defining characteristic of the classification system in the GPS. The narrow conception and the officers' subjectivities creates what Alexander described as "misclassification" (1986, p. 336), whereby prisoners are either underclassified or overclassified. Such misclassification has a profound impact on the prisoners, such as animosity between inmates with varied sentences, inmates preying on each other (see UNODC, 2020 on this issue), and lack of rehabilitation programmes (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2).

Moreover, 4 out of every 7 (57%) transferred prisoners were underclassified before the transfer. In this sense, prisoners deemed dangerous and serving a long sentence are housed in low-security

facilities alongside inmates serving short sentences prior to their transfer. For this study, I defined a long sentence as 10 years and above, while a short prison sentence encompasses 9 years and below. According to the transferred prisoners, the mockery of prisoners serving shorter prison sentences towards those serving longer prison terms is a prevalent phenomenon within low-security prisons. These create animosity between prisoners with long and short prison sentences. Furthermore, prisoners with long sentences experience significant psychological distress as they constantly ruminate over their impending release, knowing that others will be released soon. The vignette below captures the experience of a transferred prisoner with a long prison sentence.

Vignette 2: A transferred prisoner experience about misclassification as a source of transfer

Being at one place is disturbing. Imagine staying at a place smaller than a football park for 130 years. I was sentenced to 130 years, and I was taken to a local prison, I don't know if you know there, but it is so small. Apart from the small space, you are mixed with people who are just there for 6 months, 1 year, 5 years, and you know, when you are with people like that, you tend to think a lot. Apart from the thinking, if you are not careful, you can get into another trouble by just attacking some of them. Because you are there and someone who is there for just 1 or 2 years or may even be going out in a month or 3 months can make fun of you or pass a comment like "Eh, as for you, you will die here [...]," "abi you di33, you don't think about going out again [...]," so many things. If you don't control yourself, you will just hit the person and get into trouble. When I was in the local prison, one guy, he was also here, but they have transferred him, I don't know where he is now, he hit another guy who was sentenced to 8 months for stealing, I heard a goat. The guy he was teasing was serving 40 years, so he used a bowl to hit the guy and he was punished for it.

What I can say is that, sometimes if they transfer you to a prison like this place where people are serving the same years or more than you, I can say it is good. As for me, I pleaded with the In-charge to be transferred because we were mixed, people with 1 year, 20 years, 30 years, 60 years, and even those in remand. Although, there are still people here with 5, 7, 10, 15 years, but it is better because those of us with high, high sentence are many unlike where I was previously.

Close to one-eighth (13%) of the transfers related to classification exhibit a state of overclassification. These particular inmates are individuals who are serving sentences ranging from 2 to 9 years for relatively minor transgressions, such as drug possession, petty theft, and

assault, among other offences (see Table 3.5 for more comprehensive information). In principle, they are supposed to be housed in a lower-security facility, as opposed to a medium- or maximum-security facility. This situation runs contrary to the established categorisation and roles of the two prisons in question (i.e., NMSP and AMSP), as they are designated for housing prisoners deemed to be serious offenders and have received sentences of 10 years or more. Unlike the underclassified transferred prisoners, the overclassified transferred prisoners did not recount any adverse experiences.

In summary, prison transfer and classification are imbricated practises, which all form part of measures towards the effective management of prisons. The findings presented in this thesis suggest that prison transfers help to promote accurate classification, particularly in a resource-constrained carceral space like Ghana. While the legal framework of Ghana clearly designates responsibility for prisoner classification, the process is fraught with challenges that result in the misclassification of prisoners (UNODC, 2020). In the next section, I turn to overcrowding as another institutional challenge of the GPS, which also occasioned the prisoner transfers across the country.

4.6.2 Transfers associated with overcrowding

Overcrowding is the second most significant rationale for the transfer of prisoners in Ghana, based on the findings of this study. A quarter (25%) of the transferred prisoners attribute their transfer to the overcrowded conditions in their previous prisons, as shown in Figure 4.3. Before I delve into their transfer experiences related to overcrowding, I first provide a summary of statistical data that delineates the extent of overcrowding at the national level. I further explore the occupancy disparities across the country's prisons, using anecdotal data from the two prisons where I conducted the fieldwork. For the experiences of the transferred prisoners, I paid particular attention to the effects and causes of overcrowding and how it influences the transfer of the prisoners.

The 43 prison facilities dotted across the country have a carrying capacity of approximately 9,945 prisoners (World Prison Brief, 2023; Mendez, 2015, p. 9). However, during the fieldwork, these prison facilities housed around 13,354 prisoners, resulting in the country's occupancy rate reaching 134%. This data corresponds with the fundamental definition of overcrowding, which entails accommodating more prisoners in a facility than its intended capacity allows (Santorso, 2023;

Albrecht, 2012). Despite prison overcrowding being a global issue, Albrecht contended that there are no universally accepted criteria for measuring overcrowding (2012, p. 5).

Despite the prevailing problem of overcrowding in the country, there are variations in the levels of occupancy across the various prison facilities in Ghana. To illustrate, while the AMSP is operating below its maximum capacity, the NMSP is experiencing overcrowding. The AMSP started operations in 2012 with an officially designated holding space of approximately 2500 prisoners. However, there were only 1,175 prisoners housed in the facility, which represents less than half (47%) of its intended capacity at the time of my fieldwork. The NMSP, on the other hand, is designed to accommodate 851 prisoners; however, there are approximately 2,860 prisoners (336% overcapacity) housed within the facility. While certain prison facilities are experiencing overcrowding issues, others are operating below their maximum capacity (see also UNODC, 2013). As a result, the transfer of prisoners has emerged as a valuable tool for effectively managing and addressing the spatial disparities among prison facilities in Ghana. Commenting on the role of transfers in managing overcrowding, one of the prison officers says:

We have our own culture and our own way of doing things, and transfer is part of them. And this culture sustains the operations of the prison service. Any attempt to alter these things will create chaos. Let me tell you, without transfers, some of the prison facilities will have to be closed. You will also see some facilities with inmates that the officers cannot even control because of their numbers. (**Cynthia, Prison Officer, NMSP**)

From the experiences of the prisoners, I contextualise the prison overcrowding within the limited availability of bedding, access to water, prayer, and bathing facilities. With a diverse experience of the conditions of prisons among the inmates, they shed light on the inhospitable and degrading conditions that prevail in prisons across the country. The inmates reported being compelled to sleep on the floor because of the scarcity of beds, as well as being subjected to oppressive heat resulting from the large number of inmates confined within each cell and the inadequate ventilation in the various prison cells. According to the transferred prisoners, these conditions have led to the emergence of health complications, such as body rashes, among certain inmates, as well as the rampant spread of communicable diseases, including chickenpox, tuberculosis, and meningitis. The following excerpts represent the transferred prisoners' experiences pertaining to the conditions prevalent in their former prisons, which ultimately prompted their transfers.

I prefer this place because of the accommodations. I was in a central prison before my transfer. When you enter some cells, particularly at night, you will think it is a mortuary because of the way people sleep. The side of your body you lie down with is the side you will wake up with the next day. Because you cannot turn your body. We were sleeping like sardines. (**Adu-Gyamfi, transferred prisoner, Q103**)

I was transferred from a central prison in the north. What the officers told us about the transfer was that the prison was full. It is true that the prison was full because the tailoring shop where I was working was turned into a cell for people to sleep in. I know that the prison was supposed to take about 150 inmates, but before our transfer, we were about 400–500 inmates. (**Abraham, transferred prisoner, Q14**)

From a human rights perspective, the country's overcrowded prison conditions appear to violate several international instruments, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (see Article 7), and the Nelson Mandela Rules (see also Albrecht, 2012), among others. For instance, the Nelson Mandela Rules, specifically Rule 21 stipulates that:

Every prisoner shall, in accordance with local or national standards, be provided with a separate bed and with separate and sufficient bedding, which shall be clean when issued, kept in good order, and changed often enough to ensure its cleanliness. (**Nelson Mandela Rule 21**)

Many (87%) of the key informants (e.g., prison officers and NGOs) expressed similar viewpoints regarding the ramifications of overcrowding. They asserted that prison overcrowding is a conspicuous issue in the country, which leaves no room for the government and policymakers to feign ignorance of its impact on the inmates' lives and prison operations. When discussing the causes of prison overcrowding, the key informants identified insufficient funding to enhance prison conditions (see Section 4.7) and a significant number of remand prisoners. For example, as a vestige of colonialism, Ghana's incorporation of imprisonment into the mainstream criminal justice system led to the construction of holding facilities (e.g., dungeons, forts, and castles) to accommodate slaves and individuals accused of crimes (see Chapter 1, Section 1.3 on historical overview of the prison system of Ghana). Although subsequent governments after independence transformed some of these locations into prisons (also see Routley, 2022; Tomkinson, Mulugeta,

and Gallagher, 2022), minimal efforts have been made to upgrade these facilities to meet international standards. One prison officer shared his view about the overcrowding of prisons in Ghana in the vignette below:

Vignette 3: A prison officer description of overcrowding of prisons in Ghana

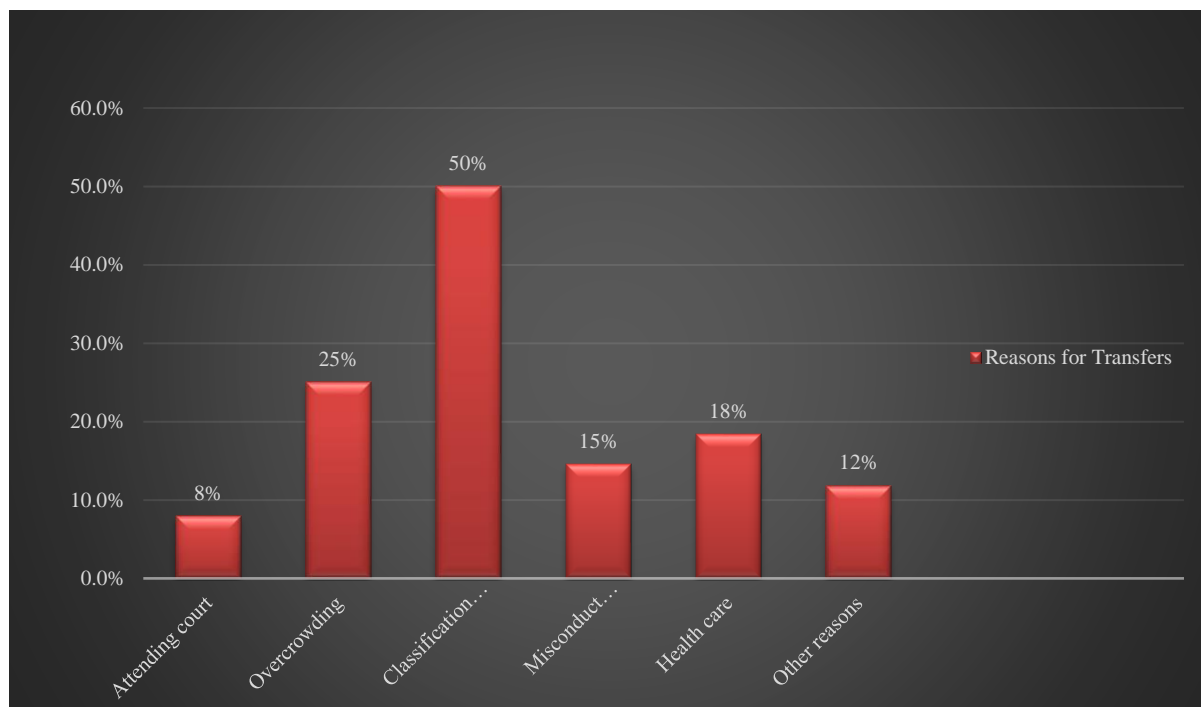
As a state, we haven't improved upon our infrastructure for prisoners. If we did, why do we still have a lot of issues with overcrowding? You take the history of Nsawam, which was supposed to take 851 inmates but is now taking almost 3000 prisoners. Kumasi Central prison, which should take 420 – 430, is now taking 2000+. Even though we have signed onto several conventions, such as the Mandela Rules and, the UN Standard Minimum Rules for dealing with prisoners, this is not there, and that is not the fault of the prison officer. It is the fault of the government, which has signed onto these things and will not provide the necessary infrastructure.

We are all aware that building new prisons is capital intensive, but hey, there is nothing you can do. You must do it. Many of the prisons we have are monuments left behind during colonial times. There are colonial relics. There were either forts, castles, or warehouses. Take Navrongo prison, for example; it was a warehouse. Even this place was for the West African Infantry Battalion, which was used as their base for keeping their items. Tamale was a horse stable where the constabulary house was, and training for the police. In addition, they used to go on patrols to Damongo, to Yendi, towards Wa, and back, and come and refresh the horses and treat them again. It has become a prison. We haven't changed it. The population then, at independence, was a little above 6 million. Today, we are above 30 million; hence, crime continues to increase. Yet, we have the same old facilities, hence the crowdedness. We attempted to build a new prison at Ankafu, where you went. It is not complete; it is just half of what you have seen. Since 2009, we haven't completed it. We are forced to pack in to create space. The government needs to do a lot [...].

Lastly, remand contributes to the overcrowding of prisons in Ghana, according to the key informants. For example, approximately 12% of the total prison population in Ghana consisted of remand prisoners during my fieldwork. A person accused and arrested for a crime must appear in

court within 48 hours. The court has the mandate to remand the person while the case is being trialled; hence, some of these people, upon their remand sentence, spent several years in various prisons, leading to expired warrants and a situation participants described as ‘being forgotten by the state’ (Field note, 2022). This phenomenon contributes to the congestion of the various prisons and further imposes auxiliary responsibilities on the prison officers, whose primary duty is to ensure the safe custody of sentenced prisoners.

Figure 4.3: Transferred Prisoners Perceptions of Reasons for Transfer in Ghana



Source: Data from transferred prisoners, 2022

4.6.3 Transfers associated with healthcare

The health of prisoners has taken centre stage in the management of prisons across countries within sub-Saharan Africa. Reports show that prisons in these countries, including Ghana, are grappling with a range of health complications, such as tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, mental disorders, and the recent novel coronavirus (Muntingh, 2020; Van Hout and Mhlanga-Gunda, 2018). Prisoners’ access to healthcare has become a matter of human rights, with them [prisoners] being entitled to healthcare regardless of their crime (Johnson et al., 2021; McLeod et al., 2020). In Ghana, prisoners’ access to healthcare services is facilitated through transfers, as the findings of this study suggest. Approximately 18% of the transferred prisoners transfer are associated with their access to healthcare, as shown in Figure 4.3. Although transfers for healthcare are either permanent or

temporary (see Section 4.4), all the transfers related to prisoners' access to healthcare are permanent. In that case, prisoners are transferred to a prison closer to a health facility for treatment or because there was no infirmary in the previous prison. In the next paragraphs, I provide an overview of the health challenges (which engender transfers) of the prisons through the accounts of the transferred prisoners.

First, prisoners' access to healthcare services in Ghana is poor because of the lack of infirmaries in certain prison facilities and insufficient health personnel, equipment, and medications (see also Baffoe-Bonnie, 2019). For example, the transferred prisoners reported that their previous prisons did not have an infirmary, while those with infirmaries are in a deplorable state because of the inadequate staffing, equipment, and medication. Furthermore, inmates cannot access the needed healthcare services from nearby communities or cities because they are also under-resourced (see Assan et al., 2019; Adua et al., 2017; and others for the health challenges of Ghana), according to the officers and prisoners. Thus, a medical doctor within the prison or the region may occasionally recommend that a prisoner be transferred to a well-equipped healthcare facility in a different region. If the inmate's illness is complex and recurring, they may be transferred to a facility closer to an advanced healthcare facility to ensure easy access. To illustrate the health complications that led to their transfer, Samba and Adom, two of the transferred prisoners share their experiences:

In my previous prison, just pray that you do not fall sick. There was no infirmary. One woman will just come and sit in a room; if you go there with any kind of sickness, the only drug she will give you will be paracetamol. Your head, para! Your stomach, para! Your eyes, para! Your legs, neck, para! They do not have any medicine there. Chickenpox affected me. I went to the officers, and when they saw me, they said they would transfer me to Nsawam. My whole body was covered with pox, but you can see now they are all gone. There is a good hospital here, and they treated me. People from outside even come there. (**Samba, transferred prisoner, Q41**)

Adom also recounted his experience leading to his transfer:

It is because of my illness that I was transferred to Nsawam. The officers first took me to Effia Nkwanta Regional Hospital. The doctor recommended that I be transferred to Korle-Bu Hospital. They sent me to Korle-Bu, and after my first treatment, I was sent back to my old prison. I fell sick again, and they brought me here since this is closer to Korle-Bu. The

doctor here diagnosed me and said there was a problem with one of my ribs. He referred me to Korle-Bu for surgery. It was when I got to Korle-Bu that they conducted tests and realised that it was tuberculosis. They treated me and decided not to send me back. The hospital here has been taking care of me, and as you can see, I am now better. (**Adom, transferred prisoner, Q59**)

A second health challenge that is noteworthy is that among the 43 prison facilities spread throughout the country, the Ankafu Contagious Diseases Prison, located in the central region, is the only prison facility specifically designated to treat prisoners afflicted with contagious and communicable diseases, such as tuberculosis, hepatitis A and B, and chicken pox. These diseases have become increasingly prevalent within the prison population of Ghana. A third challenge is that, out of the 7 prison facilities designated to hold female prisoners across the country, only the Nsawam Female Prison has a baby-friendly unit, according to the prison officers. Before the operation of the baby-friendly unit in 2006, pregnant female prisoners and nursing mothers shared cells with the general prison population, putting the health of the baby and the mother at risk. It is now standard practise to transfer all female prisoners who are pregnant and those with babies from different parts of the country to the Nsawam Female Prison, which has a baby-friendly unit.

In sum, there is a pressing need to ensure that prisoners in Ghana, regardless of their crime or place of incarceration, are provided with adequate healthcare services. Although transfer helps give prisoners access to healthcare, transferring prisoners to access healthcare also draws attention to the unequal distribution of healthcare services in prisons and different regions of Ghana. In their study, Dzando et al. (2022) identified challenges in Ghana's healthcare system, such as infrastructural gaps, insufficient medical professionals, and a shortage of medications, which is also a reflection of the health conditions of the country's prisons. Consequently, state actors need to go beyond considering the economic benefits that communities may gain from citing a prison in a community (for critique, see Gilmore, 2022) and take into account the proximity of healthcare facilities, particularly in a resource-limited nation like Ghana.

4.6.4 Transfers associated with court attendance

Prisoner's transfers are also associated with court attendance, and just 8% of the transfers in this study are because of the need for the prisoner to attend court. All the transfers attributed to court attendance for this study are because of appeal applications filed by the prisoners (see Chapter 5,

Section 5.2 for details on prisoners' legal representation during the trial). As part of the appeal filing requirements in Ghana, prisoners can only file the Notice of Appeal with the same court of their sentence. According to the collective insights of the legal professionals I interviewed, the recent directive that mandates prisoners to file their appeal applications only at the court or region of their initial sentence is to minimise the abuse of the appeal system by prisoners. For instance, there have been many reports of transferred prisoners starting a fresh appeal once they are transferred to a different prison in a different region, despite having already received a judgement on their appeal prior to their transfer. The transferred prisoners often undertake the double appeal application in the hope of securing a favourable verdict in the new court or region. However, this practice creates duplication of cases, which puts pressure on the already resource-constrained judicial system (Addadzi-Koom and Bediako, 2019; Tuffour, 2019). Hence, the new directive.

The practise of transferring prisoners in the middle of their appeal process, even before they can file their appeal, presents a dialectical practise where prisoners are transferred back to their previous prison facility or to a facility near a court for their appeal hearing. As previously explained in Section 4.4 concerning the typologies of transfers, prisoners endure lengthy periods of time, potentially spanning months or even years, and, in certain instances, find themselves permanently confined in the prison if they cannot pay the cost for their return journey. It is worth reiterating that the transferred prisoner pays all expenses associated with the appeals, including transportation costs. It exacerbates the hardship of the transferred prisoners, as I further explore in Chapter 5, Section 5.2.

4.6.5 Transfers associated with transferred prisoners' misconduct

Prisoner misconduct refers to actions that contravene the internal rules and regulations of the prisons in which they are confined (Steiner, 2023; Steiner and Wooldredge, 2014). This section focuses on the experiences of a little over a seventh (15%) of the transferred prisoners who attribute their transfer to various forms of violations they engage in, resulting in their transfer. I analysed the misconduct of the transferred prisoners at two levels: the individual and institutional levels. The individual analyses pertain to the personal choices of the transferred prisoner that violate the prison's internal rules, such as gambling, fighting, smoking, and possession of contraband (e.g., mobile phones, SIM cards, drugs). The transferred prisoner alone undertakes these actions (e.g., smoking, possession of contraband), and some were between a transferred prisoner and a fellow inmate (e.g., gambling, fighting) or between a transferred prisoner and a prison officer (e.g.,

disrespecting and fighting). Considering such forms of misconduct, the prisoner may be transferred alone, and such transfers may be carried out before approval is obtained from the headquarters of the GPS. Vignette 4 exemplifies the individual misconduct of a transferred prisoner I interviewed, whom the prison officers repeatedly mentioned for engaging in various infractions during his time in the two prisons where I conducted the fieldwork.

Vignette 4: Misconduct by a transferred prisoner in a minimum-security prison

A transferred prisoner named Eben, serving a 25-year sentence, was interviewed in the high-security prison. Prior to the interview, his story had been mentioned twice - once during a conversation with a prison officer at the medium-security prison and another time with a state attorney's lawyer in one of the regions of Ghana. The lawyer claimed that Eben was one of the boldest inmates he ever came across throughout his practice. Following his sentencing and transfer to a nearby prison, Eben had asked the judge that he prefer to serve his term in a specific (Central) prison, a rare occurrence as most inmates are usually hesitant or unaware of such a possibility, according to the lawyer. Despite initial reservations, Eben's request was eventually approved after some back-and-forth with the judge, leading to his transfer to the chosen central prison.

Eben had been transferred twice after his initial placement. He was transferred from the central prison to a medium-security prison, where a prison officer noted that he had been involved in a series of misconducts and infractions since his arrival. The prison officer reported that besides Eben's constant conflicts with other inmates, he has been repeatedly caught engaging in gambling activities with other inmates. Despite numerous warnings, he persistently indulges in these infractions, even resorting to physical altercations with some of the officers, resulting in biting the hand of one of the officers. The only choice left was to transfer him to a maximum-security prison, during which he was shackled on both legs and hands.

I coincidentally interviewed Eben at the maximum-security prison, where he recounted the events leading to his transfer. He admitted to participating in just one infraction, namely gambling. To him, this was merely a survival tactic, considering the various ways prisoners adapt to life inside, such as selling cooked food, and smoking, albeit prohibited. Eben alleged that they [prison officers] were complicit, benefiting from smuggling in some of these prohibitive items to the inmates. Eben claimed that he became a target to the prison officers when he confided in a friend about the prison conditions and the officers' behaviour. The friend, according to Eben was working with the ministry overseeing the Ghana Prisons Service. This led to inquiries that worsened his situation, resulting in physical abuse and the incident where he bit the officer, ultimately leading to his transfer.

The analyses conducted at the institutional level regarding the transfers associated with prisoners' misconduct arise from the collective action of the transferred prisoners, which takes the form of protests and riots against the deplorable conditions prevalent in their respective prisons. In such cases, the management transfers the prisoners in groups to different prisons. Notably, the primary cause of these protests and riots is the inadequacy of food provisions (see Chapter 7 for examination of the food situation in prisons). The collective action undertaken by the transferred prisoners against the prison system, resulting in their transfer, aligns with the deprivation theory, which provides a framework for the study of aggressive behaviours of prisoners during their time in incarceration (Steiner, 2023; Cortie et al., 2023). It is beyond the scope of this thesis to extensively examine the core tenets of deprivation theory (Sykes, 2007; Clemmer, 1940). Nonetheless, I acknowledge its relevance to the experiences of the transferred prisoners, particularly in a resource-constrained prison system in Ghana. Steiner (2023) argues that deprivation theory presupposes that prisoners adapt to the restrictions, severity, and challenges of prison life by establishing social systems and what Jacobs (1979, p. 1) refers to as "prison subculture." From the management point of view, some of the prison subcultures are considered an illegitimate means of coping with the challenges of the prisons. For instance, one transferred prisoner I interviewed vividly recounts the reason for his transfer:

I was a cell leader, and we were about 120 in the cell. I did not have a problem with any of the prison officers. As part of our job as cell leaders, we help control the other prisoners, ensuring that they do not misbehave. I was transferred with other prisoners because we led a demonstration. Right in my cell, a prisoner died in front of everyone. Nobody wanted to go near him, but I and one other guy went and held him when he was struggling. By the time the officers came into the cell, he was already dead. Do you know what was coming out of his mouth? The soup that we ate for lunch. Sadly, many other prisoners have been to the hospital, and it is always because of the food. They would not also allow us to cook. Sometimes, you can see your image in the soup they serve you. Just water mixed with groundnut paste and salt. That day, we became so angry and said enough was enough. The following day, the whole prison was hot, and we were shouting here and there, and they called for reinforcement. They calmed us down on the condition that they would allow us to cook only in the prison kitchen to supplement the prison food. Following that incident,

the officers transferred some colleagues and me to this place. (**Ayuss, transferred prisoner, Q8**)

More than two-thirds (70%) of the key informants, particularly the prison officers and NGOs, reiterated the provision of imbalanced and insufficient diets to the prisoners. Commenting on the daily allocation of GH¢1.80/£0.13 to feed a prisoner, the key informants argued that the amount is grossly inadequate. Similar observations are found in detention scholarship, where the insufficient feeding of detainees stems from the practise of cost-cutting by both the government and private organisations (Coddington, Conlon, and Martin, 2020; Conlon and Hiemstra, 2022). This meagre allocation not only exerts pressure on prison management across the country but also has a detrimental impact on the health of the prisoners, leading to their discontent in prisons. Besides frequently expressing their frustration with the prison officers, some prisoners prefer to be transferred to facilities like NMSP despite the challenges it presents to both the transferred prisoners and their families (for further information on the effects of transfer, refer to Chapter 6).

4.6.6 Transfers associated with other factors (i.e., work purposes, rehabilitation)

Transfers are also associated with work and rehabilitation reasons, and slightly more than one-tenth (12%) of prisoner transfers are for work-related purposes. The transfer experiences discussed in this section primarily pertain to second-time offenders; thus, the perspectives shared by the prisoners relate to their first transfer experience. Prisons across the world continue to serve the dual function of providing a contained labour force (Melossi and Pavarini, 2018), and Ghana is no exception. Whereas prisons hold people with skills and specialised training, they are also spaces through which transferred prisoners can acquire and learn new skills. With the notion of prisons filled with an untapped labour force, as neatly captured in the Ten-Year Strategic Plan (2015–2025) of the Ghana Prisons Service, several measures are designed to maximise the benefits of this “abundant prison labour force and extensive land assets.” Transfer implicitly forms part of achieving this plan set by the GPS, whereby prisoners are transferred to work in different prisons, including open-camp prisons and farm stations. The prison officers further contend that the reason prisoners are transferred, especially to open-camp prisons and farm stations, is to facilitate their rehabilitation and reintegration after release.

According to the prison officers, open-camp prisons and farm stations house low-risk prisoners and those who are nearing their release. These prisons do not receive prisoners directly from the

courts. However, prisoners who have shown commendable conduct and have served more than one-third of their sentence in a secured prison are the only categories of prisoners sent to open-camp prisons and farm stations. Inmates transferred to these types of prisons are often sent out under the supervision of prison officers to work. It is an opportunity for the prisoners to interact with the public, which will help improve their behaviour. Similarly, prisoners transferred to the farm stations learned innovative basic farming skills, which they can use upon release. One of the prison officer's notes:

We cannot send somebody sentenced to 10 years to a camp prison. Because the security at the camp prisons is a bit relaxed, but that is how it is structured. The camp prisons are just meant for people who are about to face off and who are about to go home. So, we sent them first to the bigger prisons, which are the central prisons, and got them transferred to these ones to exit. Once they are sent there, especially to the farm stations, some of them have their own gardens where they plant vegetables. They used some of the produce from the garden to support what the prison fed them with, and some even sold it to other inmates.

(Fidelis, Prison Officer)

The transferred prisoners opined that they spent the last stage of their sentence in these facilities, thereupon, they did not experience any transfer before their release. Hence, such a transfer can be characterised as a permanent transfer (see Section 4.4 for further details on permanent transfers).

4.7 Institutional Challenges Confronting Prisoner Transfer in Ghana

With the current conditions in the prisons, the officers are just limited to counting, opening, and closing the prison doors for prisoners and their relatives. It is just a system of punishment, not only for the prisoners but for the officers too. (Philip, transferred prisoner, Q01A)

The prison service in Ghana is fraught with many challenges, which act as catalysts for the transfer of prisoners. The challenges I outline in this thesis are analogous to those faced by the carceral system across Africa, such as overcrowding (Section 4.6 of this study), lack of accurate data, pre-trial detention, inadequate staffing, and inadequate budget allocation, resulting in insufficient feeding of inmates (Walmsley, 2018; Antwi, 2016; Appiahene-Gyamfi, 2009). The findings echo the assertion by Amnesty International that “prisoners are the bottom of the pile” in the priorities of the government (Amnesty International Report, 2012, p. 1), as I discuss in the next section. Based on the findings of this study, overcrowding (which I examined earlier), logistical challenges,

and bureaucratic constraints impede the transfer of prisoners. In the paragraphs that follow, I shed light on these challenges and their impact on the transfer process.

4.7.1 Logistical challenges

Logistical constraints present a significant obstacle to the operations of the GPS. A vast majority (98%) of prison officers attribute this challenge to the continuous insufficient allocation of funds to the GPS. Besides the systemic challenges (such as overcrowding, inadequate staffing, and feeding), the prisons lack essential logistical resources, including data storage devices, communication devices, transportation vehicles, handcuffs, and tasers. These deficiencies directly affect the transfer process, particularly data management and prisoner transportation. As a result, officers are compelled to record, process, and store inmates' data (such as their region of birth, sentence, offence, and contact details of their relatives) manually. This practice does not guarantee the privacy and data protection of inmates, and it hampers access to inmates' criminal and transfer histories. I encountered similar challenges when I requested the total number of transferred prisoners in the two prisons during the fieldwork, and officers from both facilities reiterated the lack of data on prisoners because of the lack of logistics. One of the officers stated:

You cannot get that type of segregated data. We can only provide the total number of inmates in the facility. We record most of the inmate's information, including the prison they are transferred from, in a register (book). You will be surprised if you see our filing room. Even files on inmates that were first imprisoned in the facility are all stored there. We do not store such information on computers. Only a few offices have computers. To tell you the truth, computers are the least of our problems, although they are also important. We are talking about the survival of the inmates, whereby they are fed with just GH¢1.80/£0.13 pesewas per day. (**Fidelis, Prison Officer**)

Moreover, the prison officers attributed the centralisation of interregional transfers at the headquarters of the GPS to the logistical challenges faced by the service, particularly the inadequate availability of transportation vehicles for transferred prisoners. Although the government occasionally donates vehicles to the service, these vehicles are often not purpose-fit for prisoner transfer. Recounting on purpose-fit vehicles for transfer, the officers mentioned the donation of two 33-seater buses from the British High Commission to Ghana and a bus from the Prisons Service Council known as *Project Efiasse*. This project raises funds from philanthropists

and local and international organisations to support the GPS. The limited availability of transfer vehicles forces the prisons to rely on public transportation for prisoner transfers, despite the risks this poses to the public. As a result, delays in prisoner transfer, overcrowding of transport vehicles during transfers, and financial difficulties for transferred prisoners who must pay for transportation during the appeal process have ensued (I examine these topics in Chapter 5). Finally, as part of the service's responsibility to ensure the safe custody of convicted individuals, transferred prisoners are supposed to be handcuffed during transportation, according to the prison officers. However, the inadequate supply of handcuffs makes it challenging to adhere to this internal protocol. Thus, transferred prisoners are often handcuffed together during transfers, and officers employ various strategies, such as physical force, communication skills, or disregarding minor misconduct from inmates, to ensure compliance and proper behaviour during the transfer (also refer to Sykes, 2007).

4.7.2 Effects of bureaucracy on prisoner transfer

The GPS is embedded with many bureaucracies, where authority mainly resides with the Director-General. The centralisation of approval powers on inmate transfers, logistics, and escort personnel at the behest of the Director-General creates bureaucratic bottlenecks. Lipsky (2010) asserts that street-level bureaucrats (such as prison officers, police officers, and teachers) adopt rationing mechanisms to manage logistical constraints faced by civil service providers. Similarly, the GPS uses rationing strategies, such as mass transfers of prisoners and occasionally outsourcing transfers to the Ghana Police Service. While these measures are significant in alleviating the GPS constraints, they result in transfer delays and tend to put a financial burden on prisoners during health-related emergencies. Moreover, the various bureaucratic measures further perpetuate the uneven power dynamics within the carceral system, particularly in the interactions between transferred prisoners and prison officers. These bureaucratic measures create diverse opportunities for prison officers to exploit transferred prisoners, as highlighted throughout this thesis.

Lastly, from the findings, the transfer of inmates is based on the availability of resources (e.g., fuel, vehicles, and officers) rather than necessity, such as classification. According to the transferred prisoners, the altering of transfer dates creates uncertainties in the flow of transfer information. These partly contribute to the inmates' lack of preparedness during the transfer process, as I illuminate in Section 5.3.2. The prison officers' criticisms of the bureaucratic impediments are based on the lack of decision-making powers of the individual prison facilities. On the other hand, transferred prisoners are often disturbed by their inability to notify their

relatives about the transfer.

4.8 Summary of chapter

This chapter focused on the general practises of prisoner transfer in Ghana, with particular attention paid to the rationale, actors, transportation, and institutional challenges involved in the transfer process. In order to inform this analysis, insights from Michalon (2016) regarding mobilities in detention centres in Romania, Moran, Piacentini, and Pallot's (2012) research on transportation among prisoners in Russia, and Packer's (2003) work have framed prisoner transfers as a punitive measure. The findings I present in this chapter expand the conventional and continuous description of the mobility of prisoners, especially transfers as what Moran, Piacentini, and Pallot characterised as 'disciplined mobility' (2012). Beyond the punitive character of prisoner transfers, transfer enhances the successful governance of the prison system in Ghana amidst overcrowding, inadequate and poorly furnished prison infirmaries, and improper prisoner classification. As such, the underlying justifications for prisoner transfers primarily stem from the systemic challenges faced by the Ghana Prison Service as opposed to the individual behaviours or criminal acts of transferred prisoners. Paradoxically, many of the transferred prisoners perceived the transfer as a form of reward rather than a punishment.

The assertion that transfer is a response to the systemic challenges of prisons rather than inmate behaviour stems from two main factors: the poor conditions in which inmates are housed and the inadequate financial support provided by the government of Ghana to the GPS. The inadequate funding gives rise to a range of difficulties faced by both the transferred prisoners and the operations of the GPS, resulting in a discrepancy between the recommended practices based on local and international guidelines for the treatment of prisoners and the realities of limited bedding space, inadequate feeding, outdated equipment, and a lack of transport vehicles. These constraints place the prison officers in a position where they have considerable discretion as they fulfil their responsibilities of providing custody to the prisoners, regardless of the challenges they face. According to Lipsky (2010), public servants (that include prison officers and police officers) "operate and are mandated in a context of severe resource shortage [...] it requires of field personnel considerable discretion that cannot be reduced to official guidelines" (2010, p. 106). This discretion, as observed among the prison officers, manifests in the selection of prisoners for transfers and the imposition of fees on transferred prisoners before they can appeal their sentences in court, resulting in the suppression, domination, and exclusion of inmates from exercising their

right to appeal. In the next chapter, I further explore these defining features of power dynamics in the carrying out of transfers, through which transferred prisoners and officers closely interact with each other.

CHAPTER FIVE

PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF TRANSFERRED PRISONERS’ MOVEMENTS BETWEEN PRISONS

5.1 Introduction

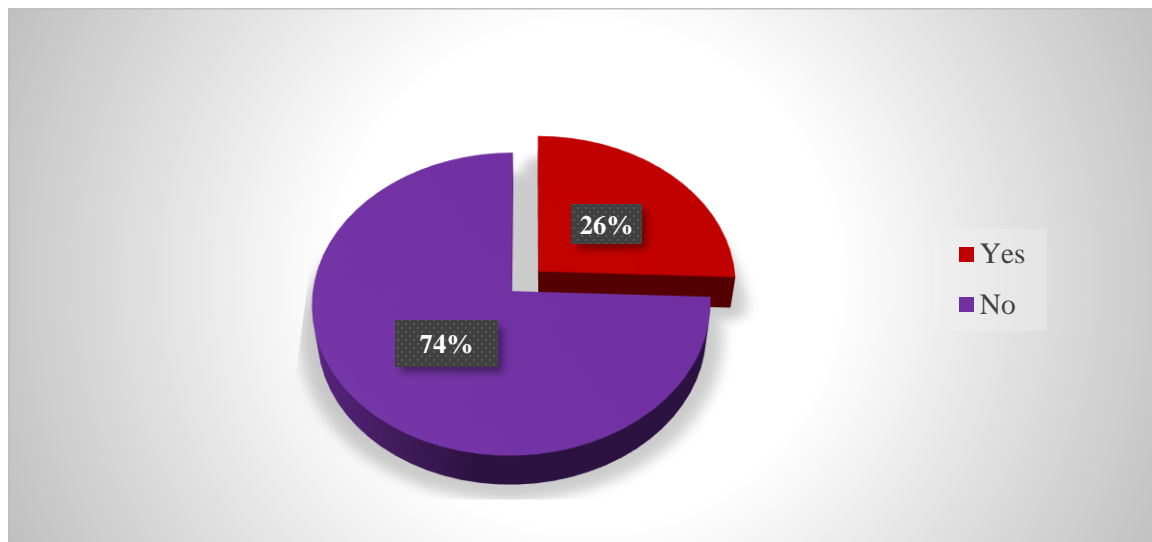
This chapter examines RO2 of the thesis, which focuses on the perceptions and experiences of transferred prisoners’ movements between prisons. The chapter broadly sits within the theoretical framework of power, revealing various tactics, strategies, and manoeuvres the officers employ in transferring prisoners. I discern the vestiges of power dynamics by analysing the transferred prisoners’ reactions, level of preparedness, and transportation experiences. To provide context to the transportation experience of the transferred prisoner, I provide a map showing the transfer routes and movements (see Figure 5.4). The movements of the transferred prisoners proceed in a series of spatial-temporal phases, revealing various procedures and specific prison sites (e.g., departure, transit, and destination prisons), which contextualise transfer as a continuous procedure rather than a one-off event. I further delve into the interconnection between transferred prisoners’ access to legal representation and their transfer. In this regard, I evaluate transferred prisoners’ access to legal representation during trial, the factors affecting transferred prisoners’ access to legal representation, the effect of transfers on prisoners’ access to legal services, particularly during the transferred prisoner appeals applications. I conclude the chapter by asserting that the experiences of transferred prisoners mirror those of forced migrants (e.g., refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs), characterised by uncertainty, lack of legal representation, confiscation of prisoners’ belongings, and unexpected raids, as observed in detention studies (see Wittock et al., 2023; Lindberg, 2023; De Genova, 2019; Hiemstra, 2016).

5.2 Legal representation of transferred prisoners before the sentence

In this section, I explore the transferred prisoner’s access to legal services, paying particular attention to their trial experience and the factors affecting their access to legal representation. Before I delve into the transferred prisoners’ experiences of accessing legal representation, it is crucial to consider the following contextual information in analysing the extent of legal interference in the transfer process. The Criminal Procedure Code, 1960, Section 86 of Ghana, has empowered the Court to summon the appearance of a prisoner, including those transferred at a place of the court chosen, upon which the prison officer is obliged to follow the court order. Then

again, all the legal professionals I interviewed for this study maintained that the GPS has the sole responsibility for assigning prisoners to various prison facilities. As one judge succinctly stated, “our duties end once the sentence has been issued.” Essentially, the lawyers representing individual prisoners often do not interfere in the operations of the various prisons, including the transfer of prisoners, according to the legal professionals. However, the point needs to be made that transferred prisoners through their lawyers often rely on the provision of the Criminal Procedure Code to be transferred back to the region they were sentenced for their appeal application.

Figure 5.1: Percentage distribution of legal representation of transferred prisoners



Source: Data from transferred prisoners, 2022

To assess the legal representation of the transferred prisoners during the trial, I asked them if they had a lawyer during the trial. Close to three-quarters (74%) of the transferred prisoners did not have legal representation, as shown in Figure 5.1. The lack of legal representation adversely affects the transferred prisoners, as they claim the judges denied them the opportunity to speak and defend themselves during the trial, leading to unfair prison terms. In the same fashion, scholarly research on immigration detention has shown that detainees who use legal representation are more likely to receive favourable outcomes compared to those without legal representation (Lindberg, 2023; Ryo and Peacock, 2021). The transferred prisoner’s claim of being denied the chance to defend themselves directly conflicts with Chapter 5 of the Constitution of Ghana, specifically Article 19, Clause 2(f), which stipulates that a person charged with an offence “be permitted to defend himself before the court in person or by a lawyer of his choice.” Commenting on his legal representation during the trial, Isaac, one of the transferred prisoners shared the following experience:

What I can say is that when you come across any group or organisation that is helping prisoners, please let them know that the number of years given to inmates is too high, especially for those of us who did not have lawyers during the trial. During my trial, I will ask a question, and the judge will tell me that the question is supposed to be asked by a lawyer, and here is the case I was not having a lawyer. So, this was a big challenge for me.

(Isaac, transferred prisoner, Q06)

On the contrary, more than a quarter (26%) of the transferred prisoners had legal representation during the trial. Among the 43 transferred prisoners who had legal representation during the trial, approximately 41% of them sought the assistance of their lawyers in order to prevent their transfers. Nonetheless, their efforts proved to be in vain. Whereas a section of the lawyers advised they [transferred prisoners] go on the transfer, it was not uncommon to hear them [lawyers] saying they could not prevent the transfer, according to the respondents. Moreover, five transferred prisoners maintained that their lawyers even came to speak to the OIC to rescind their transfer, but they were unsuccessful.

As I mentioned earlier, many transferred prisoners expressed their intention to file an appeal against their imposed sentence (see Section 4.6.4). Many transferred prisoners who lack legal representation during the trial express the view of seeking redress through an appeal application. For the potential appellants, several factors prevented them from having legal representation during the trial, including insufficient time to pick a lawyer, lawyers' lack of commitment towards their cases, exorbitant costs associated with hiring legal counsel, and personal decisions to abstain from engaging a lawyer (see Figure 5.2 for further details). According to the affected transferred prisoners, they are undertaking measures ranging from raising money, reaching out to lawyers, and retrieving the transcripts of their court proceedings. Next, I explore the factors that affect transferred prisoners' access to legal representation during trials, as shown in Figure 5.2.

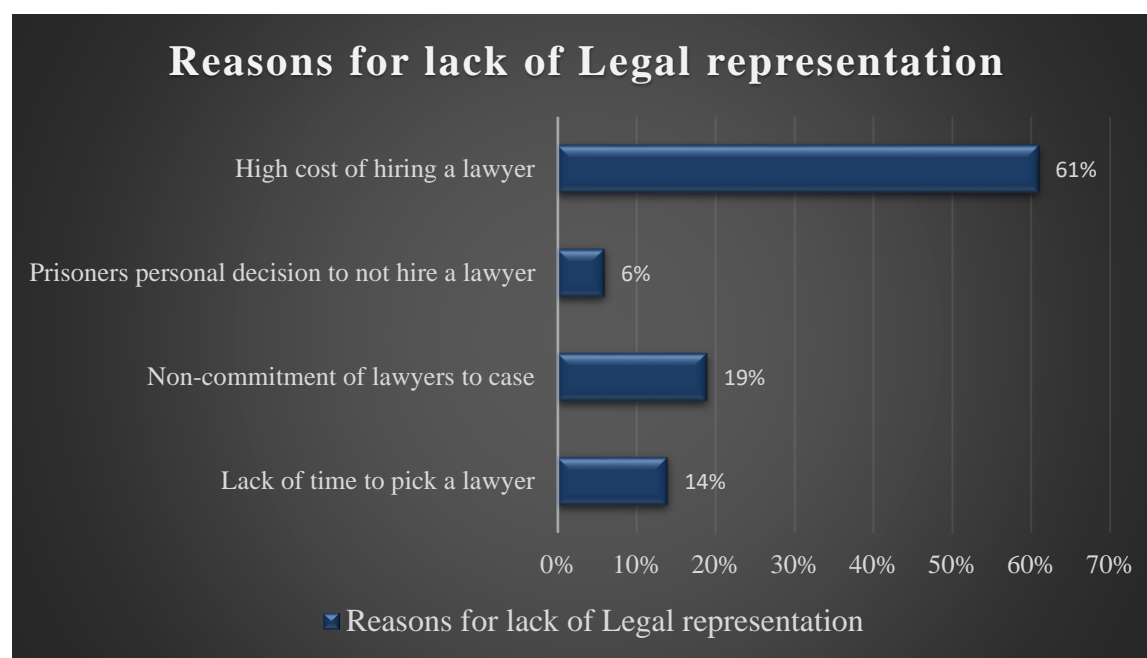
5.2.1 High cost of hiring a lawyer

The lack of legal representation primarily arises from the financial burden associated with hiring a lawyer, as nearly two-thirds (61%) of the transferred prisoners were unable to engage a lawyer due to the associated costs. This discovery aligns with the broader assertion in legal scholarship that legal fees are a significant barrier to accessing justice (Farrow and Jacobs, 2020; Himonas and Hubbard, 2020). The experiences detailed in this section draw attention to the socio-demographic

background of the transferred prisoners, with a substantial proportion being unemployed (refer to Table 3.5 for additional information). Furthermore, those employed prior to their incarceration held low-income and informal jobs, such as farming, small-scale mining, or ‘galamsey,’ and construction work (e.g., masonry, carpentry, welding). Additionally, sections of these transferred prisoners were the primary source of financial support for their families before the sentence. Consequently, neither they nor their family members possess the necessary funds to hire legal representation during the trial. The imprisonment exacerbates the financial hardships faced by the transferred prisoner’s household (also see Condry and Minson, 2020), a finding I return to in Chapter 6.

More than half of the 100 transferred prisoners who cite the exorbitant legal fees assert that they did not reach out to any lawyer during the trial, despite their willingness to employ a lawyer if they had the means. For these inmates, regardless of the amount of the legal fees, payment remains unfeasible. It is crucial to highlight this perspective as a section of the prisoners made a personal decision not to hire a lawyer, despite having the financial resources available (see Section 5.2.4 for further information). Conversely, some transferred prisoners did reach out to certain lawyers during the trial; however, the fees demanded by these lawyers exceeded their financial capacity.

Figure 5.2: Percentage distribution of reasons for transferred prisoners lack of legal representation



Source: Data from transferred prisoners, 2022

5.2.2 *Non-commitment of lawyer(s) to case*

The Legal Profession Rules, 1969 (L.I. 613) empower the General Legal Council of Ghana to supervise the conduct of lawyers towards their clients. Specifically, Rule 9 (6) of the L.I highlight lawyers non-appearance as a misconduct, which stipulates:

“A lawyer who neither attends in court himself nor makes arrangement for a responsible member of his firm [...] to be present throughout in court proceedings in which he or his firm is acting is guilty of a breach of duty to the court, his client and his profession.” (**Legal Profession Rules, 1969**)

Despite this provision, nearly one-fifth (19%) of the transferred prisoners cite the lack of dedication from their attorneys as the primary reason for their absence of legal representation during the trial proceedings. According to the transferred prisoners, they contacted and made payment to lawyers, upon which they agreed to represent them in court. However, some lawyers failed to attend court sessions even after receiving a portion of the legal fees, while others only made a single appearance and did not show up for subsequent hearings. Anecdotally, two factors contribute to the non-commitment of the lawyers during the trial: First, the transferred prisoners share the view that once a lawyer realises that an inmate lacks any support network (such as family members or friends) outside who can follow up on the case, they exploit the situation by showing less interest in the case. Due to limited access to the outside community and phone calls, they lose contact with the lawyer (such as lawyers refusing to pick up their calls and visiting them in the cells) and find themselves without representation. Second, the transfer of inmates alters the agreements between inmates and the lawyers. For example, lawyers consider the proximity of the prison and the court when determining the fees charged to their clients, the inmates. When an inmate is moved to a different prison that requires a longer travel distance, it is customary to adjust the legal fees. Thus, transferred prisoners who are already financially disadvantaged and unable to pay end up without legal representation.

Similarly, a few of the transferred prisoners with initial legal representation by the Legal Aid Commission (LAC) of Ghana recounted related experiences where they concluded their trial without the presence of the assigned lawyer. The experiences shared by these transferred prisoners in their pursuit of the LAC’s services run counter to the fundamental principles of the commission, which primarily seeks to ensure equitable access to justice for individuals, particularly those who

are vulnerable and economically disadvantaged and cannot afford the legal costs throughout their trial. A fifth of the transferred prisoners assert that they initially had legal representation from the LAC. However, communication between them and their legal representatives halted when the lawyers, as one transferred prisoner characterises it, “informally and illegally,” demanded financial compensation to cover transportation expenses. Because of their inability to make the payment, the lawyer neither came to visit them again nor represented them in the courtroom. One of the transferred prisoners shared the following experience when I asked, “*Did you have a lawyer during the trial and were you able to inform him/her about the transfer*”?

Which lawyer? Ha-ha! A lawyer from the government (referring to LAC) was helping me with the case. If I remember right, he came to the court only twice, and after the second time, he told me I should find him something to buy fuel for his travels. I didn’t have any money with me; even outside, it was difficult for me to sometimes get money to buy food. I told him that I did not have any money at that moment, but I would call a friend to see if he could help me. When I called him too, he could not help, so the lawyer stopped coming to the court, and he was not picking up my calls again. With a lawyer, they sentenced me to 15 years. **(Kwasi, transferred prisoner, Q04)**

5.2.3 Lack of time to pick a lawyer

Several concerns are raised regarding the prolonged remand of accused persons without certainty of a verdict pronouncement (refer to Mensah and Gyamfuo Akuoko, 2023). Indeed, the slow delivery of justice contributes to Ghana’s prison overcrowding (Yin, Korankye-Sakyi, and Atupare, 2021). Conversely, the findings presented in this section reveal the hasty sentencing of certain prisoners in Ghana. Instead of bolstering the justice system in Ghana by reducing the duration individuals accused of crimes spend in prison, this practice perpetuates unequal access to justice. The hasty sentencing of prisoners aligns with similar practises observed in asylum decisions, which serve as strategies to expedite the legal process for cases deemed less likely to succeed (see also Reneman and Stronks, 2021; Cwerner, 2004), as described by Hambly and Nick (2020, p. 3) as “thinning-out” the legal process. Within the Ghanaian context, prisoners face limited time to secure legal representation, ultimately resulting in their sentencing without legal counsel. A seventh (14%) of the transferred prisoners attribute their lack of legal representation during the trial to insufficient time to engage a lawyer. Inmates are sentenced within 24 hours of arrest and during their first court appearance. It occurs while they cannot communicate with their

networks due to the confiscation of their mobile phones by the police officers. Nick Gill, Deirdre Conlon, and other scholars have also examined the power effects inherent in the movement of detained asylum seekers within the UK detention system and how this intentionally disrupts support networks (see Conlon, Hiemstra, and Mountz, 2017; Gill, 2009). In Chapter 6, I delve further into these disruptions within the prison context.

Besides the asymmetrical power relations exerted by individual police officers through the confiscation of transferred prisoners' belongings and the denial of phone calls prior to sentencing, the transferred prisoners also highlighted the discretionary powers of judges in imposing sentences, as captured in the following statement:

I did not have a lawyer because all my family members are in the north. By the time my sister heard about my arrest and came to see me, they already sentenced and sent me to prison. They arrested me, and within 3 days, I was sentenced. They arrested me on January 1, 2017, in one community and transported me to a different community, where we arrived at 1:00 pm. They told us that the court was closed. The criminal investigation officer took me to the judge's chamber, and the officer gave a sheet of paper to the judge. After the judge read the document, I raised my hand, and the judge said I cannot talk and that if they want me to talk, they will let me know. He then said I have been sentenced to 15 years. What even annoyed me was when the judge said he was using his powers to sentence me and that I could appeal if I wanted. (**Amartey, transferred prisoner, Q61**)

5.2.4 Transferred prisoners' personal decision to not hire a lawyer

Prison life entails the coalescing of ideas, where prisoners share stories and experiences as they navigate through the criminal justice system, including their trial experiences. These shared stories and experiences influence recidivists and accused persons' decisions to use legal representation. These became apparent when a handful (6%) of the transferred prisoners took a personal decision not to hire a lawyer based on negative experiences recounted by fellow inmates within the criminal justice system of Ghana. Two main reasons accounted for their decision to not hire a lawyer, despite having the means to acquire it. First, the justice system in Ghana is unfair, according to the transferred prisoners. The transferred prisoners' claim of unfairness in the justice system emerged from stories they heard from cellmates before their trial, which encompasses instances of injustice perpetrated by both police and the judiciary. The allegations of bribery and corruption levelled

against the judges further heightened the transferred prisoner's perception of judicial unfairness. Notably, many of the transferred prisoners who took that personal decision referenced a documentary by investigative journalist Anas Aremeyaw, which reveals judicial corruption in Ghana. Specifically, the documentary captured footage of 34 judges accepting bribes to skew court verdicts (see also Munyai, 2020; Mark, 2015).

Second, taking a personal decision not to hire a lawyer was based on accepting responsibility for committing the crime. In this regard, the transferred prisoners pleaded guilty and felt there was no need to pick a lawyer. Commenting on this claim, Prince, one of the transferred prisoners says:

I did not hire a lawyer because I pleaded guilty. But one lawyer stood to plead on my behalf for my sentence to be reduced since I told the court the truth that we stole the gold from the Whiteman. I was sentenced to 40 years, and my case partners were sentenced to 20 years and 60 years. The one who was sentenced to 20 years was a police officer. He is here with me. They were arrested first and kept on remand for more than a year before I was arrested. Throughout their time on remand and trial, they pleaded not guilty. But when I was arrested, I knew we committed the crime, so why should I pick a lawyer again? I just pleaded guilty. **(Prince, transferred prisoner, Q77)**

Summarily, access to legal representation promotes the fundamental rights of people. However, the accounts of various transferred prisoners I present in this section reveal the asymmetric power relations that extend beyond the prison space. Taking a step back to assess transferred prisoners' legal representation, I maintained that the pre-sentence experiences (i.e., their interaction with the police and the court) of prisoners set grounds for the sufferings of prisoners, a claim I return to in Chapter 6. Besides their marginalised status leading to their inability to raise money to pick lawyers to represent them, there is also a dysfunctional state-funded legal aid system and an antithesis application of the maxim 'justice delayed is justice denied,' through which accused persons are hurriedly trialled and sentenced without legal representation. These anomalies of the justice system produce a structural derivative of the fact that some accused persons consciously choose not to seek legal assistance. They feel that hiring a lawyer is an exercise in futility, a conclusion that emerges from the experiences and stories of their cellmates. Furthermore, I maintained that the legal grounds for influencing prison transfer in Ghana emerge during the trial or when an inmate files an appeal application. It is crucial to emphasise that transferred prisoners are required to bear

the costs associated with transfers related to appeals, which continue to exclude people, particularly the vulnerable, from accessing legal redress. In the next section, I turn attention to transferred prisoners' preparedness, challenges and confrontations during the transfer.

5.3 Resistance, Preparedness, and Challenges during prisoner transfers in Ghana

By now, we know enough about the rationale, actors, and institutional obstacles of prison transfer in Ghana. Now, I turn attention to how transferred prisoners react to the transfer, a discussion I situate within the framing of resistance. The transferred prisoners' response to the transfer shows the plurality of expressions of resistance, some of which may be subtle and challenging to identify (see Johannson and Vinthagen, 2020). Martin, Minca, Katz (2020), Gibson-Light (2018), and others have extensively examined the varied forms of resistance within diverse power-ridden spaces. Conventionally, the relational encounters between persons within these conditions denote a binary conceptualisation of power versus resistance (Katz, 2004). The manifestations of these power dynamics are often visible. However, there is an emerging trend towards recognising the invisibility of resistance; phenomena that are "diverse, ephemeral, subtle, sporadic, and banal" among peoples under oppressed conditions (Hughes et al., 2022, p. 1). The subsequent excerpt illuminates the perspective of a death row inmate who has undergone many transfers since his sentencing:

My situation is different because I know they can kill at any time. The transfer is not even something I think about. I have gone on many transfers. It has even become a normal thing for me. But anytime they are about to transfer you and do not make it clear that it is a transfer, you always think that would be the end of your life. You become sad, and sometimes you cannot even breathe. Transfer is not easy, and when you think you are finally settling in a particular prison, then they will come and say transfer. Based on my experience, you are happy with some of the transfer because of how you receive the information, where they are taking you, and so many other things. **(Dagba, transferred prisoner, Q69)**

Besides a few visible remnants of resistance that I present in this study (see Chapter 7), transferred prisoners exhibit the invisibility of resistance as emotions, sentiments, and challenges during transfers. Johannson and Vinthagen's study into "everyday resistance" in workplaces identifies work slowdowns, destruction and theft of property, and intentional accidents as forms of resistance

among employees (2020, pp. 1-2). The experiences of the transferred prisoners support Katz's (2004) and Abu-Lughod's (1990, p. 41) assertion that resistance should not be "romanticised" as a direct outcome of power dynamics exhibited by individuals in oppressed conditions, such as prisoners, but should be understood as a complex encounter, a situation aptly described as "somewhat chaotic" by Baaz et al. (2016, p. 137). For my study, the chaotic contours of resistance are embedded in the transfer experiences of the prisoners, which they express through overlapping emotions, sentiments, and challenges, as represented in Figure 5.3 below.

5.3.1 Transferred prisoners' resistance to transfer

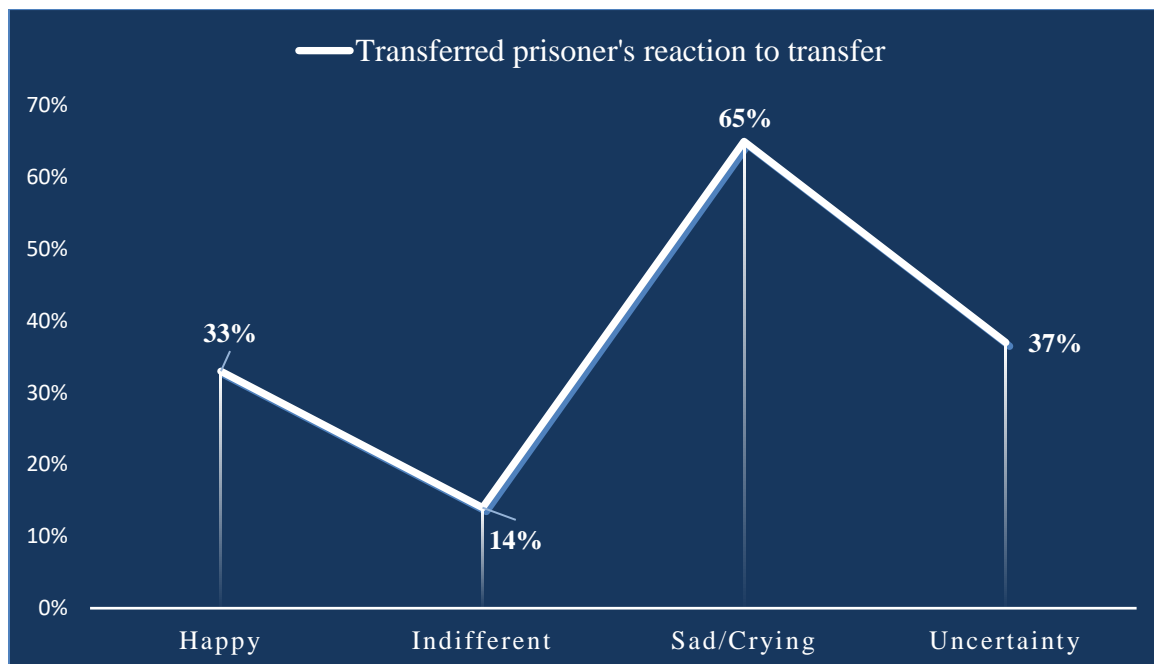
It is important to reiterate that the complexity of transferred prisoners' resistance stems from their mixed feelings about the transfer. When I asked them to recount how they responded to the transfer, nearly two-thirds (65%) of the transferred prisoners expressed sadness, with some even disclosing that they shed tears during the process. Multiple reasons accounted for their sadness, including a separation from their social networks, the inability to inform their family members, the hindrance of their appeal cases, and a feeling of being re-traumatized as if they were being re-sentenced. For instance, a significant portion of these transferred prisoners commonly undergo transfers from their birthplace (see Figure 5.4 and Table 5.1 on transfer distances), and a section of them had already formed networks of friendship in the previous prison. Therefore, the inconvenience the transfer imposes on their families in terms of visitation (see Chapter 6, Section 6.4.1 for more information) and the process of integration (such as forming new friendships and acquiring new belongings like utensils and beds) in the new prison contribute to their profound sadness. The excerpt below illuminates the concern of accessing some essential properties post the transfer by one of the transferred prisoners:

Initially, I was a bit confused. I was thinking about how I would have to start all over again. I was familiar with the previous prison because I spent almost 3 years there and I had a bed, my cups, utensils, and so many other things. I was thinking about all this and whether I would have a bed at the place I was being taken to, so I was sad. You know, if you are a new prisoner in a facility, you will suffer until you make new friends. (**Gideon, transferred prisoner, Q25**)

The transferred prisoner's sadness also emanates from the stage and cost involved in the appeal applications. As I mentioned in Chapter 4, transferred prisoners are responsible for the costs

associated with appealing their sentence, including the transportation to and from the appeal hearing. Consequently, the transferred prisoners often harbour concerns regarding the financial ramifications, and in the absence of a court order preventing transfer, the inmate may be transferred regardless of the stage of the appeal process. In this regard, prisoners who have initiated their appeal application but have not reached completion are occasionally subjected to transfers. Lastly, prisons are spaces where individual emotions and memories are constantly coalescing, encompassing sentiments of suffering, atonement, remorse, and transformation (Jewkes and Laws, 2021; Foucault, 1977, p. 180). Within the context of this thesis, transfers prolong the pain and atonement endured by prisoners. Furthermore, I posit that transfers revive dormant memories, including the emotions associated with their initial entry into prison.

Figure 5.3: Distribution of transferred prisoners' reaction/resistance to the transfer



Source: Data from transferred prisoners, 2022

There are many reasons why prisoners' reactions to transfer vary. These include disparities in resources between prisons (e.g., bedding, exercising yard, water, feeding, infirmary) and individual circumstances (i.e., closeness or distant from networks). In contrast to the prevailing sentiments of sadness, a third (33%) of the transferred prisoners expressed happiness regarding their transfer (see Figure 5.3). The rationale behind their happiness primarily revolves around the enhanced level of convenience and the change in the environment of their incarceration. Traditionally, the prison system aims to curtail the comfort afforded to prisoners by imposing

various restrictions (Haesen et al., 2023). However, the experiences of the transferred prisoners suggest that transfer tends to augment their comfort. For instance, out of the 53 (33%) transferred prisoners who expressed contentment with their transfer, 23 (14%) cited that their new prison was in closer proximity and more accessible to their family members compared to their previous confinement. Besides the convenience it offers to their loved ones, transfer also fosters an increased frequency of visitations from family members and friends, a theme I return to in Chapter 6.

Through transfers, prisoners can move across different spaces, allowing for diverse movement experiences (see also Mincke, 2020). By acknowledging the role of restricted movement in their punishment, the transferred prisoners argue that transfers help them navigate through their lengthy prison terms. Consequently, rather than enduring their sentence exclusively within one prison facility, which can engender a monotonous prison experience, prisoners eagerly anticipate gaining new encounters by interacting with fellow inmates from various backgrounds and acquiring new skills through participation in training workshops in their new prison following the transfer.

Moreover, slightly more than one-third (37%) of the transferred prisoners experienced a certain degree of uncertainty upon hearing that they were about to be transferred, as depicted in Figure 5.3 above. Similar to Hasselberg (2016), the uncertainty transferred prisoners felt primarily stems from their unfamiliarity with the destination they are being transferred to, as they are often unaware of the transfer until the day it happens. Manu, one of the transferred prisoners, made an insightful statement shedding light on the uncertainty of life in prison, saying, “The only thing certain in prison is the number of years a prisoner is sentenced. Anything after that, you don’t know, and you cannot do anything about it.” Thus, the transferred prisoners frequently find themselves in perpetual contemplation regarding their destination, the events that will transpire at the new facility, and the likelihood of reuniting with their loved ones. The following conversation illuminates the experience of a transferred prisoner grappling with uncertainty.

Interviewer: *Can you briefly narrate how you responded to the transfer information?*

Transferred prisoner: When I heard that I was to be transferred, I was worried because I did not know where I was being taken. They just came in late in the night and mentioned our names. Before my sentence, I used to hear stories that in prison, they could just take you out and kill you [...] I panicked. I thought they were going to kill me. The problem is

that nobody tells you anything. Before my transfer, some of my cellmates were taken from the cell while we were still sleeping. We never heard about them again. So, I was confused and scared because those people were never brought back before they came to take us too. I did not know what had happened to them or what would happen to me.

Interviewer: *Why didn't you ask them where you were being taken to, or were you afraid?*

Transferred prisoner: I was not afraid to ask them where I was being taken to, I know that they would not tell me, so I did not even bother to ask them.

Similar observations are noted among persons in detention (Gashi, Pedersen, and Ugelvik, 2021; Turnbull, 2016), as well as individuals seeking refuge from conflict situations (Hyndman and Giles, 2017; Hasselberg, 2016) that reveal an uncertain future. Drawing lessons from the work of Hasselberg, uncertainties among detainees emanate from three sources: an unfathomable understanding of why deportation is happening to them, the chances of preventing their deportation, and the consequences of failing to prevent the deportation (2016, p. 96).

Also, the embodiments of anxiety, stress, and shock that accompany transferred prisoners' uncertainties about transfer became more disturbing among the death row inmates I interviewed. Without an exact date for their execution by the state, the death row inmates continue to live in a state of uncertainty. For instance, death row prisoners are placed in a distressing state (such as 'time to be killed') in many circumstances. These include the abrupt summoning of them to the administration by prison officers, unplanned visitations from networks, which means they are called to the gate without knowing the reason, and their own sensory maps by hearing the opening cells at odd hours by the prison officers, shouting their names by the prison officers or fellow prisoners. In this sense, transfers tend to exacerbate these experiences of uncertainty because of their lack of awareness, the timing of the transfer, and the mood of the prison environment during the transfer (see Section 5.3.2 for further details). Dapilah, a 49-year-old transferred prisoner describes how his status as a condemned prisoner shaped the way he responded to a transfer:

I am charged with murder, and they have condemned me. I could be killed at any time. I do not think about anything apart from when they are going to kill me. When I arrived at the previous prison and they realised that I was a condemned prisoner, they said they would have to transfer me because their facility is not meant for condemned prisoners. But they

did not tell me when I would be transferred. It was around 3:00 am when they came to my cell and said I should come out and follow them. Because I know that I would be killed, I thought that was the end. I just came out with only my shorts and shirt, and I told one of my cellmates to inform my family to come and pick up my belongings. I thought they were just going to kill me at that time, but it turned out to be a transfer. **(Dapilah, transferred prisoner, Q53)**

Lastly, the transferred prisoners' diverse backgrounds, combined with their varied sentences, result in different perceptions of their punishment. Some transferred prisoners perceive the transfer as a form of punishment, while others normalise it. Those who normalise it view the transfer as just another part of their punishment, which they have no trepidations about, and in their view, "it was just a movement from prison to prison." The normalisation of transfers is prevalent among repeat offenders and foreign prisoners. In the view of the foreign transferred prisoners, being imprisoned or transferred within Ghana does not result in an improvement in their closeness to their networks. On the other hand, repeat offenders claim that first-time offenders and those experiencing their first transfer tend to panic and exhibit various reactions, such as sadness, fear, anxiety, or even happiness. The normalisation of transfer also stems from the perception of the prisoners that it is not an action targeting specific prisoners. According to them, it is a practise in which all inmates have the potential to be transferred; hence, "why should I bother myself if I am not the only one transferred?" queried one of the transferred prisoners.

From the above accounts, it is apparent that transfer information is often concealed from the prisoners, regardless of their status (e.g., those on death row, serving lengthy sentences, lifers, etc.). From the concealment of the transfer information, I draw attention to two significant issues. First, transferred prisoners construct their own narratives based on the concealment of transfer information, leading them to believe, for instance, that they will never be reunited with their family members, among others. Second, the practise of concealing transfer information is a strategic and psychological tool employed to inflict punishment upon prisoners. This practise reinforces the notion that prisons are unsettling spaces where inmates are constantly anxious, living in fear, and framing their own stories (see also Jewkes and Laws, 2021; Maier and Ricciardelli, 2019). Analogous to the diverse range of reactions expressed by the transferred prisoners, the procedures involved in transferring prisoners also engender various forms of preparatory measures. The next

sections will delve into the preparations undertaken by transferred prisoners prior to and during the transfer process.

5.3.2 Transferred prisoners' preparations during transfer

Prisoners' preparations shape the transfer process and their overall prison experience. The extent of the prisoner's preparedness during the transfer directly influences their integration into the new prison. In this study, I analysed transferred prisoners' preparation as an overarching engagement encompassing the successful and convenient completion of various activities prior to their actual transfer. These activities include bathing, using the lavatory, retrieving personal belongings, packing, and travelling with their possessions. Therefore, I framed transferred prisoners' preparation as either prepared or unprepared during the transfer. Before delving into these encounters, there are several factors that shape transferred prisoners' experiences of being prepared or unprepared during the transfer. For example, the level of awareness regarding the transfer, whether obtained through formal or informal sources, significantly impacts the transferred prisoners' preparedness. Likewise, the prison officers maintain that the behaviour of the inmates determines whether they will be allowed to prepare or not (see Chapter 4 for further details), as captured in the words of one of the prison officers:

The violent ones, you can even transfer them without their properties, and we have done that on several occasions. (**Zoro, Prison Officer, AMSP**)

Along similar lines, Ray, one of the transferred prisoners, claims that he was able to prepare before his transfer. However, the behaviour of the inmate matters a lot during the transfer. According to Ray:

When it comes to transfers, the behaviour of the inmate before the transfer counts. If you have bad behaviour, such as trying to influence the new arrivals, you will be transferred without even your knowledge. Before our transfer, some five inmates were transferred one hot afternoon. Before they even entered the transfer vehicle, their heads were covered with sacks, and they were handcuffed to the back. Nobody handcuffed me during my transfer. The officers did not even allow them to pick anything; they only went with the clothes they were wearing. If you have cash with the facility, you cash out before the transfer, but with their transfer, I am not sure they could cash out their monies if they have any. (**Ray, transferred prisoner, Q32**)

The time of the transfer also affects the preparedness of the prisoners during the transfer. From the experiences of the transferred prisoners, they [transferred prisoners] are frequently transferred at the break of dawn, which affects the inmates' preparations. Along the same lines, incidents of raids and pickups during unconventional hours are frequently reported among immigrants in the UK and other locations (see Lindberg, 2023, p. 103; Walters and Cornelisse, 2010). Evidently, the few transfers that occurred at a different time than those conducted at dawn allowed the prisoner to successfully and conveniently prepare during the transfer, as I explore in the next sections.

5.3.2.1 Transferred prisoners' perceptions about being prepared during transfer

Only a handful of the transferred prisoners claimed that the officers allowed them to prepare during the transfer. In framing their own experience of preparations during the transfer, they pointed out the opportunity afforded them to take their bath, use the loo, inform relatives to visit them with some essentials (e.g., toiletries, foodstuffs, and clothes) before the transfer, and their ability to pack and travel with their belongings. According to the transferred prisoners, the officers frequently prevent them from carrying most of their possessions because of a lack of space in the transportation vehicle. With such experience, prisoners just focus on packing what is essential during transfers, which affects them in the new prisons. However, the time a prisoner spends in prison determines the extent of belongings he possesses. For instance, a section of the transferred prisoners claimed they could prepare during the transfer because they did not have enough belongings since they spent less than a month in the previous prison. Hassan's (one of the transferred prisoners) account of spending only a few days in the previous prisons before being transferred illustrates this phenomenon:

The officers called me to the reception and asked if I had any belongings. I told them no, and they said I should go and bathe and come back. I did not have so many things because I spent only 3 days at the prison. It was only my tourist bag and two shirts; I was not even having a cup or bowl. I was about to settle when the transfer came, so there were not so many things to take along. (**Hassan, transferred prisoner, Q14**)

Moreover, the prisoners' awareness of the transfer helps them make arrangements before the transfer. The officers contacted and informed the select few prisoners who were already aware of the transfer (see Sections 4.6 for more details) that they would be transferred, although often without being provided with the precise date and time. In response, the transferred prisoners gather

their essential possessions and inform their relatives to visit them before the transfer. As a result, regardless of when, at what time, or under what circumstances the transfer occurred, these specific groups of transferred prisoners were often well-prepared. Conversely, the majority of transferred prisoners recounted troubling experiences during their transfer, including instances of physical abuse, being compelled to move and forcibly placed into transfer vehicles, and being transferred without any of their identification cards, clothing, food, or utensils, among other things.

5.3.2.2 Transferred prisoners' perceptions about being unprepared during transfer

This section discusses the various aspects of transferred prisoners' perceptions of their lack of preparedness during the transfer process and the unequal power dynamics between the prisoners and the prison officers that contribute to the transferred prisoners' unpreparedness. Despite the importance of transferred prisoners' preparedness, many of them argue that they did not adequately prepare during the transfer. The transferred prisoners accounts regarding their transfers appear to conflict with the established procedures described by the prison officers (see Chapter 4 for further details). The following narrative exemplifies a typical encounter during an inmate's transfer:

The day of the transfer was like a typical robbery scene. Heh! When they mention your name, you come out; whatever was on your body was what you would travel with. When you even attempt to pick up any of your belongings, even towels, the officers will hit you with a piece of car tyre. Those who were even aware and had packed their things already when they even slowed to pick them up were beaten. That day, huh! The officers really dealt with me; I was beaten because I wanted to pick up my clothes. Even attempting to carry a water container, they will beat you. So, I came here without anything. **(I.B, transferred prisoner, Q23)**

The previous account appears to represent a commonly shared occurrence among transferred prisoners who assert that they were unprepared during the transfer. Not only do these individuals endure physical abuses, such as beatings, dragging, shouting, and insults, during the transfer, but they also often undergo the experience of being transferred without their personal belongings, including clothing, health insurance cards, driver's licenses, toiletries, and utensils. This deprivation of possessions further compounds the already distressing circumstances faced by prisoners, particularly with regard to the conditions surrounding their transfer. In addition to their

lack of awareness, the prison officers employ various covert tactics during the transfer, all of which contribute to the transferred prisoners' lack of preparedness.

Considering the lack of awareness regarding the impending transfer and the unfamiliar circumstances they will face, transferred prisoners frequently experience panic, shock, and disorientation during these transfers. The discretionary actions of the officers contribute to varying degrees of unpreparedness among the transferred prisoners. Gershgoren and Cohen (2023) have argued that street-level bureaucrats, such as police and prison officers, occasionally use discretion in carrying out their duties, which often exhibit biases (see also Lipsky, 2010). While some transferred prisoners claim to have been handcuffed while they were sleeping and promptly escorted to the vehicle, others assert that they were allowed a brief period to gather their belongings in the presence of the prison officers.

Moreover, the transmission of information regarding the transfer of prisoners is sometimes characterised by alterations, inaccuracies, and manipulations. To illustrate, transferred prisoners have claimed that the officers sometimes prevented them from packing their possessions during the transfers on the grounds that they would be given some necessities (such as mattresses, blankets, cups, bowls, and toiletries) upon arrival at the new prison, or they would deliver their belongings to them later. This type of manipulation by prison officers not only facilitates the passive transfer of prisoners but also exacerbates the difficulties faced by transferred prisoners in the new prisons, as they neither have access to their belongings nor receive any new essential items such as utensils, toiletries, or blankets. Despite the positive outcomes from these manoeuvres as perceived by the prison officer, prisoners not only resent this approach, but many of them have resolved not to make the 'mistake' of being transferred without carrying their belongings, as recounted by Kojo, one of the transferred prisoners below:

I faced many challenges when I got here [the prison]. The officers came at about 4:00 a.m. when I was still sleeping. I could not pick anything. I only came here with my knicker and singlet. When I got here, it was a new place, and I found it difficult to even contact my family. We tried to pick a few things, but they told us to leave everything because everything would be provided at the new prison. We got here, and they gave us nothing. Since then, I have learnt my lessons. **(Kojo, transferred prisoner, Q62)**

Also, the transferred prisoners identified that the rescheduling of the transfer dates contributed to

their lack of preparedness. The administrative procedures involved in prisoner transfers, such as approval, accompaniment by officers, and provision of transportation vehicles by the prison headquarters, as described in Chapter 4, result in the regular occurrence of rescheduled transfers throughout the prison facilities across the country. Transferred prisoners who assert that they were duly notified about their transfers further argue that transfers were conducted either earlier or later than originally scheduled. Due to the unpredictability of the transfer dates, transferred prisoners frequently find themselves unprepared for the transfer. The officers corroborate the notion of changes in transfer dates and times, attributing these delays and modifications primarily to the bureaucratic processes involved in transfer approval and other logistical considerations at the headquarters (see Sales, Forrester, and Tully, 2023; Cochran, 2020).

5.3.3 Journeying from prison to prison: transferred prisoners experiences during transportation

In this section, I focus on the transfer routes of the prisoners (see Figure 5.4) and their experiences and challenges in transit and during transportation. Prisoners' experiences transcend the precincts of the prison, especially when they are moved across different spaces by the state. There is growing scholarship on various forms of mobility among prisoners, ranging from court appearances (Gear, 2021), inmates working outside prisons (Zamble and Porporino, 2013), and transporting prisoners between prisons (Gashi, Pedersen, and Ugelvik, 2021). Transportation forms an integral part of the transfer experience, and apart from the varied forms of experiences it produces, it is also shrouded in diverse power relations. Before I delve into the transfer experiences and embedded power relations during the transportation, Figure 5.4 shows the transfer routes of the prisoners. Although the two study areas (i.e., AMSP and NMSP) appear as the final destinations for the transferred prisoners, it is important to reiterate that prison transfer is an ongoing process, and not a one-off event (see Chapter 4, Section 4.4 further information on temporary transfers).

The findings reveal testimonies of unequal power relations between transferred prisoners and escorting officers during transportation. These unequal power relations tend to create a series of challenges for the transferred prisoners throughout the transportation phase. The transferred prisoners depicted the transportation vehicle as a replica of the prison building characterised by several challenges, ranging from overcrowding, psychological stress (i.e., wielding of guns, denial of food and water), confiscation of properties, and handcuffing of inmates.

Figure 5.4: Map showing transfer routes to AMSP and NMSP



Source: Mapping of the transferred prisoners transfer journeys the researcher

Due to the logistical challenges confronting the GPS, as highlighted in Chapter 4, prisoners are often transferred in groups. For instance, the mean number of prisoners transferred at each transfer phase for this thesis was 31. During such group and coordinated transfers, transport vehicles often transit through several prisons to pick prisoners for the final destinations (i.e., AMSP and NMSP). Although most of the transfers involved transiting through different prisons (such as Tamale central, Sunyani central, and Kumasi central), a few transfers were directly carried out without any stopovers before reaching the final destinations. During such stopovers, the transferred prisoners are occasionally allowed to use the toilet and new prisoners picked up for the final destination – either AMSP or NMSP (see Figure 5.4). Inadequate space in the transport vehicle becomes a concern for the transferred prisoners; hence, transport vehicles are often overcrowded because of the substantial number of inmates during the transfer. Consequently, some transferred prisoners either stand throughout the journey or reshuffle their seats with fellow inmates. Indeed, it is a challenge for transferred prisoners to stand for one to fifteen hours over several miles during transportation as shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Main transfer prisons with distances to AMSP and NMSP

Transferred Prisons	Distance (miles) to study sites	
	<i>Ankaful Maximum Security Prisons</i>	<i>Nsawam Medium Security Prison</i>
Wa central prison	424	416
Tamale central prison	393	368
Sunyani central prison	216	213
Kumasi central prison	140	137
Tarkwa local prison	99	203
Sekondi central prison	42	145
Akuse local prison	147	48
Ho central prison	196	97
Navrongo central prison	511	487
Nsawam medium security	111	

Source: Data from Google Earth, 2022

According to the transferred prisoners, upon arriving at the new prisons, they often experience back pain and inflammation of the legs. The challenges experienced by the transferred prisoners during transportation were further exacerbated by the handcuffing of inmates on both hands and legs as precautionary measures against escapes. According to the transferred prisoners, they are often handcuffed in pairs amid the poor road infrastructure of the country, which makes their sitting in the vehicle unsettling; hence, they tend to experience ‘double locking of the cuffs’ (Haddad et al., 1999), often leading to swelling and lacerations of the wrist and legs.

Similarly, the transferred prisoners pointed out the psychological stress they experienced during transportation through the constant wielding of guns by the escorting officers, denial of food and water, and their inability to either urinate or excrete. Because of the lack of appropriate vehicles for prisoner transfer as stipulated by the prison officers, arming escorting officers tends to be one of the surest ways of ensuring that inmates do not escape during transportation. In that case, the seating arrangements in the vehicle are often compartmentalised, with prisoners often sitting in the middle and the escorting officers wielding guns at both sides. This constant gaze by the escorting officers, which “forms a part of the overall functioning of power” (Foucault, 1977, p. 195),

permeates throughout the entire journey, including when prisoners tend to ease themselves (e.g., urinate, excrete, and vomiting), as illustrated in the narration below:

We were more than 70 people in the vehicle. There was no space to do anything. I stood throughout the journey because I did not have a seat. Sometimes I have to sit on the edge of one of the car seats. They used glass and wire mesh to partition the vehicle into three places, and we were in the middle. We could not hear the officers, but they were looking at us. On the way, two of my mates wanted to go to the toilet and we hit the glass to tell the officers. When they told them they wanted to go to the toilet, they would not stop. They hold it ahh! Until they could not and do it on themselves, inside the vehicle. It really smelt inside, and we sat with the faeces until we reached here. (**Obour, transferred prisoner, Q64**)

Relatedly, Adamu who was a prison officer before becoming a prisoner shares his experience with the challenges prisoners face during transportation:

We only ate gari with bread on the way to this prison. When you tell the officers that you want to urinate, they wouldn't mind you. They will only stop when they see that your eyes are changing, meaning that you are suffering. But before they even stop to allow you to urinate, they will point a gun at you, and one of the officers had to open my zip and hold my penis for me to urinate, and the officer that held my penis, we trained and graduated the same year. (**Adamu, transferred prisoner, Q26**)

Similarly, some transferred prisoners asserted that the vehicle in which they were transported never stopped throughout the journey. Consequently, transferred prisoners who complained about urinating or going to the toilet were made to use either an empty yellow plastic gallon/container or a polythene bag as related to Sam's, a transferred prisoner experience:

We were on the way when an older man said he wanted to urinate. I told him that he should not talk to the officers because they would not mind him. He thought I was joking, and when he went and told them about it, they said he should go and sit down and urinate into the gallon. He said he was not having a gallon, and then the officer said he should tighten his trousers and urinate inside because he was not going to stop until he arrived at Nsawam. He came back, and I could see that he was suffering, so I gave him my gallon and he

urinated inside. When we arrived here, he went and emptied the gallon and brought it to me. I told him to throw it away, and he said he would wash it and use it to fetch water. He is still using it. (**Sam, transferred prisoner, Q41**)

In addition to the inability of most of the transferred prisoners to eat before departing from the prison and the long distance they travelled, many of the transferred prisoners also alleged that they were denied food and water during transportation. Commenting on the allegation of denying inmates food and water, the prison officers posited that they often transport the prisoners after a meal (i.e., breakfast, lunch, supper). In instances where they would transport the prisoners before a meal is ready, they are given their portion of the food, mostly gari and sugar, which they eat along the way. Although some of the transferred prisoners confirmed that they were given gari and sugar, a section refuted these claims. A few of them alleged that they even gave money to the escorting officers to buy them food, but the officers neither gave them the food nor the money. Having stayed for so long without food and water, the transferred prisoners complained of fatigue and dizziness.

5.4 Concluding remarks of chapter

This chapter has mapped out various forms and scales of power relations between prison officers and transferred prisoners within the transfer process. Foucault (1977, p. 271) maintained that the contours of the carceral system transcend the stasis or movement of the prisoner but include its “coercive regulations [...] and mechanisms that reinforce delinquency.” Hence, situating prisoners as an anchor of a system and actors helps us to understand their carceral experience, especially the various layers and forms of power relations (Siegel and Worrall, 2016). Although the focus of this study is on the transfer experiences of prisoners, I maintain that prisoners’ encounters with the police and the judicial system before the sentence and transfer reveal asymmetric power relations hypostatized through seizure and non-disclosure of prisoners’ possessions (i.e., phones holding contact numbers of relatives, monies), and inadequate legal representation. Beyond this pre-sentence experience, diverse forms of strategies are used in the transfer process, which are either covert or glaring and radical, including the use of verbal insults, physical assaults, handcuffing, withholding meals, subjecting transferred prisoners to urinate and excrete into inappropriate materials, and the use of unfamiliar officers for escorts.

The transfer process is chaotic and unsettling in the view of the transferred prisoners; however, clear and formal procedures are followed during the transfer, according to the prison officers. As part of the strategies adopted in controlling or transferring prisoners, dates of transfers are either concealed or altered, and prisoners are often transferred in the middle of the night, a strategy that disorients the prisoners and limits any form of physical resistance. Similarly, the relationship between prisoners and prison officers becomes more intricate and misanthropic during transfers because unfamiliar officers from the GPS headquarters are often used for escort. Apart from these subtle manipulations, overt force ranging from insults, beatings, and denial of food to handcuffing prisoners during the transfer was a common experience among the transferred prisoners. The conditions under which prisoners are transferred affect their integration into the new prison, altering transferred prisoners' relationships with their networks and worsening the financial challenges of the transferred prisoners' families, as I explore in the next chapter.

To conclude, this chapter has shown that besides symbolising the transfer of prisoners or persons in confined spaces as 'disciplined mobility' (Moran, Piacentini, and Pallot, 2012), particular attention must be extended to the processes and trajectories of the transfer where the contours of unbridled power relations exist.

CHAPTER SIX

UNVEILING THE HIDDEN CONSEQUENCES OF PRISON TRANSFER AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRANSFERRED PRISONERS AND THEIR SOCIAL NETWORKS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on RO3 and RO4, which focus on post-transfer access to transferred prisoners' social networks (e.g., family members, friends, and co-workers) and the effects of incarceration and transfer on the relationship between transferred prisoners and their family members. Until recently, carceral scholarship has described the social networks of prisoners as "external appendages" (cited in Hutton and Moran, 2019, p. 2; Comfort, 2008), where the focus of the effects of incarceration was mainly on the prisoners. Moving beyond this conventional focus, I explored the incarceration and transfer effects on both inmates and their social networks. I analyse transferred prisoners and their social networks experiences of the effects of incarceration and transfer as an independent yet overlapping phenomenon. To draw the distinction between the pre- and post-transfer effects of the incarceration, I espoused three key themes: 1) distance; 2) time; and 3) risk and hazards associated with family members/visitors' movement between prison and home to meet transferred prisoners (see Section 6.4.1). Despite the blurred boundaries between incarceration and inmate transfer in which the practises of the former seemingly encapsulate the latter, as shown in the preceding chapters, the research participants shared nuanced and varied experiences of the consequences of the two phenomena. Regarding the effects of incarceration on the transferred prisoners and their networks, the principal experiences I identified include broken families, disrupted schooling, loss of self-esteem, loss of business, the inability to grieve upon the death of a relative, and inmate self-improvement (e.g., quitting smoking and alcohol, access to the prison library).

On the other hand, I observed the effects of transfer on two fronts. First, I assert that transfers often modify and exacerbate the consequences of incarceration, such as separation of families because of long distance, posing travel risks for transferred prisoners' support networks during visitations, and prisoners opting to serve their sentence away from their networks to conceal their imprisonment and foster self-reflection. Second, transfer affects the rehabilitation of transferred prisoners and a potential discouraging practice to even non-transferred prisoners, such as their refusal to sign up for training programmes instituted by the prison, a claim that I return to in Section

6.4. Among the many challenges that imprisonment imposes on transferred prisoners and their networks, I ask what support systems are available to transferred prisoners and their family members, especially in a country with a weak welfare system such as Ghana (see also Wong, 2014; Darkwah, 2012). In this chapter, I chronicle some of the support systems available to both the transferred prisoners and their social networks.

Prisons are described as social institutions (Comfort, 2008; Goffman, 1961) and are characterised by diverse forms of encounters ranging from negotiations and surveillance to searches on both prisoners and visitors. This chapter accounts for these encounters through an analysis of interviews with visitors, transferred prisoners, and prison officers, complemented by my observations during fieldwork at various sections of the prison (e.g., waiting room for visitors, registration centre, and visitor's meeting rooms). Regarding the structure of the chapter, first, I explore the effects of incarceration in the context of Ghana (Sections 6.2 and 6.3) and how transfer modifies and exacerbates these effects (Section 6.4) on both the transferred prisoner and family members, arguing that their closer examination shows blurred boundaries that reinforces the heterogeneity of prisoner's experience. Second, I examined the visitors access, negotiations, and challenges post-transfer of a relative at the various prisons (Sections 6.5 and 6.6), through which I used the experiences of the research participants and my personal observations at the various prisons to demarcate 3 points (Sections 6.5.1, 6.5.2 and 6.5.3) of interaction between visitors and prison officers, which are potential areas for the manifestation of power dynamics. I conclude the chapter by examining the various social support systems available to both transferred prisoners and family members (Section 6.7).

6.2 Incarceration, Prisoner Transfers, and its Effects on Families

The effects of incarceration on prisoners have often been at the forefront of empirical inquiry; however, until recently, less attention has been paid to the role it plays in the lives of inmates' families (Condry and Minson, 2020; Hutton and Moran, 2019; Comfort, 2008). Synthesising scholarship on the effects of incarceration identifies the following impacts: economic constraints (Bruns, 2020), psychological traumas (Johnson et al., 2021), and sociocultural repercussions (e.g., stigma, divorce, antisocial behaviours among children) (McKay et al., 2019) are ubiquitous. Comfort et al. (2016) emphasised the overlap of the consequences of incarceration among prisoners and their relatives. The experiences of the research participants (i.e., transferred prisoners and their networks) in terms of incarceration effects in Ghana are not distinctive from discoveries

made in other locations, such as the U.S. (see Tadros et al., 2021; Wakefield and Uggen, 2010), South Africa (Dünkel, Harrendorf, and van Zijl-Smit, 2022), and the United Kingdom (Condry and Smith, 2018; Scharff-Smith, 2014). Although I reiterate the general effects of incarceration on transferred prisoners and their networks, it is critical to recognise the value of each transferred prisoner's unique experiences, considering the varying geographical context of the prisoner's incarceration.

I framed and examined the effects of incarceration in this study through the lens of social network theory (see Chapter 2, Section 2.7 for further details), which has gained traction in migration scholarship (see De Haas, Castles, and Miller, 2019). Massey et al. defined social network theory as a “set of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants, and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship, and shared community origin” (1993, p. 448). The strength of the theory and the rationale for its adoption in this study stem from the positioning of the transferred prisoner within a web of relations that transcend the conventional understanding of family. Franklin (1990, p. 1029) maintained that “[t]he family is that climate that one ‘comes home to’ and it is this network of sharing and commitments that most accurately describes the family unit, regardless of blood, legal ties, adoption, or marriage.” The theory presupposes that network members interact, influence one another, and share resources among themselves. Contextualising the experiences of the research participants within the network theory, I explore the effects of the transferred prisoner within their network of relationships, paying attention to the impact of incarceration: financial, marriage, and stigma. The analysis I present shows an intersection of the effects of the incarceration and other facets of transferred prisoners' experiences.

6.2.1 Financial implications of incarceration on transferred prisoners and their networks

The financial status of prisoners undoubtedly plays a critical role in their carceral experience, ranging from their legal representation and family living conditions to their reintegration into society following their release. Through the analysis of the sociodemographic characteristics of the transferred prisoners, a considerable number of them came from low-income families and had unstable employment before their conviction (see Chapter 3, Table 3.5). The research participants claim that family roles (i.e., paying school fees for their children, hospital and utility expenses, and providing food for the household) saw significant changes because of the strain brought about by incarceration. The reconfiguration of family roles, primarily influenced by financial difficulties,

takes centre stage on the effects of incarceration on the family, as 6 out of every 7 (86%) transferred prisoners mentioned the financial hardships that their imprisonment has imposed on their families. The transfer increased transportation costs for family members and the time lost in travelling to and from the prisons, exacerbating the difficulties on transferred prisoners and their family members (see Section 6.4 for further details). Visitors, particularly spouses and mothers of the transferred prisoners, express their deep distress regarding the difficulties they currently face because of the imprisonment of their primary source of income. As stated by a spouse of one of the transferred prisoners:

We have three children, all of whom are attending school. Before his imprisonment, he took care of the children's school fees and paid their health bills, rent, and electricity bills. I have a provision shop at the Kasoa market. Now the shop is almost empty because that is our only source of income. Sometimes I enter the shop and I feel like crying. I pay rent from the shop, and even this December, I must raise about GHC2400/£173 money to pay our rent. (**Akua, Visitor**)

Embedded in Akua's narrative is the assumption of roles that are traditionally carried out by male spouses, particularly in societies with a patriarchal structure where gender norms influence family roles, such as Ghana (Tenkorang et al., 2013). Similarly, in her influential book, 'Doing Time Together: Love and Family in the Shadow of the Prison,' Comfort (2008) pointed out that despite the hardships women face because of the incarceration of a loved one, some of them navigate through these hurdles to become more independent. Beyond the financial constraints experienced by transferred prisoners and their family members, the social effects were found to be significant, according to the research participants. Some of these social effects (e.g., marriages, education of transferred prisoners' relatives, chronic diseases among transferred prisoners, etc.) tend to be an upshot of the financial constraints confronting the families of prisoners, which I turn to in the next section.

6.2.2 Effects of incarceration on marriages of transferred prisoners

Incarceration has had a significant impact on the societal institution of marriage. Comfort (2008, p. 148) argued that the incarceration of a male spouse has three significant effects on the family, whereby "you did cause a triple effect: you got another man in jail. You got a single parent now. You got a child without a parent." The concept of "secondary prisonization" has been used to

contextualise research on the effects of incarceration on families, which reinforces the negative impact of incarceration on family members, including the disintegration of families (Comfort, 2019, p. 66; Condry and Minson, 2020; Codd, 2013), visitation (Comfort, 2019, p. 66), and psychological stress (Scharff-Smith, 2014).

More than a third (37%) of the transferred prisoners I interviewed were still married while incarcerated, while nearly a fifth (19%) were divorced following their incarceration. Many of the transferred prisoners expressed concern regarding the length of their sentences. Besides spending a significant portion of their lives in prisons, the research participants reported that the length of their sentence bears significant repercussions on the stability of their marital unions (see also Scharff-Smith, 2014). All the divorced transferred prisoners asserted that their female spouses, upon learning the extent of the sentence, concluded that they could not endure such a protracted period awaiting the release of their partners. Thus, they remarried or returned to the homes of their biological parents. Daari, a 32-year-old transferred prisoner whom I interviewed at one of the prison facilities, shared the following account:

My wife visited here once. She arrived from the north, and since her last visit, I have not heard from her again. According to the information I obtained from my brother when I called home to ask about her; she has packed and moved to her father's house. When she returned home after the visit, she told them that she could not wait for me to serve all those years. I have even heard that she is married and that our children are now living with my mother. **(Daari, transferred prisoner, Q84)**

The observation I made regarding the correlation between prison terms and marriage aligns with Einat's assertion that a lengthy prison sentence engenders the termination of marriages. However, Einat acknowledges that long marriages prior to the incarceration of a spouse may counterbalance this effect (2019, p. 152). Besides long marriages as a factor in sustaining prisoners' marriages, I observed among the 61 transferred prisoners who were still married that marriages with children before the incarceration of the male spouse were still functioning, which I delved into in the next paragraph. Apart from the length of the sentence, the stigma attached to some prisons also destabilises the marriages of transferred prisoners. According to the research participants, *Nsawam prison* is infamous for housing hardened criminals and those who cannot be *reformed*.

Consequently, once prisoners are transferred to Nsawam prison, they are perceived as beyond reform, and wives feel compelled to move on with their lives.

There are many factors that contribute to the decision of individuals to remain married despite one partner's incarceration. One prominent factor is the presence of children in the relationship. According to the research participants, female spouses choose to stay in the marriage primarily to care for their children. The transferred prisoners confirm this assertion and recognise the vital role their partners play by remaining married and taking care of their children. However, alongside this recognition, prisoners also experience a persistent sense of guilt. Apart from the financial inability to support their families, they express concerns about the conduct and deterioration of the educational performance of their children and siblings under their care.

6.2.2.1 *Impacts of incarceration on children*

The incarceration of a parent significantly affects a child's life (Codd, 2019; Morgan and Leeson, 2019), including their education. While previous research has established the negative consequences of incarceration for children, many of these studies have predominantly focused on the biological or legally assigned guardianship of children with incarcerated parents (see, for example, Wakefield, 2014; Comfort, 2009, p. 148; Arditti, Lambert-Shute, and Joest, 2003). However, the obligations of transferred prisoners I studied extend beyond their biological children to include siblings, nieces, and nephews. This variation in caregiving and responsibility arises from the contextual distinctions within family systems (i.e., nuclear and extended). As Boakye-Boaten (2010) points out, the extended family system prevalent in Ghanaian society involves a network of relationships that includes the exchange of benefits and obligations among its members. The average number of household members for transferred prisoners is 7 for this study, which demonstrates the potential financial pressure on families before, during, and after incarceration. Approximately one-seventh (14%) of the transferred prisoners expressed concerns that their children and siblings had discontinued their education because of financial constraints, and around 5 of the 23 (14%) reported that their children had dropped out of school because of pregnancy.

Moreover, a handful of the transferred prisoners said that their wards had switched schools, from attending an expensive and high-performing school to a more affordable and lower-performing institution, negatively affecting their academic performance. The prisoners attributed this situation to their own incarceration, which, in its [imprisonment] intended purposes, shred and muddled

family relationships. In the same fashion, several studies have found behaviours such as early sexual activities, low educational performance (see, for example, Murray, Farrington, and Sekol, 2012), and delinquency (e.g., drug use, theft) (see, for instance, Codd, 2013) among children of incarcerated parents. In the view of the transferred prisoners, the lack of patria potestas often leads to indiscipline among the children, whereby children are not “given a good beating” when they misbehave (see also Rush and Ibrahim Lazarus, 2018, p. 177). Commenting on the impact of his incarceration, Adu, one of the transferred prisoners asserted, ‘My wife is doing a good job with the children, but you know the special bond between a mother and her daughter. Our eldest daughter started misbehaving after my sentence, and now she is pregnant. The mother will complain, oh! She wouldn’t have dared to do this when I was free. But now I cannot do anything.’

The incarceration also engenders stigma among relatives of transferred prisoners, particularly children, which their peers may use against them during conflicts (see Sections 6.2.2.1 and 6.2.3 for additional information on stigma). In the view of the transferred prisoners, incarceration comes with several scars, which are potentially bequeathed to their offspring. For example, besides growing up without one of their parents, children, according to both transferred prisoners and visitors, frequently become victims and have to cope with comments like “his/her father is a thief” or “she/he doesn’t know her/his father” (field notes, 2022). The following passage portrays the experience of one of the visitors, who visited his father for the second time in 18 years:

My father was already here [in prison] when I was born. I grew up with only my mother. All along, I thought my dad was dead because my mother never said anything about him, and I never asked. Something happened; I cannot remember exactly, but my mother said my dad was at Nsawam. I was confused, and I even did not know where Nsawam was. I just asked her what he was doing there. Then she said he was in prison. I became more confused, but I could not do anything. When I came here the first time and met him, I did not know him, and he said he had been seeing me in pictures. That day, he cried. I could not cry that day because that was my first time seeing him. I thought he was dead, but now we talk all the time because he occasionally calls from the phone booth. (**Fred, Visitor**)

From Fred’s account, it is evident that concealing the incarceration of a family member from children is occasionally done. The concealment of the incarceration of a parent from a child raises conflicting reactions among research centred on children of prisoners (see, for example, Bülow,

2022; Minson, 2020; Scharff-Smith, 2014). For instance, Scharff-Smith (2014) argued that concealing the incarceration of a parent from a child breaks trust and leaves the child in a constant state of uncertainty about when the incarcerated parent will come back home. On the contrary, the author opines that informing a child about a parent's incarceration "helps children see the consequences of actions" (Scharff-Smith, 2014, p. 68), such as engaging in criminal activities. Considering the detrimental effects of incarceration on all family members and the cultural discourse and perception of incarceration of family members, as I discussed, family members, especially children, should be made aware of parent incarceration. This will help alleviate the difficult circumstances in which they may receive such information. Next, I illuminate the concept of stigma as a consequence of imprisonment and its impact on the family members of the transferred prisoner.

6.2.3 Stigma and self-esteem among transferred prisoners

In this section, I explore stigma through transferred prisoners' non-participation in some cultural activities, including funerals, marriages, festivities (e.g., Christmas, Eid-Fitr, Eid-Adha), and naming ceremonies. Beyond the obvious consequences of incarceration (e.g., financial constraints), there are often vestiges of abstract or emotional experiences (e.g., introspection by inmates, guilt, regrets, etc.) and societal imposition of dishonour (see, for example, Goffman, 1963), victimisation, and rejection. These attributes often transcend the prisoners and affect their close relatives, a process Goffman referred to as "courtesy stigma" (cited in Hutton and Moran, 2019, p. 3). Concerns about stigma and low self-esteem post-release from prison were prevalent among the transferred prisoners rather than their networks. Several studies have recognised imprisonment as a symbolic source of stigma, which is often interpreted in relation to the crime committed by the prisoner (Rutter and Barr, 2021). However, I argued that causes of stigma against prisoners extend beyond their simple presence in prisons and are instead engendered by their [prisoners] non-participation/absence in/from cultural events such as funerals and naming ceremonies. Joseph, one of the transferred prisoners recounts the death of his father:

I have a sister, and she is married now. I was still in prison when my dad died. Fortunately, I had not been transferred by then. My family informed the in-charge about the death, and he approved that some officers take me to the burial. Although I attended the burial, the shame was unbearable because I was handcuffed and marched through lots of people when they took me to our family's house, where the funeral was held. I don't know where you

come from, but for funerals in the north, the first 7 days are always packed with so many people, extended relatives from different communities. You know, the question people like to ask during these times is whether he has children or a son. Imagine responding, Ooh, his only son is in prison. I even regretted going to the funeral, but this is something I could not refuse. Because I am the only son, and I will never see him again. (**Joseph, transferred prisoner, Q159**)

The death of a loved one while still incarcerated is a concern among the transferred prisoners. Contextually, death and funerals are highly revered in Ghanaian society (Mazzucato, Kabki, and Smith, 2006). There are often rites marked by people paying their last respect to the deceased, resulting in significant attention and participation from various groups. The role of the family member(s) in the funeral arrangements of the deceased cannot be overlooked. Having identified themselves as an offspring/father/spouse while incarcerated, a cross-section of the transferred prisoners claimed that their incarceration obliterated their roles in the funeral rites of a relative (e.g., father, mother, wife, child, and sibling). Acknowledging the cultural significance attached to a child's participation in the funeral and burial rites of a parent, the transferred prisoners expressed the irreparable blemish their absence at various family funerals because of their incarceration has created. Such experiences shared by the transferred prisoners overlap with Goffman's description of stigma, specifically "blemishes of individual character" and "tribal stigma of race, nation, and religion" (1963, p. 4) (see also Joseph, one of the transferred prisoners accounts).

In summary, the evidence from this study reiterates the adverse effects of incarceration on families. Despite the geographic differences, there is an overlap in the consequences of incarceration, ranging from financial constraints and altering of family dynamics (i.e., divorces, single parenting) to socio-cultural construction and imposition of stigmatisation and victimisation. Significant from this study is also the corroborating evidence of the 'secondary prisonization' of family members as professed by Comfort (2009) and Codd (2013), among others, implying that policies and interventions for the management of the carceral systems of respective countries, especially Ghana, must transcend the inmates to include their family members. Beyond the adverse effects of incarceration on transferred prisoners and their networks, a few studies endeavour to highlight the positive impact of incarceration (Hornberger et al., 2021; Comfort, 2009). Although a handful of the transferred prisoners shared some positive views about their incarceration, which is the focus

of the next section, the evidence from this study contributes to this hidden yet important dimension of the carceral experience.

6.3 Transferred prisoners' perception of the positive effects of incarceration

In this section, I focus on the positive consequences of incarceration, which are often overshadowed by the negative implications of incarceration. The reasons underpinning imprisonment are frequently linked to deterrence and rehabilitation, which involve providing skill training to inmates (Jones, 2021; Williams and McShane, 2018). The principle of deterrence continues to manifest through the appalling conditions that characterise the carceral systems of various countries. As I presented in the previous sections, incarceration adversely affects an overwhelming majority (97%) of the transferred prisoners, including their family members. However, a fraction of the transferred prisoners (26%, or 41) I interviewed reported positive experiences during their incarceration. Contrary to the adverse effects of incarceration, which affects both transferred prisoners and their family members, transferred prisoners' perceptions of the positive impact of incarceration are centred on self-improvement. The transferred prisoners evaluated their level of improvement based on three considerations: improvement in temperaments, journey towards rehabilitation (e.g., abstinence from drug/alcohol/smoking usage), and access to skill training and education.

Prisons are frequently characterised as tumultuous environments (Laws, 2022), where diverse interactions are coalescing between various actors (e.g., prisoners, prison officers, visitors). According to Laws (2022), these interactions revolve around emotions and sentiments that give rise to aggression and violence (see Chapter 4 of this thesis for more detailed information). Relating emotions to masculinity, characteristics of anger, hostility, fear, and aggression are commonly found among male prisoners (see, for instance, Laws, 2022, p. 9; Karstedt, Loader, and Strang, 2011). The physical manifestation of these emotions, regarded as misconduct in this study, causes inmate transfers (see Section 4.6.5 for further elucidation). Based on the views of the transferred prisoners, prisons are spaces where prisoner behaviours are monitored, suppressed, and penalised. In this regard, engaging in any form of this misconduct could lead to solitary confinement, the denial of sentence reduction, and transfers to different prison facilities.

In the view of a subsection of the transferred prisoners, their incarceration contributes to their rehabilitation journey from drug addiction, alcoholism, and bad temperaments. The restrictive

nature of the prisons, as evidenced by strip searches of visitors and general cell searches (see Section 6.5), has made prisoners' access to contraband (e.g., cigarettes, marijuana, alcoholic beverages, and energy drinks) extremely difficult, according to the transferred prisoners. Hence, either the transferred prisoners see their incarceration as a recovery process and envisage not using drugs or alcohol post-release, a conclusion formed based on the number of years they are serving and their inability to use any of the contraband while inside. The consciousness transferred prisoners attached to their incarceration as a recovery journey may offer a pathway for the Ghana Prisons Service to achieve its mission of "reformation, rehabilitation, and reintegration of inmates." However, the service apparently does not have a formal treatment programme or policy framework for prisoners addicted to drugs and alcohol, rendering *rehabilitation* a buzzword used by both prisoners and the prison authority. The non-use of drugs could be attributed to their non-availability rather than a rehabilitation process for prisoners. For instance, Chamberlain et al. (2019) and others (Western and Simes, 2019) found that relapse was common among former prisoners.

Moreover, about a third of the 41 transferred prisoners who acknowledged the positive effects of incarceration were enrolled in different educational programmes. For instance, 6 of the transferred prisoners I interviewed stated that they were preparing to write the West African Senior School Certificate Examination in the hopes of pursuing a programme at the tertiary level. Furthermore, while 2 of the transferred prisoners had earned a diploma certificate from the University of Cape Coast, 5 others were still enrolled at the same university. According to the prison officers, the Distance Education Scholarship programme implemented through a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ghana Prisons Service, Plan Volta Foundation, and the University of Cape Coast facilitated prisoners' access to higher education. According to the transferred prisoners, attaining formal education during their incarceration was a second chance to improve their lives, and they are hopeful that leaving prison with a higher education could be used to secure employment (e.g., teaching) following their release. The opportunity offered to the prisoners to gain formal education during their sentence in this study coincides with the continuous calls to incorporate such programmes into prisoners' reformation and rehabilitation process (Dünkel, Harrendorf, and van Zijl-Smit, 2022). Several studies have found recidivism to be lower among prisoners who received formal education and vocational training during their incarceration as

compared to those who do not (see, for instance, Dünkkel, Harrendorf, and van Zijl-Smit, 2022; Biao, 2017; Pompoco et al., 2017; Esperian, 2010).

Despite the significant role formal education plays in the rehabilitation of prisoners, as revealed by the transferred prisoners and a corpus of scholarships (see also Boakye, Akoensi, and Baffour, 2022; Hutton and Moran, 2019), the opportunity for prisoners to enrol in and acquire formal school while incarcerated was limited because of a lack of resources and logistics. For instance, the programme at NMSP is saddled with varied challenges ranging from insufficient logistical support for studies (i.e., textbooks), inadequate teaching staff, and a lack of interest among some prisoners, who cite the number of years they are serving and the truncation of their studies due to transfers. Transfers, as I present, affect and complicate prisoner's prison experiences in terms of their connection with families and involvement in rehabilitation programmes, as narrated by Abdul, a transferred prisoner:

Transfers are not good. If I were in one prison without all these transfers, I could have learned some skills and be able to make money. The problem with the transfer is that you will start something (i.e., skill training, school), and in the middle of it, they will transfer you. I used to have a small garden in the previous prison and could sell the produce to other inmates. I was making money with that. But then they just came and transferred me, and all my suffering in the garden was wasted. I arrived here; there is nothing for me to do.
(Abdul, transferred prisoner, Q10A)

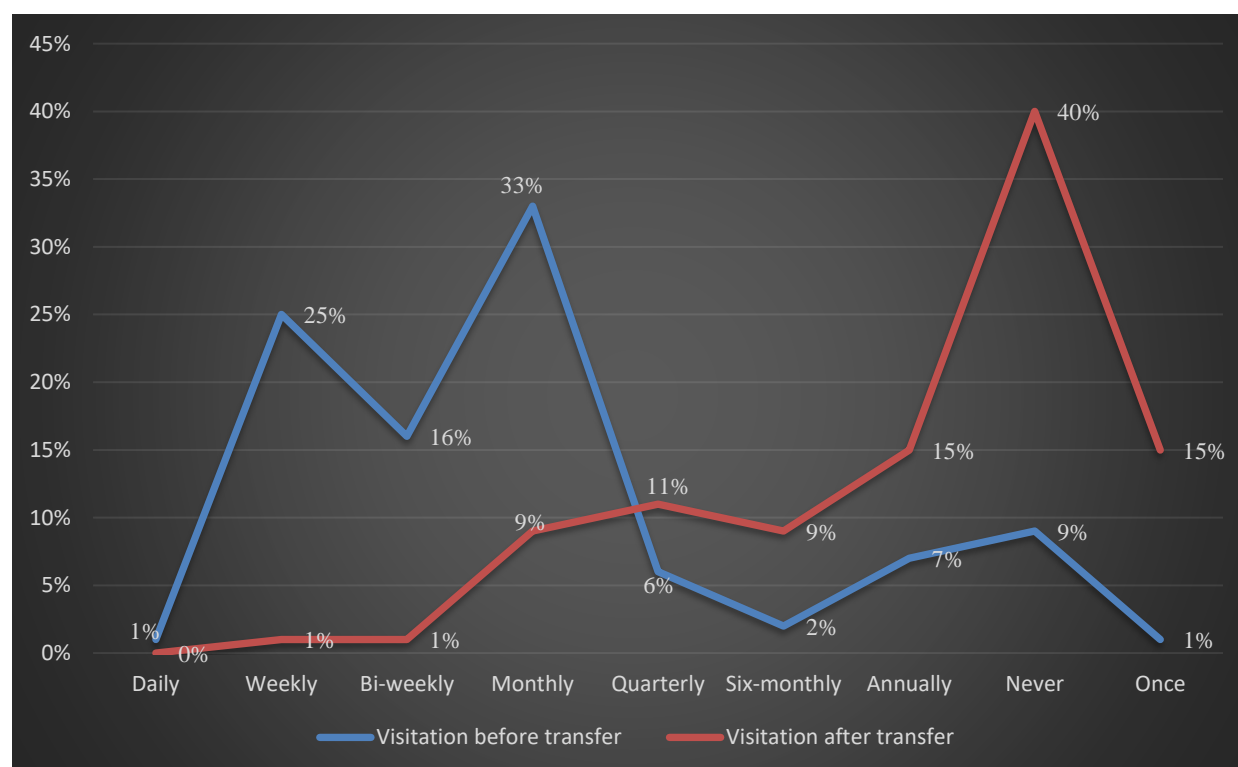
In the next sections, I turn to the effects of the transfer on the prisoners and their family members. In mapping out the effects of the transfer, I pay particular attention to visitation within the context of distance and time.

6.4 Effects and barriers of transfer on prisoners – family relationships

Here, I focus on the effects of the transfer on the prisoners and family members. The fundamental claim I advance on the effects of transfer is that it magnifies the disintegration of families by reducing the interaction between the transferred prisoners and their family members. I contextualise this viewpoint by comparing transferred prisoner visits before and after the transfer. Besides the decline in visits following the transfer, three primary factors shape the experiences of the transferred prisoners about the effects of the transfer; these being distance, time, and travel hazards (see Section 6.4.1). As I previously maintained, incarceration produces diverse

experiences, both positive and unpleasant, for both transferred prisoners and their family members. These consequences are further worsened and complicated by transfers based on the experiences shared by the transferred prisoners, family members, and non-governmental organisations working within the carceral space of Ghana. It became clear when transferred prisoners rated the frequency of visits before and after their transfer, as shown in Figure 6.1 below, and the factors hindering their interaction with family members' post-transfer.

Figure 6.1: Frequency of visits among transferred prisoners before and after transfer



Source: Data from transferred prisoners, 2022

Visits from family members to incarcerated individuals exhibit notable disparities pre- and post-transfer. Prior to a prisoner's transfer, a higher frequency of visits occurs, ranging from daily to monthly, with a majority (75%) of transferred prisoners receiving at least one visit. More specifically, approximately one-third (33%) and one-fourth (25%) of the transferred prisoners reported receiving a monthly and weekly visit before the transfer, respectively. Conversely, during the same time frame (i.e., weekly and monthly) following the prisoner's transfer, visits notably declined, with a mere 1% of transferred prisoners receiving weekly visits and a fraction (9%) receiving monthly visits.

By further analysing the data, with particular attention to transferred prisoners who received only one visit per year, I discovered that a mere 7% of transferred prisoners had one annual visit before the transfer. However, after the transfer, more transferred prisoners (15%) had to wait approximately one year before a relative visited them. The findings further reveal that, for certain transferred prisoners, visitation ceases altogether after their transfer. After his transfer, Abdul, one of the transferred prisoners shared the following account:

My family used to visit me every week when I was in the previous prison. But they have not come since my transfer to this prison in 2001. They stopped coming. It is not that they do not want to come, but the truth is that 'house is not good' [literally, they do not have money]. I was the one taking care of them, but since my arrest, things have become hard, and I understand the situation. So, I do not blame them. They are staying in Kumasi, and if I were still there, they could even trek, but they will surely get to the prison. But here, they cannot. **(Abdul, transferred prisoner, Q10)**

The narrative of Abdul is a familiar occurrence among two-fifths (40%) of the overall transferred prisoners I interviewed, who asserted that they did not receive any visits after their transfer. The majority of the transferred prisoners, particularly those hailing from Ghana, contend that they did not receive any visits after their transfer, which was an unfamiliar experience. Nevertheless, a complete lack of visitation was a daily reality among the foreign prisoners I interviewed for this study. As stated by Kad, a 25-year-old foreign transferred prisoner:

There was no form of communication (i.e., a phone booth) in the previous prison. But when I got to the first prison I was transferred to before this one, I went to the reception, and I was told that they do not allow inmates to make *foreign calls*. However, one officer said she could allow me to use her personal phone if I gave her money to buy credit. But because I did not have any money, I was just transferred to this place without informing my sister. I only have her phone number. I followed up when I arrived here, but I was told the same story: that foreign calls are not allowed. Nobody knows that I have been here since 2016. **(Kad, transferred prisoner, Q81)**

Along the same lines as Kad's claims, all the foreign transferred prisoners I interviewed revealed that they were not permitted to make international calls using the prison's telephone booth. More than two-thirds (69%) of the prison officers corroborated the ban on foreign calls for prisoners,

who pointed out the potential financial burden that such calls may impose on the Ghana Prisons Service, in addition to its already insufficient funding. The prohibition on international calls, which prevents foreign prisoners from informing their family members about their imprisonment and transfer, contravenes the provisions set forth by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on the “protection of all persons under any form of detention or imprisonment,” which state that:

“Promptly after arrest and after each transfer from one place of detention or imprisonment to another, a detained or imprisoned person shall be entitled to notify [...] members of his family or appropriate persons of his choice of his arrest, detention, or imprisonment, or of the transfer, and of the place where he is kept in custody.” (**United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Principle 16(1)**)

Geographical distance, financial constraints, time, loss of contact information, and commuting hazards were among the factors that influenced delays, reductions, and loss of contact/visits between transferred prisoners and their family members after the transfer. Consistent with Foucault’s views on imprisonment (1977), prisoner transfer adheres to the principles of temporality, spatiality, and movement. Beyond the use of time and space to reflect the length of the sentence and the boundaries of the prison, respectively, prisoner transfer produces diverse configurations and understandings of time and space based on the findings of this study. That is, the act of traversing different spatial domains (for instance, from home to prison or from the workplace to prison) by networks of transferred prisoners during visitation, the time spent in transit to and from the prison facility, and the many perils encountered during their movement. These factors have had a significant impact on the dynamics between prisoners and their social networks after the transfer.

6.4.1 Distance, Time, and Road hazards post prisoners’ transfer

Primarily from the experiences of the transferred prisoners and visitors are issues around distance, time, and the risk associated with travelling to visit a transferred prisoner in the new prison. My analysis began with distance, focusing on the birthplaces or residences of transferred prisoners and visitors in relation to the new prisons where transferred prisoners are being incarcerated, which helps to measure the distance visitors have to travel to see an incarcerated relative. Also, I asked the transferred prisoners, “Which region of Ghana were you transferred from?” Putting all this

together, the backgrounds of both transferred prisoners and visitors show heterogeneity (see Chapter 3 for further details). For instance, the background of the transferred prisoners shows a regional representation of Ghana, whereby the prisoners are transferred from all 16 regions of the country to either AMSP or NMSP. Notably, a little over a quarter (26%) of the transferred prisoners were transferred from the Volta Region to either the Central or Eastern regions. Family members of transferred prisoners from the Volta Region visiting their incarcerated relatives in either AMSP or NMSP travelled distances of 382 miles and 189 miles for a return journey, respectively (see Figure 5.4 for journeys of transferred prisoners). Next was the Ashanti region, which had nearly one-fifth (19%) of the total prisoners transferred to the two prisons, causing family members to commute distances of 292 miles and 261 miles to and from AMSP and NMSP, respectively. For transfers that were made from the Northern part of Ghana (see, for instance, Figures 1 and 8 for further details), specifically, the Upper West Region that saw about a tenth (10%) of the inmates transferred to the study sites, family members were commuting distances of 894 miles and 903 miles to AMSP and NMSP.

The research participants asserted that distance is a major hurdle for family members following the transfer of a relative. An overwhelming majority (94%) of the visitors I interviewed stated that it was not possible to commute to the prison in one day. Consequently, they spend more than a single day visiting an incarcerated relative after their transfer, which creates another hurdle in terms of where to stay during visitation. While two of the research participants claim to have stayed at a guesthouse, the majority report that friends and relatives hosted them during visits. Staying with a friend or relative during visitation reaffirms the central tenet of the social network theory, according to which resources (e.g., hosting/accommodating, providing information on job opportunities) are shared between network members (Poros, 2011; Drever and Hoffmeister, 2008). The following vignette chronicled Adam's experience on a visit to one of the prisons following his uncle's transfer:

Vignette 6: A visitor's perception of the effects of distance on prison visitation

My uncle is here, and I came to visit him. I come from the northern region of Ghana, but I am currently staying and working in Accra. My uncle was well known across the country, and at the community level, he used to pay school fees, health bills, and funeral expenses of underprivileged persons from his community. Because of his status and the critical role he used to play before his sentence, his colleagues from work, friends, family members, and some people he helped before his incarceration routinely want to visit him in prison. However, because of the one visit per every two weeks policy allocated to inmates, I manage his visiting schedule because several people want to visit him in the prison.

Regarding the transfer, my uncle was moved from the NMSP to this place, and none of us knew the reason he was moved. Nevertheless, the transfer has affected my uncle and the entire family in so many ways. For instance, NMSP was easily accessible because of its proximity to the city centre, Accra. Family members who were staying in Accra and those travelling from the north to visit could easily access means of transportation to the prison. Now, this place is far from Accra, and some people will even want to come here, but they cannot. Any time I visit, I just tell him that this person back in Tamale sends his/her greetings.

Today, I am here to meet 4 community members who have travelled from the northern region to visit my uncle. The main challenges for travelling to this place are the distance, the cost, and the means of transportation. Before they could arrive here, they used 3 different means of transportation before reaching the prison. The total cost incurred in transportation alone was GH¢960/£69 for the four visitors. He has been in prison for 4 years, and this was the first time these people were coming to see him.

‘You see the man lying on the bench, sleeping,’ he is one of the 4 people who arrived from the north after sitting on the bus for more than 11 hours. They do not have any place to stay when they arrive. Because they do not have any place to stay, they will have to travel back to Kumasi, where they will stay with one of our relatives, and then continue the journey back to Tamale the next day. Travelling to Kumasi will also take more than 4 hours, which is not only exhausting but also very costly.

In my view, the Ghana Prisons Service must consider the family system in our society when deciding where the inmate should be imprisoned. The stigma attached to some prisons could inform or make family members abandon the inmate in the prison.

Furthermore, the research participants lamented the financial implications of transfers, such as paying for a place to sleep and transport costs during visits. All the visitors interviewed took at least two means of transportation, often public transport, before getting to the two prisons. Apart from the high cost of lorry fares, both transferred prisoners (see, for instance, Section 5.3.3 for

details on double locking of handcuffs during transportation) and visitors also complained about road hazards such as bad roads, sitting in long traffic, and the lackadaisical attitude of drivers leading to road accidents. Many challenges characterise the transportation system of Ghana, including deplorable roads (Nanga, Odai, and Lotsi, 2017; Sam et al., 2018), traffic congestion (Musah, Peng, and Xu, 2020), and attitudinal problems of drivers ranging from unqualified drivers to drunk driving, among others. Beyond the conventional conceptualisation of prisons as static and enclosed spaces, Turner (2016, p. 228) contends that prisons and the public are ‘symbiotically’ connected through the material (e.g., goods and services, roads) and imaginary (see also Gilmore, 2007). Hence, the deplorable nature of the roads in Ghana, which directly connect the prisons to the homes of prisoners’ families, plays a significant role in their interaction. For instance, besides wasting time on the road due to long traffic during visitations, both transferred prisoners and visitors also reported road accidents, as captured in the excerpts below:

When I first arrived at the previous prison, which was closer to my family as compared to this place, I wanted to be seeing my family all the time. But my sister was involved in an accident, and she is still in the hospital as we speak. Due to the accidents on the roads, I just told them not to visit again, especially when my wife died. Although they still wanted to come, I told them not to come. For more than a year now, I have not received a visit.
(Osei, transferred prisoner, Q05)

Lastly, most of the transferred prisoners are transferred far away from their families or places of residence (see Section 5.3.3 for further details). Upon release, transferred prisoners must find their way back home. A significant majority (62%) of the prison officers and representatives from NGOs asserted that the GPS often provides money covering only the fares for prisoners to travel back home after serving their sentence. However, some transferred prisoners are stranded in finding their way back home due to the long period of being locked away. Sharing his experience in an interview, Zoro, one of the prison officers at the reception unit, says:

Some of them spent more than 25 years behind bars without any contact with the outside world or relatives. Just imagine the level of developmental changes that may have taken place while they were in prison. The person comes out, and he is confused. Maybe the bus station he used to know is now a mall or a school. He has no clue how to get back home; some end up sleeping in the bus stations or are hauled back here because they have

recommitted. There is one prisoner in one of the central prisons in the Ashanti Region; he was released from this place after spending about 4 or so years here. On his way to the north, he stole a passenger's phone and money. They arrested him and sentenced him to 2 years. I asked him what happened when I spotted him there when I went to visit a friend. He said he did not have anywhere else to go following his release. They re-offend sometimes so they can be brought back to an environment they are familiar with. **(Zoro, Prison Officer, AMSP)**

Thus, besides the stigma (Codd, 2013; Condry, 2007), lack of access to accommodation and stable jobs (Western, 2018; Petersilia, 2003) confront prisoners following their release.

Similarly, Addo chronicled his experience working with an NGO that offers various forms of help to prisoners:

We have a close relationship with the inmates while they are in there [prison]. We aim to ensure that they leave the prison very well, relatively well, and prepared for life outside. Now, for their release, we are often the first point of contact when they need help. The money they receive to go back to their hometowns is usually determined by what is on the admission documents during their arrest and sentence. Sometimes, they give wrong addresses during their arrest because they do not want to be stigmatised when released if the service assigns an officer to take the inmate home, which is often rare. When the person is discharged, they will have to come to us for us to top up because the money is sometimes not enough. **(Addo, NGO, Prison Ministry of Ghana)**

Despite the adverse consequences of the transfer on prisoners and their relatives, the transfer tends to foster quintessential Ghanaian diversity within prison facilities, facilitating the exchange of cultural ideas and skills between prisoners. While prisons have been subject to criticism for perpetuating social inequalities (Gilmore, 2022; de La Haye, 2021), serving as recruitment spaces for gangs (Bolden, 2020; Skarbek, 2014), and causing family disintegration (Hutton and Moran, 2019; Condry and Smith, 2018; Comfort, 2007), they have also provided a path to redemption for certain prisoners (Bolden, 2020). Based on the findings of this study, transfers tend to serve as a means of drawing prisoners from diverse backgrounds, including varied skills such as barbering, tailoring, and weaving. The few transferred prisoners with these skills tend to augment the limited training programmes instituted by the prison authority by training fellow prisoners during their

incarceration. For instance, Kamil, a transferred prisoner shared an account of how the art of smock weaving, a distinctive form of garment production prevalent in the northern region of Ghana, was introduced to prisons situated in the southern region:

You know this is a big prison, and they have diverse types of prisoners. Just as people are here for different crimes such as murder, armed robbery, and rape, some of them have skills before coming here. When we arrived here, only carpentry, tailoring, and blacksmith shops were here for inmates to learn. Now we have developed a workshop where inmates can learn how to make a smock. It is open to anybody who wants to learn; irrespective of whether you are from the north or the south, you can go there and learn. We have some inmates from different regions – Volta, Central, Sunyani who are all learning how to make the smock now. Where some have gotten to, they can open their own shop if they go out now. **(Taylor, transferred prisoner, Q07N)**

Summarily, consistent with the findings of previous studies (Addison, 2023; Cochran et al., 2016), it is evident that transfer as a part of the carceral practise further disintegrates families of prisoners. As I illuminated above, the relationships between incarcerated individuals and their family members become more fragile when transfers take place. Thus, contact between transferred prisoners and their families diminished, fractured, and sometimes even eradicated. The interplay of physical distance, financial limitations, and the challenges associated with travelling to and from prison facilities continue to affect these relationships. Despite these constraints, family members still strive to maintain contact through phone calls, letters, and travelling to prisons to meet transferred prisoners (Comfort, 2019; Hutton and Moran, 2019; Condry and Smith, 2018). The next section sheds light on families' experiences as they navigate the prison system during visitations.

6.5 Access, Negotiations and Challenges during family members' visitation

This section dissects the negotiations and challenges family members encounter as they strive to maintain contact with incarcerated relatives. Specifically, I analysed the visitors' and transferred prisoners' experiences during visitation and observations I made during my time at the various centres. The visitors' centres are spaces of tension that Moran refers to as "liminal spaces" where tangible and intangible materials are exchanged (2013, p. 339). Also, Comfort (2003) describes these spaces as grounds for conflicting statuses between visitors and prison officers. Based on my

findings, the contestation in the visitors' centre encompasses encounters and clashes between visitors and prison officers, as stipulated in earlier studies (see also Pallot, Piacentini, and Moran, 2012; Comfort, 2003). It is also a point of contestation between the transferred prisoners and prison officers, especially when a transferred prisoner feels unfairly treated by the prison officer, such as when the latter divides food items, harasses visiting relatives, and denies visitors entry, which I will return to later.

Both prisons where I conducted the study are all situated near a busy thoroughfare. Prison guards stationed at the prison's gates question visitors. Aside from the security justification for these questions, visitors are asked in order for the prison officers to direct them to their intended destination because, in addition to the walled spaces where prisoners are housed, an amalgamation of facilities (e.g., canteens, officers' accommodation, courts, clinics, prayer centres) are situated on the same parcels of land, depicting what Goffman (1961) describes as a 'total institution.' From this point, persons visiting incarcerated relatives must pass through the following three checkpoints and spaces I formulated based on the experiences of the research participants and observations I made: *the registration centre, the physical checking centre, and the meeting with the prisoner.*

6.5.1 Checkpoint 1 - Registration Centre

The registration centres are next to the walled prisons, where the prison officers perform initial screening of visitors. These first screenings are often conducted to prove the relationship between the visitor and prisoner, to ensure that visitors do not carry/have prohibited items (e.g., mobile phones, cameras, drugs, etc.), and to ensure that visitors' dress code corresponds to the prison guidelines. Primarily, visitors are asked to show a valid national identification card (e.g., voter's card, passport, driver's license, national health insurance card, Ghana card), followed by providing the name of the prisoner they are visiting. Once the name of the prisoner is provided, their last visitation is checked to ensure that they are due to receive visits (for more information, see Section 6.6.2).

Visitors are required to complete a 'Prison Visitor's Pass' form in order to establish their relationship with the prisoner. This form includes information such as the visitor's name, residential address, phone number (if any), the visitor's relationship to the prisoner, the prisoner's name, the prisoner's offence, items to be provided to the prisoner, and the amount of money the visitor intends to give to the prisoner (see Figure 6.2).

Figure 6.2: Specimen of Prison Visitor's Pass

Prison Visitors Pass	
Name of Prisoner	Date:
Name of Visitor(s)	Serial #:
Relationship to Prisoner	
Item/Money	Receiving Officer's:
Date of Prisoner's last visit	Name:
Recommending officer's Name	
Signature	Signature
Approving Officer's Name	
Approving Officer's Signature	
Visit Due/Not Due	
Name of Officer Conducting Visit	

Whereas some of the information (i.e., phone number, items, money) requested was optional and overlooked by the prison officers, for visitors under 18 years, the inability to provide a valid national identification card and the right name of the prisoner were key grounds for denying visitors the opportunity to see a relative (see Section 6.6.2 for further details). Once visitors are successfully screened, they are directed to the physical checking centre for a thorough search.

6.5.2 Checkpoint 2 – Physical Checking Centre

Based on the time spent at the physical checking centres of the two prisons, I observed that many of the items inspected at this point were food items visitors brought to support incarcerated relatives. Food support from family members was unsurprising, as prisoners' access to nutritious and sufficient food has long been a concern in Ghana (see, for instance, Baffour, 2021; Boakye, Akoensi, and Baffour, 2022). The underfunding of the various prisons in Ghana has culminated in the insufficient feeding of prisoner, whereby each prisoner is allocated an amount of GH¢1.80/£0.13 per day. Food was a significant concern among the inmates, as reflected in the accounts:

I was previously in a local prison in the north, and we staged a demonstration because the food was bad. Because of the bad nature of the food, one inmate died, and we took the body out of the cell. You could see the soup we ate the previous night coming out of his

mouth. Because of the demonstration, we were allowed to start cooking, but it also caused some of us to be transferred. **(Yussif, transferred prisoner, Q47)**

Because of the low quality and inadequate provision of food for the prisoners, their families support them with cooked food (such as plain and jollof rice, yam, fried fish and chicken, kenkey, stew, ‘shito’, ‘banku’, bread, etc.) and uncooked food items (such as rice, tubers of yam, plantains, beans, tomatoes, etc.), along with fresh vegetables (such as tomatoes, pepper, onion, etc.) and a variety of soft drinks. While the NMSP permits the inclusion of uncooked food, as prisoners are allowed to prepare supplementary meals to complement the prison food, the AMSP strictly prohibits uncooked food, and it is an offence for prisoners to cook in the AMSP (see Table 3.1 for more detailed information). Consequently, the prisoners depend on the prepared meals brought by visitors and the prison-provided food. Regardless of the differences in food restrictions in the two prisons, food also serves as a symbolic connection between the prison and the prisoners’ homes (see also Moran, 2013). This is evident in Abu’s situation prior to his transfer, as he discloses during an interview:

I felt bad when I heard I was about to be transferred. In the previous prisons, my mother used to come there every afternoon because our house was just a short distance away. She often comes with the food the family prepares for that particular day. Through that, she gives information about the family and the community. I was not even going for the afternoon food in the previous prison. It was just like when I was outside: you go out, and you know by this time they have finished preparing the afternoon meal, and whenever you go back to the house, your food is in the room. But things are different now; not only am I not getting the food, but I have not seen my mother since my transfer to this place in 2017. **(Abu, transferred prisoner, Q02)**

The food and provisions (e.g., food, toiletries, and clothes, among others) that visitors bring to the physical checking centre are examined for contraband by the officers (e.g., mobile phones, marijuana, cigarettes, and energy drinks). Besides the contraband, officers also assess the quantities of items that visitors bring and use their discretion to determine whether the food and provisions are ‘too many.’ In a situation where the officers deem the food items to be ‘too many,’ a portion is returned to the visitor to be sent back home, while the prisoner keeps the remainder. There have been a few instances where visitors have chosen to gift the officers the portion of food

that is denied because of the high cost and the likelihood of it spoiling before they can transport it back home, especially perishable items like fruits and vegetables. This division of food items creates tensions between the visitors and prison officers, as I illuminated in Section 6.6 below. Moran's (2013) study in Russian prisons also found restrictions imposed on the quantities and packaging requirements of foodstuffs, but the author further posited that there was a weight requirement for items visitors' intended to give to incarcerated relatives, thus minimising the discretion used by prison officers as seen in the Ghanaian context.

Once the officers finish examining the visitors alongside the food and provisions, they are directed to a waiting area until they are called to meet their relative. While waiting, the 'Prison Visitors Pass' is taken to the main prison yard to locate the prisoner, since almost two-thirds (62%) of the transferred prisoners' maintain that their visits are often unexpected (see Section 6.6.2 for further details). Once they locate the prisoner, the visitor is called to meet the prisoner, as described below.

6.5.3 Checkpoint 3 – Meeting the prisoner

Conventionally, visitors were permitted a maximum duration of 30 minutes for face-to-face interaction with their incarcerated relatives. However, the outbreak of the novel COVID-19 pandemic prompted the implementation of preventive and control measures, including the issuance of a presidential pardon to 808 prisoners, the suspension of visitations from family members, and the temporary halt of prisoner intake in certain prison facilities (see also Dünkkel, Harrendorf, and van Zijl-Smit, 2022). Subsequently, these control measures were revised, during which visitors were allowed to only bring essential items, such as food items, to prisoners. During the fieldwork, visitors were allowed entry to the gates of the walled prisons but were not allowed to interact with the prisoners. Their entry was solely permitted to visually confirm that the prisoner being called is the person they are visiting. After confirmation, one of the prison officers would hand over the items to the prisoner, with no verbal exchanges allowed between the visitors and the prisoner during this period.

Both transferred prisoners and visitors have raised concerns about the new directive, which prohibits visitors from interacting with prisoners. Based on the experiences of the research participants, it could further diminish contact between prisoners and their families. A significant majority (69%) of the visitors I interviewed expressed their intention to cease visiting if they continued to be deprived of the opportunity to interact with their incarcerated relatives. Similarly,

approximately 19% of the visitors were unsure, while more than a tenth (12%) firmly declared they would not visit again because of the restrictions. Akosua, a 38-year-old spouse of one of the prisoners, shared her opinion about the effect of the restrictions on her visitation plans:

I do not see why I should keep coming here. It is not easy to travel from the Volta region to this place. Apart from waking up as early as 3 a.m. to ensure I get here in time, the lorry fare is another issue. You arrive here too, and you cannot even talk to the person. So, what is the reason for coming here? It is a conversation I will have to have with my husband when he calls. I cannot continue to waste money on lorry fare to this place, and I cannot talk or even give all the items I bring to him. (**Akosua, Visitor**)

With the above institutional arrangement, once visitors find themselves within the purview of the prison during visitation, they are metaphorically considered as ‘prisoners’ (see also Moran, 2013; Comfort, 2003, p. 79). The justification for subjecting visitors to various forms of control and search primarily lies in security concerns (such as the prevention of contraband from entering the prison) and the lack of space in the prisoners’ cells. Hence, visitors are confronted with many challenges, encompassing unhygienic search procedures, the dividing of food and provisions, denial of entry, harassment, and a long waiting period during visitation, which I turned to in the next section.

6.6 Challenges Visitors Encounter at various checkpoints

This section provides a contextual framework for understanding the challenges and concerns experienced by prisoners and visitors during visitation. Besides the notion of these spaces as a point of exchange of material and non-material goods (Moran, 2013), there are also spaces of inclusion and exclusion, as seen in the denial of entry, the division of food items, and instances of harassment, according to the research participants. The challenges inherent in these situations stem from the uneven exercise of power, with prison officers having the discretion to deny visitors entry, the inability of prisoners to receive essential items because the items are ‘too many,’ and the turning away of visitors because of perceived inappropriate dressing, among other reasons. The next sections unpack these challenges and concerns through interviews with visitors and transferred prisoners.

6.6.1 Dividing of Food items

The dividing of food and provisions during visitation presents a contradictory practise in the prison context of Ghana. It is an open secret that prisoners in Ghana are inadequately fed (see also Boakye, Akoensi, and Baffour, 2022; United States Department of State, 2022; Ghana Prisons Service, 2022). It has led to calls from representatives of the GPS, as well as NGOs, relatives, and philanthropists, for an increase in the allowance for feeding inmates. Therefore, it is contradictory that the prison officers divide food items visitors bring to inmates, which has become a concern for more than two-thirds (69%) of the transferred prisoners and all the visitors I interviewed for this study. Citing the effects of the transfer in terms of the cost of travel and reduction in the frequency of visits, the visitors maintain that they must be well prepared during each visit. Such preparedness includes ensuring that the items given to the incarcerated relative will last for a long period before they can make another visit. Hence, it sometimes leads to situations where they bring bulk food items and provisions exceeding the allowable limits. However, these limits are undefined and at the discretion of the prison officers, which further emphasises the power dynamic between the officers and the prisoners.

All the prison officers I interviewed confirmed the dividing of the food items and attributed it to the lack of storage space and the prisoners' establishment of informal commissary stores to sell excess food items at inflated prices (see Chapter 7 for further details). Prisoners often store received items in the prison cells because of a lack of storage units; this tends to exacerbate the already overcrowded cells, according to the prison officers. The prison officers explained that they assess the items visitors bring to ensure that there are not 'too many.' Contrarily, transferred prisoners argued that lack of storage space cannot be a factor since a prisoner can buy any quantity of food items and provisions from the prison supermarkets. The incongruity between limiting the amount of material support prisoners can receive from visitors and the prisoners' ability to buy from the prison supermarket without any limitations reinforces prisons as spaces for economies of extraction (see also Chennault and Sbicca, 2023; Coddington, Conlon, and Martin, 2020). Through such covert tactics, prisoners are exploited through the purchases they make at the prison supermarket at exorbitant prices, a claim I return to in Chapter 7. One transferred prisoner succinctly articulated this during an interview in one of the prisons:

The only big challenge we are facing here is that a family member brings some items, and they will divide them and tell the visitor to go back with the rest. They cannot send it back

because they will have to pay the bus fare again; they will just give it to the officers. Oh, I have been fighting with the officers over this thing. The interesting thing is that they will tell you that you can buy everything in the supermarket; the supermarket is inside. If you have money, you can buy the entire provisions in store and send it to your cell, and they would not have a problem. However, things in the supermarket are expensive. For instance, if you go there, you can buy 20 boxes of anything and take it to the cells, and no officer will stop you. But let your relative bring just 10 boxes; you will be lucky to even get 5. **(Adu, transferred prisoner, Q72)**

Similarly, Hassan shared the excerpt below about his spouse's experience during visitation:

I am from one of the northern regions, and travelling to this place is not a simple thing. All my family members are staying in the north. My wife travelled to this place, and when she got there, the food items she brought were divided into two, and she was asked to go back with the rest. She complained about that, considering how much she paid the lorry fare for the food, and she could not give everything to me, so the officers divided the food. She could not carry the rest of the food back because she would have to pay the bus fare again. She just gave the food to someone before going back. Even the towel she brought was not allowed because they wanted to divide it and it was already small. She refused, and she was told to return with it. **(Hassan, transferred prisoner, Q14)**

In the end, both visitors and transferred prisoners perceive the dividing of the food and provisions as a deliberate practise adopted by the prison officers for their parochial interests. They argued that apart from the prison management profiting from the high price of food items and provisions in the prison supermarkets, visitors, especially those travelling far distances, often have no option but to donate the rejected items to the prison officers at the various checkpoints. The visitors' assertion that the prison management profits from the soaring prices of goods sold in prison supermarkets confirms Yin and Kofie's (2021) study on the informal prison economy of Ghana. The authors noted a percentage increase (e.g., 25%, 33%) in prices between the inside and outside stores of the prison on some selected items (e.g., bread, guardian soap, slippers, geisha soap) (Yin and Kofie, 2021, p. 10).

6.6.2 Denial of Entry

Visitors are occasionally denied entry to meet an incarcerated relative, according to the visitors and the inmates. As I mentioned previously, the grounds for denying visitors the opportunity to meet a prisoner include visitors' inability to show any proof of national identification card, inappropriate style of dressing (e.g., visitors wearing funeral attire, tattered clothes, and revealing clothes), and arriving outside of visiting hours. Furthermore, prisoners who are not due for a visit because they exceed the allocated number of visits or are in solitary confinement and visitors providing the wrong name of a prisoner contribute to the denial of entry by visitors, irrespective of where they travel from. Recounting being denied entry to see her boyfriend during her last two visits, Asana shared the following experience:

Some officers do not know anything; the one over there (i.e., pointing to the registration point) spelled 'Bonsu' as 'Boosu'. I corrected him. So, you see, if they are calling 'Bonsu' as 'Boosu', how will the prisoner know that he is the one? You will sit here and wait, aah! And they will later come and tell you that there is no such inmate with that name in the prison. On my last two visits, I could not meet the person I came to visit because I got here and they said they had closed, and the second time, they said because of the coronavirus. They [officers] just do what is convenient to them without considering the plight of either the visitor or the inmate. (**Asana, Visitor**)

Based on my review of the prisons noticeboard and the official website of the GPS (<https://ghanaprison.gov.gh/visiting-the-prisons.cits>), only information regarding visiting hours, the process of applying for prison access, and the list of prohibited items (such as mobile phones, electronic devices, knives, and cannabis, among other things) is available to the public. Visitors, particularly those visiting for the first time, lack awareness of the various restrictions mentioned above and consequently face the challenge of being denied entry during their visit. Comfort (2003) has made similar observations regarding San Quentin prison in the United States, where the responsibility of informing visitors about various regulations (such as dress code and visiting hours) falls on the prisoners, thereby exacerbating the hardships experienced by uninformed relatives during their visits. It is important to reiterate the role of transfers in the Ghanaian context, which often complicates the relationship between prisoners and family members. Due to the challenges faced by transferred prisoners in maintaining contact with their family members, it is common for family visits to occur without the transferred prisoners' knowledge. For instance, the

vignette below espoused the interplay of misinformation between a prisoner and family members regarding visits and enforcement of the control measures during visitation:

Vignette 7: Mapping the challenges during visitation through one of the transferred prisoners' experience

I have 3 wives, and I can remember that they all came here sometime ago, and only one was allowed to see me. The two were not allowed, and they went back without seeing me. I have a schedule for receiving visitors, but it is difficult to follow because of two reasons: 1) The first one is from the officers, and 2) visitors who do not know the visiting hours of inmates. Because of the status of a visitor in society, he comes here, and the officers will allow the person to see me whether I am due for visits or not; they will just allow the person because of his/her status. At times, the powers are beyond you, the prison officer, and you would have to allow the person. It is not like that for most people visiting. For instance, a police commander who is a friend of mine came to visit me, but I had received a visit that week, so technically I was not supposed to see him again. I do not know what happened, and the prison officer at the checkpoint told him that I said I did not want to meet him. But our friendship is such that he knows I could not have said that. He insisted and even threatened that there could be foul play, which is why they do not want him to see me; only then was he allowed to see me.

That same week, 3 of my relatives from the north came here and went back without seeing me just because I had met the police commander. I did not even know that the police commander and my relatives were visiting, but the police officers verbally abused me. They said I intentionally let people visit when I knew very well that I had exhausted all my visiting time. You could see a lack of professionalism from the officers and my relatives' inability to have informed me ahead. I could just have told them not to come. All the expenses, but they were denied entry.

Denying visitors' entry to meet incarcerated relatives primarily stems from the control measures (i.e., visiting hours, dressing code, proofing the identity of inmates and relatives) instituted by the prison authorities, as I chronicled above. Enforcing these control measures in the wake of

inadequate information available to visitors before visitations reinforces and sustains asymmetric power relationships between prison officials and visiting relatives. Apart from further disintegrating family relationships through the exclusion of visitors who do not meet the requirements during visits, these control measures are also seen in the manner in which officers search visitors when they visit.

6.6.3 Harassment and Searching of Visitors

[...] my mother visited me some time ago, and the way she was handled, she told me that if I were not her blood, she would never visit again because of the harassment and shouting the officers were throwing at her. (Amin, transferred prisoner, Q10)

The excerpt above symbolises the experiences of both transferred prisoners and visitors as they encounter the prison system during visitation. I framed these experiences through the lenses of social network theory and Comfort's (2019, p. 66) conceptualisation of "secondary prisonization" of family members of inmates (see Section 2.7 for further details on the use of this concept). An overwhelming majority (90%) of the visitors I interviewed reported different forms of harassment (e.g., verbal, sexual, and physical abuses) during visitation. Verbally, both transferred prisoners and visitors reported being shouted at during visitation, the manner of questioning, and making visitors wait several hours during visits. For instance, Isiah, one of the transferred prisoners noted during an interview:

A friend visited me when I was still in the previous prison. She was detained for the entire day. When she went back to our hometown and informed my relatives about her experience, nobody wanted to visit me again. The way the officers handled her was like she was part of the group that committed the crime. People were afraid to visit just to prevent the officers from accusing them too. (Isiah, transferred prisoner, Q06)

Moreover, the instances of abuse are also evident in the sexual advances female visitors received from a few of the officers, according to the transferred prisoners and visitors. For instance, close to a third (33%) of the female visitors disclosed that officers have expressed romantic feelings and sought relationships when they visit the prison, but further asserted that they [visitors] rarely take those proposals seriously. Nevertheless, it became a primary concern among affected transferred prisoners, who described the officer's behaviour as unprofessional and insulting. A news article has confirmed this claim of sexual harassment towards visitors when the prisoners of NMSP

threatened to demonstrate against the management for overlooking such behaviours of some of the prison officers in the facility (GhanaWeb, 2018). Such action by the officers engenders tension between the prisoners and the prison officers. In the voice of Adu, a 43-year-old transferred prisoner, “some of the officers like making love proposals to wives of inmates who come to see their husbands. An incident happened in one of the prisons I was transferred from when an inmate slapped an officer because the officer asked his wife, what is a beautiful lady like you doing with an armed robber?”

Finally, the approach officers employ when examining food and supplies has garnered negative feedback from transferred prisoners and visitors, who find it unsavoury and unhygienic. For instance, food items (such as soup, rice, stew, bread, and yam) are often ‘stirred, cut open, and smashed’ in search of contraband. The participants also noted that a single ladle could be used to stir food for multiple visitors (a practise I also observed during my time at the checkpoints), disregarding food allergies. Kweku, a 37-year-old transferred prisoner, retorted, “My wife vows never to bring me cooked food again [...]. You even lose appetite for the food they bring because of the way the officers handle them. As for bread, forget it.”

In summary, although the various measures implemented affect both prisoners and visitors, the prison officers argue that these measures are necessary to ensure the safety and rehabilitation of prisoners by preventing the introduction of contraband into the prisons. But, in attempts to achieve this through the imposition of these control measures, it excludes and reinforces the concepts ‘secondary prisonization’ (Comfort, 2019), ‘pains of imprisonment’ (McKendy and Ricciardelli, 2021; Sykes, 2007), and ‘courtesy stigma’ (Goffman, 1963) as applied in understanding the experiences of family members who come into contact with the prison system of Ghana. This worsens the vulnerability of prisoners, especially in Ghana’s already underfunded prison system. Besides the challenges I detail above, the next section further delves into the support systems available to both prisoners and family members, especially the role of NGOs and religious organisations, which continue to play a crucial role in the lives of the prisoners and prison activities across the country.

6.7 Prisoners and Families’ Access to Social Support Systems

This section highlights the forms of social support systems available to prisoners and their families during the sentence period. I asked the transferred prisoners and visitors if they had ever received

any form of assistance since the incarceration of the former (i.e., the transferred prisoner), and if yes, to provide the sources and types of assistance they receive. Scholarships abound that explore the significance of social support systems for prisoners during their incarceration (McKay et al., 2016) and post-release (Codd, 2013). House, Umberson, and Landis (1988, p. 294) argued that social support is rooted within the principles of “social integration and isolation.” Commenting on the functions of social support systems, House (1987) draws attention to the role of emotional support (e.g., care, love, empathy) and instrumental or tangible aid (e.g., exchange of goods and services) among social relationships (cited in Heaney and Israel, 2008). Within the context of prisons, Jiang and Winfree (2006) argued that, at the institutional level, prisoners’ access to adequate social support systems enhances the management of prisons and ensures their smooth reintegration when released from prisons. Along the same lines, all the key informants I interviewed for this study acknowledged the essential role private organisations and individuals continue to play in the management of an already underfunded prison system (see, for instance, Section 4.7 for further details). Both prison officers and NGOs call for additional support from philanthropists and private organisations. However, the experiences of the transferred prisoners and the visitors I interviewed showed mixed responses to their access to support systems.

Based on the data collected, I categorised the forms and sources of social support systems into formal (i.e., government, NGOs, religious organisations) and informal (i.e., friends, extended family members, coworkers). Beyond the conventional responsibilities of the government in providing custody (i.e., accommodation/cells, feeding, infirmary services) to the prisoners, no form of assistance is offered to the family members of the prisoners, according to all the transferred prisoners. This was supported by the interviews, when all the visitors maintained that they never received any form of assistance from the government, NGO, or religious organisations. For instance, Abena, a 33-year-old wife of one of the prisoners, contended when asked if she or her spouse ever receive support from the government/NGO/Religious organisation:

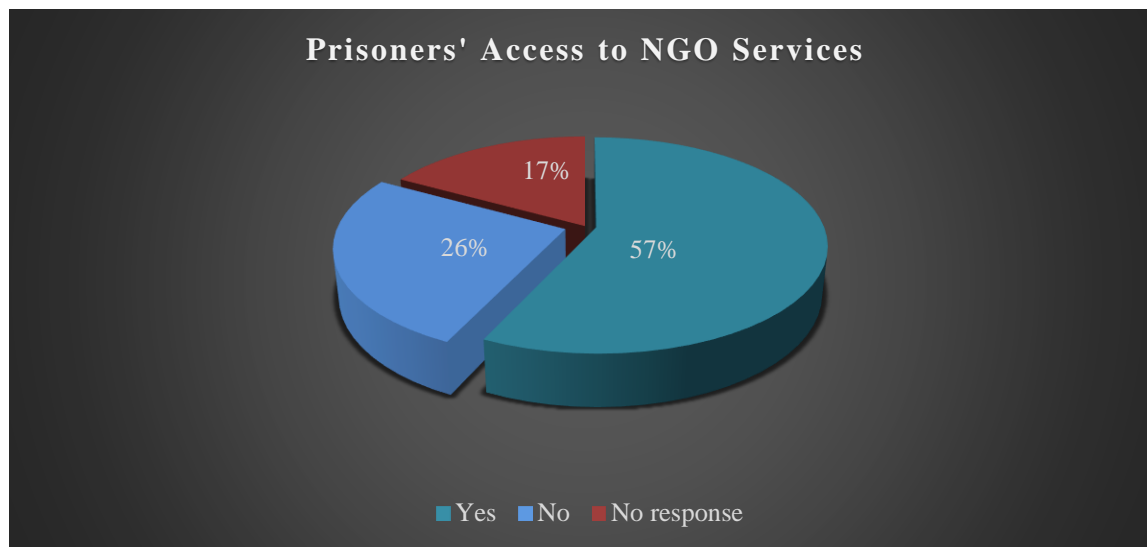
Is it possible? No one will even ask, not even the assembly member of the area. They will only come and console you, and that is all. But one of his family members occasionally sends me money for the children's school fees. Apart from that, nobody has assisted me since his incarceration. (**Abena, Visitor**)

Similarly, Comfort (2003) observed in the US that the effects of incarceration on the family members of prisoners are rarely considered during debates about the country's penal policy. Although support systems from formal sources (i.e., the government) were lacking among the family members, varied forms of support were obtained from informal sources, ranging from accommodation and cash donations to food items (e.g., maize, tubers of yam, and rice). For instance, almost 2 out of every 5 visitors interviewed indicated that they received either cash support or food items from a friend or an extended family member. In a similar vein, 20% of the 61 transferred prisoners who were married at the time of this study declared that their spouse and children had relocated to go and stay in the transferred prisoner's parent house. This was supported by the qualitative data, as noted by Ama below:

Before his imprisonment, we were all staying in the capital city, but now that he is in prison, I have relocated to the Central Region with the children to stay with their grandmother because his [the inmate's] father died a long time ago. I cannot afford to pay the rent in the city because I am the only one working now. We were all working before he was sent to prison, and things were much better. Now that I have moved to a house where we are no longer paying rent, the only worry is taking care of the children. Our first son will be going to senior high school this week, and I do not even know how I will get money to buy provisions for him. (**Ama, Visitor**)

Contrary to the lack of formal support systems stipulated by the visitors', the data and interviews with the transferred prisoners and the key informants reveal otherwise. It was revealed that NGOs and religious organisations provide various forms of assistance, ranging from legal services during appeals, paying fines for prisoners, donations of assorted food items and toiletries, and health screening, to advocacy campaigns for reforms in Ghana's criminal justice system. The significance of the interventions made by the NGOs and religious organisations in the country's penal system reinforces the continuous calls made towards a collaborative engagement between NGOs and the state (see, for instance, Macaulay, 2014). Amid the critical role played by both NGOs and religious organisations, their interaction with the prisoners differs significantly. To assess the presence of NGOs in the prisons, the prisoners' awareness of their work and activities, as well as whether they have ever received assistance from them, were evaluated. Figure 6.3 illuminates the transferred prisoners' awareness of the presence of NGOs in the various prisons.

Figure 6.3: Percentage distribution of transferred prisoners' access to services of NGOs



Source: Data from transferred prisoners, 2022

As shown in Figure 6.3 above, 4 out of every 7 transferred prisoners (57%) I interviewed stated their awareness of the work and activities of NGOs, as well as their reception of help from these entities. According to the transferred prisoners, the NGOs often donate to the prison management, which the officers will subsequently distribute to the larger prison population. The individual access of prisoners to NGOs visiting prisons for help is conditional on prison management approval. In the view of the transferred prisoners, the intermediary role of the prison officers impedes their access to seek help from the NGOs because of the opaqueness surrounding the selection and approval process. The excerpt below chronicles one of the transferred prisoners' experiences about their access to NGOs:

Sometimes, you see the NGOs carrying out HIV/AIDS tests and donating soap and toothpaste. The only problem is that the officers would not allow you to have direct contact with the NGOs. Sometimes, the officers can even tell the NGOs that we cannot be reformed. It affects us when we seek help from them. I know about the Justice-for-All Programme, which is supposed to benefit all inmates, but I do not know how they even do the selection. I have tried many times but have never been successful. **(Bamba, transferred prisoner, Q21)**

Bamba's experience was common among the transferred prisoners. The NGOs further shed light on their engagement across the various prisons in the country. Besides the NGOs' donations to the

prisons, they also collaborate with the prison administration to provide legal advice and medical screening for prisoners. In the same vein, all 4 NGOs I interviewed draw attention to the financial constraints confronting their operations; hence, the approach adopted is donating to the central prison administration for them to distribute to prisoners who need help the most. Moreover, the NGOs claim they occasionally make exceptions for prisoners with unique cases, especially on health grounds, paying fines for petty offenders with peculiar stories, etc. For instance, one representative of the NGOs I interviewed noted:

Many people are innocent. Both prisoners and officers often call, asking for help: ‘We want you to help me or this inmate.’ We recently paid the court fine for one widow who was caring for her four children. She was working as a labourer for one contractor, and she had to have been paid every day for her service, but for close to one month she was not paid. According to the woman, she confronted the man in his house to see if she could be paid, but it turned into an altercation between her and the man’s wife. Some properties were destroyed in the process, and she was arrested and sentenced because she could not pay the fine imposed by the court. We stepped in to pay the fine so that she could go back and take care of her children. Such stories are common, so we prioritise the cases because we do not have enough resources. (**Abraham, NGO representative**)

The relationship between prisoners and religious organisations differs significantly from that of NGOs. Prisoners were more intimately related to the religious organisation than the other NGOs. These differences emanate from the focus of religious organisations, which aim at improving the prisoners’ moral compass (see also Routley, 2023). These findings reaffirm the historical functions of the church in reforming the prisoner through observation, meditation, and works (Sullivan, 2009; Foucault, 1977). As Sullivan (2009) asserts, separating religion from prisons would be a difficult endeavour. Thus, their engagement with the prisoners is often more interactive through counselling, prayer sessions, penance, and Bible studies. These initiatives provide prisoners with the opportunity to individually confide in and receive assistance from churches and mosques.

Despite the support NGOs and religious organisations provide to prisoners, a quarter (26%) of the transferred prisoners are neither aware of the presence of NGOs nor have sought support from them. Two key factors contribute to this situation: first, some transferred prisoners show a degree of unfamiliarity regarding the services offered by NGOs and how to access them for assistance.

Second, a few transferred prisoners maintain a sense of uncertainty regarding the potential for receiving aid from NGOs, thus leading to their disregard for seeking help from such organisations. While a subsection of these transferred prisoners indicated that they need help, particularly in areas such as purchasing medication for chronic illnesses, obtaining court documents to initiate their appeal processes, securing legal representation, and acquiring food and toiletries, they neither know how to contact these NGOs nor are aware of the services provided by these organisations.

6.8 Concluding remarks of chapter

This chapter explores access to transferred prisoners for their social networks in the post-transfer period (RO3) and the effects of incarceration and transfer on the relationship between prisoners and their family members (RO4). Based on the findings I present in this chapter, I draw attention to what I characterise as a pervasive sense of ‘blurriness’ between incarceration and prisoner transfer and their concomitant effects on the relationship between prisoners and their family members. In the first place, prisoner transfer is consequential and forms part of the practise of incarceration (Moran, Gill, and Conlon, 2016; Moran, Piacentini, and Pallot, 2012). However, a closer examination of the effects of incarceration and the transfer of inmates in Ghana’s carceral space calls for circumspection in the study of inmates’ and families’ experiences, as they show contradictions and synergies when examined together. For instance, the effects of incarceration among prisoners, such as the disintegration of families, financial constraints (see also Condry and Minson, 2020; Hutton and Moran, 2019), loss of self-respect, and interruption of prisoners’ wards and siblings’ education, are further exacerbated by transfers through long distances, the high cost of transportation during visitations, and the accompanying hazards of the roads (i.e., accidents, traffic). The quantitative data support the adverse effects of transfer when prisoners’ visitation began to decline after the transfer. Moreover, the termination of family visits (40%) for transferred prisoners is alarming; especially in light of the essential role that visits play in reintegrating them into society after their release (Comfort, 2019; Mears et al., 2012).

Furthermore, the transfer experiences of prisoners show a contradictory practise when we consider the GPS mission of “reformation, rehabilitation, and reintegration of inmates” (Ghana Prisons Service, 2022) and the restrictions imposed on the quantity of food and provisions family members are permitted to give to prisoners. In carrying out this mission, training programmes and opportunities for prisoners to obtain formal education have been introduced, despite their disproportionate distribution across the prisons. Although a section of the transferred prisoners

enrols in these rehabilitation programmes, transfers are a deterrent for some prisoners because of the uncertainty and haphazard manner in which transfers are conducted. Further studies are needed, especially in a carceral system with an equal distribution of such training and rehabilitation programmes, to determine whether the practise of transfer is the deterring factor or if it is just the unequal distribution of these programmes as seen in the Ghanaian context.

The consequences of prisoner transfer further affect the families of prisoners through visitation. In principle, prison visits should be invigorating encounters since that is the space and time where the separation between prisoners and family members is temporarily suspended (Crewe et al., 2014). Contextualising the visiting experiences of the transferred prisoners and the research participants within Moran's (2013, p. 339) concept of 'liminal spaces,' families are entangled in the prison system and subjected to many control measures, such as conforming to a dressing code, visiting hours, and proving their identity and relationship with the prisoner. Beyond the exchanges that take place (Moran, 2013), the presence of these control measures engenders exclusion, as seen in the denial of entry for visitors and harassment of visitors. To mitigate these challenges of financial distress, long distance, reduction in family visits, and exclusion, both transferred prisoners and family members employ their agency and coping strategies through social capital and other informal transactions within and outside the prisons. The next chapter unpacks these coping strategies of transferred prisoners and family members as they navigate through the carceral space of Ghana.

CHAPTER SEVEN

AGENCY AND COPING STRATEGIES OF TRANSFERRED PRISONERS AND FAMILY MEMBERS POST-TRANSFER

7.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the agency and coping strategies of transferred prisoners within the politics of the internal micro-capitalism and economic transactions of the prisons where I collected the data. The focus of this chapter is the economic and related transactions that transferred prisoners engage as a strategy to ameliorate the challenges of the prison. It is not within the scope of this thesis to elaborate on every dimension of coping strategies among prisoners (see, for instance, LaCourse et al., 2019; Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). In analysing the politics of prisons' internal micro-capitalism, I consider the various forms, functions, and actors that create and sustain these transactions across the prison space (Appadurai, 1988). Before returning to these transactions, I draw from Lazarus and Folkman's conceptualisation of *coping*, which is defined as:

“[...] constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as [...] exceeding the resources of the person.”
(Lazarus and Folkman, 1984, p. 141)

The chapter reflects the efforts of the transferred prisoners in managing the consequences of their transfer and other control measures by engaging in diverse forms of economic transactions. I specifically home in on the transactions transferred prisoners place on visits, food items, and toiletries with fellow prisoners, as well as the prison-assigned work. The experiences of the transferred prisoners and the research participants on the varied transactions I present in this chapter show what I consider a ‘blurring of binaries’ between formal and informal economic transactions. Delving into these transactions, I first map out the everyday economic transactions of the transferred prisoners within the formal framework of voluntary assigned work by the prison authority (see Section 7.2.1). I further explore transferred prisoners' engagement in informal activities to generate money (see Section 7.2.2). Based on the experiences of the transferred prisoners and the research participants, I argued that the formal and informal economic systems within the prisons are mutually interdependent (see also Yin and Kofie, 2021). Furthermore, the informal economic system is fostered and sustained by the phenomenon of transfer and the imposition of various control measures by the prison authority. Also, the presence of these

transactions in the prisons presents binaries and spillages between covert/overt, legitimate/illegitimate, which are embedded with inequalities and exploitation, a claim I return to in Section 7.2.2.

Second, I illustrate how transferred prisoners trade visits among themselves and retail food and toiletries from visitors (i.e., family members, community members within the proximity of the prisons, and friends) for profit. With this approach, I point out that formal measures such as the limitations on receiving visits among prisoners and the reduction of food items by the prison authority tend to give rise to and support a covert and informal economic system in the prisons. The financial benefits inherent in these economic transactions within the prisons tend to incentivise and implicate various actors, ranging from the prisoners and visitors to the prison officers (see also Peterson et al., 2021; Yin and Kofie, 2021).

I conclude the chapter by highlighting the functions and sustenance of the coping strategies of the transferred prisoners. In doing so, I present the role of technology, which has become an essential tool for two reasons. According to the transferred prisoners, to deal with the challenges of the transfer (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3 for further details) and the effects of COVID-19, which have led to the imposition and strict application of various control measures (see, for instance, Chapter 6, Section 6.4.1 for further details). Lastly, I revisit the significant role of the transferred prisoners' networks alongside the community members who live near the prisons. Beyond the challenges of the transfer in terms of long-distance, the findings also point to the financial benefits community members can gain by serving as substitute family members and friends of prisoners by supplying food items to prisoners through visitations.

7.2 Economic transactions among transferred prisoners and family members' post-transfer

The transferred prisoners were asked to share the strategies they adopt to mitigate the consequences of the transfer in terms of long-distance, time, and financial burden. In the wake of the decline and cessation of visits following the prisoners' transfer and the various control measures instituted by the prison authority, just over half (57%) of the transferred prisoners adopted strategies to offset the consequences of the transfer. Transferred prisoners use these strategies to earn money for their appeal application, meet their family's financial needs, and buy essential items not provided by their families. In contrast, a little over two-fifths (43%) of the transferred prisoners, including Jonathan, a 32-year-old transferred prisoner, admitted to not being engaged in any activities,

instead, he was simply ‘waiting for my sentence to end.’ While the experiences of this category of prisoners are scant regarding coping mechanisms, it is typical to hear that there is a lack of training programmes and work opportunities for prisoners. The limited training and work opportunities make prison work more voluntary, driven by competition (between prisoners) and exploitation (by officers), a point I revisit in Section 7.2.1.

The present chapter focuses on the experiences of the 93 (57%) transferred prisoners who adopted coping strategies during their incarceration. The strategies and activities they engage in take the forms of both formal and informal engagement, forming part of the prison economy. These strategies and activities reflect what Arjun Appadurai (1988, p. 3) described as ‘economic value’, referring to the sacrifices people make in exchange for gains (see also Simmel, 2004). Being aware that the prison economy is a broad transactional engagement (Peterson et al., 2021; Crewe, 2009), this chapter focuses on the experiences of the 93 (57%) transferred prisoners in terms of the economic value they derive from both formal and informal engagements.

7.2.1 Formal economic transactions/engagements

In this study, I frame formal economic engagements as prison-assigned yet voluntary work that prisoners engage in for a reward, either in kind or in cash. Primarily, evidence from the global north has shown that the legitimate source of work in confined spaces such as detention centres (Conlon and Hiemstra, 2017, 2014) and prisons (van Zijl-Smit and Dünkel, 2018; Sykes, 2007) is through enlisting with the management of the various facilities for a work assignment. However, less than a tenth (7%) of the 93 transferred prisoners I interviewed enlisted with prison management, where food was primarily used to compensate for their labour. The small number of transferred prisoners enlisted to work could be attributed to three main reasons: lack of comprehensive work details for prisoners, inadequate work opportunities for prisoners, and the limitation of the study to only prisoners with transfer experience.

First, the GPS does not have comprehensive work details for prisoners; hence, both prison officers and prisoners, especially prisoners sentenced to hard labour, often consider the assignment of work as part of the punishment. Zatz (2008, p. 861) characterises the labour of prisoners as ‘nonmarket character,’ which takes away any financial obligation on the management of these spaces—prisons. Consequently, the incentive to sign up for prison work in the two prisons was more than the illusive financial reward prisoners stand to receive from the prison authority. Along similar lines, prison

work has been found to be a source of alleviating boredom rather than the financial incentive attached to it (see, for instance, Bengtsson, 2021; Zamble and Porporino, 2013). The following excerpts are common lamentations by the transferred prisoners about work opportunities in the prisons:

We don't do anything here apart from eating and sitting. Do you see how dirty the cities are in Ghana? Inmates in only this prison can clean and desilt the whole of Accra. What do prisoners need? If we get just food (e.g., a pack of fried rice) and some small money to buy soap for cleaning, we can clean the entire country, and the government will not have to sign any huge contracts with companies like Zoomlion. **(Darmaani, transferred prisoner, Q17)**

In the same fashion, Magnus, a 24-year-old transferred prisoner in one of the prisons, reveals during an interview that:

We do not really get much when we go out to work; everything ends with the officers. They often buy food for us, and sometimes they will add you some small money when we return. But you can also make some small coins by buying items (e.g., soap, pepsodent, biscuits, food, soft drinks, tea leaves) for your colleagues for a fee or even reselling them. Out of pity, someone can also pass money to you when one is outside. **(Magnus, transferred prisoner, Q48)**

A second reason for lack of engagement with formal prison work, especially those that are compensated, is that it is limited, and they also bring prisoners into direct contact with the public. Hence, criteria such as less dangerous prisoners and prisoners with only a few years to be released are given first consideration for prison jobs. Commenting on these criteria, the prison officers point out that allowing prisoners to work, especially outside the prison is part of their reintegration process as contained in the Prisons Service Act, 1972 N.R.C.D 46, Section 42. For instance, Fidelis, one of the prison officers opines:

Another way of getting them reintegrated is to send them to go out and work. With about 1-2 years to go home, you can be assigned some work to do outside. You interact with other people as you go outside. An incident happened when an inmate was taken out to work, and instead of working, he was soliciting for funds, begging money from people who

were passing, and harassing passengers and drivers. We had no choice but to revoke that opportunity. Many people want to work, but the places are limited. If, for nothing at all, they will move outside this prison they have been in for many years. (**Fidelis, Prison Officer**)

In assigning work, the prison officers take into consideration both the prisoners' behaviour and how much time they have left to serve. In the view of the officers, prisoner participation in such programmes is a means of reintegrating them into society while at the same time protecting the public against any potential aggression from the prisoners. However, the transferred prisoners criticise the opaqueness of the selection process and the occasional covert extortion of money by the officers before enlisting prisoners for work. Third, the small number of prisoners who sign up for the various jobs in the prisons is also because of the target population of this study, as I consider only prisoners with transfer experience (see Chapter 3 for further details on the selection of transferred prisoners for this study).

The work assignments performed by the prisoners occur within and outside the prisons (see, for instance, van Zijl-Smit and Dünkel, 2018; Sykes, 2007). Internally, prisoners provide administrative support to the prison officers, such as managing the internal printing services of the facilities, helping in preparing the appeal documents of prisoners, cleaning the various offices, and filing and locating fellow prisoner's files, as I observed during my time at one of the prison facilities. The prison administration also recruits prisoners to work as 'yard boys,' - a term used to describe prisoners tasked with finding and calling prisoners to the visiting centres when their relatives visit, working at the prison supermarket, and at the kitchen of the various prisons.

Working outside the prison is a desirous opportunity for the prisoners due to the potential additional benefits involved. For example, prisoners perceive moving out of prisons as temporary freedom and the opportunity to save money by buying essential goods outside that may cost a fortune in the prison supermarkets. As claimed by Jude, a 47-year-old transferred prisoner, it was also the only time prisoners can 'eat proper food.' Working outside prison involves sweeping, weeding, and desilting nearby towns, farming, and construction sites of private individuals for fees that are paid to the prison authority.

The above evidence draws our attention to three principal issues. First, it reinforces prisoners as a source of 'extracting labour and profits' (Morris, 2023, p. 4; Melossi and Pavarini, 2018), as seen

with prison authorities expanding the contours of the punishment to include the labour of the prisoners, including prisoners whose sentence does not even involve hard labour. Second, the management of the various prisons in Ghana primarily compensates for the labour of prisoners with food. However, they attach monetary value to prisoner labour when a third party seeks their [prisoners] labour. In other words, prisoners are just given (in the form of food) a fraction of what the prison management receives from outsourcing their labour to private individuals and organisations. Anecdotally, private individuals can contact the administration of various prisons for the labour of prisoners. This arrangement involves an agreed-upon fee, which is directly paid to the administration. More than three-quarters of the prison officers affirm that a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is often signed between the Ghana Prison Service (GPS) and private organisations concerning the use of prison labour. One example of such a MoU is the recent agreement between the GPS and Zoomlion Ghana Limited. In this case, Zoomlion agreed to provide logistical support to prisoners (such as wheelbarrows, reflectors, and means of transportation) to facilitate the cleaning of the principal streets of Accra. In addition, Zoomlion agrees to compensate the GPS with GH¢10/£0.72 per prisoner and only GH¢5/£0.36 for each prisoner whose labour is used.

Third, the findings suggest that prisoners are not just passive subjects for exploitation in the prison economies, but they also exploit the system to their advantage, a claim I extensively unpack in Section 7.2.2. This observation contradicts the conventional framing of power as a unidirectional concept (Buchanan and Badham, 2020; Haugaard and Clegg, 2009; Clegg, 1989), but reiterates Foucault's (1978) latter work on the relational nature of power as seen in the resistance and agency of prisoners to derive financial benefits. Thus, they [prisoners] perceive their working outside as temporary freedom and use the opportunity to subtly profit from the prison economies by asking for financial support from the public and serving as part of a supply chain to bring items into the prisons.

Prisoners acting within the margins of prison-assigned work and the temporary freedom of working outside the prison convolute and blur the boundaries between the formal and informal economies (see also Yin and Kofie, 2021). The complexity of the boundaries of the formal and informal prison economies is further seen in the covert transactions prisoners adopt to mitigate the challenges of incarceration and transfer, as shown in the next section.

7.2.2 Informal economic transactions

This section chronicles the informal activities of the many (49%) transferred inmates who frame such activities as their coping strategies and rationalise their engagement in such activities for the aim of obtaining benefits. Specifically, I illuminate the *working lives* of prisoners, which I frame as the everyday transactions between the prisoners that are ostensibly legitimate but form part of the informal economy of the prisons. I further delve into the informal measures the transferred prisoners employ to navigate through the various control measures by focusing on the transaction of food. Before returning to the central themes of the section, I acknowledge the convoluted character of the concept of the ‘informal economy’ (Dell’Anno, 2022; Portes and Haller, 2010, p. 407; Feige, 1990) and how its application in the prison context engenders various debates and contradictions (Ifeonu, Haggerty, and Bucerius, 2022; Crewe, 2009). For instance, Portes and Haller (2010) note the distinction between the two schools of thought concerning the definition of the informal economy. Recognising its evolution and classical usage in so-called Global South countries, the informal economy has been equated to poverty (Portes and Haller, 2010). On the other hand, activities in the informal economy in recent times have been regarded as entrepreneurial pursuits that contradict the rules of an institution (Portes and Haller, 2010; Feige, 1990). Hart (1990) further rationalises the birth of the informal economy as “people taking back in their own hands some of the economic power that centralised agents sought to deny them” (cited in Portes and Haller, 2010, p. 404).

These two schools of thought about the informal economy relate to the experiences of transferred prisoners in Ghana on two fronts. In the first place, transferred prisoners are primarily from low-income family backgrounds, which translates into their lack of legal representation, the decline in visitations, and the changing of ward schools (see Chapters 5 and 6 for further details). Furthermore, the rationale for engaging in the informal prison economy of Ghana stems from the internal control measures of the prisons, including the reduction of food items and provisions during visitations and the denying of visitors access because of non-conformity with the prison rules (see Chapter 6, Section 6.5 for further details). Hence, participation in the informal economy of the prisons becomes a regrettable necessity for the prisoners to mitigate the challenges of prison life. Prior scholarship deploys the informal economy of prisons to mean the illegitimate and unapproved economic transactions within the various spaces of the prison system (Crewe, 2009; Sparks, Bottoms, and Hay, 1996). These studies often focus on items that are illegitimate

contraband in prisons (e.g., marijuana, cocaine, mobile phones, alcohol, heroin, and keeping money beyond the official threshold by the prison authority) and activities (Peterson et al., 2021; Walker, 2015; Crewe, 2009). Moving beyond the conventional framing of prison contraband, which frequently focuses on the items as illegitimate, I maintain that we must pay attention to the manner of the exchange. Contextualising the experiences of prisoners about the exchanges, everyday life in prison is subject to scarcity and thus is fraught in prisons across Ghana. This section focuses on the transaction of food items and provisions, which are presented as legitimate but whose exchange produces value and informal character for the transferred prisoners and family members. In what follows, I expound on the everyday informal engagement between the transferred prisoners and the transaction of food items and provisions.

7.2.2.1 Dynamics of informal work among transferred prisoners

[...] the monetization of the prisons especially in this place has made some people to really experience punishment while some do not because of the money they have. (Taylor, transferred prisoner, Q7)

The monetization of the prisons is a common experience among many of the transferred prisoners I interviewed, which affects their engagements within and outside the prisons. In the view of the transferred prisoners, the challenges of prisons (e.g., inadequate feeding and toiletries, lack of visitations, medical and appeal expenses) are enough motivations for prisoners to engage in any activity that can potentially generate cash. Also, the scarcity and lack of access to essential goods birth and sustain the informal economy of the prisons (see also Peterson et al., 2021; Gibson-Light, 2018; Hatton, 2018; Rowe, 2016). As part of the transferred prisoners' engagement to mitigate the challenges of incarceration in Ghana, they import and offer their skills/crafts/trade from outside to fellow prisoners and prison officers for a reward. For instance, a small subset of the transferred prisoners runs a weaving business that specialises in making traditional embroidery silk cotton dresses, popularly called *batakari*/smocks in NMSP. Besides the official prison training programmes (such as soap-making, carpentry, batik tie and dye-making, and tailoring), transferred prisoners imported the smock-making craft into the prison. Hence, they informally started the business to train other prisoners and generate revenue by selling the finished products. The popularity of the dress within the Ghanaian public and prisoners' ability to acquire new skills that form part of their rehabilitation process may have contributed to the prison authority paying a

‘blind eye’ to smock-making and other similar businesses (e.g., weaving of sponges, chains, and jewellery making) since there is no official policy document on their operation.

The final products are frequently sold to the public through the prison store, where prisoners display their goods (such as batahari, toilet rolls, batik tie and dye, and neck chains) for purchase. Besides the prison store, prisoners also create informal arrangements and sell the products to retailers that are based outside the prison (see Section 7.3 for further details). Seidu, for example, noted:

The only visits I receive here are when people come to buy the smock I make. I have a woman from Koforidua; she brings me the threads I use in making the smock. Once I finish weaving about 5 to 10, I call her, and she comes to take them and give me my money. The last time she was here for another consignment, the officers held her at the gate from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. until they finally allowed her to see me. She said that if that were to be the case, she would not come again. (**Seidu, transferred prisoner, Q01**)

Further, some transferred prisoners engage in menial jobs, such as washing clothes, barbering, repairing, and polishing the sandals and shoes of fellow prisoners’ and prison officers for a fee. The experience of Adamu, one of the transferred prisoners is illustrative of this and the motive for performing menial jobs in prisons:

You are free [literally] here as compared to my previous prison. But you pay for everything. Look at me. I am 48 years old, and I wash people’s clothes to survive. Apart from trying to pay for the basics like soap and medicine, we also pay for the electricity bills. I cannot continue to take money from my sisters when they are taking care of all my children, including their education. I must be doing something so that I do not put all the burden on them. (**Adamu, transferred prisoner, Q09**)

Prison officers and prisoners’ approaches to paying for the services they [prisoners] render differ significantly. While both prison officers and transferred prisoners derive utility from the various transactions, I observe a disjuncture between the officers and prisoners in paying for the services. Evidence of this disjuncture relates to the manifestation of the proportionate (prisoners vs. prisoners) and asymmetric (prisoners vs. officers) exercise of power in prisons. For instance, prisoners pay the amount of the transaction they had with fellow prisoners, and often on time, as clearly stated in the excerpt:

We are all doing different things here, and that is what is sustaining some people. I barber people's hair, and you only come to the barber when you have money. I have friends with whom I can do it free, but I take the money before I even start. I will eat and bathe, and I cannot get all that for free. What I make from the barbershop is what I use to buy things I need, which may be what my fellow inmate is also selling. (**Jacob, transferred prisoner, Q72**)

Prison officers, on the other hand, often use discretion in paying for the service they derive from prisoners, reinforcing the power and authority officers have over the prisoners. The subtle extraction of benefits by the officers from the labour of prisoners reflects Foucault's perspective on the microphysics of power, which encompasses mechanisms and strategies that extend beyond mere physical domination over the bodies of prisoners. In this sense, payments are oftentimes postponed or reduced, and sometimes officers even refuse to pay. Although the transferred prisoners I interviewed attribute the violation of transactional agreements to only officers rather than prisoners, Ifeonu, Haggerty, and Bucerius's (2022) study on the importance and access to food among prisoners in Canada suggests otherwise. The authors attribute the source of violence in the prisons to the inability or refusal of prisoners to fulfil informal transactional agreements with fellow prisoners (see also Crewe, 2009). Despite the differences in the two carceral contexts (i.e., Ghana and Canada), both discoveries point to the unsanctioned and clandestine character of the informal arrangements various actors make. Consequently, the transactions are inherently exploitative since violators are often not accountable within the guiding principles of the various prisons (Peterson et al., 2021; Crewe, 2009).

The findings I present in this chapter suggest that the exploitation of prisoner labour is pervasive in both formal and informal transactions that prisoners engage in as coping strategies. That is, irrespective of whether transactions in prisons, especially between prisoners and prison officers, are covertly/overtly, legitimately/illegitimately performed, inequalities and exploitation still characterise them (see also Yin and Kofie, 2021). To say it differently, the 'nonmarket character' of the labour of prisoners will continue to limit the rights and negotiations of prisoners regardless of whether they are working in the formal or informal economies of the prisons (Zatz, 2008, p. 861).

7.2.2.2 Food transactions among transferred prisoners

This section focuses on the inflow of food items into prisons in the face of the many control measures instituted by the prison authorities. The main commodities visitors sent to incarcerated relatives at the time of the fieldwork were food items (see Chapter 6, Section 6.5.2). This is because of the low quality and inadequate amounts of food received from the GPS. The low quality and quantity of food also trigger the transfer of prisoners, as I explored in Chapter 5. The broader literature on prison food has identified poor feeding of prisoners as a widespread problem (Ifeonu, Haggerty, and Bucerius, 2022; Einat and Davidian, 2019; Ugelvik, 2011). Consequently, food is a weapon of power (Smoyer and Lopes, 2017) and a tool for resistance (Gibson-Light, 2018; Ugelvik, 2011) used by prison officers and prisoners, respectively. Interrogating the inflow of food into prisons presents intriguing and complex perspectives. I analyse the inflow of food into the prisons by taking into consideration the consequences of the transfer and the control measures during visitations (see Chapter 6, Section 6.5.2). The findings show further blurring and complication of the boundaries of the formal and informal economies of the prisons through a mixed inflow of food, either for personal consumption or for selling to fellow prisoners. The consequences of the prisoner transfer on the inflow of food into the prisons reveal two significant outcomes. First, the transfer brings an end to visits from family members for many of the transferred prisoners. With this comes a concomitant lack of food support from family members (see Chapter 6 further details). Consequently, transferred prisoners tend to trade their visiting privileges for food items. In other words, transferred prisoners who do not receive visits give their personal details informally and covertly to relatives/acquaintances of fellow prisoners to bring food items into the prisons, and in return, part of the food items is given to the inmate, as noted by Adams in the following excerpt:

I have never received a visit since my arrest. My family members are not aware that I am in prison. My phone and everything I could use to contact them were seized during my arrest. I do not know if they even brought the phone during my transfer. The only number I know is one friend, and he is afraid of the police more than me. If he hears that I am in prison, he will not even pick up the call. The only visit I get here is if a colleague inmate uses my name and gives it to someone; the person will bring the items, either food or provisions, in my name. I will take it and have a cut from it. (**Adams, transferred prisoner, Q66**)

Furthermore, the prison officers assert that all prisoners have the privilege of receiving visits and food support from family members, but it is illegal for prisoners to sell the food received to other prisoners. However, it was a widespread practise for prisoners to covertly sell part of the food items received to other prisoners, a claim both transferred prisoners and officers corroborated. Apart from the incentives within the trading of visits and food, a subset of the transferred prisoners also points to the altruism and solidarity among prisoners, as seen in the sharing of food items. Specifically, relationships, brotherliness, and sheer sympathy are enough motivations for prisoners to informally arrange with each other to bring food into the prison. After all, they will share the food among themselves, as they posited. It is not within the scope of this thesis to unpack the various contours of altruism and solidarity among the prisoners, although it appears to be a significant phenomenon in a resourced-constrained prison space like Ghana. However, the contextualisation of the coping strategies of prisoners within these concepts (i.e., altruism and solidarity) draws our attention to the ‘collective pains’ of the prisoners in the face of the many challenges of the prisons, and the control mechanisms prison officers continue to use (such as dividing of food items, denying visits, and revoking the working privileges of prisoners). Commenting on ways of dealing with ‘collective pains’ in prisons, Crewe (2009, p. 288) cited “generosity” as an essential ingredient utilised by prisoners. The sharing of food among transferred prisoners is an illustration of this generosity, as noted by Opanin:

The way the prison is, you have brothers inside and you help each other. Apart from food, we even contribute money to help treat fellow inmates who cannot afford it. We know ourselves, and you can just see that this inmate has never received a visit. You cannot allow such a person to rely on only the prison food, he will fall sick. Here is the case that the officers will divide the food if only one person brings them. So, what do you do? You just arrange with someone to receive part of the food, because you are all going to use them.

(Opanin, transferred prisoner, Q24)

The informal arrangements between transferred prisoners to trade visits for food are often difficult to discern by the prison officers because of the prison’s protocols, which allow all prisoners to receive visits and food support from family members. Consequently, the vacuum created by the lack of visitation among transferred prisoners amidst the prison protocol allowing them to receive visits and food support is contributing to possibilities for the informal transaction of food among prisoners. Along these same lines, Crewe (2009, p. 388) asserted that the “ingenuity” and

“creativity” of prisoners could stem from the weaknesses of a system, which is often exploited to their [the prisoner’s] advantage.

Moreover, a considerable number of the transferred prisoners still receive visits and support including food items and provisions from family members despite the consequences of the transfer in terms of long-distance and financial cost (see Figure 6.1 for further details). With the decline in the visits, both family members and transferred prisoners said that enormous quantities of food items are often brought to prisoners with the anticipation that it would sustain them until the next visit. Furthermore, prisoners’ background in terms of the primary occupation of their household plays a significant role in the type and quantity of items they receive. With just one out of every five (22%) of the total transferred prisoners from a household whose primary occupation is farming, food items become the common items family members often use to support incarcerated relatives, according to both the transferred prisoners and the visitors. Dela, a 27-year-old sibling of one of the transferred prisoners’ states:

Since his arrest, only his wife and I have been visiting him. We mostly come after every harvest from the farm. That is the only time we can get money for the lorry fare. Once we finish harvesting, we bring part of the farm produce (such as yam, cocoyam, tomatoes, and maize flour) to him. For example, after today's visit, we will not come here until the next harvest. So, he must always manage what we bring. You can see my bag now; we always make sure that we bring so many foodstuffs that he will rely on for the time being. (**Dela, Visitor**)

As seen from Dela’s narration, receiving only food items without any other essentials (e.g., toiletries, money, and medicine) is a common experience among prisoners, especially those from a household with farming as their primary occupation. To get these essentials, prisoners often trade the food items with other prisoners to raise money to buy these items. Similarly, because of the perishable nature of the food items, the transferred prisoners argue that it was only prudent to trade part of the food items for money that they could save for future expenses. George had this say:

One thing you should know is that some families can only bring food items and may not be able to give you money. What we do is sell some of the food items because you may not eat them all before they rot. I am now relying on the money I saved from these sales because my wife, who used to visit me, is now sick. She cannot come here again. Once you

are in prison, you do not know what will happen tomorrow; you must always plan in case the visits stop. **(George, transferred prisoner, Q28)**

Unlike the difficulties in discerning the inflow of high quantities of food into the prisons through the covert and informal trading of visits and food, bringing massive quantities of food in anticipation of sustaining prisoners for a longer period is easily spotted and prison officers use discretion to divide provisions (see Section 6.6.1 for further details). Commenting on the prevalence and concealed intention of food transactions among the prisoners causing the food division, one of the prison officers' asserts:

You can get anything in this prison. Now! Now! If you want fried yam, chicken, egg, indomie, fufu and goat soup, chill drinks, etc., I can get that for you from the inmates. Some of them [the inmates] are building houses outside just from the selling of the food items to fellow inmates. **(Sako, Prison Officer, NMSP)**

The financial incentives attributed to the inflow and food transactions among the prisoners by the prison officers are further supported by a small section of the transferred prisoners when they responded to the question, "Do you think your responsibilities have changed since your incarceration?" For instance, a substantial number (72%) of the transferred prisoners affirm *Yes* and further assert that a family member (e.g., parents, spouse, children, siblings, etc.) has assumed their responsibilities. By contrast, with just 8 (5%) of the transferred prisoners having *No Responsibilities* before their incarceration, a little over one-fifth (23%) stated *No*, claiming that they were still performing the same responsibilities before their incarceration. Citing these responsibilities, sending money saved from the food transaction to family members was prevalent, as captured below:

By the grace of God, I have been selling soft drinks and indomie since I arrived here. I have been saving. I sometimes send money to my mom to take care of my two children. She has started a small business from that too, and part has been used to pay for my court procedures [...]. I am preparing to start my appeal application with the money I make here. **(Yussif, transferred prisoner, Q47)**

These findings illustrate how transferred prisoners resist the prison system through the covert use of internal arrangements among themselves and the overt manoeuvring of the various control measures of the prisons. In addition to Ugelvik's (2011) identification of food as a hidden tool of

resistance used by prisoners, the clever use of visiting privileges to bring food into the prisons suggests that resistance can be visible without direct consequences. As I have shown throughout this section, the prison officers are aware of the arrangement but could rarely differentiate between genuine visits/food for personal consumption and arranged visits/food for selling purposes. Thus, the inflow of food further blurs the formal and informal economies of the prisons because of the collective pains of incarceration. The blurriness and spillages between the formal and informal economies I present in this chapter aligns with Foucault's assertion that power and resistance are a web of relations. Nonetheless, the unfettered powers of prison officers are still ubiquitous, as seen in the division of food, denying visitors entering prisons, and assigning and revoking the working privileges of prisoners.

7.3 Role of digital technology in transferred prisoners – visitors' interaction (access to mobile phones, e-money transfers)

This section catalogues the emerging shift from in-person visits to digital technological strategies (e.g., access to mobile phones, Subscriber Identity Module (SIM) cards, and electronic money transfers) among the transferred prisoners. The digital technological strategies transferred prisoners use include an e-money transfer system and phone calls to contact family members. The shift has exacerbated the proliferation, desire to own, and informal trading of mobile phones and SIM cards among transferred prisoners, which are frequently classified as contraband within prison space. This growing shift emanates from the effects of the transfer, various control measures at visiting centres (see Chapter 6, Section 6.6 for further details), and the changes that occurred with the emergence of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). There is abundant evidence showing the effects of COVID-19 on the global prison systems, including early releases of prisoners to decongest prisons (Maruna, McNaul, and O'Neill, 2022; Cingolani et al., 2021), suspension of visiting hours (Brennan, 2021; Muntingh, 2020), and deterioration of prisoners' mental health because of a lack of visits and support from family members (McDonald et al., 2023; Dallaire et al., 2021).

Similarly, prisons in Ghana became a primary source of concern to various NGOs and policymakers following the country's first recorded case of COVID-19 in March 2020 (Amponsah, Tagoe, and Afriyie, 2021). To minimise the ravaging effects of the disease on an already overcrowded prison system, a range of measures were implemented, such as early releases and the suspension of new prisoner admissions by lower prisons. For instance, a presidential pardon was

granted to 808 prisoners, out of which 797 first-time offenders, aged, and seriously sick prisoners were discharged, as well as 11 having their sentences commuted from the death sentence and life imprisonment to life imprisonment and 20 years, respectively (GPS Press Release, 2020; Novak and Pascoe, 2022). In addition, prisoners were allowed to receive food items, provisions, and financial support from visitors, although clothes, blankets, direct contact, and conversing during visits were still prohibited. In that sense, visitors were allowed to drop off items at the prison, but face-to-face visits were not permitted (see Section 6.5.3). Anecdotally, a few transferred prisoners do not consider this new form of interaction in the wake of COVID-19 as visits. As described by Taylor, a 27-year-old transferred prisoner:

We do not call people who just come to deliver items ‘visits.’ When we say ‘visit,’ you can sit and talk with the person. You tell the person your problems and ask about what is going on in the family. But since the outbreak of COVID-19, the person only gives you the items and goes back. Sometimes, you do not even see the person. (**Taylor, transferred prisoner, Q07**)

Travelling long distances to visit incarcerated relatives and being denied contact and communication threatens in-person prison visitations in the view of the transferred prisoners. It is particularly the case when one considers the convenience of other modes (e.g., digital technologies) of contacting and communicating with family members. Hence, using these digital technologies is more ‘reasonable and cost-effective,’ in the words of one of the transferred prisoners. In that sense, the time visitors spend travelling to and from the prisons, the lorry fares, and the many challenges at the visiting centres are minimised through phone calls and mobile money (MoMo, an e-money transfer system in Ghana). As said by one of the transferred prisoners:

I have stopped my family from visiting me. If I want them to come, they will, but I prefer them sending me MoMo to them, travelling all the way from the Ashanti region to see me. With MoMo, they can even send what they would have used for lorry fare, and it will be enough. It saves them money and time. I can buy most of the things I need in the prison’s store and even call them from the phone booth. Once you have a phone number, they can send the money; you do not have to let them suffer coming here. (**Obour, transferred prisoner, Q64**)

The shift from in-person visits depends on prisoners' access to mobile phones and related technologies, as seen in Obour's narration. Prisoners' access to these technologies stems from formal/central prison and informal sources.

Formally, prisoners have access to prison phone booth privilege; however, it is on the condition that they buy phone credit, and the call is local. For instance, 6 out of every 10 (64%) the transferred prisoners I interviewed rely on the prison's phone booth to stay connected with family members. However, a little over one-third (36%) claim they have never used the phone booth. Despite the availability of the phone booth, exorbitant call charges continue to hinder their usage among the prisoners in keeping contact with their family members. Commenting on reasons for not receiving visits, one transferred prisoner noted:

I have not tried calling my family members since my transfer to this place. Calling them will be like a gamble because I will have to pay for the call, and they may not come. Here [in prison], no amount is small, and I will have to use more than GHC2/£0.14 for just a 3-to-4-minute call. It is better I keep the money rather than go to the phone booth. I do not know why it is not free for us to call our families. Even if it is just once a year, it will really help some of us. (**Evans, transferred prisoner, Q63**)

Apart from the exclusionary dimension of the phone charges seen in prisoners' inability to keep contact with relatives (see also Grommon, Carter, and Scheer, 2018), the outright ban on foreign calls also denies foreign prisoners the opportunity to stay in constant contact with family members through phone calls. And in the U.S. immigration detention context, Conlon and Hiemstra (2014) also discusses exorbitant charges for phone calls and communications for detained migrants. Such a ban on foreign calls also contradicts international best practises such as the UNHCR Principle 16(1) (see Chapter 6, Section 6.4 for further details on the prohibition of foreign calls).

In addition to phone calls, prisoners are allowed to receive e-money transfers from friends and relatives. Less than half (39%) of the transferred prisoners I interviewed admitted receiving e-money through the reception office of the prison, which is often recorded in the 'Prisoners Cash Deposit Book,' an internal banking system of the prison through which prisoners can deposit and withdraw money. Contrarily, almost two-thirds (61%) of the transferred prisoners never use the formal/central prison system to receive e-money from friends or relatives. According to the transferred prisoners, the cap placed on the amount for prisoners to receive and withdraw (i.e.,

GH¢40/£3 per week) for spending in the prison commissary, the lack/loss of phone numbers of relatives, and the financial difficulties of the household continue to hinder the use of the e-money transfer system of the prisons. Sharing his experience with the e-money transfer system, Kwame remarked:

The officers searched our cells and seized GH¢6200/£448, which was meant for my lawyer. I sold my piece of land to raise that money. The problem is that the reception office has a cap on the amount we can save with them. I tried arranging with my wife for her to send the money to the reception office, but they refused. My lawyer was supposed to pick up the money the next day when the officers searched our cells. Now I do not know if they will give the money back to me because nobody is saying anything, and I cannot appeal the case without the money. **(Kwame, transferred prisoner, Q17)**

Through an informal conversation with a few prison officers, they raised concerns about the lack of accountability about the seizure of prisoners' money and valuable items (e.g., mobile phones) during cell searches. In the view of the officers, the OICs are not accountable to anybody when prisoners' valuables are seized. Hence, it is an 'unofficial and easy way of making money' by some prisoners, in the words of one prison officer. Yin and Kofie (2021) made similar observations in their study on the informal prison economy in Ghana, where they claim:

“It is a time-honoured ritual to destroy an already defective mobile phone in the prison yard. However, there is no clear accounting of the number of phones or the amount of illicit drug confiscation that gets destroyed. The symbolic destroying/burning of the contrabands is not lost on the prisoners; it is a ruse.” (Yin and Kofie, 2021, p. 16)

Prisoners informal access to and use of mobile phones and other related technologies are embedded in the informal economies of the various prisons. Their need or desire to own personal phones arises from the high costs of institutional telecom and e-money transfers and the ramifications of the transfer (see Chapter 6). Critical analysis of the transferred prisoners and visitors' experiences about the transition to the various technologies relates to David Harvey's concept of 'time-space compression.' For Harvey (1991, p. 418), time-space compression pertains to the “annihilation of space by time” and the optimisation of the exchange of goods and information. In that sense, the growing shift from in-person visits to the use of digital technologies such as phone calls and electronic money transfers is anchored on counterbalancing the consequences of the transfer (i.e.,

distance, time of travelling to and from the prisons, hazards of the roads), and the internal restrictions of the prisons. Peterson et al. (2022), Russo et al. (2022), and Shukla et al. (2021) research on prisoners' use of contrabands, specifically cell phones, in the U.S. points out bypassing the prison monitoring system, making less expensive, and calling family members at their own convenience as the motives for possession and concealing mobile phones among prisoners. The officers express concern about the rise in prisoners' possession of mobile phones and SIM cards, which has caused the transfer of some prisoners. For instance, Solo shared the experience:

My transfer is because of stubbornness. I went to the cell master to inform him I wanted to be transferred. He said that was not possible. They later caught me with about 50 SIM cards and a mobile phone. It was difficult to get water to bathe in the previous prison, so I just wanted them to transfer me. I did not have money to pay either. Because if you give something [money] small to the officers, they will add your name to the list. I did not have money, so I just had to sell the SIM cards. I knew it was not allowed. They did not tell me anything until the transfer day. (**Solo, transferred prisoner, Q19**)

Anecdotal evidence through informal conversations with the officers and transferred prisoners and observations I made during the fieldwork show that prisoners' access and use of mobile phones and SIM cards goes beyond the benign purpose of keeping contact with relatives. In that regard, a subsection of the officers alleges prisoners' use of mobile phones to defraud people outside the prisons. For instance, an ex-prison officer who was convicted for trying to smuggle mobile phones into one of the prisons shares the following experience in the vignette below:

Vignette 8: Former prison officer cum transferred prisoner experience of proliferation and informal transaction of mobile phones

I am an ex-prison officer who was convicted of trying to smuggle mobile phones into one of the prisons. I know that some of my colleagues tipped off the management leading to my arrest. I still don't know the reason why they did that, because a couple of the officers are deeply involved in concealing and bringing mobile phones, SIM cards, and money (above the limits) into the prisons for inmates.

Making a call or receiving e-money in here is very expensive, been it through the officers or the inmates. You can buy an unregistered SIM card inside the prisons for about GHC30/£2 as compared to buying the same outside for GHC2–5/£0.14-0.36. As you know already, registration of SIM cards for electronic money transfers is often free outside at the various offices of the mobile operators. However, they sell registered SIM cards in the prisons for GHC120/£9. Many of my colleagues [inmates] often prefer the registered SIM cards to the unregistered ones because they can save, receive, and send any amount from outside the prisons without any restrictions, especially money they obtained through fraudulent means.

From my experience as an ex-officer, many of the inmates exhibit high levels of intelligence, and they have Facebook accounts under pseudonyms and communicate with individuals outside the prison. These inmates sometimes deceive people into believing in false relationships and marriages, from which they derive financial gain. Through such engagements, they have obtained compromising photographs of individuals in positions of power, such as queen mothers, police officers, and journalists, and have used these images to blackmail and extort money from their subjects. The funds are transferred to designated phone numbers, which is subsequently dispensed to a prison officer for a percentage, who will then bring the money into the prison. However, electronic transfers have become the most secure method for conducting such transactions.

Inmates with mobile phones and registered SIM cards sometimes trade with fellow inmates, during which 30% is charged on the amount received. The 30% charge may be high; however, the level of convenience and ability to receive any amount is what will motivate my colleague inmate to go to fellow inmates rather than the reception office.

Visitors also smuggle contraband, such as mobile phones and SIM cards, into prisons for inmates. There are instances where visitors can use something as simple as '*Azuma blow*' (i.e., local Ghanaian soap) to conceal SIM cards into the prisons. Food items (such as bread, stew or soup, yam, and cassava) have been used to conceal mobile phones.

Akin to the narration in vignette 8 are the dangers of prisoners' using mobiles to organise riots, plan escapes, intimidate witnesses, and continue the maintenance of a criminal lifestyle that led to their incarceration (see also Russo et al., 2022; Peterson et al., 2022; Schlosser and Feldman, 2022; Shukla et al., 2021).

The participation of the officers in the trade of mobile phones and electronic money transfers presents a doubtful advantage. For instance, it is a conduit of contraband proliferation (e.g., mobile phones, inmate access to money beyond the threshold of the prisons) into the prisons, as seen in vignette 6, and the benign offering of personal (i.e., officers) phones to prisoners to make calls,

receive and withdraw electronic monies on behalf of prisoners from family members, and financially support prisoners. For instance, I observed the following conversation between a transferred prisoner and a prison officer, who all hail from the same hometown, during one of my visits to NMSP:

Transferred prisoner: Hello bro, I have not seen you for a while, how is the family doing?

Officer: We are doing well. Yes, I have been away for a while, but I am back now.

Transferred prisoner: Bro, the place is hot; your junior brother does not have anything to eat. Can I get something to buy gari?

Officer: [...] This time is not good, bro; today is the 17th, and you know we are paid at the end of the month. Next time, I can get you something. But today I do not have any money.

Transferred prisoner: You know you are our father here, if you do not help your brother, I do not know who to return to.

Officer: Huh! You would not understand [...] you take this GH¢5/£0.36. That is my lunch money you are taking now.

Prisoners asking for help either in cash or in kind from prison officers, as seen in the conversation above, is a daily experience, according to close to two-fifths (39%) of the prison officers I interviewed. In that regard, a cross-section of the officers offer their phones to prisoners to contact family members without charging them. Gifty, a spouse of one of the transferred prisoners corroborated the benign help officers provide to prisoners and family members:

My husband used one of the officers' phones to call and inform me they had transferred him to the NMSP. The officer is helpful, and I have his number now. Sometimes, if I come here and I am going home, he gives me money to pick up a trotro (i.e., a local public transport vehicle in Ghana). If I am unable to come here, I can send him money to cash out for my husband. I used to cry anytime I visited, and I even thought of committing suicide. However, the officer will console me and recommend that I focus on the children. He used to ask, If I die now, who will take care of the children? That helps me to focus on taking care of the children. (**Gifty, Visitor**)

Summarily, the gradual shift from in-person visits underpinned by the positive effects of using digital technologies among transferred prisoners offers an alternative and more complex picture on scholarship about the negative effects of the implementation of digital technologies in prisons (see also Dallaire et al., 2021; McLeod and Bonsu, 2018; Rabuy and Wagner, 2015). In that sense, the time-space compression effects and their concomitant benefits (e.g., time and money savings, minimising road accidents, and harassment of visitors) in accessing digital technologies in the prisons could be a respite to both transferred prisoners and family members. Simultaneously, access to such technologies at the individual level could further shrink prisoners' physical interaction with family members, a source for exploitation and intimidation. At the institutional level, digital technologies are potent for undermining prison walls, especially if access is not guided, as the findings from this study suggest in the context of Ghana. The evidence supports Farrington's (1992, p. 7) description of prisons as a 'not-so-total' as opposed to Goffman's (1961) 'total institution' representation of prisons in terms of the informal transactions of mobile phones, SIM cards, and e-money transfers.

7.4 Concluding remarks of chapter

In this chapter, I have explored the coping strategies of transferred prisoners and focused on the activities of transferred prisoners in addressing the challenges of transfers. Rather than the transferred prisoners using emotional and avoidance tactics, as seen in prior studies (see, for instance, Leszko, Iwanski, and Jarzebinska, 2020; LaCourse et al., 2019), many of the transferred prisoners use a mixture of different strategies. These strategies specifically aim at dealing with the challenges of the transfer, an approach that relates to the problem-focused coping strategies of persons in confined spaces (Gonçalves et al., 2015). I contextualise these strategies by assessing the transferred prisoners' access to food support from family members and digital technologies (e.g., mobile phones, SIM cards, and e-money transfers). Deducing from the findings, I argue that the emergence of the informal prison economy is a creation of the weakness of the formal character of prisons and its internal micro-capitalism. Also, the study of prison contraband should not solely be based on the nature of the product (Peterson et al., 2021; Shukla, Peterson, and Kim, 2021) but on how or the way products are exchanged.

Despite the conceptual distinction between the formal and informal economies of the prisons (Gibson-Light, 2023; Burgason, 2017), their close examination shows complexities and blurriness. Transferred prisoners strive through their coping strategies to ameliorate their circumstances of

infrequent visits from family members, financial costs (e.g., lorry fares, exorbitant phone charges), and restrictions on visiting hours. In so doing, they try to manoeuvre and outwit the internal control mechanisms (see also Crewe, 2009) of the prisons. The prisoner's 'ingenuity' in the form of coping strategies aligns with Foucault's discussion of power vs. resistance as a complex web of relations. This is seen in the trading of visiting hours, utilising their temporary time outside during prison work to bring in essential goods that are informally traded with other prisoners, and monetizing their skills (e.g., operating barbering salons, weaving and sewing dresses) and services (e.g., washing clothes, repairing sandals, working at the prison supermarket) to fellow prisoners and prison officers.

Lastly, the blurriness of the boundaries between formal and informal prison economies engenders a mixed flow of goods for benign consumption and illegal trading, a lack of accountability, and reinforces exploitation and asymmetric power relations. For instance, it creates a situation where corruption among prison officers is inevitable, as seen in vignette 8, implicating officers in the proliferation of mobile phones and cash into prisons.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the principal findings of this study; I review the theoretical contributions, the practical implications for prisoner transfer in Ghana, and the conclusions derived from the overall project. The central aim of this study is anchored by the research question: *To what extent does prison transfer affects the governance and management of the Ghana Prison System?* This study is empirically located within Ghana's prison system and the research contributes to many theoretical assumptions, including prison labour/economy, multiple mobility's (including forced migration), and social network to analyse the experiences of transferred prisoners. As set out in the methodology chapter, the study is guided by five specific research objectives (RO):

RO1: To assess the rationale and transfer processes of prisoners in Ghana and how such transfers affect prison management.

RO2: To examine the perception and experience of transferred prisoners' movement between prisons

RO3: To examine families of prisoners' experiences and access to transferred prisoners.

RO4: To examine the effects of incarceration and transfer on the relationship between transferred prisoners and family members.

RO5: To explore the agency and coping strategies of transferred prisoners' and family members post-transfer of prisoners.

The research question and objectives necessitated robust methodological consideration; thus, I use a mixed method of qualitative and quantitative techniques. The qualitative techniques employed in this study include purposeful, voluntary, and convenience sampling, semi-structured interviews, and non-participant observation. For the quantitative techniques, I deploy questionnaires and utilise SPSS and NVivo to collect, analyse, and present the results in four analytical chapters. This chapter is organised into four sections, where I first summarise the study findings (Section 8.2). In Section 8.3, I focus on the conclusion of the thesis, paying particular attention to the significant themes that emerge from the findings. I conclude the thesis by outlining various recommendations (Section

8.4) based on the study findings and potential areas for future research (Section 8.4.1), particularly towards the improvement of the prison systems in Ghana.

8.2 Summary of the study findings

Informed by Foucault's discourses of power model (1977), the empirical chapters are interrelated in examining manifestations of power relations in various stages of the transfer process, including the reasons for, selection, and transport of prisoners as well as how power relations operate in the course of prison visitation by relatives of transferred prisoners.

There is a lack of empirical information or a regulatory framework for the transfer of prisoners in Ghana. RO1 responds to this, providing a detailed account of the context, administration of, and practises related to prisoner transfer in Ghana. Specifically, I explore the reasons and the institutional challenges associated with prisoner transfer in Ghana. At the macro-/state level, transfer is used as a quick fix or temporary solution to address the systemic challenges of the Ghana Prison Service (GPS), including overcrowding, misclassification of prisoners, and access to health services. On the basis of the study findings, I contend that transfer will continue to serve as a tool for the GPS as long as these challenges persist in the prison system. The use of transfer in these contexts aligns with the 'disciplined mobility' framework, as discussed in chapters 4 and 5. At the micro-/individual level, transfer serves as a punitive response to prisoners' apparent misconduct, including activities such as smoking, gambling, and possession of mobile phones, and for court attendance during appeals. I outlined several distinctions that are made to rationalise the use of transfers, which reinforce and embody the heterogeneity of experiences of mobility within confined spaces. Significantly, prisoner transfer enhances the governance of the carceral system in Ghana, according to the prison officers. As previously discussed (see Chapter 4, Section 4.5), as well as Fassin (2017) and Reginal and Jannetta (2021) argue that transfers serve as a tool for dispute resolution between prisoners and guards. Crewe (2009) also maintains that prisoners are safeguarded through transfers, especially when they owe fellow prisoners and cannot pay them back, or for snitching on fellow prisoners.

The varied conditions of prisons across the country, anchored in the many challenges that were outlined in Chapter 4, engender a dialectic framing of transfer as either a punishment or reward by the transferred prisoners. In other words, prisoners' perception of their transfer as either a punishment or reward mirrors the diverse prison conditions across the country. For instance, it is

perceived as a reward to be moved away from a prison where water is rationed, prison facilities are overcrowded, there is low quality and inadequate food, the prison infirmary is inadequate for treating common illnesses and insufficient bed space is provided. On the other hand, being transferred against one's will, being unable to inform family members, or to carry belongings during transfers, and not knowing the destination is perceived as a punishment; this also supports the proposition that prisoner transfer in the context of the GPS is a practise of 'disciplined mobility.'

By mapping the transfer process, I observe a hierarchical approach where the Director-General of the GPS approves all transfers and resources needed to transport prisoners across the country. The centralisation of the approval and resources of transfers, which is reasoned out of the logistical challenges confronting the GPS, produces bottlenecks in the transfer process. First, it creates bureaucracy because of the vested powers of transfer approval on the Director-General of the GPS, which lessen the autonomy of various prisons across the country. At the same time, selection, medical screening, and processing of prisoners for transfers are delegated to respective prison facilities and carried out by key units/officers such as the reception, administration, infirmary, and operation units superintended by the Officer-in-Charge. Second, the bureaucracies of the prisons, coupled with the lack of a regulatory framework for transfers, produce an asymmetric power relationship between centralised authorities, prison officers and prisoners. This asymmetric power relationship manifests as discretion, manipulation, exploitation, and discrimination, as highlighted in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5 addressed RO2, which focused on the perception and experience of transferred prisoners' movement between prisons. Given the scarcity of empirical research on Ghanaian prisons, I began the chapter with an overview of the legal representation, awareness, preparedness, and reaction to their relational encounter with the escorting officers during the transfer. Prisoners' socio-demographic characteristics significantly influence the transfer process and experience. First, the *nationality* and *transfer history* of the prisoners play a significant role in normalising the transfer process, particularly among foreign prisoners, as they acknowledge the transfer as part of their sentence. In other words, they remain emotionally detached as long as the transfer is within the confines of Ghana. Also disturbing from the experiences of the foreign prisoners is the ban on using the prison phone booths to communicate with their relatives who reside outside the country. Another key finding is that prisoners derive spiritual and material support from their *religious*

affiliations, particularly in situations where visits and family support come to a halt because of the transfer. Lastly, the *criminal records* of the prisoners and the *type of crime* they are convicted for, which appear to be the only factors officers consider during transfer, directly affect the treatment they receive during transfers. This includes details such as whether they are notified about the transfer, given time to prepare, or handcuffed during transportation. Considering the critical importance of socio-demographic variables in shaping and generating varied experiences among the transferred prisoners (see Chapter 3, Table 3.5 for further details), I propose that attention to prisoners background information must extend beyond the primary focus on criminal records and type of crime, as considering sentence length, occupation pre-incarceration, level of education, and age of prisoners will contribute to addressing the misclassification challenges that the GPS is fraught with (see Chapter 4).

All through the transfer process, prison officers' interactions with the prisoners are marked by overt and covert tactics that chime with Foucault's 'microphysics of power' conceptualisation (1977) (see Chapter 2, Section 2.4.1). Scholars have analysed migrants' experiences using this and related analytical lenses (Bosworth, 2023; Gashi, Pedersen, and Ugelvik, 2021; De Genova, 2019; Garelli and Tazzioli, 2016; Carrera and Stefan, 2018; Gibney, 2013; Walters and Cornelisse, 2010). For instance, besides the formal processes' officers follow in transferring prisoners, they also deploy tactics, strategies, and techniques in the form of verbal insults, physical assaults, handcuffing, withholding meals, and subjecting inmates to urinate and excrete into inappropriate materials (e.g., gallows, cups, bowls, polythene bags) during the transfer and transportation of prisoners. Covert manipulations such as hiding and changing transfer dates, transporting prisoners in the middle of the night, and using unfamiliar officers for escorts, which all serve as strategies to disorient and minimise prisoners' engagement and resistance during transfers, are also typical.

Because of the unbalanced power between the officers and prisoners, which manifests via manipulation and subjection, many prisoners are transferred without being informed, leaving them unprepared for the transfers. In other words, many prisoners had no knowledge they would be transferred and are often not allowed to carry any of their belongings, including clothing, toiletries, food, and utensils. It leads to 'somewhat chaotic' experiences and encounters, as described by Baaz et al. (2016, p. 137); these are fraught emotionally too with sadness, tears, uncertainty, frustration, happiness, and apathy expressed during and in connection with transfers. For many of the transferred prisoners, these experiences reflect an inconspicuous type of punishment.

Furthermore, the treatment and conditions under which they are transferred have an impact on their integration into the new prison, impairing their ties with their networks and increasing the financial challenges of the transferred prisoners' families, as explained in more detail in Chapter 6.

The question I address in Chapter 6 is: *How are transfers reconfiguring the relationship between prisoners and their family members?* The chapter examines family members' experiences in accessing their incarcerated relatives post-transfer (RO3) and the effects of incarceration and transfer on the relationship between transferred prisoners and their family members (RO4). By integrating both RO3 and RO4, the findings add to the body of knowledge on the effects of incarceration while also advancing the idea that we can draw a distinction between the consequences of transfer and incarceration. While they are conceptually associated and mutually reinforcing, blurriness also characterises them. To begin, social network theory, as used in this study, positioned the transferred prisoner within a web of relationships or family within which the effect of the incarceration affects different actors. For instance, financial consequences, the reconfiguration of marriage, stigma, and self-esteem among transferred prisoners and family members are significant findings in this study. They contribute a contextual understanding of the effects of incarceration in Ghana and also highlight the system's similarity to typical consequences of incarceration found in other carceral spaces (see also Johnson et al., 2021; Condry and Minson, 2020; Hutton and Moran, 2019). Contextualising the financial consequences of incarceration in Ghana reveals two inter-related trends: the reconfiguration of gender roles and the increased financial distress of relatives of transferred prisoners, particularly women (e.g., spouses, mothers, sisters) who are already economically marginalised in Ghana (see also Arthur-Holmes and Busia, 2020). For example, female relatives assume the cost of a prisoner's children's school fees, hospital and utility expenses, guardianship of grandchildren, paying rent, and going the extra mile to care for the incarcerated spouse/son/brother/father.

Similarly, the evidence from this study shows that incarceration threatens marriages as a social institution because of the length of prisoners' sentences (with an average of 29.2 years from this study), accusations of infidelity among female spouses by incarcerated husbands, and the type of prison in which a prisoner is housed. Divorce is one of the consequences, nearly one-fifth (19%) of the transferred prisoners experiencing marriage breakdown, while one-seventh (14%) noted deterioration or low performance of their children and siblings' education. Because of financial

constraints, children of transferred prisoners had to switch schools, from an expensive and high-performing school to a less costly and lower-performing one. Despite the threat incarceration poses to marriages (see also Condry and Minson, 2020; Comfort, 2019), the survival of slightly more than one-third (37%) of transferred prisoners' marriages seems to depend on the presence of children, for whom female spouses stay in the marriage as caretakers. Stigma and low self-esteem as consequences of incarceration among the prisoners also stem from the inability to perform duties as head of the family (e.g., paying rent, utility expenses, children's school fees, providing food), coupled with non-participation in familial cultural events (e.g., funerals, naming ceremonies). The accounts of a culture of stigma I advanced in this study corroborate Goffman's (1963, p. 4) description of stigma as "blemishes of individual character" and "tribal stigma of race, nation, and religion," while also adding to the conventional assertion that crime and imprisonment are the primary sources of stigma among prisoners (Rutter and Barr, 2021).

The transfer of the prisoners magnifies the consequences of their incarceration. To map out this finding, I compare the frequencies of visits prior to and after the transfer (see Chapter 6, Figure 6.1 for further details), predicated on distance, time, and the hazardousness of travel for relatives visiting the transferred prisoners. Prior to the transfer, for instance, family members of transferred prisoners would regularly visit their incarcerated relatives on a weekly, biweekly, or monthly basis. However, the frequency of visits dwindles significantly to only once a year, with two out of every five (40%) transferred prisoners losing all visits after the transfer. Although the cessation of visits among Ghanaian prisoners was a new occurrence, which prisoners attribute to the transfer, foreign prisoners reported having never received any visits from family members during their time in prison. The distance plays a significant role in reconfiguring the visits after the transfer, as prisoners from all 16 regions of Ghana are transferred to the NMSP and AMSP located in the south of the country (see Figure 5.4). As a result, family members are required to travel long distances from all parts of the country to visit their incarcerated relative; travel typically spans over a single day, is fraught with excessive transportation costs, and results in time lost. Consequently, many family members opt to discontinue their visits following the transfer, while those who persist in visiting, despite these obstacles, tend to rely on friends and family members for lodging, food, and directions to the prisons. This phenomenon aligns with the fundamental principles of social network theory used for the study, which advocate for leveraging one's network during times of adversity (see, for instance, Zaami, 2020).

Homing in on RO3 about visitors experiences post-transfer at the various prisons, they undergo various processes during visitations that are imbued with ontologies of power and discretions ranging from denial of entry, splitting of supplies (e.g., food, toiletries), to harassment. While the officers typically direct the visitors upon arrival, the visiting process lacks formal representation. In order to gain insight into the interaction between visitors and officers, I formulated three stages of the interaction process: *Checkpoint 1 (Registration Centre)*, where visitors relationship with prisoners are established and officers check the appropriateness of visitors' dressing; *Checkpoint 2 (Physical Checking Centre)*, where officers search visitors supplies for contraband, occasionally, this results in the division of large supplies with a portion returned to the visitor; and *Checkpoint 3 (Meeting the inmate)*, where visitors have face-to-face interaction with visitors. However, the prison management temporarily halted face-to-face interaction between prisoners and visitors as a precaution against the COVID-19 pandemic. The mapping of the visiting centre I present in this study could potentially serve as a first step toward establishing a formalised and comprehensible approach to visitation protocols throughout the diverse prisons situated in Ghana. Establishing a formalised protocol has the potential to foster greater knowledge and awareness among visitors regarding visiting guidelines, enhance accountability for the behaviour of prison officers, and enhance the experiences of prisoners and their networks.

In each of the stages identified, transferred prisoners and visitors encounter a multitude of challenges. These include the unsavoury process of searching and dividing supplies, specifically food items. In addition, visitors are denied entry because of their inability to prove their identity or for dressing in a manner deemed inappropriate. Moreover, arriving outside of visiting hours has also resulted in a denial of entry. Long waiting times have also been an issue. Furthermore, visitors have experienced varying degrees of harassment, ranging from verbal assaults to sexual abuse, such as sending love proposals and making phone calls to female relatives.

The lack of visibility of the visiting regulations, along with officers' discretion as the rules of engagement, leads to denial, exclusion, and harassment of visitors and prisoners during visits. These findings relate to the notions of 'secondary prisonization' (Reizabal et al., 2023; Comfort, 2019) and 'pain of imprisonment' (Bosworth, 2023; McKendy and Ricciardelli, 2021) (see Chapter 6, Section 6.6 for further details). Based on the transferred prisoners' and visitors' experiences, it exacerbates their vulnerability, particularly in an already underfunded system like the GPS.

In the last section of Chapter 6, I examine transferred prisoners' and families' access to social support systems following the former sentence. Given this, I briefly explore the activities of NGOs and religious groups in the prison space of Ghana. The array of challenges identified throughout this thesis underscore the necessity and importance of contributions from private entities in bolstering the management of various prisons. I maintain that the primary sources of support are NGOs and religious groups. Through the centralisation of the activities of both NGOs and religious groups by the management of the prisons, all material donations (e.g., food items, toiletries, medical supplies, mattresses) are received on behalf of the prisoners. The subsequent allocation of these donations to prisoners is beset with opacity, as transferred prisoners allege that the prison officers pilfer and withhold the donations. Along similar lines, access to these supports is managed/controlled by prison officers, which has become a source of concern to the prisoners. However, a significant disparity exists in providing more intangible services (e.g., counselling, prayer sessions, bible studies, health screening), where prisoners directly interact with NGOs and religious groups. This allows them to make covert appeals for assistance from these entities. If we are to appreciate the full dimensions of the struggles of transferred prisoners, we must equally appreciate how they are responding and minimising the shocks and challenges post-transfer, which I address through RO5.

The findings I present in Chapter 7 pertain to RO5 and focus on the agency and strategies transferred prisoners employ to cope with their challenges. I paid particular attention to the intricacies of the internal micro-capitalism governing the two prisons and the increasing prisoner preference for technologically driven measures as a cost-efficient way of addressing the consequences of transfers. Regarding the prison's internal micro-capitalism, I framed the coping strategies of the transferred prisoners through formal and informal economic transactions within the prisons. Based on the analysis of the transferred prisoners' coping strategies through the various economic transactions they engage in, I maintain that blurriness and spillages characterise the formal and informal economies of the prisons, which also appear to be mutually interdependent. Further, several factors, including the consequences of the transfer and splitting of supplies for prisoners, produce and sustain the informal economy of the prisons. In addition, the framing of prison contraband should extend beyond a focus on the nature of the product to consider the exchange process within the prison environment, a claim that requires further empirical investigation.

Ordinarily, both formal and informal economies generate financial benefits for varied actors within the prison space (e.g., prisoners, officers). However, the participation of transferred prisoners in the formal prison-assigned work points to its ‘nonmarket character’ (Zatz, 2008, p. 861), whereby the officers primarily use food to compensate for their labour. However, the administration of the various prisons mainly requests monetary compensation when private individuals use prison labour. Such “extraction of labour and profits” from the transferred prisoners is also common among refugees (Martin and Tazzioli, 2023; Morris, 2023, p. 4), in detention centres (Bosworth, 2023; Hiemstra and Conlon, 2016; Conlon and Hiemstra, 2014), and trafficked persons (Cockbain, Bowers, and Dimitrova, 2018; Lewis et al., 2014). The level of exploitation, in conjunction with insufficient work opportunities and inadequate work prospects within the prisons, leads to a small proportion (7%) of transferred prisoners opting for formal prison assignments, which are often performed within and outside the prison premises. The activities of the few transferred prisoners who continue to participate in the formal prison work bring to light interesting issues about the influx of supplies into the prison and reinforce their (i.e., prisoners) own creativity within confined spaces. In that sense, the time spent outside the prison engaging in prison work is perceived as a temporary reprieve from the sentence, functioning as a channel to procure supplies externally for vending them to their fellow prisoners at an exorbitant price and soliciting financial assistance from passers-by.

Similarly, transferred prisoners’ participation in the informal economy of the prisons relates to what Scott (1985, p. 33) describes as ‘everyday resistance’ where their activities and engagements are implicitly and covertly performed amid the many difficulties associated with the transfer (see also Hughes, 2023, p. 60). In that sense, I approach the informal transactions of the prisons through the daily work routine of the transferred prisoner, as well as the strategies, tactics, and manoeuvres they employ to bring in supplies, circumventing the splitting of the supplies for real consumption and trading purposes. From the analysis of the transferred prisoners’ daily routine work, they trade their crafts/skills and perform menial tasks for their fellow prisoners and officers in exchange for monetary compensation. In paying for the services prisoners informally provide, officers employ discretion to pay, whereby they delay, reduce, and sometimes refuse to pay. This trend reflects the existing power imbalance between the prison officers and the prisoners.

Moreover, the internal and informal arrangements between transferred prisoners to bring food into the prisons stem from the inadequate and low quality of food provided to prisoners. As outlined in

Chapter 6, the shared hardships of the prison conditions enable and maintain the strategies and tactics prisoners employ to mitigate the internal control measures of the prisons and the consequences of the transfer (such as cessation and long waiting periods between visits). For Crewe (2009, p. 228), solidarity and generosity among the prisoners are critical to mitigating the ‘collective pains’ of prison life. Such collectivity complicates and blurs the inflow of food supplies, as transferred prisoners without visits trade their visiting privileges for food. For instance, the prevalence of family members offering prisoners food supplies rather than monetary assistance and the extended duration between visits result in a surplus of food items transferred prisoners receive from visitors. Therefore, it is common for transferred prisoners to exchange their excess food items for money, which they often save for future expenses and the procurement of other necessities, such as toiletries. Despite the transferred prisoners’ resourcefulness, the unrestricted authority of the officers remains pervasive, as evidenced in the division of food supplies, prohibition of visitation, and retraction of prisoner work privileges.

Chapter 7 concludes with a discussion of the function of technological measures in mitigating some of the challenges associated with transfer. The findings relate broadly to the concept of time-space compression in terms of the rationalisation of the use of digital technologies by transferred prisoners and their concomitant consequences. Drawing from David Harvey’s concept of time-space compression, Warf (2008, p. 55) posited that time-space compression pertains to methods of reordering and traversing distance, the shrinking of time horizons, and the optimisation of the exchange of goods and information. In that sense, the growing shift from in-person visits to the use of digital technologies, such as phone calls and electronic money transfers, counterbalances the consequences of the transfer (i.e., distance, time of travelling to and from the prisons, and road hazards) and the internal restrictions of the prisons, such as the embargo on foreign calls, excessive phone charges, denial of entry, and the temporary suspension of face-to-face interaction between prisoners and visitors during the COVID-19 pandemic. For the transferred prisoners and visitors, the annihilation of the distance between the prison and home, which manifests through the capillaries of digital technologies, is a reasonable and cost-effective way of saving time and money. In Harvey’s view (1991, p. 296), “the round of time-space compression is fraught with as many dangers as it offers possibilities for the survival of particular places or for a solution to the overaccumulation problem.” For instance, the spillover of this shift from in-person visits to the use of digital technologies plays a role in the proliferation of contraband, specifically mobile phones

and SIM cards, which are embedded in the informal economies of the prisons and appear to undermine the prison boundaries. The undermining of prison boundaries through the subtle and creative use of technology to facilitate prisoner access to contraband aligns with Foucault's argument on 'counter-conduct,' which signifies the "struggle against the processes implemented for conducting others" (2007, p. 201). In this sense, the conduct of the transferred prisoners' challenges and alters the operations and boundaries of the prisons, as I explore in chapters 6 and 7.

In summary, interrelated power dynamics embedded in the pre-sentencing, transfer, and post-transfer phases shape the experiences of transferred prisoners. Along with these power dynamics, the police, judges, and prison officers use procedural discretion, as seen in the prison officers' rationalisation of the transfer based on the systemic challenges of the GPS. Furthermore, I underscore the disparities and heterogeneity across the GPS, where prisoners are subjected to temporary and permanent transfers (Moran, Piacentini, and Pallot, 2012). In addition, the transfer process creates diverse configurations and interpretations of space and time as reflected on the length of the sentence and the prison's boundaries (see also Kitchin, 2023). Also significant is the relational character of power manifested through the 'everyday resistance' of the prisoners to mitigate the challenges of both incarceration and transfer (Hughes, 2023; Johansson and Vinthagen, 2016).

8.3 Conclusion of the current study

This thesis provides an account of prisoner transfer in Ghana. I seek to not only uncover and describe the patterns of the transfer of prisoners as a distinctive practise in the management of prisons but to ground that description of moving prisoners in an analysis of carceral mobility in which these patterns arise. Serving as the first empirical study to explore the practises of prisoner transfer in Ghana, the findings reveal nuanced and intriguing constituents of mobility. The analysis of the motives and procedures of prisoner transfer in Ghana reveals the coercive character of mobility in prisons, which relates to claims in previous studies on carceral spaces (see, for instance, FitzGerald, 2020; Moran, Piacentini, and Pallot, 2012). These align with Moran, Piacentini, and Pallot's (2012) claim in advancing the concept of 'disciplined mobility,' which situates power specifically in relation to mobility. Thus, it demonstrates the limitations of people's agency and autonomy, particularly in restricted spaces. The plausibility of the theoretical argument put forth in this thesis, which suggests that transferred prisoners can be seen as forced migrants, stems from

the coercive practises involved in their transfer. This is further supported by the corollaries of the diverse movements they experience while incarcerated.

This study contextualises the coercive practises involved in prisoner transfer, with a focus on the challenges that the GPS faces. I have argued that in a resource-constrained carceral context like Ghana, prisoner transfer is primarily aimed at offsetting the systemic challenges of overcrowding, classification, and health access. As such, the praxis of prisoner transfer expands understanding of transfer as a punitive measure (as elaborated in concept of ‘disciplined mobility’ discussed earlier) and situates it within the politics of the internal micro-capitalism and economic transactions of prisons. Therefore, it is imperative to query the continuous underfunding of the GPS by the state, which engenders conditions (e.g., inadequate bedding space, food, water, training workshops, and a well-resourced infirmary) to force the occurrence of transfers. This highlights the manifestation of governmentality through policies (Walters and Tazzioli, 2023; Foucault, 2007), where transfers are used as a temporary solution in the face of the governed reality of underfunded prison systems.

Having established the pivotal function of prisoner transfer in the management of the GPS, there is a lack of a policy framework for the implementation of such transfers. This deficiency in the policy framework consequently produces *discretion*. Similarly, the rationalisation of discretion is presented as fulfilling the primary role of what Haggerty and Bucerius (2021, p. 114) describe as ‘order maintenance’ within the prison space. The transfer process is laden with discretionary considerations, particularly at the selection, prisoner transportation, screening of visitors, and payment of services that prisoners provide to fellow prisoners and officers, and the extent of supplies visitors are allowed to give to their incarcerated relative. Contrary to the logic of exercising discretion along the contours of enforcement and nonenforcement of prison rules (Ricciardelli, 2022), the instances of discretion highlighted in this thesis largely emanate from informal/unregulated considerations by the officers during the transfer. This both engenders and reinforces imbalanced power relations and serves as a conduit for the exploitation and violation of the rights of transferred prisoners. For instance, the discretionary powers of the officers in selecting prisoners for transfers create situations where prisoners are compelled to offer monetary bribes to have their names added to the transfer list. In addition, prison officers exercise their discretion when it comes to determining the extent of preparation for prisoners’ transfers, including decisions surrounding the allowance for prisoners to pack their personal belongings, the facilitation or denial of restroom breaks during transportation, and the provision or withholding of food and water for

prisoners. Consequently, prisoners reported instances of physical assault, enduring long journeys without access to food and water, being forced to endure the unsanitary conditions of urinating and defecating on themselves during transportation, experiencing bruises around wrists and ankles due to doubling-locking of handcuffs during transportation, as well as being transferred to different prison facilities without their personal effects, such as clothing, blankets, food items, toiletries, and utensils.

The analysis has important implications for research on how discretion shapes the power relationship between officers and prisoners in that it [discretion] serves a significant yet unwritten role in the management of a prison system that is limited in resources. This thesis also highlights how discretion also exists as a technique of bestowing privileges on prisoners to enhance their behaviour (see also Liebling, 2000, 2008; Liebling and Price, 2003) and a mechanism for defusing the volatility within prisons (Haggerty and Bucerius, 2021). Therefore, it is essential that discretionary power and its effects—both positive and negative—receive more careful consideration in prison management.

The study's analysis is also characterised by what I describe as a pervasive sense of blurriness, highlighting the need for a rethinking of the ramifications of incarceration and the intricate workings within the internal micro-capitalism of the prison's economy. Specifically, the scope of blurriness presented throughout this thesis relates to the overlaps and spillages between the formal and informal economies of prisons and the consequences of incarceration and transfer. I acknowledged that transfer is partly a consequential outcome of incarceration (see also Haesen et al., 2023; Turney and Conner, 2019). Besides the overlaps and spillages, there is a fine line between the consequences of incarceration and transfer, which I observed by comparing the pre- and post-transfer experiences of the prisoners. This sheds light on the heterogeneity of challenges prisoners encounters as well as their individual or collective resistances. The effects of prisoner transfers tend to magnify the challenges associated with incarceration. The efficacy of acknowledging the distinctions I identify in this study gives rise to two further issues for consideration. First, in a prison environment with limited resources, like that of Ghana, such recognition would assist external stakeholders, particularly NGOs and philanthropists, in determining the needs and prioritising the support they provide to incarcerated individuals. The findings suggest that NGOs rarely consider these matters and tend to treat prisoners as a homogeneous group given the limited resources at their disposal. Second, acknowledging such

distinctions provides contextual insights related to prisoners' reactions, resistances, and agency as manifested in the strategies they adopted to create, sustain, and perpetuate the formal and informal economies of the prison as a means of alleviating the challenges they face post-transfer. Thus, it will help inform policy directions about the specific challenges prisoners face, particularly in a context whereby transfer forms part of the primary response to the management of prisons.

By re-centring prisoner transfer in the analysis of the internal micro-capitalism of the GPS, the findings show the blurriness between the formal and informal economies of the prisons. The blurriness demonstrates the mutual interdependence of the formal and informal economies of the prisons that are sustained and perpetuated by the solidarity prisoners share because of what Crewe describes as the 'collective pains' of incarceration (2009, p. 288). For this study, the prisoners' collective pains stem from the generally appalling conditions of the prisons and the effects of transfer. Also, and significantly, the prison system unintentionally facilitates the pursuit of entrepreneurial activities, enabling prisoners to use their skills to generate money to sustain themselves. When taken together, the findings underscore the need for prison officers and scholars to rethink the inflow of supplies into prisons. Specifically, the use of contraband (also see Peterson et al., 2021; Shukla, Peterson, and Kim, 2021), as well as the resourcefulness and agency of prisoners in managing the difficulties of imprisonment and transfer. Relating the findings to Peterson et al. (2021) and Shukla, Peterson, and Kim's (2021) assertion that the analysis of prison contraband requires a more comprehensive approach, I maintain that analysis of prison contraband must encompass more than just the reductive categorisation of supplies (e.g., mobile phones, SIM cards, and marijuana). Instead, scholars and prison officers must pay attention to the manner (i.e., the dynamics, relational character, purpose and impact) of inflow and exchange of supplies in prisons. For instance, in this thesis, supplies that are typically legally accepted into prisons become a subject of dispute because of the officers' discretionary assumption of excessive quantities and clandestine trading of such supplies among prisoners (see Chapter 6).

Regarding the coping mechanisms transferred prisoners employ, the discussions I present here augment scholarship on resistance, which manifests through the everyday strategies transferred prisoners undertake to alleviate the challenges posed by their incarceration and transfer. Relatedly, these strategies sit within the concept of 'everyday resistance' (see also Hughes, 2023; Keith and Pile, 2013). Transferred prisoners routinely engage in activities such as trading supplies and their visiting privileges, working in prison restaurants, commissaries, and infirmaries, and offering their

services to fellow prisoners and officers. The activities of the transferred prisoners presented in this study relate to the covert and informal character of ‘everyday resistance’ as advanced by Vinthagen and Johansson (2013), with financial gain, survival, and network maintenance serving as a motivating factor. The strategies, tactics, and manoeuvres used by the transferred prisoners tend to formalise everyday resistance within the prison system, as some of their actions are overt and occasionally involve the prison officers, refuting Vinthagen and Johansson’s (2013, p. 10) claim that “everyday resistance [...] is not politically articulated or formally organised.” The findings cast doubt on the widely held belief that prisoners are passive, dependent, and powerless (see, for instance, Rowe, 2016; Haney et al., 1973). As a result, the findings acknowledge the agency of the transferred prisoners in shaping both their immediate environment and their lived experiences while incarcerated.

In summary, when considering all the findings and their implications, it is clear that this research holds great importance in understanding the experiences of transferred prisoners and the function and procedure of transfer in Ghana. Transfers are employed as a temporary measure to address the systemic challenges prisons face, particularly in carceral spaces where resources are limited. Additionally, the findings reinforce and expand scholarship on the heterogeneity and coercive character of mobility within carceral spaces and the various forms and spaces where power dynamics exist during the transfer, as we saw in the selection and transportation phases and during prison visitation by relatives of prisoners. Lastly, the findings put into context the individual agency of transferred prisoners, which is deeply intertwined with the collective suffering they experience through the incarceration and transfer that tends to convolute the formal and informal economies of the prisons.

8.4 Recommendations and Areas for Future Research

The findings have implications for prison management in Ghana. Moreover, these results provide valuable insights for future research undertakings, as they represent the first empirical study into the transfer of prisoners in Ghana from the perspective of carceral geography. It is evident that in this study there were various challenges, both pragmatic in terms of methodological application and theoretical in terms of conceptualisation. Consequently, this section puts forward recommendations grounded in the findings, provides guidance for future research endeavours, and underscores the challenges confronted in undertaking research of this nature, particularly during a time when measures were implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This study's findings acknowledged the significant role of transfer in managing the GPS, despite the lack of a policy framework to guide its application and practises. The absence of a policy framework tends to foster discretion among officers and reinforce the imbalanced power dynamics within prisons, leading to the discrimination and exploitation of prisoners during the transfer process, especially during selection, preparation, transportation, and visitation. Consequently, a crucial consideration is the need for a comprehensive and all-encompassing policy document that provides guidance for the practises and management of prisoner transfer in Ghana. Considering the findings of this study, a prospective future policy framework or document for prisoner transfer should include establishing a *digital data management plan* (DDMP). Although data, specifically the total number of prisoners incarcerated in the prisons where the research was conducted, were readily accessible, it became clear that the administration did not adequately consider the transfer history and data of prisoners. Hence, they were unable to ascertain the total number of transferred prisoners in the respective prisons and occasionally were unable to properly direct visitors to the prison that their incarcerated relative had been transferred to. This made it difficult for family members to locate their incarcerated relatives. In the most severe instances, communication between the prisoner and their family members was severed due to the inability to locate the prisoner after the transfer. The implementation of a DDMP that records the transfer history and data of prisoners would facilitate the tracing of transferred prisoners by their relatives and a fair allocation of transportation fares to transferred prisoners following their release.

Furthermore, although the study primarily focused on just two prisons in Ghana, the varied experiences of the transferred prisoners because of their transfer from prisons across the country offered a comprehensive overview of the challenges confronting the GPS (see Chapter 4, Section 4.7 for more information). These challenges, as recognised by the key informants, primarily stem from the insufficient financial resources allocated to the GPS. This not only leads to delays in transfers but also hampers the transfer process. The prevalence of discretion observed throughout the analysis of this study is primarily a consequence of the challenges facing the prisons (see also Lipsky, 2010). The structural nature of the challenges facing the GPS requires a national conversation and commitment on allocating funds to first provide the basic necessities for prisoners' survival. Second, renovating and expanding the deteriorated prisons throughout the country to ensure their suitability for human habitation are critical. In addition, the overall provision of logistical support for the day-to-day administration of the prisons requires urgent

attention. This may be considered overly optimistic within the Ghanaian context (see for instance, Ministry of the Interior, 2022, p. 61); nevertheless, what is urgently needed for the purpose of transfers are logistics that would aid in minimising the exercise of discretion by prison officers. To improve the conditions and efficiencies of the prisons as they impact prisoner experiences, I maintain that data capturing and storing devices (e.g., biometric devices, computers), specialised vehicles for prisoner transfers, scanning apparatus, and provisions for the infirmaries across the prisons must be provided. Further, the introduction of scale and weight limit for prisoner supplies will contribute to minimising the discretion of officers', as discretion has become a source of exploitation within the prison space. The provision of such logistics would contribute to prompt transfer of prisoners without relying on public transportation, reduction in the overcrowding of transfer vehicles, unsavoury searching of food items, and discretionary division of supplies meant for prisoners.

Similarly, what this study also establishes is the complete prohibition on international phone calls, resulting in incarcerated foreigners across the country being unable to communicate with their relatives who live outside Ghana. As shown, all foreign prisoners have been deprived of visits throughout their incarceration, with more than one-third asserting that their family members were unaware of their incarceration due to the restriction on international calls. Consequently, they are unable to notify their relatives. This contradicts established international standards such as the UNHCR Principle 16(1). Consequently, it is imperative to reassess and end this ban, as scholarly research emphasizes the significance of visitations in the rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners (Comfort, 2019; Hutton and Moran, 2019; Condry and Smith, 2018).

8.4.1 Future Research Areas

This study raises a great deal of new questions and interest for future research. Thus, more research is needed to generate empirical evidence that would help shape prisons and their management in Ghana to be free of abuses of human rights, including exploitation, discrimination, harassment, and intimidation. At the theoretical and conceptual level, I have augmented earlier studies that advance the framework of disciplinary mobility (Sheller, 2016; Moran, Piacentini, and Pallot, 2012; Packer, 2003), by elaborating on how the logic behind the transfer of prisoners primarily revolves around addressing the systemic challenges faced by the GPS. Moreover, I put forth the argument that the dialectic framing of transfer as either a punishment or reward, along with the obscurity of coercion in the transfer of prisoners', stem from the effects of post-transfer experiences. The contextual and

different prison conditions across the carceral space of Ghana complicate and affect these post-transfer experiences of prisoners. Therefore, there is still scope for further investigation into the theoretical connections between coercive mobility and prisoner transfer, and future research will concentrate on examining the pre-transfer experiences of prisoners. To put it differently, further research is necessary and will focus on exploring the perceptions and reactions of prisoners towards transfers, particularly prisoners who have not previously undergone transfers. Along similar lines, there is scope for a more extensive study of other types of prisons within and outside Ghana to expand and develop attention to prison and prison transfer impacts on families and wider networks. Furthermore, it is imperative to expand this detailed mapping of the process of power dynamics embedded within prison systems, particularly to other Global South contexts.

In addition, the concept of blurriness is a recurring finding in this study, which highlighted the complexities between the formal and informal economies of prisons and their corresponding impact on the influx of supplies into these facilities, as well as the effects of incarceration versus transfer in understanding the diverse agencies and coping mechanisms within the prisons. The analysis I presented to explicate and map the contours of these phenomena is predicated solely on prisoners who have experienced transfers, as it was beyond the scope of this research to scrutinise the experiences of prisoners who had never undergone transfers. Having acknowledged the heterogeneity of experiences in prisons due to transfers, further research is imperative to compare the experiences of transferred and non-transferred prisoners in terms of visitations, agency, and coping strategies. The logic of this would be to inform and address the blurriness and complexities that characterised the internal micro-capitalism of the prisons (i.e., the formal and informal economies of prisons) and the role of transfer, which I contend significantly amplifies the general effects of incarceration (see, for instance, Condry and Minson, 2020; Johnson et al., 2021; Bruns, 2020; Hutton and Moran, 2019 for the effects of incarceration).

In the instance of analysing power dynamics within prisons, the conduct of the prison officers embodies unequal power relationships that transcend the conventional and often narrowly focused relational encounters between prisoners and officers, as well as officers and visitors. Studies on prison officers have frequently concentrated on the authority they possess over prisoners and visitors, their emotional and psychological well-being, the consequences of their work on familial relationships and the impact of professional training on prison management, with a scarcity of attention given to the uneven power relationships among the officers. Additional research is

necessary to comprehend the fundamental power dynamic among prison officers and prisoners. An appropriate point of entry into such a study will centre on the experiences of former and retired correctional officers, as they would be exempted from the legal prohibition of demonstrations, strikes, the formation of unions among security personnel including prison officers, and the threat of demotion and transfers.

Lastly, this study finds transfer to be antithetical to the GPS mission of reforming and rehabilitating prisoners, as it interrupts and dissuades a section of the prisoners from enlisting in the GPS's rehabilitation programmes. In that regard, prisoners create a sense of doubt about participating in rehabilitation programmes because of the uncertainty and suddenness with which they are transferred. They often assume that they could be transferred in the middle of their education or training programme, as this is a frequent occurrence. Given the disproportionate distribution of training programmes throughout the GPS and the limitation of the study to only two prisons, future research to fully understand the scale of impact transfer has on prisoner participation in prison rehabilitation programmes is eminent.

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APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE (Transferred prisoners ONLY)

RESEARCH TOPIC	Carceral Mobilities, Governance and Social Network: Conceptualizing Transferred Prisoners Experience in Ghana
QUESTIONNAIRE #:	
DATE OF INTERVIEW:	
TIME STARTED: __ __/__ __	TIME ENDED: __ __/__ __
NAME OF PRISON	
PSEUDONYM FOR PRISONER:	
<p>I am a PhD student at the University of Leeds, and I am researching the topic <i>“Prisoner Transfers in Ghana: Examining Concepts, Practices, and Experiences”</i>. Please, the study is purely an academic exercise and all information given shall be used solely for such purpose. I would be grateful if you could respond to the questions genuinely. All responses will be used anonymously and cannot be traced to person(s) who provide them. Thank you in advance for your time and contribution to this research.</p>	

SECTION A: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF TRANSFERRED PRISONERS

N ^o	QUESTIONS	CATEGORIES
1.	Sex of respondent	1. Male [] 2. Female []
2.	How old are you now?	Age in Completed years
3.	What is your current marital status?	1. Single [] 2. Married [] 3. Divorced [] 4. Widowed [] 5. Co-habitation [] 6. Separated [] 7. Other (Specify)
4.	What is your highest level of education attained?	1. No education [] 2. Primary education [] 3. Middle/J.H.S [] 4. Secondary education [] 5. Tertiary [] 6. Non formal education []
5.	What religion do you practice?	1. Christianity [] 2. Islam []

		3. Traditionalist [] 4. Other (Specify)
6.	What was your occupation before your sentence?	1. Unemployed [] 2. Student 3. Teaching [] 4. Farming [] 5. Trading [] 6. Dressmaking [] 7. Hairdressing [] 8. Other (Specify)
7.	How many people are in your household?	State number
8.	How will you describe your nationality? (Skip to Q10 if Foreigner)	1. Ghanaian [] 2. Foreigner [] (Specify)
9.	Which region of Ghana were you born?	1. Oti (Dambai) [] 2. Bono East (Techiman) [] 3. Ahafo (Goaso) [] 4. Savannah (Damongo) [] 5. North East (Nalerigu) [] 6. Bono (Sunyani) [] 7. Western North (Sefwi Wiawso) [] 8. Volta (Ho) [] 9. Western (Sekondi) [] 10. Upper West (Wa) [] 11. Upper East (Bolgatanga) [] 12. Northern (Tamale) 13. Greater Accra (Accra) [] 14. Eastern (Koforidua) 15. Central (Cape Coast) [] 16. Ashanti (Kumasi) []
10.	Which region of Ghana were you transferred from?	1. Oti (Dambai) [] 2. Bono East (Techiman) [] 3. Ahafo (Goaso) [] 4. Savannah (Damongo) [] 5. North East (Nalerigu) [] 6. Bono (Sunyani) [] 7. Western North (Sefwi Wiawso) [] 8. Volta (Ho) [] 9. Western (Sekondi) [] 10. Upper West (Wa) [] 11. Upper East (Bolgatanga) [] 12. Northern (Tamale) 13. Greater Accra (Accra) [] 14. Eastern (Koforidua) 15. Central (Cape Coast) [] 16. Ashanti (Kumasi) []

SECTION B: EXAMINING THE PERCEPTION AND EXPERIENCES OF TRANSFERRED PRISONERS' MOVEMENT BETWEEN PRISONS

N o	QUESTIONS	CATEGORIES
11	Have you ever been imprisoned before your current sentence?	1. Yes [] 2. No [] 3. No response []
12	If yes to Q11, how will you describe yourself? (NB: Second time offender = one with previous conviction and have been admitted into prison for the second time; Recidivist = Prisoner with more than two convictions/ repeatedly reoffends)	1. First time offender [] 2. Second time offender [] 3. Recidivist []
13	What is your current offence/crime leading to your sentence?	1. Stealing [] 2. Possession Narcotics Drugs [] 3. Murder [] 4. Manslaughter [] 5. Armed Robbery [] 6. Defilement [] 7. Rape [] 8. Other (Specify)
14	Which type of court were you sentenced?	1. Circuit [] 2. District [] 3. High Court [] 4. Court of Appeal [] 5. Supreme Court [] 6. Other (Specify)
15	How many years are you serving?	1. Less than a year [] 2. 1- 2 years [] 3. 3-4 years [] 4. 5-6 years [] 5. 7-8 years [] 6. 9-10 years [] 7. 11+ years []
16	Were you informed before your transfer? (Skip to Q18 if No)	1. Yes [] 2. No [] 3. No response []

17 .	If yes to Q16, how long were you informed before your transfer?	1. Same day of transfer [] 2. One week to transfer [] 3. One month to transfer [] 4. More than one month [] (Specify if known)
18 .	Do you know the reason(s) why you were being transferred? (Skip to Q20 if No)	1. Yes [] 2. No [] 3. No response []
19 .	If yes to Q18, kindly please mention why you were being transferred?	
20 .	Can you briefly narrate how you responded to the information, that you were being transferred? [<i>Probe for how the experience of being transferred made them feel and why, forms of resistance if any, calling legal representative, family member(s) etc.</i>]	
21 .	Where would you have wished to serve your sentence, and why the choice you have mentioned? (<i>Probe for closeness to family members, place of birth, etc.</i>)	

22	Can you please recount the day you were being transported to the current facility? (<i>Probe for how long the transfer took</i>)	
23	How many of you (prisoners) were being transported?	1. Alone [] 2. 1-5 [] 3. 6-10 [] 4. 11+ []
24	How will you describe the transportation during the transfer? (<i>Probe for challenges and comfort</i>)	
25	Can you please describe the relation between you and the escorting officials during the transfer?	

SECTION C: ASSESSING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF TRANSFERRED PRISONERS BY THEIR SOCIAL NETWORKS

Nº	QUESTIONS	CATEGORIES
26.	How often do you get visits from family and friends? (<i>Probe for number of household members</i>)	1. Daily [] 2. Weekly [] 3. Monthly [] 4. Quarterly [] 5. Six-monthly [] 6. Annually [] 6. Never []
27.	Who often visits you since your transfer to the new prison facility? (<i>Probe for marital status</i>)	1. Friend(s) [] 2. Spouse [] 3. Father [] 4. Mother [] 5. Sibling(s) [] 6. Children [] 7. Other (Specify)

28.	Has the rate at which you were being visited at the previous prison facility changed since your transfer? (Skip to Q30 if No)	1. Yes [] 2. No [] 3. No response []
29.	If yes to Q28, can you please describe how it has changed?	
30.	Can you please describe the processes you follow in arranging a meeting with a relative who intend to visit you? (Probe for challenges also)	
31.	What are your thoughts regarding visiting relative(s) access to the prisons and you?	
32.	How does the transfer affect your interaction with your lawyer?	
33.	Can you please describe a typical visit from a relative?	

SECTION D: EXAMINING EFFECTS OF INCARCERATION AND PRISONER TRANSFERS ON THE WELL-BEING AND GENDER ROLES ON HOUSEHOLDS IN GHANA

Nº	QUESTIONS	CATEGORIES
34.	Can you please describe your responsibilities to the family before your incarceration?	

35.	Do you think these responsibilities have changed since your incarceration?	1. Yes [] 2. No [] 3. No response []
36.	What are the reasons for your response to Q35? (<i>Probe for alternative source of support to fill the gap created due to their incarceration</i>)	
37.	Do you think your transfer has any direct effects on your role within the family?	1. Yes [] 2. No [] 3. No response []
38.	If yes to Q37, what do you think the effects is of your transfer on the family? (<i>Probe for both negative and positive effects</i>)	
39.	Are you aware of any Non-governmental Organizations/activist groups working around the prisons? (Skip to Q41 if No)	1. Yes [] 2. No [] 3. No response []
40.	If yes to Q39, can you mention these NGO's and the work they are doing? (Probe for whether they even receive any form of help)	
41.	Any final comments on the above subject matter?	

APPENDIX II: INTERVIEW GUIDE (Visitors/Family members of prisoners ONLY)

1. What do you think are the effects of the incarceration of the family member on the household? (Probe for changes in roles within the household, source and level of income)
2. Are there any support system(s) available to you or the prisoner since their incarceration? (e.g. formal – government, NGO's, informal – extended family members, friends, etc.) If yes, can you please mention these support system(s) and what kind of support you/the prisoner often receive?
3. Can you please tell me your views/perceptions about the transfer of prisoners by the state?
4. Can you briefly tell me how you received information about the transfer of your incarcerated relative? From whom, and what were your reactions?
5. How would you describe the family relationship with an incarcerated relative since their incarceration?
6. How does the transfer of the prisoner affect the relationship between the family and the prisoner? (Probe for the frequency of visit, the experience of commuting between place of residence and the prison)
7. Please, briefly describe the processes you pass through in gaining access to the prison. What are the challenges you encounter? How do you respond to these challenges?
8. Please, can you share your experiences in the waiting room and interaction with an incarcerated relative? (Probe for their views on privacy and how their interaction is affected)
9. Any final comments on the above subject matter?

APPENDIX III: INTERVIEW GUIDE (Prison officials ONLY)

1. Tell me about the process of prisoner transfer (Probe for whether the prisoners are informed about the transfer, if yes, how long does it take to inform them, if no, why are they not informed)
2. Can you please mention the persons involved in determining which prisoner should be transferred?
3. With regards to this prison, what reasons account for the transfer of prisoners? (Probe for prisoner own request for transfer and the reasons), Are prisoners views considered in deciding their transfer? If not, why are their views not considered?
4. Has a prisoner(s) ever tried to resist their transfer? If yes, can you please describe the forms of this resistance by prisoners and what are the consequences?
5. Are you familiar with any international instruments guiding the processes of prisoner transfer? What are some of these instruments? Are these instruments considered before a prisoner is transferred from this prison?
6. What are some of the challenges confronting the operation of the prison service including the transfer of prisoners?
7. What suggestions would you want to make for addressing the challenges confronting the prison service including prisoner transfer?
8. Tell me the process family members of prisoners have to follow before visiting transferred prisoners?
9. Any final comments on the above subject matter?

About yourself, please fill in the following details

Your gender?	
Your age?	
Your highest level of education?	
How long have you been working as an escort officer?	

APPENDIX IV: INTERVIEW GUIDE (Mobility scholars ONLY)

1. How would you describe the application and limitations of forced migration to group of people across society?
2. To what extent do you think the transfer of prisoner(s) can be considered as forced migrations? (Probe for the element of movement and coercion)
3. Do you think recognizing/labelling a section prisoners (i.e. transferred prisoners) as forced migrants have advantages? Yes/No; what are the reasons for your response.
4. Do you think recognizing/labelling a section of prisoners (i.e. transferred prisoners) as forced migrants have disadvantages? Yes/No; what are the reasons for your response.
5. Are you familiar with any international instruments/protocols guiding the treatment of forced migrants that you think can be applied to transfer of prisoners? If yes, what are some of these instruments?
6. What suggestions would you want to make to enhance the rights of a person(s) moving with an element of coercion and under the direct influence of the state such as prisoners' (i.e. transferred prisoners)?
7. Any final comments on the above subject matter?