

Violence, Self-Harm, and Suicide in Prison: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Prison Inspection and Political Reporting on Prisons in England and Wales

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Abstract

The discourses on violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons are yet to be explored within penological research or literature. To date, there is a limited use of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) within penological studies, yet politically and administratively documents are published daily to detail the experiences and actions that are taken on imprisonment. This thesis utilises CDA to explore how His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) and political stakeholders have discursive views on violence, self-harm, and suicide. The study contends with how discourses on these problems are enhanced, reproduced and sustained by these two groups, whilst critically exploring the consequences and challenges that appear as a result of these discursive positions. Through my analysis I discuss how these groups maintain dominant discursive practices and actions that are characterised through risk-management, datafication, and problematising prisoners. I also explain how HMIPs and the political stakeholders organisational discourses, a term I develop from Hajer's (1995) concept of 'storylines', can be used to explain why action is not always taken on these issues, explaining how discourses are reinforcing, reproducing, and underpinning what groups see, overlook, and avoid within practices. I conclude this thesis by arguing that greater self-reflection is needed in the inspection and political spheres that need to consider how language use can move towards greater comprehensive, compassionate and transparent approach to understanding the complex and generative nature of prisons and the root causes of violence, self-harm, and suicide.

Key words: Critical Discourse Analysis - Violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons - Prison Inspection - Prison politics - Discursive veil

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Abbreviations

ACCT	Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork
ARI	Areas of Research Interest
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CDS	Critical Discourse Studies
CJA	Criminal Justice Act 1982
CJI	Criminal Justice Joint Inspectorate
CoP	Cry of Pain
CT	Constructivist Tradition
CQC	Care Quality Commission
DA	Discourse Analysis
DSPD	Dangerous and Severe Personality Disorder
ECHR	European Court of Human Rights
FDA	Foucauldian Discourse Analysis
HMCIP	Her/His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons
HMIP	Her/His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons
HMP	Her/His Majesty's Prisons
HMPPS	Her/His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service
HoC	House of Commons
IEP	Incentives and Earned Privileges
IMB	Independent Monitoring Board
IRCs	Immigration Removal Centres
IRPs	Independent Review of Progress
IPP	Imprisonment for Public Protection
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
KPT	Key Performance Target
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MP	Member of Parliament
NICE	National Institute for Care Excellence
NHS	National Health Service
NOMS	National Offender Management Service
NPM	New Public Management
NPMs	National Prevention Mechanisms
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
OPCAT	Optional Protocol to the UN Convention Against Torture or Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment
PPO	Prison and Probation Ombudsman
PRT	Prison Reform Trust
RAP	Radical Alternatives to Prison
RMT	Risk-Modelling Tradition
SAMHSA	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration
SDT	Safety Diagnostic Tool
SoSfJ	Secretary of State for Justice
SSV	Short Scrutiny Visit
STCs	Secure Training Centres
TIP	Trauma Informed Practice
UNP	Urgent Notification Process
YOI	Young Offenders Institute

Chapter One: Introduction

Violence, self-harm, and suicide have become endemic problems within prisons across England and Wales and despite efforts from politicians and prison management the problems continue to rise. Across the prison estate, these three problems collectively create a distressing experience for prisoners and prison staff, as these problems affect the lives of individuals and groups within prisons. The need for change is fundamental in saving lives and reducing trauma, distress, and pain for prisoners and staff. Between March 2023 and March 2024 there was a total of 18,292 assaults – up by 19% - 9,847 assaults on staff – up 24% - 3,215 serious assaults (sexual, in-patient hospitalisation, concussion or internal injury, or specific injuries) – up by 16% (MoJ, 2024a). The total number of self-harm incidents also increased by 16% to 73,804 incidents, further broken down by an increase in male self-harm by 25% and a decrease of 4% for women (MoJ, 2024a). Only self-inflicted deaths have decreased in this time period, by 8% to 92 deaths. Statistically, the last 10 years have seen the highest recorded incidents on the three problems, which the Ministry of Justice's (MoJ, 2024a) Safety in Custody data (July 2024) demonstrates on suicide (figure 1), self-harm (figure 2), and violence (figure 3). The data demonstrates that incidents of violence, self-harm, and suicide have remained high, even with the slight changes during the Covid-19 pandemic which saw a reduction in self-harm before increasing, alongside a reduction on prisoner-on-prisoner violence during the prolonged lockdown period (Kay, 2020). Importantly for this study the period between 2015 to 2019 – the period from which the documents analysed in this research were selected – shows an overall increase in all three problems.

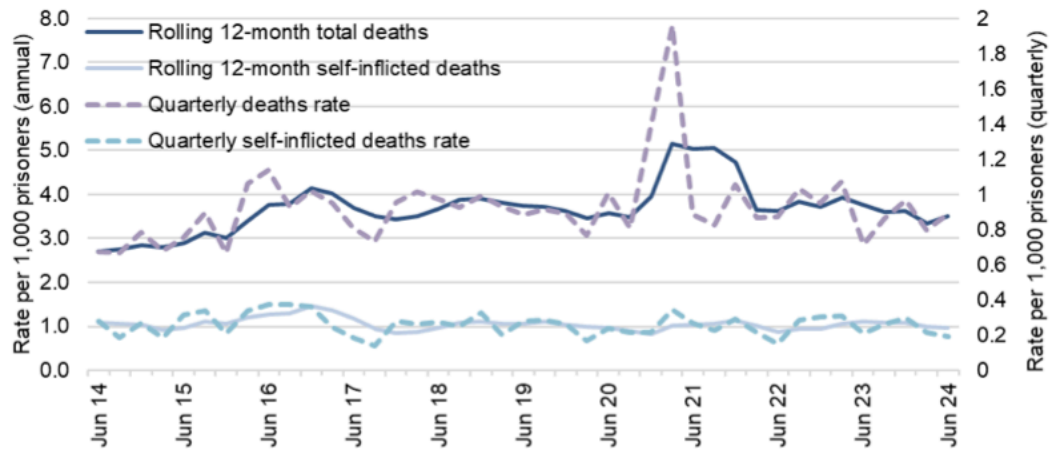


Figure 1: Quarterly 12-month rolling rate of deaths per 1,000 prisoners, 12 months ending June 2014 to 12 months ending June 2024, with quarterly rates (MoJ, 2024a).

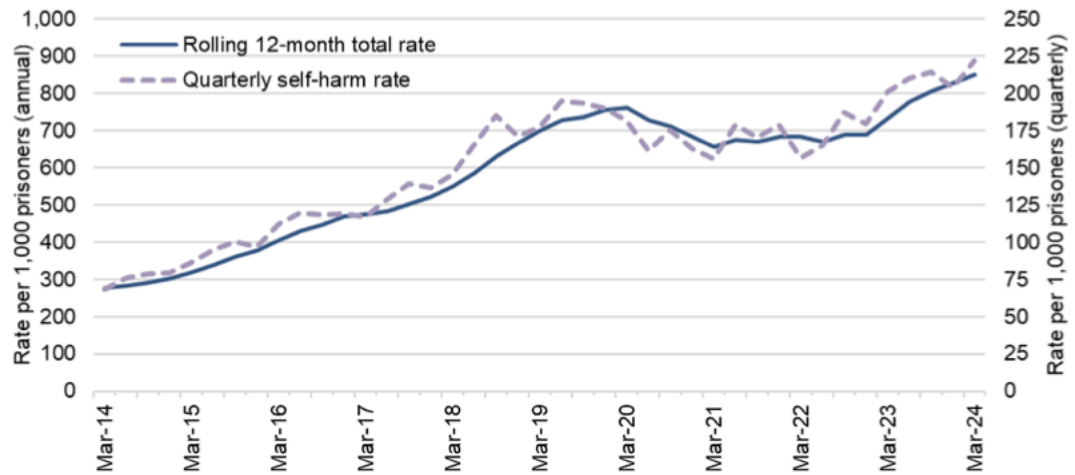


Figure 2: Quarterly 12-month rolling rate of self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners, 12 months ending March 2014 to 12 months ending March 2024, with quarterly rates (MoJ, 2024a).

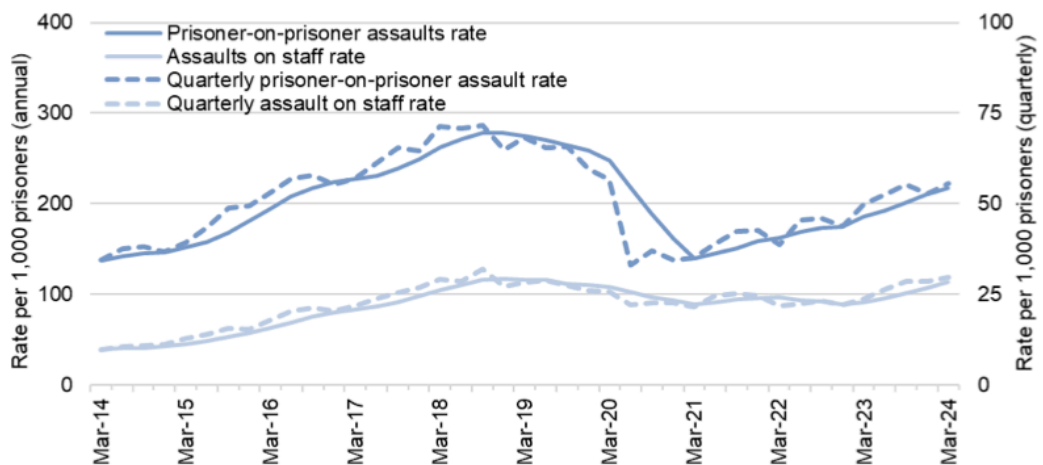


Figure 3: Quarterly 12-month rolling rate of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults and assaults on staff, 12 months ending March 2014 to 12 months ending March 2024, with quarterly rates (MoJ, 2024a).

This data is concerning when considering the increases in all three areas under investigation. However, the construction of this data does not acknowledge prison population size and the distribution of incidents in the adult prison estate. The above figures present incidents per 1,000 prisoners annually and quarterly, meaning that only a rate is presented rather than the total number of incidents, as shown above. When considered alongside prison population the data demonstrates further challenges and complexity. For example, in the week ending 26th July 2024 there was a total of 87,479 adult prisoners in England and Wales (MoJ, 2024b), meaning that the numbers presented above will need to be multiplied by a factor of 87 - turning incident rates from the hundreds to thousands. However, the number of prisoners who self-harmed was at 13,348 (around 15% of the adult prison population), providing a rate of 5.5 incidents per prisoner (MoJ, 2024a). The management of the prison estate is further threatened by overcrowding and increasing prison populations, with MoJ (2024: 1c) suggesting that the prison population could increase to “between 94,600 and 114,800 by March 2028”. This presents a possibility of failure when operational capacity in February 2024 was recorded at 89,041 prisoners, which can be further compounded by a likely increase in violence, self-harm, and suicide.

Violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons have been discussed by many in academic research, highlighting problematic practices, failings of policy, and dehumanising prison environments (Tomczak, 2018; Sims, 2023; Robinson and Forrester, 2023) parliamentary reports and political inquiry, discussing violence as a result of prison failings, and self-harm and suicide in connection to experiences and gender (Woolf, 1991; Corston, 2009; Harris, 2015; Maguire, 2018; MoJ 2016), and news stories, presenting the rising problems and referring to prison sentences as ‘a death penalty’ (*Guardian*, 2023; 2024; *BBC News*, 2024; *the Independent*, 2024). These groups have collectively identified several political and administrative failures in prison management, poor conditions, overcrowding and overpopulated prisons, and a failure of sentencing and criminal justice. These problems occur during a period when prison sentences are used more widely than before and for longer periods, increasing the human cost to individuals who enter establishments. Reports suggest that mental

health issues are at “record levels across the estate, with nine in 10 people having at least one mental health (or substance misuse) need” (Woolf et al, 2024: 8). There is mounting pressure on prisons, with growing concerns of the rising population and the prospective of increase in violence, self-harm, and suicide.

The extent of violence, self-harm, and suicide in prison require political attention to enact change to reduce these problems. However, trends from the last ten years do not demonstrate that actions taken have been effective at producing the significant reductions needed. Indeed, during the second reading on the Prisons and Court Bill 2017, Harriet Harman MP (Labour) claimed in reference to suicide in prison that “It is not that we do not know what needs to be done; it is just that we have not done it” (Hansard HC Deb., 20 March 2017). Harman’s claim that knowledge of what needs to be done to reduce suicide in prison raises unanswered questions, in particular, what do politicians believe are the root causes of these three problems, and if practices are known that would reduce these problems why have they not been implemented? Do they really have the knowledge? Furthermore, if knowledge of the root causes of the problems is available and politicians are not using this knowledge, then what are the organisations of prison accountability saying about the lack of action? To answer these questions, this thesis explores how prison political stakeholders – that is political authors, groups, or individuals who conduct political activity around prisons – and His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) address the problems of violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons. Both groups (prison stakeholders and HMIP) have produced a significant amount of documents detailing the problems of prisons, through reporting on individual prisons to debates about the three problems within the House of Commons (HC). I am therefore, analysing discourses to understand why the issues of violence, self-harm, and suicide are not actioned through recognising the inadequacies that emerge from the discourses used by HMIP and politicians.

This thesis investigates the reporting of political stakeholders and HMIP on violence, self-harm, and suicide in adult prisons across England and Wales, to consider the extent to which reports detail a lack of action and to consider why inactivity exists. Violence, self-harm, and suicide have been selected as the three problems to explore

due to the increasing rate of incidents, as demonstrated above, and the worry that as prisons enter a point of tension and challenge that these problems can get worse. The three problems are also deeply distressing and traumatising human experiences, with the effects of these problems reaching beyond offenders and victims, but to all who work, enter, and engage with prisons. This investigation is achieved through analysing the language within documents, through the use of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), to explain the two features mentioned in Harman's quotation. This thesis is therefore concerned on discourses and language, recognising the impact that these have on theory, policy, and practice. Discourses are

“a complex set of relations including relations of communication between people who talk, write and in other ways communicate with each other, but also...relations between discourses and other such complex ‘objects’ ... of the physical world, persons, power relations and institutions, which are interconnected elements in social activity or praxis” (Fairclough, 2010: 3).

This research explores the discourses which frame the problems of violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons, analysing how different sets of actors involved in prison accountability have their own discourses and ways of communicating and acting on these topics. Language and discourse are therefore analysed to consider what is known and believed about these problems, what actions different groups believe should be taken, and to question why action has not been achieved.

Unlike typical qualitative research, which starts with research questions, this study begins with problems and builds analysis around problem-based issues. This is due to the use of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the chosen strategy to conduct this thesis, as it is usual within CDA to start with a problem rather than a question (Fairclough, 2003: 2010; van Dijk, 2015). CDA is often referred to as an “issue-orientated rather than ‘theory-orientated’” (van Dijk, 1997: 22) study of research, allowing theories and explanation to be produced through inductive analysis applied to documents and discourse. I justify the use of CDA through the recognition that the above data represents a form of crises. I engage in discussing prison crises through referring to a crisis of prisoner harm - where harm is enacted both externally through

violent acts and internally through self-harm and suicide; and a crisis of prisoners treatment and conditions seen with the management and organisation of imprisonment. The notion of crisis indicates a starting point for the use of CDA. As Fairclough (2010: 14) argues that in a “time of crisis the priority for critical research including CDA should shift from critiques of structures to critiques of strategies – of attempts, in the context of the failure of existing structures, to transform them in particular directions”. Thus, this study critiques the strategies in communication to address why the above crises are sustained, so that transformation can be achieved. Therefore, this study’s aim is to identify differences within discourses in texts by different stakeholders, offering a comparative style of CDA as the methodological strategy.

Within this thesis I critique the strategies of communication taken by the prison inspectorate (those tasked with reporting on the treatment and conditions in prisons as a strategy for public accountability) and political stakeholders (those who have power and authority to direct strategies of change in prison). The approach to beginning CDA studies in this way is similar to Alvesson and Sandberg’s (2011) approach of problematization as a starting point for conducting research and producing contributions to discussion. Alvesson and Sandberg (2011: 252) discuss this as the “*dialectical interrogation* of one’s own familiar position, other stances, and the domain of literature targeted for assumption challenging”. Thus, research in this vein addresses important discourses around crisis and problems to promote practical change in discursive fields to challenge the dominant and encourage change. Engaging with challenges and change within prisons is in itself a discursive and political act, and as such I need to reflect on the position that this thesis takes in pressing for transformation of penal practice, culture, and organisation. Within penology authors tend to speak of change with two different voices, based on the spectrum of reformists versus abolitionists or Radical Alternatives to Prison (RAP) (Ryan and Ward, 2014). A reformist agenda can be understood as seeking practical change alongside key lobbyist groups (such as the Prison Reform Trust or the Howard League for Penal Reform) who pursue gradual changes in penal politics, theory and practice for the betterment of those imprisoned. Alternatively, abolitionist or RAP propose “a

movement to end systemic violence, including the interpersonal vulnerabilities and displacements that keep the system going” (Berger, 2014: vii-viii). Abolitionist and RAP voices therefore present a moral philosophy which seeks a world without prisons or similar institutions that house pain and punishment (Ryan and Sims, 2016). The reformist versus abolitionist debate is beyond the remit of this thesis, but there is value in stating my position within a reformist framework when considering changes to imprisonment – as I do not think that current cultural or social realities exist which can be without prisons. Critique should be offered to the strategies employed with imprisonment rather than seeking penal revolution that requires a radical shift in the cultural practice seen with imprisonment – however, this does not mean I do not agree that systematic violence and pain should be seen within prisons. I construct my conclusions in this thesis towards a discursive abolitionist view, where I do believe that language and the social action this produces, requires a level of radical change that moves away from dehumanisation towards discourses of care and compassion.

1.1: Overview of Chapters

Before I present an overview to each chapter, I want to briefly explain the layout of this thesis, to address how this is used discursively, thus differing from other forms of study. I offer two chapters as literature review, establishing the context of violence, self-harm, and suicide in prison alongside the organisation of prison accountability. Offering context is an important dimension of CDA, as without this my analysis would be limited to linguistic description rather than appreciating discursive nuance. I then detail my methodological approach, explaining how and why CDA is the best approach for this study and detailing how I selected and analysed documents for this research. I then address my analysis directly, using a strategy that explores discourses from a micro-linguistic approach through to wider structures of discourses (Richardson, 2006). The last analysis chapter for this thesis also presents a metaphorical theory to explaining action and inaction, where I discuss the use of a discursive veil to represent how observations are blurred and obstructed by organisational discourses. This

strategy allows the problem-orientated analysis to speak for itself and to not directly utilise a theory-orientated approach, more on this in chapter four (van Dijk, 1997).

Chapter two presents my first literature review. This has been structured based on the epistemological traditions that I identified within literature on violence, self-harm, and suicide in prison. Within the chapter I identified two epistemological traditions through my reading on literature on violence, self-harm, and suicide in prison. I named these epistemological traditions the Risk-Modelling Tradition (RMT), which focused on statistical prevalence and identifying specific risk indicators, and the Constructivist Tradition (CT), which explores voices, lived-experiences, and generative realities on the problems. Approaching the literature in this way helps to instruct the reader on how different traditions within research and literature represent the causes of these problems, whilst also addressing the discursively complex field that is associated with these topics. I characterise and provide examples for each tradition, before offering critique to the challenges that emerge within each tradition.

Chapter three explores the organisation of prison accountability and explains the relationships that exist between HMIP and political stakeholders. The chapter explores the tripartite model of prison accountability (Behan and Kirkham, 2016), between HMIP, the Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) and the Prison and Probation Ombudsman (PPO), to support recognition of the roles and relationships that HMIP have with politicians – emphasising the advisory capacity of HMIP and their role in inspecting on treatment and conditions in prisons. The chapter also discusses different theories of public service inspection, considering quality assurance, quality improvement and surrogacy for competition. Finally, the chapter explores the practical aspects of HMIPs role, detailing the development of their inspection practice, criteria, and methodology. This overview to HMIP evaluates the developments that have enhanced the legitimacy of prison inspection. Throughout the chapter I take a critical look at the make-up of prison inspection, building on the limited literature that offers challenge and critique to their practices.

Chapter four sets the methodological intentions of this study and discusses approaches to CDA. I establish how CDA is understood theoretically and discuss how I have operationalised these ideas to practically analyse documents. I begin this operationalisation through a review of a pilot study I conducted on one of the selected documents, highlighting the applicability and effectiveness of CDA as a research strategy. This methodology chapter also explains how I organised selection of a corpus (a collection of written texts), how I extracted quotations from documents, and how I developed an analytical matrix through the adoption of critical questions which I applied to each quotation. This matrix supported the analysis to progress through micro-linguistic to macro-discursive themes.

Chapter five is the first analytical chapter in this study, which focuses on how discursive devices used datafication on the topics of violence, self-harm, and suicide to dehumanise prisoners' experiences. These discursive devices - which are micro-linguistic techniques used to construct a reality and position on topics - were based on how authors from the documents selected datafied these topics to strip away the human aspects of them. This was mostly seen through the dominance of data during discussion on these topics, where lived-experiences of prisoners are reduced and atomised to numbers. The chapter argues that data dominance functions to problematise rather than humanise prisoners and their experiences, guiding readers of the documents through data stories rather than paying attention to distress, trauma, or the human experiences of the problem. The dominance of data stories leads me to the concluding claim of 'devil in the data', as this chapter explores how datafied devices are used in attempt to shock readers through methods of data visualisation.

Chapter six explores wider discourse structures of accountability, looking at how the corpora detailed different strategies and styles of doing accountability within the communication offered within documents. In the chapter I identified four key features of how accountability was practiced and conducted. The first was through authors shifting accountability, recognising how political stakeholders move accountability away from themselves and place this onto prison governors or other organisations to

deflect blame and responsibility. The second feature illustrates how New Public Management (NPM) has become dominant within the language used by both groups, detailing how target setting, auditing, and hands-on management are embedded throughout the documents. The third feature recognises the groups using accountability, referring to specific actors to highlight failure and to assign blame. The final features consider how accountability is presented, unpacking the consequences of an outcome-focused discourse of accountability which reflects the ideological powers and values of NPM. I argue in this chapter that the pervasiveness of NPM results in a reductionist reaction to the three problems, calling for greater compassionate strategies of accountability.

Chapter seven further analyses structures of discourse, discussing the different discourses that authors communicate on the cause of violence, self-harm, and suicide. Within this chapter three main discourses are identified, the first is on Trauma-Informed Practice (TIP) and how this is focused on those who witness violence, self-harm, and suicide in prison rather than using TIP to recognise the trauma of those who commit these acts – thus presented a misinformed approach to TIP as recognised by leaders in the field. The second discourse is around victimised experiences which, similarly to the discourse on TIP, rejects using victimised experiences to understand incidents, but instead recognises the need to manage victims through key strategies of risk-assessment and risk management. The third discourse in this chapter draws on a common association that connects drugs and violence, this is a dominant view throughout the corpus and seen as an unquestionable truth. I argue that the association is used to problematise prisoners and justify interventions made by prison managers. Throughout this chapter, I identified a further dominance of risk management and reductionist techniques that continued the dehumanising practices and consideration to those who do violence, self-harm, and suicide in prison.

Chapter eight is the last analysis chapter for the thesis. In this chapter, I explore how discourses of HMIP and political stakeholders are used to ‘veil’ (i.e. conceal) actions and potential actions. I suggest that specific organisational discourses, which are self-constructed, have the ability to obscure certain possibilities whilst leaving others

available. Thus, I provide this metaphor to provide theoretical explanations to how organisations shape their discursive practices which have a consequence for the actions that the authors present within their documents. Within the chapter I present this through considering the different ‘threads’ that can be seen within HMIPs and the political stakeholders discursive veils. For HMIP I argue that the threads of impartiality, outcome-focused methodology, and independence play a part in HMIP missing opportunities to provide specific and actionable recommendations – which results in vague detail and superficial suggestions. For political stakeholders I argue that key threads are based on risk, blame, and political inactivity. These threads support a discourse that politicians are not able to provide necessary actions due to the domination of risk tropes within their documents, suggesting that they use the three problems for political gaming and to neutralise responsibility – resulting in political motivations overshadowing potential actions. This chapter explores the consequences of discursive practices within these groups, recognising the limitations that organisational discourses, or threads, provide to necessary action on violence, self-harm, and suicide in prison.

Chapter Two: Violence, Self-Harm, and Suicide in Prison: A Review of Epistemological Traditions

2.1: Introduction

This chapter critically discusses the different categories of literature that seek to describe and understand the causes of violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons. In this chapter I discuss two bodies of literature that I identified during initial investigation and reading on these three problems. During my reading two categories of literature emerged that, I argue, demonstrated distinct characteristics in style of research, approach to theorisation, and sources of the causes of the problems. The literature accessed for this chapter was broad, including research studies, theoretical papers, government and organisational reports that detailed the three problems. The majority of the literature was based on prisons in England and Wales, with some international pieces accessed on theoretical explanations of the problems. I also paid greater attention to literature that presented the discursive manoeuvres of ‘authorities’, as such ethnographic research did not play a significant feature – however ethnographic work has influenced my ethical framework regarding prisoner welfare and prison conditions. The core feature of the two categories is that they represented competing epistemological traditions on violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons, as the approach to the construction of knowledge appeared polar (Wodak and Mayer, 2016; Fairclough, 2003; Keinzel, 1970). I call these the Risk Modelling Tradition (RMT) and the Constructivist Tradition (CT). This chapter outlines these competing epistemological traditions before exploring how knowledge construction within these traditions situates claims and actions regarding violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons.

Before these different knowledges and models are thoroughly unpacked, it is important to reflect on the extent of the three problems under investigation. As the introduction indicated, violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons are not new problems nor are they considered as atypical experiences for prisoners and staff to

witness, a claim presented throughout penological literature (Cavadino et al, 2020; Harrison, 2020). However, they are problems that have seen trajectories of increasing overall prevalence (see introduction chapter) and problems that represent a deeply personal and distressing circumstance for prisoners. Much of the literature on violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons identifies these issues as inevitable features of imprisonment and as part of a continuous penal crisis (Cavadino et al, 2020). Prisons are often discussed in connection to the concept of ‘crisis’ whether it be a crisis of management, prison order, of drugs, New Psychoactive Substances (NPS), crisis of condition, and a crisis of accountability and legitimacy (Cavadino et al, 2020). This offers an important backdrop to the literature on violence, self-harm, and suicide. The discussion is often drawn towards issues of staffing, overcrowding, and other prison wide problems rather than specific procedural issues on the problems, such as Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) processes (Pike and George, 2019; Tomczak, 2018) or detailed assessment on violence reduction strategies (Wauben et al, 2020).

Violence, self-harm, and suicide are considered to be emblematic of penal crisis, leading to these problems being used as indicators of a ‘failing prison’ within political discussion, inspection reports, news reports and wider political and public accounts of prisons (such as Wolff, 1991; Harris, 2015; Corston, 2006). The rate of incidents in these three areas are also often referred to directly by others with reformist outlooks, such as members of the Howard League for Penal Reform. The then Chief Executive, Frances Crook, claiming that “[the] government’s own figures... reveal the sheer scale of human misery behind bars across England and Wales. Assaults may be falling but the restricted regimes imposed have caused further surges in the numbers of self-injury incidents” (Crook, 2020). This demonstrates the extent to which violence, self-harm, and suicide are identified as human responses to imprisonment and used to support claims of the failure seen within prisons. Furthermore, these issues appear alongside discussions on wider issues within prisons, such as drug-use, overcrowding, reduced staffing levels, and Covid-19 restrictions within prisons all discussed in context to violence, self-harm, and suicide. This demonstrates the complexity and commonality of these problems. This leads to questions of whether these problems

are personal or situational or whether they are actions and behaviours presented by individuals in reaction to usually distressing experiences, the answers to which form the base of the epistemological traditions discussed below.

2.2: Epistemology as a Base for Comparison

This chapter separates literature into two epistemological traditions to narrate the complex range of published works on these topics. Literature of this nature is not easy to organise, nor is there a natural or customary method of doing so. Therefore, categorising based on epistemology has been done to support presentation of these ideas for this analysis. The significant difference for each tradition is with knowledge construction, in determining what constitutes true knowledge and how knowledge is exchanged (Wodak and Mayer, 2016; Fairclough, 2003; Keinzel, 1970). Hence, I talk of these approaches as epistemological traditions. Discussions on epistemology are usually considered within discussions in methodology, as it draws on values and theoretical preference in understanding what constitutes knowledge and how best to achieve this in social science (Keinzel, 1970). As theoretical beliefs, epistemologies “provide models of the conditions, contingencies and limits” that researchers utilise to justify their construction of knowledge (Wodak and Mayer, 2016: 17).

Epistemological models provide researchers with frames for their positionality, views of valid knowledge construction and how they wish to present knowledge within their research. Mills (1959: 58) similarly addresses the way that epistemology constructs the “grounds and the limits” in different knowledges, each with their own “character” and method. He utilises the example of the science of physics used in earlier sociological thinking, demonstrating how researchers construct epistemological traditions using techniques from natural sciences, which was favoured and preferred as the valid manner to conduct research (Mills, 1959). Consequently, epistemology has significant importance within research design (see figure 4 from Wodak and Mayer (2016: 15), it is situated as one of the central values researchers take a position on, justifying methodology, method, and data analysis, whilst also justifying and

evaluating the knowledge research produces. It is therefore a central catalyst in the development of construct and generating knowledge, as it is used to justify and evaluate what we see as valid knowledge.

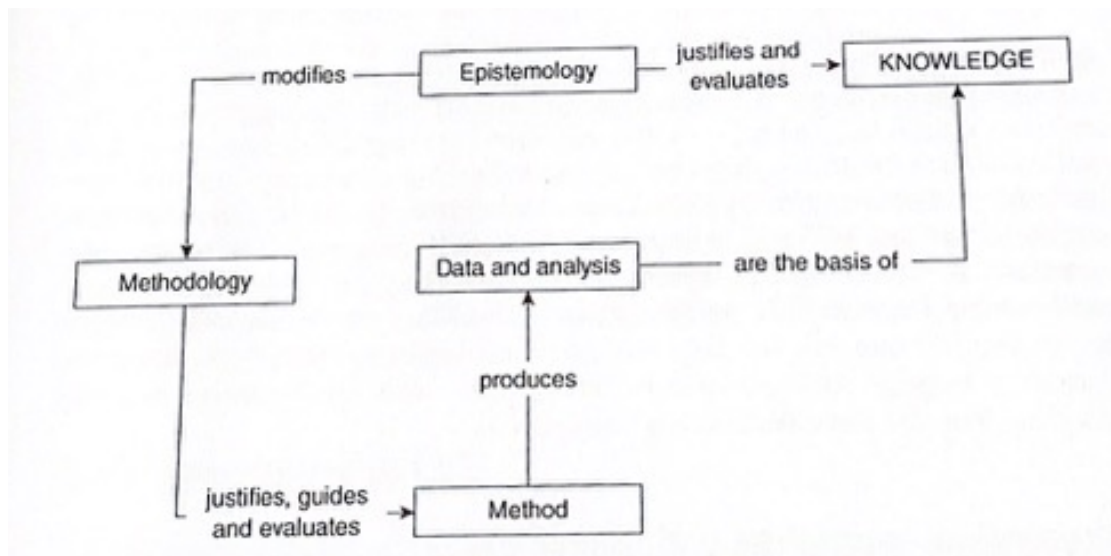


Figure 4: The relationship between epistemology, methodology and method (Wodak and Mayer, 2016: 15)

Epistemologies are distinguished by the divisions between “the poles of realism and constructivism” (Wodak and Mayer, 2015: 17), or between holism or reductionism (Verschuren, 2001). Oppositions seen between epistemological traditions are therefore often seen as polar, one constituting a specific focus on reducing social phenomena to specific variables and the other seeking to construct explanations around social phenomena, whilst taking a more holistic stance.

The two traditions that I draw out in this chapter are oppositional in their approach to explaining the causes of violence, self-harm, and suicide in prison. As will be discussed, the difference in epistemology leads to different actions that traditions seek to promote, with the Risk-Modelling Tradition (RMT) promoting prevention, prediction, intervention, and risk management as opposed to the Constructivist Tradition (CT) which promotes understanding lived-experiences, exploring holistic reasoning, and addressing the origin of the problems. Division between traditions leads to different stylisation and attention, with “prevalence studies” (Armour, 2012: 887) often underpinned by assumptions about risk factors, following a reliance on empiricism and statistical significance. This produces identifiable characteristics, demographics,

and profiles of prisoners so that risk-modelling can produce technologies which aim to prevent and reduce future incidents. This is usually seen through research findings or through using statistical information to identify, establish, and measure risk factors (Armour, 2012; Hawton et al, 2014; Fazel et al, 2011; Glorney et al, 2020; Slade et al., 2014; Ryland et al, 2019; Horton et al, 2014; Borrill et al, 2005; Humber, 2011). Whereas others (for example, Ward and Bailey, 2013) seek to identify circumstances through experimental methods, that lead to profiling on risk, used and applied to inform practical and “evidence-based” policy interventions for prison.

The CT develops theoretical models around explanations to the causes of violence, self-harm, and suicide, producing theories such as the importation – which suggests prisoners bring these problems from the community into prisons (Zamble and Quinsey, 1997), deprivation model – suggesting that the prison environment and experiences create the problems (Goffman, 1961; Sykes, 1958), and combined models – which suggests that prisoners bring problems which are further exacerbated by the experiences of imprisonment (Dear, 2006). Each model has contextually different approaches to their explanations, for example deprivation models suggest that it is the consequences of imprisonment which are the cause and origin of the pains that lead to issues of violence, self-harm, and suicide (Crewe et al, 2020). In contrast, trauma-informed approaches suggest that previous experiences of trauma (i.e. traumas experienced before entering prison) are triggered by imprisonment, leading to adverse reactions (Miller and Najavits, 2012). More generally, the CT draws on wider criminological and sociological debates, addressing structural and social responses to experiences and circumstances (Garland, 2001).

Importantly for this thesis, the difference is in the objectives and techniques that are employed within an epistemological tradition and how they are utilised through agencies of offender management, such as MoJ, HMPPS, SoSfJ and others. The RMT is interesting here, as it has a privileged position for offender management agencies, who recognise the practical impact that these studies offer to creating initiatives and policy. This is highlighted through the MoJ’s (2020a) publication on Areas of Research Interest (ARI) which promotes research conducted on areas, with many calls for

practical outcomes to be seen through new techniques and innovations in interventions for prisons. Thus, research that is valued from the MoJ has a focus on intervention, narrowing opportunities for wider explorative explanation to the problems. Influencing policy in this style is not unique to literature on prisons but is seen widely in criminal justice, providing an intervention-based outcome from research to supply policymakers with an ‘evidence-base’ that can be used to shape practices (see Sutton et al. (2022) who discuss this practice with Youth Justice).

2.3: Risk-Modelling Traditions

Within literature on violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons, research that produces action-based outcomes or interventions to tackle the issues are held in higher regard than research that focuses on lived-experience (MoJ, 2020a). As stated above, research that identifies specific risk indicators are often used by the MoJ and HMPPS for the construction of interventions. This follows a long history of intervention-focused research, which takes precedence in debate and political agenda setting, for example, the infamous ‘What Works?’ agenda on rehabilitation in prisons (Martinson, 1974; French and Gendreau, 2006; Polizzi et al, 1999). What is noticeable within this body of work is the disposition to specific epistemological traditions, characterised through reductionist and atomising tendencies, leading to profiling of large populations to target interventions. Literature on violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons likewise follow this practice, which has dominated the field. I refer to this work as a risk-modelling epistemological tradition due to the methodological tendencies and the framing of risk interventions as conclusions to studies. All of which create models of practice in attempt to reduce violence, self-harm, and suicide in prison.

2.3.1: Characteristics of a Risk-Modelling Tradition

A significant characteristic of the RMT is on estimating prevalence of sections of the prison population who demonstrate certain behaviours associated with these three problems. Liebling (1999) compares this to practices usually engaged in psychiatry and

psychology, where statistical data is utilised as a means of quantifying the scale of problems within populations. Studies of this nature seek to estimate prevalence of sub-groups within the prison population, to determine who are the over-represented populations who have risk factors of violence, self-harm, and suicide. These studies draw attention to the importance of quantification, to provide practices for comparison, replication, control, and generalisability to analysis done within studies (Verschuren, 2001). These methodological technologies result in the production, visualisation, and presentation of the complex modelling done on populations and subgroups within prisons through comparative testing and authors estimating those groups who have a higher prevalence in violence, self-harm, and suicide. The estimation of high prevalence in specific groups, based on divisions of age, gender, ethnicity, sentence, drug-use and other factors, are framed as the group who are more 'at risk' of the behaviours under investigation. These sampled sub-groups are then extrapolated to the wider prison population to estimate risk (Verschuren, 2001; Lieblich, 1999). Achieving the extrapolation of sub-group findings to the wider population then requires analysis of population distribution through the use of quantifiable data, using specific factors (such as length of sentence or type of crime committed) to identify a wider population who can be considered at higher risk of one of the problems. This is achieved through the quantification of the levels of problems seen within the prison population (Armour, 2012), demonstrating how this tradition utilises group level analysis which is then used to categorise individuals as posing risk of violence, self-harm, or suicide.

A notable example of this epistemological tradition in research can be seen in Hawton et al. (2014) who studied the prevalence of self-harm and subsequent suicides across prisons in England and Wales. Their study employed four methods that represent quantification technologies, using descriptive statistics from a large data source, a case-control study of risk factors of those who did and did not self-harm to compare characteristics, analysis of clustered data, and prospective comparative cohorts based on five screening measurements - Prison Screening Questionnaire (PriSnQuest), Self-Harm Inventory (SHI), Borderline Symptom List-23 (BSL-23), Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation System – Outcome Measure (CORE-OM), and Patient Health

Questionnaire (PHQ-9). This particular study supports use of screening tests based on different populations, addressing the likelihood of the tests being able to produce a high, medium, or low risk marker for prisons on Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) (Hawton et al, 2014). The study used a large dataset of all self-harm incidents recorded within England and Wales prisons from January 2004 to December 2009, a total of 139,195 incidents. The study identified specific risk factors of self-harmers, identifying that most likely to self-harm were young, white, in high secure prisons, serving either a life sentence or on remand, or were women who had committed violence on another person (Hawton et al, 2014). The underlying logic involved in this study is based around identifying a group who have self-harmed in prison and those who have not before comparing characteristics. During the comparison, if any statistical significance was found then it was presented as a 'risk factor', which is then extrapolated to all in the prison population, in this case young, white, high secure prisoners, serving life or remand (Hawton et al, 2014).

These findings offer factors of specific prisoners who are statistically deemed as most likely to be involved in an incident, which can then be applied to staff practices in preventing violence, self-harm, and suicide. Beyond this, Hawton et al. (2014) provide other statistical findings to support existing practices in prisons, such as a specific timeframe of incidents and the likely methods of self-harm and suicide, which can be used to build recommendations to support prevention through raising staff awareness of incidents and greater identification during screening at reception (Hawton et al., 2014). This study is an important example as it identifies specific attention to applying quantitative methodological technologies to draw out risk factors associated with self-harm. It demonstrated that there are advantages to recognising identifiable risk-factors associated with the incident and provided opportunities for its conclusions to become part of wider penal practice, as recognising and observing risk is an essential part of prison staff work on monitoring self-harm and suicide. Indeed, this study is seen as one of many that contribute to HMPPS's (2018) response to self-harm in adult male prisons, in which recommendations were made based on the findings from this style of study. HMPPS went as far as to claim that they "know more about risk factors

than protective factors” (HMPPS, 2018: 27). This demonstrates the focus on risk-modelling utilised by penal policy makers and prison management.

The reliance on empirical and measurable risk factors in prevalence studies reflects a specific methodological decision which is then utilised to support suggested changes within prison practice. This is usually done through two approaches, one which focuses analysis on developing and evaluating practical tools used by prison staff and the other which directs analysis towards testing theories of violence, self-harm, and suicide in prison to support risk modelling. An example of the former is Ryland et al. (2019) who conducted a prospective study to examine the extent to which screening tools measuring risk factors administered when entering the prison predicted the occurrence of self-harm in prisoners. To do this, they broke down risk factors into two categories, the acute or triggering factors of prisoners and any predisposing factors to self-harm. Their analysis results produced a practice use for screen and risk assessing, identifying “the importance of adhering to methodological best practice to avoid a number of pitfalls that threaten to undermine the accuracy and applicability of prediction models in real world settings” (Ryland et al, 2019: 7). This demonstrates difference in practices between clinical tools and risk assessment tools in measuring the predictability of self-harm in male prisoners, producing conclusions which suggested there is an “absence of current valid screening tools for suicide risk” (Ryland et al, 2019: 7). These findings sit in contradiction to other agencies who consider screening tools for self-harm, such as the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) who argue that only mental health professionals should undertake risk formulation, recommending that all tools used to assess chances of self-harm are avoided by practitioners (NICE, 2022).

The second characteristic of the RMT seeks to test theories as predictors for self-harm and suicide. For example, Slade et al’s (2014) study which applied the Cry of Pain (CoP) model to self-harm and suicide by prisoners, using multiple psychological scales to measure and determine whether individual factors can be linked to CoP. CoP is one of many psychological models used to consider self-harm and suicide, other studies demonstrate the CoP through different lived-experiences such as university students

(Dhingra et al, 2021; Dhingra et al, 2019). The CoP model presents four psychological features that individuals have that lead to self-harm to be a cry 'of' pain, rather than a cry 'for' help (Baumeister, 1990). The four main features that lead to self-harm include the presence of stressors, presence of defeat, perception of entrapment, and no perception of rescue or support (Slade et al, 2014). Having these psychological features is argued to lead to self-harm as a strategy of expressing the pain caused by the presence of stress, defeat, entrapment and lack of support (Baumeister, 1990; Slade et al, 2014). Slade et al (2014) seek to test whether the conceptual themes within the theory can be used as a means of determining the risk of a person self-harming or taking their own lives during their imprisonment. They used psychological measuring scales to test for these four features of CoP, to consider if such tests can support prediction of deliberate self-harm. The researchers claimed that they were "able to build an evidence base on which assessment and intervention provisions can be developed" (Slade et al, 2014: 142), suggesting that the CoP model can support prediction techniques for self-harm. The two examples above, Ryland et al (2019) and Slade et al (2014), demonstrate that studies that follow the RMT seek to support intervention and prediction strategies. They draw on specific risk factors (such as the features of CoP) to provide identifiers for potential violence, self-harm, and suicide which are then implemented into risk management technologies, used by prison staff and policymakers.

The quantification and methodological practices that characterise the RMT, lead authors such as Liebling (1999) to suggest that studies that try to predict violence, self-harm, and suicide focus on 'profiling' offender populations rather than understanding lived-experiences. She refers to profiling as the drawing on specific factors that can be used to establish an at-risk group of prisoners, or predictable circumstances in which violence, self-harm, and suicide are more likely to occur. Profiling of risk is not isolated to penology, but is seen across criminology, with research and literature on criminal justice favouring studies that provide actions on risk-based interventions. For example, Fraser (2017) draws on multiple studies to address the risk-profiling seen in gender and gang membership, in an attempt to identify a correlation between measurable social and individual characteristics and gang membership. Such

conclusions can then be used by the police to support their practices of crime control, such as increased stop and search practices or to engage more with community-based interventions to prevent further gang membership (see Fraser, 2017: 113). This epistemological tradition is also seen in Probation work, where practices of risk management and assessment of offenders and ex-offenders in the community are central to practice and a desired feature of political and public populism when considering particularly dangerous offenders, such as sex offenders (Senior, 2013). The expansion of the profiling tradition in criminology has become an active element of several criminological sub-disciplines and engages epistemological practices that encourage the construction of risk factors, crime modelling and the identification of criminal activity for prevention strategies (Mythen, 2014; Garland, 2001). It is, therefore, not surprising to see penologists consider such traditions when contending with incidents seen within prisons. The issues underlying profiling seen within the RMT is that the characteristics that form the study and assessment of behaviours only allow two factors to be seen as relational – such as the type of sentence providing greater risk of suicide. This approach therefore circumvents the human complexity involved in these assessments, favouring the efficiency of statistical models to target interventions over understanding the lived experiences of those sampled (Liebling, 1999). In doing so, statistical efficiency is valued over human dignity.

2.3.1: Risk-Modelling and the Sociology of Penal Change

This tradition is characterised by the practice of risk-modelling personal vulnerabilities, prison population demographic, situational circumstances and profiling. As a result, the RMT is seen as beneficial for new policy initiatives, an attraction that is not limited to prisons but across the criminal justice system (Case, 2007; Garland, 2001; Knepper, 2007). As highlighted earlier, this is due to preference HMPPS and the MoJ have towards using academic research that provides necessary statistical profiling, where risk-modelling supports the practice of direct and evidence-based intervention. The development of the RMT in penological and criminological research can be explained sociologically through theories of modernity that engage

with penal environments. Where authors (Garland, 2001; Mythen, 2014; Hope and Sparks, 2000; Holloway and Jefferson, 1997), often influenced through theoretical frames of late modernity (Young, 2007) and risk society (Beck, 1992), construct meaning around the practical changes seen to penology. Garland (2001: 194) goes so far to suggest that these risk-based frames have become normalised in the practices of criminal justice, addressing the “obsessive attempts to monitor risky individuals, to isolate dangerous populations, and to impose situational controls on otherwise open and fluid systems”. Here, Garland is addressing the normalisation of risk, born through a shift in social life towards perceptions of risk and dangerousness which are now placed on offending populations. Risk and danger are now two normalised factors in a “crime-conscious society” (Garland, 2001: 194), which has not only become a dominant ideal within a risk-based discourse, but also in wider social life and penal practices.

A normalisation of risk brings with it an approach to modelling, an approach not limited to the study of prisons, but one seen throughout criminology and social science, and further utilised through policymaking. Sutton et al (2021: 14) conclude that this tradition is seen within youth justice, having a “privileged” position due to wider frameworks that appear within criminal justice and offender management, such as the ‘What Works?’ framework, which has seen psychological and “quasi-positivist assumptions” as a dominant voice in explaining the causes of youth offending. The overarching risk-modelling tradition, seen throughout criminology, has produced other concepts to explain the shift in attention highlighted by Garland (2001), such as the concept of dangerization. This refers to the tendency to perceive and analyse the world through categories of menace. As such, this shift produces actions and technologies that center on continuous detection of threats and assessment of the impact of adverse probabilities, whilst building a defensive perception in reaction to these threats, rather than an optimistic approach built on a reformist attitude that centers prisoner experience. This results in a dominance of fear and anxiety for working and managing offenders, rather than an approach built on ambition and desire for good (Lianos and Douglas, 2000; Hudson, 2003).

The dominance of prevalence and intervention in literature is therefore a part of this form of risk modernity, and whilst literature often discusses the impact of this on criminal justice more generally (Garland, 2001; Hudson, 2003; Mythen, 2014; Hope and Sparks, 2000), there are specific examples of this producing a shift in penological practices. Feeley and Simon (1992) identify a penological shift occurring in the 1970s and 1980s, claiming that the period saw three distinctive shifts in the strategic format of punishment leading to a 'new' penology establishing dominance in the turn of the 1990s. Their first shift is based on the emergence of new discourses, which are demonstrated through changes in language, from an 'older style', where punishment was framed through individual diagnosis of criminality and tailoring interventions for each offender, to a discourse which saw classification, identification and management of probability and risk becoming mainstream. The second and third shifts merged following the discursive-linguistic shift and the actions that this promoted. Feeley and Simon (1992) explain this as the formation of new objectives, based on management of offenders within the criminal justice system and to the development of new techniques of risk management, through producing forms of social control by rearranging the definition of offenders, and risk dominating ideas on sentencing. For example, they discuss the technologies of incapacitation as a way of acting on the 'new' penological values, as this promotes the promise by governments and policymakers to reduce the effects of crime in a community. This is a technology that redistributes the location of offenders in society and thus promotes a risk-modelling approach to the imprisonment of offenders (Feeley and Simon, 1992). This approach can be exemplified through the policy of the then Home Secretary Michael Howard in 1993, who commented that 'prison works' due to the technologies of incapacitation in keeping the public safe. Howard's comments demonstrate a radical shift in political penological thinking (Burnett and Maruna, 2004), representative of the embodiment of the 'new penology' into political discourse.

Simon and Feeley (1992) present these discourses as 'new', which could be problematic considering the time since the article was published. Instead, the discourses they identify could be seen as the emergence and normalisation of a RMT in penological practice, alongside a discursive shift to actuarialism and actuarial

justice. Simon and Feeley refer to this as “the replacement of a moral or clinical description of individuals with an actuarial language of probabilistic calculations and statistical distributions applied to populations” (1992: 452). This promotes profiling and prevention of offending, through a style of applied punishment which see less attention paid to the causes of offending than to strategies of prevention and intervention. Such an actuarialist approach can be seen in the literature highlighted earlier, with the characteristics of the RMT seen within Feeley and Simon’s (1992) ‘new penology’. For example, Hawton et al’s (2014) study demonstrated specific risk-probabilities that are constructed through calculations and statistical significance for prediction, likewise with Ryland et al (2019) who sought to assess and determine the level of predictability on self-harm with their study based on initial screening tests. This actuarialism therefore sets the priority for action seen within punishment of the time, action that is also promoted within this tradition of literature, supporting the production of a “suite of risk calculation techniques” (McLaughlin and Muncie, 2013: 6) and risk applied through techniques of sentencing (Annison, 2018). Examples of this approach working in practice include the creation and administration of Dangerous and Severe Personality Disorder (DSPD) for violent offenders in 1999 (Taylor, 2003) and the introduction of Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) in 2005 (Jacobson et al, 2010; Annison, 2014).

Thus, the RMT places value on statistical practices, profiling, identifying risk factors and population categories through actuarial technologies and the promotion of risk intervention. These values have become widespread in penology. The body of literature discussed above also considers violence, self-harm, and suicide in prison through a practical outlook. The authors do not seek to explain the causes of these issues but instead focus on recommending intervention strategies for policymakers to reduce incidents. Primarily, this tradition is characterised through an intervention-based approach, where identification of risk has become not only an interest to policymakers and politicians, but a significant feature of wider criminological and sociological shifts (Garland, 2001; Feeley and Simon, 1992; McLaughlin and Muncie, 2013; Lianos and Douglas, 2000; Hudson, 2003). There is no doubt that the RMT demonstrates a progressive and worthwhile contribution, insofar as they seek to limit

incidents, identify potential risks, and work towards creating models to support staff and penal practices. Yet, this epistemological approach is not without critique, particularly in how studies approach their findings as generalisable risk factors or technologies that prevent or reduce the issues (Liebling, 1999). There are three main critiques that I draw, the first addresses the issues of reductionist research and its use in policy, the second is around how reductionist present these human issues through data, and finally the problems of actuarialism and how these approaches to prisons generate new levels of dangerousness, risk, and stigma.

2.3.1: Critiques of a Risk-Modelling Tradition

Within the RMT two characteristics stand out as key, the first is around this tradition engaging in a complex practice of reducing human experiences into variables, secondly that subgroup differences from large data sets are extrapolated to individuals. These processes depict a specific choice made by researchers, as fragmentation or ‘variableisation’ (the process of reducing human life into specific variables for the basis of quantification) requires researchers to ignore wider holistic realities of prisoners and atomise these for the benefit of their proposed research (Verschuren, 2001). Reductionist approaches like this therefore focus on the measurement, ignoring what cannot be quantified, such as the situational experiences of imprisonment. Liebling (1999) suggests this approach reduces sympathy and empathy of prisoner’s experiences. This shifts arguments away from the distress, suffering, or trauma that could be seen as the root causes of violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons, thus atomising the human experiences and removing opportunities for empathy in research. This demonstrates the extent to which fragmentation takes place within literature on violence, self-harm, and suicide. For example, Hawton et al (2014) takes variables from subgroups of prisoner’s demographics to analyse prevalence within the population, and Slade et al (2014) seek to quantify experiences of stressors, presence of defeat, perception of entrapment, and no perception of rescue or support through psychological measure-scales to test theoretical ideas. Such examples demonstrate, as Liebling (1999) suggests, the tendency for psychological

studies to provide limited explanation of wider holistic lived-experiences and realities, from personal, social, and relational issues that appear because of imprisonment and institutional confinement. Nor do such studies contextualise the ways in which prisoners experience this distress, potentially ignoring opportunities for useful information to support intervention. For example, this style of research does not provide the level of detail seen in wider sociological studies of imprisonment, such as Crewe et al (2020) who provide qualitative analysis of the experiences of life imprisonment, recognising the consequences this has on identity, sense of self, and how prisoners adapt. Such information and detail like this cannot be quantified or fragmented in a reductionist style.

The challenge with this level of quantification is that it rejects, ignores, and focuses attention away from the complex dynamics seen in prisoner's lived experiences and relationships. Instead, the RMT produces data that is only ever a partial representation of prisoners lived experiences. Liebling (1999) draws attention to the challenges that exist around the collection of data, measurements, and the use of phraseology of research, suggesting that the strategies applied are not universal and therefore make findings subjective. This projects doubt on the validity of quantification as different terminology used in the recording of suicide provides different estimates. For example, different variations in the definitions of self-harm, used by different organisations, bodies, actors, mean that there is variation in what is counted. Which gives rise to wide variations in estimates of its prevalence. It is then difficult to ascertain the 'true' incidence of self-harm and the variation in definitions behind the figures become obscured by the figures themselves. Liebling (1999) further claims that these data are unreliable due to the approach used to measure suicide in prisons. For example, labelling a death as 'suicide' might be used to prevent blame to a staff member or other processes which might have prevented the death; therefore, terms like 'self-inflicted death' are used as a strategy to locate accountability solely with the person and to place blame on an individual. This is particularly problematic when estimates of prevalence rely on data that is routinely collected from multiple sources and where discretion and decisions are made about actions for the purpose of

classification and categorisation. For example, if a death by misadventure can be considered as a self-inflicted death.

The use of terminology is of substantial importance for studies, where measurement tools are justified and explained so that the terms used in that specific project can be understood. Liebling (1999: 290) further discusses how terminology for recording suicides in prison can change due to verdicts given with terms such as ‘misadventure’ or ‘accidental death’ by coroners in the recording of suicide. This raises critical questions about the generalisability of these data as estimates of prevalence. Further to this, in July 2018, the High Court in England and Wales changed the evidence threshold used to classify deaths as suicide, moving the standard of proof from “beyond all reasonable doubt” to “on the balance of probabilities” (ONS, 2020). This has consequences on the ability to trace and measure suicides and casts doubt on the data used in studies. Importantly, this changes the level of proof required, which can have consequences to recording suicide in prison, where proof might be harder to gain due to issues with staff recording of events and incidents, which Liebling (1999: 290) identifies as having a ‘haphazard’ approach. This demonstrates that quantifying incidents is challenging due to the subjective and political nature of identifying violence, suicide, or self-harm and due to the inability of the prison to record every incident of violence or self-harm owed to the variety of modes that this takes. The changes in standard of proof raise further questions about the accuracy of the recording of suicide; it is not clear whether current data under-report or over-report death by suicide (ONS, 2020). Armour (2012) also critiques the data used to profile and track prevalence of mental illness in prison, suggesting that the quality of screening conducted by undertrained staff and the lack of information transfer between prisons has consequences on recording activity. Some incidents are also likely to be hidden from those who are responsible to record them due to not all areas of the prison being monitored, prisoner’s actions continuously tracked, and the inability for staff to monitor and record every form of incident. Liebling (1999) and Armour (2012) have similarly recognised challenges in the recording, quantification, and classification of acts; all of which has consequences when used for studies.

Within the RMT, accurate measurements are highly valued alongside precision in data collection, standardisation, replicability, and procedural control (Verschuren, 2001). Such practices seek to create data that appear to be factual and objective. However, data collection on violence, self-harm, and suicide in prison produces complexities that limit the ability to provide unquestionable objectivity when working with findings, regardless of the analytical skills held by the author. As Armour (2012) identifies, there are practical limitations on the quantification of the lived-experiences of prisoners, which she claims results in an underestimation of the extent of suicide, violence, and self-harm in prisons. This demonstrates a dark and grey figure, the former referring to incidents that are not reported to staff and the latter referring to incidents that have not been recorded by staff, through discretionary decisions staff make with reported or witnessed incidents (see Bottomley and Pease, 1986). This is an important critique of the RMT in the presentation of findings, as Verschuren (2001) claims that people often prefer quantification when making claims in research, as quantified results are often believed more by audiences.

Beyond this, the collection of information used for these studies are also open to wider critiques on the use of terminology, such as Liebling's (1999) claims around issues of recorded suicide, mentioned earlier. Armour (2012) also suggests that staff reaction to events of violence, self-harm and suicide is important to consider, with mental health data she questions the limited training offered to staff to be able to make recorded judgements on mental health, self-harm, and suicide. There is also some claims around the intensity of some of these issues. For example, Edgar et al (2011) discusses the different interpretations of intensity of violence meaning that some prisoners might experience an attack as a serious case of violence whereas others might only see it as a minor incident, and where others feel significant harm which staff might not agree or determine to be of equal severity. Such difference has shifted linguistic practices in the discussion of violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons where different terminologies have been utilised to draw on a more specific and 'measurable' standard for these issues, rather than considering the wide usage these issues can show in practice. This demonstrates a key character of reductivist research, where authors construct criteria to certain observable actions and

behaviours to assign a metric score (Verschuren, 2001). An example, in literature on self-harm, can be seen through Slade et al (2014) with the phrasing of “Deliberate Self-Harm (DSH)” in their study on the CoP model, a specific terminology and categorising of self-harm to make it clear and obvious for recording and analytical purposes. However, this could exclude other forms of self-harm experienced by prisoners, such as eating habits or other behaviours that do not result in direct hospitalisation or attention of health-care staff. This characteristic of RMT is therefore limited in being able to represent, in data terms, the complex reality of prisoners vulnerability and the harm they experience. More so, this tradition distorts the understanding of this reality.

The same can be said for the political and managerial categorisation of suicide, with the Harris Review (2015: 20) conducted to inquire into deaths in custody of 18–25-year-olds, stating that:

“A self-inflicted death (SID) is defined by the MoJ as any death of a person who has apparently taken his or her own life, irrespective of intent. This not only includes suicides but also accidental deaths as a result of the person’s own actions. This classification is used because it is not always known whether a person intended to commit suicide”.

The implications of this change in language controls recording and subsequent analysis seen within research, downplaying the variety of incidents that can be included within this categorisation. Data collected is therefore not an objective truth, but a partial or datafied construction, shaped by the measurement methods used to capture subjective experiences alongside decision making by the actors who determine the categorisation of a particular case. Reductivist tropes, such as this, present an attempt to control how data is generated, gathered, and recorded. Verschuren (2001) suggests that reductivist processes can sometimes result in ‘tunnel vision’ where the isolation of the object of investigation removes important context from the generation of findings, and that the detachment from social settings limits wider discussion around what is collected. The same can be said with the use of terminology such as ‘self-inflicted death’, as the context and the death cannot be assumed to be self-inflicted, as victims might not consider their suicide to be an act upon themselves, but an act inflicted on them through wider institutional means and pressures (Liebling, 1999).

The consequences of the challenges highlighted above are important to consider, they represent the RMT approach to communication, which normalises data domination in the narratives of violence, self-harm, and suicide in prison. There is a “data power” within this tradition, which uses the construction and presentation of data to inform propositions within several fields (Kennedy and Hill, 2016:772). The examples drawn on demonstrate how the data on issues are central in both academic and political discourses. The RMT produces research findings that draw on modelling approaches to produce interventions for prisons, in attempt to limit and reduce incidents. The tradition and normalisation of this style of communication for violence, self-harm, and suicide is often underdiscussed as ideological work due to the objective visualisation that data produces to readers – which Kennedy and Hill (2017) highlight as a common practice seen within everyday life and the presentation of data, such as news media. This is also common for reductivist research, which Verschuren (2001) links with the notion of tunnel vision. Considering data as an ideological practice shifts the production of data from neutral to positional, but where datafication of phenomena leads towards a total trust and support for the suggestions offered (Kennedy and Hill, 2016). The challenge with a datafication of the area of violence, self-harm, and suicide in prison comes with the conflict that emerges around the lack of sympathy or empathy associated with measured incidents, as well as the limitations of gathering data on this area. This is problematic as this tradition could promote a group to discriminate, to exclude, or to place under surveillance (Kennedy and Hill, 2017). Could the datafication of violence, self-harm, and suicide in prison add a new layer of discrimination and othering to this population? In this case, this *othering* takes place through the identification of prevalence of self-harm and suicide.

2.4: Constructivist Traditions

As epistemological traditions differ it is important to consider alternatives to those identified as being dominant within penological studies. For discussions in violence, self-harm, and suicide in prison the oppositional epistemological traditions reject a

reductionist approach, which the RMT arguably utilises. I name the other tradition the Constructivist Tradition (CT), which address the issues away from reductionist values highlighted above (Verschuren ,2001). This tradition can be named as constructivist as the literature included is characterised by the concern to construct knowledge on prisoner's relationships and interactions. In this constructivist tradition, diverse explanations are brought forward to provide narratives on the complex dynamics involved in prisoner's lives and the problems emerging from imprisonment, such as violence, self-harm, and suicide. This tradition provides explanations of causality for violence, self-harm, and suicide, through the construction of conceptual and theoretical perspectives to understand these problems as complex experiences with numerous explanations. I argue that this tradition provides explanations by discounting reductivist accounts, such as atomising or variablising the experiences of prisoners. Instead, this tradition constructs explanations of different realities that are collected through different research strategies, to explain violence, self-harm, and suicide in prison as social, political, and psychological issues that go beyond the prisoner. The main characteristic of this tradition is the focus on knowledge construction to understand problems. Constructing knowledge involves the practices of explaining and understanding many factors involved in causality, as this tradition is generative it addresses an ensemble of experiences and pressures which cause these problems. By addressing a holistic explanation, authors within this perspective seek to look beyond reductivist tendencies, or beyond the psychological lens which Liebling (1999) suggests dominates this field. This means this tradition is grounded in explaining and understanding social, institutional, and interaction-based explanations of the problems under examination, rather than focusing on individual measures and likelihood. It is distinctively more sociological than RMT in its practice and presentation – favouring social research methods and theoretical discussions as a means of presenting narratives on prisoner's lived-experiences. This section will discuss the main characteristics of this tradition and show how authors characterise the realities of life inside prisons and the experiences of prisoners. This involves utilising an analytical tradition that extends discussions from individual prisoners to that of institutional life and organisation, allowing explanations on causality to be holistic and generative.

To explore the main characteristics of this tradition, I draw on examples from a range of literature. Individually, such literature produces specific explanations of why violence, self-harm, and suicide in prison exists, which in turn provide a perspective on the cause of these problems. This results in different authors producing similar theoretical perspectives on causality (Liebling and Ludlow, 2016; Armour, 2012; Dear, 2006). Some locate causality of these problems outside of the prison (the importation model), whilst others see the problems emerging as a consequence of imprisonment (the deprivation and situational model), or suggest that prison experiences exacerbate previous issues or conditions experienced during imprisonment (the combined model). These models are important for this analysis, as they group together and collectively identify opportunities to explain the causes of violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons. For example, the imported model addresses the problems that exist within the offender and offending populations preprison, such as adversities like low reading, writing, and numeracy skills, a lack of qualifications, difficult childhood environments, and homelessness that collectively create a challenging and difficult preprison experience (Armour, 2012). The consequences of these adversities therefore dominate the prisoner population, resulting in increased mental health problems both before and during imprisonment (Armour, 2012). This suggests that prisoners bring with them an elevated likelihood of violence, self-harm, and suicide behaviours (Liebling, 2016; Zamble and Quinsey, 1997). Thomas and Foster (1973:227) suggest an alternative frame for the use of the importation model which “represents an attempt to expand the scope of existing conceptualization” rather than propose an alternative to ideas on deprivation from the likes of Sykes (1959), Goffman (1961), or Clemmer (1940). To explain this, they draw on Goffman’s work on the mortification process, arguing that processes associated with early imprisonment do not alter the socialisation that people experience preprison. Instead, they claim the process seeks to assimilate prisoners into institutional practices rather than as a need for degradation. Thomas and Foster (1973) further suggest that prison environments are the way that they are due to the concentration of similar individuals placed in one location, whilst there are isolated from a wider and more diverse social interaction. Instead, the beginning of imprisonment sees individuals placed at the bottom of

hierarchical structures and they then use adaptations that they are familiar with from their preprison self, therefore consequences of imprisonment are an imported factor based on an individual's previous socialisation, such as violence (Thomas and Foster, 1973).

The deprivation model challenges the above, suggesting that problems are caused due to the environmental and situational circumstances that prisoners find themselves in once incarcerated. This model draws on theoretical ideas that seek to highlight the issues of prisons directly, such as those offered by Sykes (1959), Goffman (1961), and Foucault (1975). The main focus of this model is to consider the direct impact that prison life and environments have on behaviour, attitudes, and experiences of prisoners, drawing on the specific situations that are novel to prisons, such as interacting with prison staff or being confined in cells for long periods (Liebling and Ludlow, 2016). By explaining and understanding these unique circumstances, authors provide an analysis of the prison environment alongside what they suggest as the cause for a range of behaviours and actions seen by prisoners. Through explaining how the experiences of imprisonment cause feelings of pain and deprivation, authors using this model suggest that prisoners are then tasked with adapting or coping with these pains and that with poor adaptation produces the opportunity for problems to occur (Liebling and Ludlow, 2016). For example, Sykes (1959) suggests that prisoners often construct new roles that they embody during their imprisonment, as a form of adaptation to a new culture, environment, and social lives that are born through pain and deprivation. He refers to these adaptive roles as 'argot roles' that are developed in response to the deprivations. Argot roles lessen the deprived feelings for prisoners and lessen the pains experienced; however, different roles can be the location of behaviours, in particular violent behaviours. For example, he refers to a group of prisoners identified as 'gorillas', those he suggests preying on the weak through intimidation so that they can steal goods and lessen the deprivation of goods and services. He also refers to 'wolves' who are the older, tougher inmates who demonstrate violent and aggressive behaviour towards other prisoners in response to the prison governing sexual relationships and lessening the deprivation of male sexual expression (Sykes, 1959). These examples demonstrate that violence and intimidation

are caused by the deprivations of imprisonment, leaving prisoners to react through adaptive role construction to lessen their pain and deprivation. There are also authors who suggest that prisoners need to cope with deprivation, suggesting that violence, self-harm, and suicide are individuals' responses to the feelings of pain and deprivation, notably those who use these behaviours cannot find healthy coping strategies (Liebling, 1999). This suggests that the problems of violence, self-harm, and suicide are caused by individuals inability to survive prison environments due to the deprivations and pain, the consequences of this leads to poor coping and negative reactions to others or themselves.

The combined model, suggested by Dear (2006), was developed to explain the cause of prison suicide, as located in both of the previous models, where prison exacerbates preprison conditions and adversities (Armour, 2012). This model was developed through the analysis of the weaknesses of the importation and deprivation debates, suggesting instead a model which considers the different reactions to the experiences of imprisonment, and that reactions or adaptations can vary based on individuals' methods that were used before prison and the challenges, inequalities, and experience of life before imprisonment (Dye, 2010). For example, the ability to adapt to long periods in a cell might be easier for those who might be able to access books for entertainment or escapism, whilst those who cannot use books in this way due to limited reading ability or illiteracy might find adapting to prolonged isolation in cells more difficult or traumatising, thus exacerbating the pains of time (Jewkes and Laws, 2020; Crewe et al, 2020). The model pays close attention to the concept of 'coping', especially when referring to self-harm and suicide (Liebling, 1999; 1992; Crewe et al, 2020), considering how individuals with specific lived-experiences can adapt and contend with the deprivational impact of the prison environment. Dye (2010) claims that from this model it could be understood that if conditions in prison are very poor then those who have certain preprison vulnerabilities might cope better than those without. This model therefore frames theoretical discussions against the weaknesses of the importation and deprivation models, by recognising individual prisoner differences and acknowledging that prison environments and deprivations are not experienced the same by everyone.

2.4: Characteristics of a Constructivist Tradition

2.4.1: The Voices that Construct Reality

The first characteristic of the CT is based on studies collecting voices and narratives as a form of research, to construct explanations and to engage with the problems of violence, self-harm, and suicide. Counter to the RMT, the CT's central object of investigation is experiences, rather than on quantity or prevalence and this is fundamental in how research is conducted and expressed (Verschuren, 2001). Authors narrate realities and experiences, using a range of 'voices'. These voices are taken from individuals, such as prisoners, the observations of the researcher, prison staff, and people who are external from the daily experiences of prisons (politicians, economists, and those in prison management). An important characteristic is therefore not from whom the voice comes from, although this has significant implications to the content of the voice, but that each voice is focused on providing a narrative about the prison experience(s). For example, Sykes (1958) and Goffman (1961) adopt their own voices as ethnographic researchers, drawing on experiences, observations, and conversations within prisons and total institutions to construct an explanation of carceral life. Other research, such as Crewe et al (2020) utilises both prisoner voice – presenting data from their research through quotations– alongside the researcher's own analysis and interpretation of the quotations to construct narratives on adaptation, identity, and time. This latter practice has also been used through directed organisation research, such as Pike and George (2019) who researched ACCT process for the MoJ, using prisoner voices and experiences to critically evaluate the process to construct suggestions for practical changes. These examples demonstrate the diverse range of voices and the construction of narrative seen within literature, all seeking to express an explanation and their reality of imprisonment and incarceration.

Gathering a range of voices is an essential decision made by researchers in this tradition, as it represents an epistemological decision used to inform and construct a multitude of experiences - expressed as one reality. Regardless of methods used, from prison ethnography (Drake et al, 2015; Piche et al, 2014), to specific styles of

questioning like appreciative inquiry (Liebling, 2015; Liebling et al, 1999), all studies are presented as narratives to explain causes of violence, self-harm, and suicide. Narratives are presented with a purposeful subjectivity to establish a political position and to take a side within discourses that exist within this field of study. Indeed, we might characterise the use of voice in the CT through Becker's (1967: 240) notion of side-taking, where researchers take "deep sympathy" on the narratives that they hear within research and then become emotionally engaged and agreeable with these lived experiences. The consequence for this deep sympathy and empathy with the voices in research can often produce side-taking, as researchers attempt to challenge the constructed realities they identified (Liebling, 2001). Authors therefore focus their analysis of these voices by "reflection, deconstruction, moral engagement and sensitivity to possible political consequences" (Liebling, 2001: 482), leading to suggestions to action and to a constructed position on the topic at hand. For example, Sykes' (1958: 78-79) argues that during early stages of imprisonment a prisoners' "picture of himself as a person of value ... begins to waver and grow dim". He states this to construct an explanation of the experience of prisoners, expressing how self-identity changes within prisons, suggesting that "the pains of imprisonment remain and it is imperative that we recognise them, for they provide the energy for the society of captives as a system of action". This particular work utilises voices in a manner to construct a lived reality of the experiences of prisoners, before then advocating and side-taking through reducing the blame of actions and behaviours away from prisoners and instead blaming the pains of imprisonment for providing the motivation for adapted behaviours. Like Sykes, many authors do not present a singular voice within their construction of penal reality, but instead take many views from prisoners, staff, managers, and other stakeholders, narrating these voices as "welded together in an ongoing cumulative search for 'truth'" (Liebling, 2001: 482). In doing so, authors establish a comprehensive reality around explanations of penal experiences, establishing what should be done as a form of action.

Many of these narrations describe the prison experience negatively, expressing how prisoner's self-identity and moral worth is disturbed due to conditions and treatment (Crewe, 2016). They justify the different behaviours that prisoners exhibit through

adaptations of self during imprisonment, particularly at the early periods of incarceration where self-harm and suicide are most common (Crewe et al, 2020). This is evident in Goffman's (1961) explanation of the 'assault' on an individual's moral career, named the 'mortification process' (Burns, 1992; Jacobsen and Kristiansen, 2015). This refers to the period where "the embodiment of the self is profaned" at the early stages of imprisonment (Goffman, 1961: 21). Goffman identifies this experience as a practice which attacks the prisoner's self-identity, suggesting individuals experiencing a civil death when entering a total institution, where their previous self metaphorically dies through the deprivations placed on them (Burns, 1992; Jacobsen and Kristiansen, 2015). To Goffman (1961), this civil death is a result of the degradations experienced through the dispossession of property, role deprivation, and violations of privacy all contributed to pain experienced by prisoners (Burns, 1992; Jacobsen and Kristiansen, 2015). By presenting these experiences, authors begin to set up future explanations for issues like violence, self-harm, and suicide. In this instance, Goffman presents a narrative that is highly relevant to the phenomenon of high suicide rates during early incarceration, providing an explanation to why this is the case, rather than merely identifying newly imprisoned people at risk. This is expressed through the voices and stories of those he encountered during his auto-ethnographic research in prisons.

Sykes (1958) also addresses the experiences of prisoners through discussions of how they are deprived and the subsequent consequence this has for prisoner's lives. Like Goffman, Sykes develops his analysis through observations of and discussions in prisons, using his own voice and analysis to narrate prisoner's experiences (Shammas, 2017). Central to Sykes' (1958) suggestions comes with his framing of how prisoners experience different deprivations, where he acquired the belief that deprivations in prison are synonymous with experiences of pain. Thus, he suggested that behaviour and attitudes in prisons are a result of these pains and that prisoners deprivation of specific elements impacts upon the distress experienced and the behaviours seen in prisons (Shammas, 2017). Sykes noted five deprivations, all of which have a distinctive consequence for different elements of a prisoners life. Each of the deprivations include many different restrictions and neglected features, they are categories of

areas where prisoners feel pain and as a result they are experienced differently and diversely within prisons (Crewe, 2016; Shammass, 2017). They include deprivations of liberty, referring to the nature of confinement and the restrictions placed on prisoners as free citizens; deprivation of autonomy, as prisoners choices are either restricted or rejected; deprivation of security, with prisoners being unable to control and maintain their own safety and having no privacy; deprivations of good and services, referring to the lack of access prisoners have to material and support; and deprivation of heterosexual relationships as access to opposite sexes are restricted due to prisons being separated by gender (Sykes, 1958). Sykes' narration, of these deprivations is important for discussions on violence, self-harm, and suicide as they provide a backdrop to a reality which expresses the distress and pain experienced by prisoners. The alienation that deprivations cause brings forward the propensity for problems to appear. Problems that were symptomatic of the deprivations, which require adaptations in roles, self, and behaviour to ensure that prisoners can cope with institutional confinement (Sykes, 1958; Thomas and Foster, 1973; Crewe, 2016; Crewe et al, 2020). It is these adaptations which provide a location for discussions on causality for violence, self-harm, and suicide. Adaptations made by prisoners could be seen as healthy (education, work, art) or unhealthy (drug-use, violence, self-harm, and suicide), thus leading to behaviours that produce the tendency for prisoners to harm others or themselves (Crewe et al, 2020).

Goffman (1961) and Sykes (1958) are both heavily cited works, demonstrating the narrated voices that authors provide to explain a deprivational model on causality. However, it is important to recognise challenges that appear with these studies and the ability for these to be translated to discussions on violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons across England and Wales. This can be achieved through considering the influence that they produced on contemporary authors, as the theoretical explanations offered in these works are dated, culturally isolated to American prisons, and are ignorant of intersectional experiences of being a prisoner, importantly the differences between gender. This critique is something that has been exposed by many contemporary authors and used to justify their own studies and research (Crewe, et al, 2017; 2020; Crewe, 2011; Shammass, 2017; Haggerty and Bucerius;

Vipond, 2023; Ugelvik, 2014; Warr, 2016; Maycock, 2020). This demonstrated a specific consequence of this characteristic, that studies narrate a specific historical, social, political, intersectional, and penological conditions of a given time. This therefore changes the voice offered within different studies and credits a continual study of prisons alongside contextually different experiences.

Beyond this critique studies have changed how voices are offered, adding greater use of prisoner voice, through quotation, alongside analytical propositions from authors to build a critical narrative to produce newer theorisations of prison deprivation. For example, Crewe (2011) and Crewe et al (2017; 2020) provide this hybrid approach of prisoner voice and research analysis to build a collaborative narrative, utilising models on deprivation to contextualise circumstances across prisons in England and Wales, for both genders and for prisoners serving life sentences. Crewe (2011) conducted qualitative research with prisoners through interviews, leading to his suggestion that deprivations and pains of imprisonment are not as divisional as Sykes suggested, claiming that the feelings of 'depth, weight, and tightness' are concepts that represent experiences. He applies these three terms to offer a metaphorical narration of what prisoners feel during imprisonment, producing a nuanced understanding to their realities. Crewe narrates deprivations through less obvious and clear-cut means than Sykes (1958), developing concepts like depth, weight, and tightness which offer more than one representation of a depriving or constraining experience. Crewe presents this in collaboration with prisoner's voices, using quotes from interviews within his article to build a detailed analysis and theorisation of prisoner experience. He suggests that depth presents a feeling of being "buried way beneath the surface of freedom" or a feeling of distance from civil society (Crewe, 2015: 524). This expresses the distressing distance that prisoners feel from their families, recognising how confinement and incarceration feels at different stages of a sentence, where depth can feel deep during life imprisonment or shallow during remand or before release. Weight is used to refer to the heaviness and lightness of the prison regime, where constraints and regulation provide a weighted feeling, whilst the absence of authority and feeling unsafe represent the lightness. Whereas tightness is used to explain the hard and soft grip offered by the prisons which "suppress them and wrap them up,

smother them and incite them to conduct themselves in particular ways” (Crewe, 2011: 522). Deprivations for Crewe (2015) are therefore not clear cut, they are instead difficult to define and can be of constant change, as the “line between a guiding hand and a stiff, constraining grip is a fine one” (2011: 523), prisoner’s therefore feel like they are walking on eggshells, unaware of when a crack might take place. Crewe’s work here, alongside his work on the gendered pains of imprisonment, provide a conceptual model which utilises a CT, based on gathering and explaining experiences. The importance of such explanation, however, is considered alongside how prisoners react to these experiences, which is why this body of literature is necessary for discussions on violence, self-harm, and suicide.

The literature on deprivations is important for discussion on the three problems as they offer a location to understand the circumstances prisoners experience. The reactions of prisoners to these experiences are important for this thesis. This is because the reaction from prisoners is what leads to violence, self-harm, and suicide, however this is not always a set response, as prisoners adapt in many different ways, with some coping well and some coping poorly. Healthy adaptations, or good ‘copers’, are those who utilise practices that are not self-destructive or harmful, such as creating more contact with family, artwork, literature, music, exercise, or other purposeful activities. Unhealthy adaptations, which Liebling and Ludlow (2016) refers to as ‘poor-copers’ or ‘bad-copers’, fail to react to deprivations through positive outlets, favouring drug use, self-harm, or other negative behaviours like violence, as they react to the feelings of hopelessness and distress during their time in prison. The concept of distress is particularly important within this literature, as this expresses the extreme pain felt by prisoners, leading them to unhealthy adaptations to prisoner life. It is within these experiences of extreme pain which some literature points towards as a causality of violence, self-harm, and suicide.

2.4.2: Generative Mechanisms as Explanations of Causality

Authors within the CT focus on the presentation of explanations through different means and techniques, so that construction of narratives within prison can be understood. However, this also produces the second characteristic seen within the CT,

which is based around how authors form explanations of causality by considering environmental and situational factors that occur within, around, and outside the prison, contributing to understanding causality. This characteristic opposes that seen within the RMT and utilises non-reductionist thinking to explain causality through wider consideration to the prison environment, prisoner's past, and prisoner's social intercourse during their sentence. The characteristic therefore provides generative explanations of causality, this means understanding multiple complex circumstances of prisoners becomes important to explain why violence, self-harm, and suicide emerge during imprisonment (Gergen, 1978). A characteristic that considers causality through a holist lens signifies infinite possible explanations for circumstances to occur within prisons (Verschuren, 2001), as the reduction to just understanding prisoner's individual risk factors is not the central point of contention. Instead, researchers in the CT seek causality from wider social and situational factors, considering environment, carceral geography, relationship in and outside of prison, past experiences of trauma and abuse, experiences of victimhood, and much more as the basis for why prisoners might become violent, hurt or try to kill themselves. Authors in this tradition also look beyond direct experiences of imprisonment to understand these issues, by considering political, economic, and wider social practices as potential locations for explanations. The CT is therefore against the tendencies of successionist and positivist research traditions, moving beyond a cause and effective basis for understanding complex social problems and instead looking towards underlying generative mechanisms which could be hidden or not visible but still operate to specific outcomes (Gergen, 1978; Pawson and Tilley, 1994).

There are examples of this second characteristic seen throughout literature and they propose explanations for why issues of violence, self-harm, and suicide emerge. Liebling (1999) suggested that for suicide in prisons there were multiple social and environmental activities that surround the likelihood of a person attempting suicide, which she determined not through analysis of risk factors, but through understanding the experiences of suicidal prisoners. She identified situational experiences which made it less likely for a person to attempt suicide, such as considering fellow prisoners as friends, asking for help and support, interacting with other prisoners, and engaging in

purposeful activity. Whereas those more likely to attempt suicide are more likely to prefer sharing a cell, consider themselves as alone, identify the prison system as unfair, and who have a fear of other prisoners (Liebling, 1999). Whilst the presentation of this example is offered through ideas of likelihood, it is important to consider as a characteristic of the CT as the use and explanation of social and environmental factors present different outcomes to that seen in the RMT. Indeed, the explanatory nature of attempting suicide gives an understanding to a prison life which could be utilised for intervention strategies yet providing much about the prison experience. Therefore, highlighting how generative explanation of suicide can be used to establish key mechanisms which might otherwise be ignored by the reductivist tendencies seen within RMT.

A trauma informed approach to understanding issues of violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons is another way that authors construct an understanding of causality through a combined model (Armour, 2012). This approach centres on the traumatised histories of prisoners and how past experiences can be seen as a mechanism for understanding how prisoners react to life inside. Trauma experienced by prisoners is diverse, with each case having a different beginning and a different response to imprisonment, for example victims of domestic abuse in women's prisons might then be triggered through interactions with confrontational male staff. Responses to authority can often be shaped by these imported vulnerabilities, such as trauma, which Crewe et al (2017: 1370) demonstrate through a quotation from a prisoner Eileen. ""An officer was pointing at me, and I told him, 'Don't point at me like that, because you're not my dad!' [and] he carried on, so I picked up a stapler and threw it at his head". Eileen's violence demonstrates a combined model of causality, recognising imported vulnerabilities with past trauma which are exacerbated through interactions with others inside prison, both triggering and retraumatising, causing a violent reaction. Crewe et al (2017) highlight early in the article that women's experiences of imprisonment are different to men's due to previous experiences that women have preprison, such as trauma, abuse, and victimisation. The impact of such 'imported' vulnerabilities is recognised throughout literature as having a gendered difference, which Miller and Najavits (2012: 4) recognise through their research

identifying female trauma to manifest through internalised actions, such as “self-harm, eating disorders, addiction, avoidance”, whereas men’s trauma is demonstrated through externalising actions like “violence, substance abuse, crime and hyper-arousal”. These studies present a very specific imported vulnerability for prisoners and recognises that certain vulnerabilities has consequences for prisons if coping or treating trauma is not progressive. Yet, there is evidence of how deprivations in prisons, such as the deprivation of power, autonomy, and control (Crewe et al, 2017) can exacerbate previous trauma, suggesting a combined model to explain reactions to imprisonment with violence and self-harm.

The trauma experienced by prisoners is not only something that is imported, as many situational experiences within prison can result in traumatic events, which in turn lead towards further reaction and cause for behaviours. As mentioned, authors within the CT (such as Crewe, 2011; Crewe et al, 2020) recognise that the pains and deprivations of imprisonment can be seen as a causative mechanism for adaptive behaviours within prisons. Indeed, the cultural and environmental experiences of prisons can be mechanisms alone – as they provide the energy for traumatising events to occur through prisoner-on-prisoner violence. Wooldredge (2020: 167) explains that prison “cultures develop as a means to adaptation and are defined by their unique belief systems, stratification systems, economies, and languages”. Such cultural development leaves a breeding ground for conflicting interactions around “informal market systems” (Goffman, 1961: 57), “hostility to external targets”, and “fraternization” and “bond formation of a more differentiating kind” such as gang membership or subgroup formation (Goffman, 1961: 59). Such a cultural environment has also been identified within literature on prison masculinity, where Maguire (2021) recognises how early interactions in prison can often produce a hostile and threatening environment, embedding the undertone of violence within daily cultural life in prison. Maguire (2021: 150) talks through the narratives of a few prisoners who were subject to the ‘trainer test’ and ‘window test’ whereby prisoners already embedded into prison culture attempt to present new prisoners as “being naive and weak, including the recitation of nursery rhymes”. Such displays of masculine hostility provide further opportunity for traumatising experiences within prisons, leaving

prisoners to adapt with violence due to the threats placed on them early within a sentence. Understanding interaction within the sociology of imprisonment is therefore an essential contribution seen by the CT, as it helps to establish wider causative mechanisms around violent behaviour and the need for adaptation.

Furthermore, in-prison mechanisms associated with violence can be seen in literature on drug use, particularly with the more contemporary issue of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS or Spice) seen within prisons in England and Wales since 2008/2009 (CJJI, 2017). Drug use and drug misuse in prisons has often been identified as an ever-present spectre within prison literature, often associated with death (through overdose) and violence within prisons worldwide (Bryne and Hummer, 2007; Userveice, 2016; Mason et al, 2022). However, consuming the drug is not just a causative mechanism for violence within prisons, with many discussing how the rise of specific drugs in prisons brings around issues of debt, bullying and violence (CJJI, 2017). The market for Spice creates a pseudo-market within prisons, with prisoners acknowledging the consequences of such markets appearing. Within a Userveice (2016: 31) study, one prisoner discussed spice as “a new crack cocaine. New class A drug, and obviously the value is going to go up on it when they ban it this year. It will go up in value, more buyers, price will go up, violence will increase cause you can’t afford it” (Prisoner in Userveice, 2016: 31). The procreative tendency of drugs like spice goes beyond a causative mechanism for violence, with the CJJI (2017) claiming that the resulting consequences of debt and bullying can also lead to prisons resorting to self-harm or suicide due to the emotional pressure that bullying can cause within prisons. Such acknowledgement of widespread causes of violence, self-harm, and suicide further demonstrate how the CT can be seen to produce complex and nuanced understanding around causality of the issues. With the research in this field not limiting or reducing behaviours and actions, like drug-use, as variables to only be considered through data analysis and comparative studies. Instead, the CT allows a wider generative view to appear so that cultural, relational, and hidden explanations for causality can emerge within research.

The range of studies that present generative mechanism underlying violence, self-harm, and suicide are extensive, far too expansive and nuanced to discuss in full within this chapter. Indeed, this section has highlighted situational mechanism of suicide, imported trauma, masculine cultures, and drug-use, to demonstrate this characteristic of CT. However, this section has only scratched the surface of the many causative explanations that are written on violence, self-harm, and suicide. Yet, this tradition establishes a rich body of knowledge on the voices gathered and the analysis that has been achieved to demonstrate how experiences within prison provide ample opportunity for hidden mechanisms and invisible pressure. However, what is noticeable is that these generative explanations of causality have motivated interventions to appear within prisons to contend with the mechanisms that appear around violence, self-harm, and suicide. This can be noted by the work of Trauma-Informed Practice (TIP) within the female prison estate, where training has been provided to staff to encourage changes in the response that they have to prisoner's actions and behaviours. Such an approach utilises TIP as a lens for understanding behaviour, which seeks to comprehend individual's past experiences, previous social status, and setting to construct a compassionate response from staff and officers (Covington, 2015; Jewkes et al, 2019). Such an approach rejects quantifiable, atomised, and reductive understandings of behaviour, and seeks to ensure that "practice is sensitive to trauma and adopts, as a minimum standard" (Vaswani and Paul, 2019: 514) which can "go a long way toward creating an environment conducive to rehabilitation and staff and institutional safety" (Miller and Najavits, 2012: 6). TIP is only one example of interventions that take place based on the literature surrounding generative mechanisms to understand causality. However, what can be seen with TIP is the extent to which the lessons identified in literature have been constructed into workable interventions, supporting changing environments within prisons through staff training and the construction of quality marks to support custodial and community organisations to achieving a trauma informed organisation (OST, 2020; Bradley, 2020).

TIP has had a particular focus on operationalisation from theory to policy and practice, where authors like Covington (2015) have led the field in establishing how a TIP can

look for organisations. She states that TIP can be based around five key areas of focus: safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration, and empowerment. Each area provides opportunity for interpersonal, as well as organisational adaptations, to penal practice. For example, with the area of safety Covington (2014) argues can become trauma-informed through recognising the importance of key interpersonal skills of eye contact, consistency, and providing explanations for actions alongside organisational policy and procedure around the reporting of abuse. The same can be seen within other key areas that Covington (2015) addresses, seeing trustworthiness around interpersonal modelling and clear task setting; choice around individual control and seeking informed consent; collaboration by allowing individuals to have input to their recovery journey; and empowerment through teaching skills and supporting success. This demonstrates a practice that seeks to establish change to both individual experiences and organisational ethos, by building a compassionate and understanding culture that does not seek to treat the trauma but to create “an environment in which trauma is not exacerbated or becomes an impediment” (Vaswani and Paul, 2019). The implementation of TIP across criminal justice and community rehabilitation organisations has led the charity One Small Thing (2020) to establish a ‘Trauma Quality Mark’ as a strategy of recognising TIP within services and to support development in all areas of organisational growth. One Small Thing (2020) and Bradley (2020) have created a three-tier system to recognising the extent an organisation can be seen as doing trauma work, with a bronze award being suggestive of an organisation having awareness of the trauma of its service-users and that organisations have plans in place to work towards implementing TIP. The silver award demonstrating TIP “implemented across culture, practice and environment within an organisation. Individual needs and well-being are prioritised” and a gold award referring to Trauma responsive practice which is seen through “extensive and embedded trauma informed working practices” (One Small Thing, 2020). This operationalisation of trauma-informed lenses into practices within organisations and criminal justice agencies demonstrates the extent to which the CT can lead towards practical outcomes through the development of generative models to understand the causes of violence, self-harm, and suicide. In the case of TIP this has been seen to be extended through multidisciplinary knowledge construction before then being applied through a set of values, guidelines, and

strategies to support organisational change so that services can be offered with compassion, without impeding the purposes of the service.

2.4.3: Socio-political and Historic Constructions of Causality

The final characteristic of the CT is that literature is used to construct explanations of violence, self-harm, and suicide based on the specific socio-political and historic context of events in time and space. Thus, literature can be utilised as a snapshot of specific realities of lived experiences within given time periods, providing opportunity to highlight policy change (Annison, 2018), specific political impact on prisons (Skinns, 2016), and the wider history of prison experiences (Morris and Rothman, 1998; Garland, 2001; 1990; 1985). In providing context on specific events or time periods, literature within the CT can construct explanations of causality that go beyond a timeless description of why violence, self-harm, and suicide might occur and instead build discussions to address why the socio-political or historical context of the time can be the cause of these issues. For example, Wooldredge (2020) provides an historical analysis of violence in prison, detailing how time periods provide a different explanation for what changes emerged around violence in prison. Within this analysis he suggests that gang membership both within and outside of the prison have emerged and changed the causes of violence, recognising that the shifting organisation and practices of gangs in society are likewise causing new issues of violence and intimidation in American prisons (Wooldredge, 2020). Literature of this nature therefore constructs an understanding of penal life in collaboration with wider phenomena, issues, or politics within a given time. In doing so, authors are able to identify what specific events do to the reality of prison life and how this experience can explain the causes of violence, self-harm, and suicide.

A strong example of this can be seen within recent history, where authors considered and directed attention to the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic had on the experiences of imprisonment and the subsequent consequences this had on violence, self-harm, and suicide. The start of the national pandemic saw radical changes to prison regimes, with daily activities being restricted and reduced to time in cells – thus in effect causing most of the prison population to live in solitary confinement, which

is defined by spending more than 22 hours a day without meaningful human contact for more than 15 consecutive days (Userve, 2022). Many authors (Kay, 2020; Suhomlinova et al, 2021; Bradley and Davis, 2020; Schliehe et al, 2022) have addressed extensively how these lived experiences effected daily life within prisons, discussing new pains of imprisonment, challenges to engaging in education and rehabilitative activity, and to how these experienced changed the space and shape of punishment. Alongside these issues was the underlying challenges that have been seen within prisons over the years leading to the pandemic, with issues of overcrowding, underfunding, and poor access to health services being seen within prisons (Kay, 2020). This made the likelihood of serious outbreak of Covid-19 more likely to spread due to the environmental, structural, and organisation of prisons, movement in prisons and the spread of communicable diseases (Kay, 2020; Suhomlinova et al 2021; HMCIP, 2021). Prisoners were also subject to restrictions in activities that would otherwise support their wellbeing and which would be supporting of preventing excessive issues with mental health. During the pandemic prisoners were restricted to cells, meaning that education, rehabilitative activity, exercise, offender management work, counselling and therapeutic interventions, visits from friends and family, and paid work all had to be either suspended or practiced in isolation to reduce the spread of infection (Bradley and Davis, 2020; Kay, 2020; Suhomlinova et al 2021).

The changing circumstances in prison also affected violence, self-harm, and suicide, with trends in data appearing to see reductions in all three areas. Statistically there were reductions, with Safer in Custody statistics (HMPPS and MoJ, 2021) demonstrating this through the statistics below.

There were 79 apparent self-inflicted deaths in the 12 months to March 2021, a decrease of 4% from 82 self-inflicted deaths in the previous 12 months.

In the 12 months to December 2020, there were 55,542 reported incidents of self-harm (a rate of 691 per 1,000 prisoners), down 13% from the previous 12 months. On a quarterly basis, the number of incidents in the three months to December 2020 decreased by 8% from the previous quarter, from 14,166 to 12,969 incidents.

In the 12 months to December 2020, there were 21,489 assault incidents, a 34% decrease from the previous 12 months. Of these 2,328 were serious assaults, down by 39%. Rates of assault and serious assault per 1,000 prisoners decreased to a similar extent, by 32% and 37% respectively.

The statistics were surprising to some authors, with Hewson et al. (2021) suggesting hypothetical benefits of the lockdown experiences for prisoners, which decrease the 'usual' range of mental health problems. They (Hewson et al., 2021) argued three changes to imprisonment that they used to determine the above; firstly, that spending more time in cells reduced intimidating behaviour between prisoners, with reductions in toxic interactions, bullying, and violence resulting in fewer issues with mental health. Secondly, that drug use and abuse had decreased due to further restrictions to contact, where the authors suggest that this could be supportive in the reduction of self-harm. Finally, Hewson et al. (2021) claim that prisons had anticipated the likelihood for negative experiences during lockdown periods and created strategies to prevent consequences of mental health and self-harm. The suggestions would present a positive reaction to the nature of imprisonment, but these arguments were constructed without any voices of prisoners, but instead based on reflections to the data that was provided by HMPPS. Hewson et al. (2020: 132), however, recognise that it is "difficult to establish causality" within these suggestions of benefits – drawing an ill-informed and assuming approach to addressing the experiences of imprisonment during Covid-19.

Other studies around this time period demonstrate significantly different realities to that expressed by Hewson et al. (2021), providing critique of the suggested benefits through engagement with prisoners during a similar time period. For example, Userveice (2022: 11) addressed the 'myth of violence reduction', suggesting that the changing regime during Covid-19 saw a shift in the practices of violence, away from physical attacks to "verbal bullying and coercion, and some felt that the lockdown exacerbated the risk of violent outbreaks or 'rioting'". This is furthered by over half of their sample "(54%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that 'most people welcomed the lockdown because it has reduced violence and bullying'; only 22% agreed with this

view.” (Userveice, 2022: 11). In connection to drug use, both Userveice (2022) and HMCIP (2021) addressed how many prisoners saw an mixed views on the level of drugs seen within prisons, with “more than a quarter (28%) of survey respondents thought that illegal drug use had increased during the lockdown, whereas a roughly equal number (25%) argued that levels of drug use had largely stayed the same, and 11% thought there had been a decline in drug consumption” (Userveice, 2022: 120). HMCIP (2021: 12) also claimed that whilst drugs did reduce, this had “driven up demand and increased in prisons, which in turn increased the risk of prisoners getting into greater debt”. These suggestions present an alternative view to that of Hewson et al. (2021), indeed claiming that the repercussions of pricing and demand could be a contributing factor in wider issues of violence, self-harm, and suicide. Furthermore, many authors recognised the increasing negative experiences and pains that emerged during the time of the pandemic, with prolonged reductions to education and rehabilitative activity (Bradley and Davis, 2020), further pains of imprisonment around the management and practices of protection seen within HMPPS (Suhomlinova et al, 2021), and the pains and challenges identified around the access and struggles that the pandemic brought towards seeing family and children (HMCIP, 2021). The narratives offered with the above explanations to the experiences of prisoners during the Covid-19 pandemic demonstrate the extent to which authors construct their realities of specific socio-political and historic events as a method of explaining causality. Demonstrating that the characteristic of the CT utilises different strategies and constructions to understand and address specific socio-political and historical experiences.

2.5: Critiques of a Constructivist Tradition

As discussed earlier, the nature of ‘voice’ within CTs produces an opportunity to deliver and collaborate a number of voices to construct the reality that authors put forward. In opposition to the reductionist nature of the RMT, it could be suggested that the CT has the tendency for authors to be selective and reductionist, or a mix. The selective nature of analysis is important to consider, as within any given research project an author cannot utilise all claims that come from participants voices, but

instead offers selective practices through coding to draw out what they determine to be the most important to establish their construction of reality. This is an important feature of qualitative research, which appears as a commonality within this tradition, with Mason (1998: 75) suggesting that “you will inevitably be operating in a way which both is selective and uses a particular perspective” when conducting analysis of qualitative data. Thus, it is expected that the quotations and voices that are presented within analysis are selective based on the view of reality that the author wishes to put forward – importantly here this is difficult to determine how this is influenced by the participants voices as the analytical strategy researchers employ might require and be based on specific selective datasets, as is often the case with CDA (Fairclough, 2010) and Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (Sharp and Richardson, 2001). Indeed, as a reader “we’ve assumed an empirical reality in which those words exist as brute data independent of the interpretive desires of the data “collector”” (Pierre and Jackson, 2017: 716). As a result of the selective tendency within constructivist traditions it becomes important to recognise the diverse range of realities that can be presented within this tradition, where some gain greater traction than others when addressing the causes of particular problems.

The issue with selection is the tendency for research to fall into positions where their claims produce conflicting accounts of the same issue that other researchers have produced, or even leading researchers to produce serious errors within their claims (Collier and Mahoney, 1996). The selective nature of voices therefore produces a researcher focused sensitivity to the problems under study, where wider factors might not be recognised or considered due to the goal of an author to produce a supportive argument in their area of their choosing (Liebling, 2001). This can produce a wider issue when generalising experiences to others, for example Crewe et al’s (2017) research on the Gendered Pains of Imprisonment demonstrated the inability to generalise the pains experienced from the male prison population to the female population, as both groups expressed significantly different experiences and deprivations through their experiences. Thus, the generalisation of theories and suggestions from literature are important to consider, particularly when looking at the explanations around causes of violence, self-harm, and suicide as there is no definitive

strategy or mechanism through which authors can have absolute confidence in their claims being true – instead they can only present their constructed reality on the issues.

Selectivity within this tradition provides challenges in producing problem-solving on the issues of violence, self-harm and suicide in prisons, as omissions in the wider factors or variables that can be included within the causes of the problems. Such omissions can emerge due to the complexity of producing generative or holistic explanations for the causes of the problems, as no one explanation can be suited to each case, each individual or each prison due to the countless opportunities that exists for differences. As a result, the nuanced nature of these constructions is often critiqued when considering specific implementation methods. For example, interventions to bring TIP into prisons have been accused of being “‘fashionable’ or ‘faddish’; a well-intentioned new initiative that, in the context of the reality of imprisonment, can never be more than ‘window-dressing’” (Jewkes et al, 2019: 2). Such critique is based on a different construction of the realities of interventions, which poke holes in the planned practical realities that can reduce the success of TIP. Further critique likewise demonstrates that nuanced position that TIP provides, suggesting other holistic challenges where authors believe TIP rejects, or neglects, to consider with the idea of implementation.

“The very function and purpose of prison places it at odds with TIP from the outset, and this tension between care and control was evident throughout accounts by staff of the work that they do. The tangible artefacts of the prison, such as the staff uniforms with a clear military or police influence (‘white shirts’), or the physical built environment (barbed wire, bars on windows) tend to emphasise the control element of custody” (Vaswani and Paul, 2019: 528-529).

“It is not enough for prison staff to speak a trauma-sensitive language, or even engage in trauma-informed practice, if it is not fully embedded in the prison’s culture, fabric and design philosophy. When implemented in unsuitable or even dangerous trauma-generating environments, a trauma-informed mode of engagement may be of no greater value than a disregard for imprisoned women’s complex histories and biographies.” (Jewkes et al, 2019: 13).

The critiques offered demonstrate the extent to which particular generative interventions can be seen as problematic for imprisonment. With the above

addressing how TIP can be contradictory to the nature of imprisonment and how the level of change required for this to be effective make an intervention difficult to achieve as it requires too large a scale of change and reform. Importantly, the CT will always provide opportunity for alternative debate, discussion, and framing of prison reality to be able to provide anything definitive or concrete. Indeed, the tradition is itself a politics of ideas housing different schools of thought and debate which are difficult to unify under an appreciation for one objective reality, as this does not exist within this traditions' foundations.

2.6: Conclusion

The epistemological traditions presented within this chapter offer a separation of literature on violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons, recognising that authors usually fit into one of two categories the RMT or the CT. I separate the two traditions to acknowledge how research and discourses within the field of literature are constructed, developed, and presented. This chapter can conclude that these two traditions demonstrate a tension and disagree within the literature on how research on violence, self-harm, and suicide should be done and what conclusions should be drawn from these studies. The RMT has been seen to be based on developing methods and tools to identify prevalence of violence, self-harm, and suicide. Literature within the RMT does this through taking a profiling and psychological approach to understanding the three problems, seeking characteristics of prisoner populations to establish specific risk factors that can be used to guide and form interventions. This particular tradition has seen a rise in popularity within the last 30 years, many drawing out explanations for why penal modernisation has shifted to a risk-based analysis rather than an analysis focused on care, compassion, and recovery (Garland, 2001; 2017). These different approaches suggest divergence on the interventions needed to tackle the problems of violence, self-harm, and suicide, thus producing disagreement. The CT is oppositional to the RMT, as the central tendencies of this tradition are grounded in a sociological understanding of causality, where the development of theories and explanations of penal reality are the forefront of research. The CT utilises

voices of prisoners and researchers to identify lived experiences and the construction of a reality, in doing so authors begin to identify theoretical lines through which behaviour and actions in prison can be understood. I addressed how the CT can be further separated through three models within the sociology of imprisonment, with the importation, deprivation and combined models used to establish and narrate specific causes to problems and experiences prisoners face.

The traditions outlined in this chapter are important in establishing individual positions on the nature of causality, producing schools of thought which favour researchers positions and ground their studies and arguments on these positionalities. Indeed, this study is no different and CDA has often been associated with a starting point of a research taking a strong position throughout the analysis (van Dijk, 2018). This study is located within the CT as it seeks to understand and explain the causes of violence, self-harm, and suicide. This study takes this position for two reasons. First, I am critical of the RMT due to the tendency for this approach to ignore the wider nuanced experiences of prisons within their studies. This creates the inability to establish a variable as being the cause of such personal issues like violence, self-harm, and suicide. I argue this attempts to significantly reduce the human condition within distressing human actions. Secondly, this study is positioned within the CT due to the ability to be generative in how compassion, empathy, and human experience can be expressed. Arguing that through the voices of participants, issues can be presented with important nuance that allows researchers and others to consider strategies of prevention. Without the voices of prisoners, research is void of the true experience and emotion attached to violence, self-harm, and suicide. Likewise, the use of generative explanations of causality provide opportunity for nuanced human experiences to be addressed, which I argue cannot be done through a quantitative basis of research. Furthermore, my position on the traditions likewise connects with how I think violence, self-harm, and suicide should be contented with by politicians and prison managers. As I argue that one of the central causes of these issues lays with the institute and organisation of prisons and penal life, and without reform or change to penal life then these experiences will be forever present.

In understanding these traditions and my position on them, this chapter supports the development of this study. It supports with the analysis done on the corpora for this study, bringing out key discursive positions on violence, self-harm, and suicide which are identified and seen within the following chapters. Importantly, this chapter set the contentious nature of these problems within the prison setting. However, before analysis can be done, more background is needed to understand the actors and agents that this study focuses on, who are indeed the individuals who likewise favour and take a position within the traditions that have been explained in this chapter.

Chapter Three: The Organisation of Prison Accountability Frameworks

3.1: Introduction

Recognising the different epistemological traditions around violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons demonstrates the varied approaches that actors have when attempting to understand and reduce the problems. This chapter takes a different approach by exploring the actors who are central in the regulation of prisons, to establish how relationships and practices form the organisation of prison accountability. This informs an understanding of who informs and drives actions on violence, self-harm, and suicide in prison and who provides accountability for those who make decisions. In particular this chapter details the organisation of accountability applied through His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP), the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO), and the Independent Monitoring Board (IMB), alongside the political organisation of prison management, such as the Secretary of State for Justice (SoSfJ) and His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). Exploring these bodies and organisations underpins the central aim of this study, and the construction of a comparative CDA on violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons. This chapter considers the structure and organisation of these groups, to recognise their agency in decision making and engaging change. Furthermore, by considering their relationship and location within the organisation of prison accountability this chapter understands the positions of power that these actors hold. As Garland (2001: 24) suggests "the consciousness of these actors – the categories and styles of reasoning with which they think and the values and sensibilities that guide their choices – is therefore a key element in the production of change and the reproduction of routine". Therefore, this chapter reflects on literature that exists around the organisation of prison accountability.

Whilst this study focuses on HMIP and political stakeholders, this chapter includes wider literature on actors involved in prison accountability, situating HMIP and politicians within a wider network of organisations who seek to make those accountable who have the decision making authority within prisons, such as the PPO and the IMB. Accountability and legitimacy are significant in shaping the relationships within this network, as different organisations seek to strengthen their claims, enabling them to hold others to account. However, the claims from different organisations need to be seen as legitimate, built around robust processes of rigour and evidence. Therefore, tracing the defined relationships between HMIP and the political stakeholders is essential to identify relational strains and conflict. This network of relationships and accountability holds the context for the analysis within this study, as the discourses in discussion are circulated by these organisations. One challenge that emerges with this approach is that the relationship between HMIP and politicians has received limited academic attention. Most of the literature on HMIP has been developed by previous HMCIPs, those who worked in prison management and those who develop the roles, powers, and responsibility of HMIP in line with international human rights protocol (Hardwick, 2016; Owers, 2010; 2009; Bennett, 2014). This leaves something of a void on offering a critical perspectives on these organisations, barring a few exceptions (e.g. Padfield, 2017; Liebling and Arnold, 2004; Morgan, 1985; Shute, 2013a). Other commentators agree that HMIPs work supports a unique outlook on the realities of prison treatment and conditions (Liebling and Arnold, 2004; Woodall and Freeman, 2019; Harding, 2006; Van Zyl Smit, 2010). The limited critical literature on HMIP therefore make it necessary to explore their relationship and practices in much more detail.

A critical perspective on this literature is essential for this study, as the principal aim of the thesis is to establish HMIPs discursive position on violence, self-harm and suicide and analyse why these positions remain marginal within state penology in England and Wales. To achieve this, the chapter begins by outlining the main actors engaged in the accountability frameworks for prisons, HMIP, PPO, and IMB, before locating them within wider political organisational structures. Subsequently, I look more closely at the role that inspection plays in the delivery of public services in

England and Wales, drawing on three theoretical positions by Davis and Martin (2008) that justify the purpose and provision that inspectorates have in public and criminal justice services. The chapter then turns to explaining the nuanced provision of prison inspection, addressing their legislative powers and responsibilities, organisational make-up, and design of inspection practice. This is important to form a starting point for CDA to be completed in subsequent chapters, as this produces an account of the “properties of social interaction” (van Dijk, 2015: 467) that exist between HMIP and their political counterparts, and how this is organised, carried, and reproduced (Harding, 2019; van Dijk, 1997). Therefore, this chapter provides a comprehensive review of the existing literature relating to prison inspection but also a contextual backdrop for the CDA conducted for this thesis.

3.2: Tripartite Model of Prison Accountability Framework

One strategy for understanding the framework for prison accountability is to consider the three main organisations responsible for holding others to account for the safety and acceptable running of prisons. Behan and Kirkham (2016) call this the tripartite model of prison accountability, which includes the delivery of inspection (His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Prisons), monitoring (Independent Monitoring Board), and complaints handling (Prison and Probation Ombudsman). Together, they provide a framework which support the procedural fairness and human rights associated with prisoners, such as the European Prison Rules 2006, the UN Standard Minimum Rules for Treatment of Prisoners 2015 (the Mandela Rules), and the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention Against Torture or Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT) (Behan and Kirkham, 2016; Bennett, 2014; Hardwick, 2016; Padfield, 2017). The strong connection to human rights leads to Owers (2010: 1536-1537) suggesting that the tripartite model can be seen as an “interlocking system of independent administrative protection of prisoners’ rights, designed to be preventive and proactive, as well as to expose and deal with abuse or malpractice”. A heavy burden is therefore placed on this accountability framework in maintaining these values. Behan and Kirkham (2016) state that they exist as agents for prisoner voice, neutrality,

and/or independence; to consider treatment, respect and dignity in prisons. This makes the three bodies agents to increase legitimacy in prison authorities (Padfield, 2017).

A visualisation for these groups in connection to political organisation structures can be seen from figure 5 below, taken from *Prison Safety, and Reform* (MoJ, 2016a: 16), and although now dated it still represents the most accurate relationships held between these agents, with current practice now having different names, for example National Offender Management Service (NOMS) no longer exists and has been replaced by HMPPS since 2016.

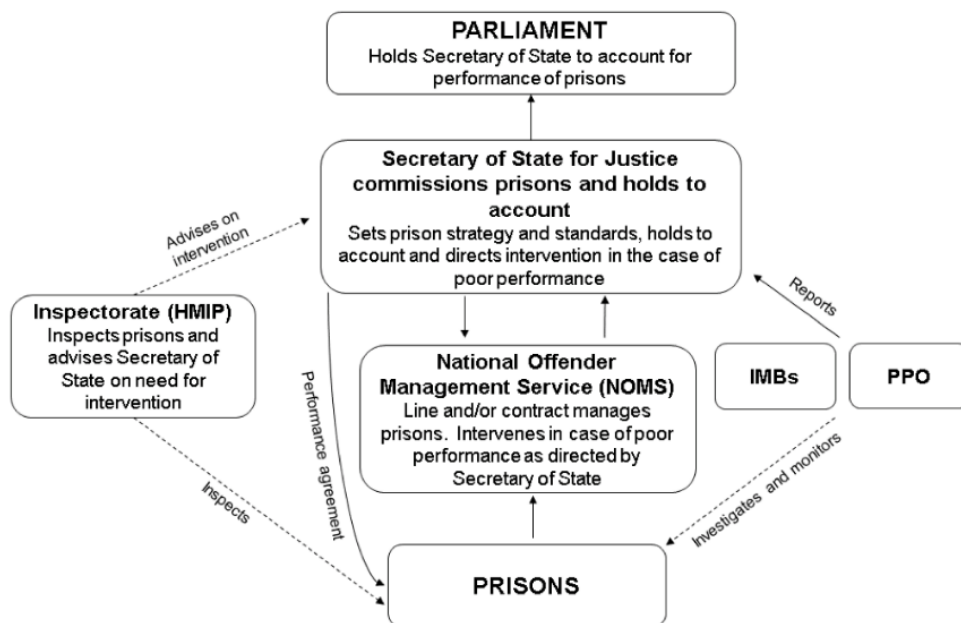


Figure 5: Reformed Prison Structure from *Prison Safety and Reform* (MoJ, 2016a: 16).

In this structure the separation of HMIP from the IMB and the PPO, with HMIPs function identified as inspecting and advising on interventions, and IMBs and PPOs function with investigation, monitoring and reporting to the SoSfJ. The advisory function of HMIP to the SoSfJ indicates the limits of HMIP's reporting, providing opportunity to offer suggestions for action, rather than HMIP having the authority to determine action to the SoSfJ (Padfield, 2017). As Pollitt (2003: 157) outlines "advice can seldom take the form of universal statements of what should be done",

demonstrating the inability of HMIP to determine action and directly change the treatment and conditions of imprisonment. This demonstrates that political actors have dominance in the process of decision making and policy construction. With HMIP's role based on inspection by offering independent scrutiny of treatment and conditions in prisons (Behan and Kirkham, 2016; Bennett, 2014; Hardwick, 2016; Liebling and Arnold, 2004), albeit scrutiny that is limited to advisory capacity, with no power of enforcement.

Comparatively, the IMB and PPO are placed on the right side of figure 5, maintaining different relationships to the SoSfJ and having a different role with HMPPS. The IMB have monitoring responsibilities in prison, and unlike HMIP they do this continuously with members of their board attending the prison daily. Each prison has its own board which includes a collection of volunteers amongst local citizens, members are provided formal training, but are left to be autonomous for their role (Behan and Kirkham, 2016; Hardwick, 2016; Owers, 2010). IMB's main aim is to ensure humanity and fairness within prisons and they are involved with issues such as loss of property, education, purposeful activity, resettlement, and witnessing prison adjudications. Board members observe and report on essential features within prisons such as food, kitchen quality, segregation, healthcare, alongside speaking to staff and prisoners to judge on fairness within these areas (IMB, 2019). Each board submits a monthly report to the Governor of the prison, who can respond and discuss findings with members. IMB also submit an annual report to their secretariat who submits a collated and summarised annual report to the SoSfJ (IMB, 2019). The PPO are another body that are independent from HMPPS and government officials, dealing with complaints that cannot be resolved by the prison Governor or which have exhausted internal complaints procedures (Behan and Kirkham, 2016; Owers, 2010). The PPO are tasked to investigate the complaint and then report findings and recommendations; however, there is no requirement for the prison to uphold what is recommended, but they are usually supported by the prison (Owers, 2010). The PPO also investigate deaths in custody, a statutory responsibility set by the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), under article 2 which states a procedural duty to investigate all deaths within state care (ECHR, 2010). Investigation and monitoring therefore feature

as the main purposes of the IMB and PPO, resulting in different agency when in collaboration with the SoSfJ and prisons.

HMIP are tasked to inspect and advise the SoSfJ and custodial services on many institutions, as they are not limited to prisons within their responsibilities. They are also responsible for other forms of custody across England and Wales; with Scotland and Northern Ireland having their own inspectorate (Raine, 2008; Shute, 2013b; Harding, 2006). HMIP are therefore responsible for the inspection of “prisons, Young Offender Institutes (YOIs), Secure Training Centres (STCs), Immigration Removal Centres (IRCs), police and court custody suites, customs custody fatalities and military detention” (HMIP, 2020b). Below is a table with information about each type of custody that HMIP inspect, and the number of people held in that institute.

Institution	People in Custody	Numbers of people in custody, number of cells, and throughput
Prisons	Men and women over the age of 18	87,901- 27/10/23 (MoJ, 2023a)
Young Offenders Institutions (YOIs)	Children under 18	409 (HoC, 2022)
Secure Training Centres	Holding children aged 12 to 18, joint with Ofsted.	94 (HoC, 2022)
Immigration Detention Facilities	Those subject to immigration control, awaiting permission to enter, or awaiting deportation or removal. Included short-term holding facilities for migrants arriving across the English Channel.	People entering detention = 3,734 People in detention = 1,591 People leaving detention = 3,187
Court Custody Suites	Custody facilities within all courts in England and Wales	252 cells across England and Wales Throughput = 28,722 detainees (HMIP, 2021)
Customs Custody Facilities	Charter flight removal	35 cells Throughput = 557 (HMIP, 2017b)
Military Detention	HM Armed Forces Service Custody Facilities and Military Corrective Training Centres.	Service Custody Facilities: Cells (single, or three person) = 39 Throughput = 120 detainees In Military Corrective Training = 33 men (HMIP, 2022a)

Figure 6: Institutions that HMIP have responsibility to inspect, with numbers of those in custody, cells, and throughput (MoJ, 2023a; HoC, 2022; Home Office, 2023; HMIP, 2021; HMIP, 2017b; HMIP, 2022a).

For all of these establishments HMIP offer judgments of the quality of conditions and treatment, offering recommendations for actions that are provided to both the Governor or manager of the establishment and the SoSfJ, through their advisory role in the organisation of prison accountability (HMIP, 2019b). Whilst their remit is large and expansive with different types of custody, this study is only focusing on the inspection of adult prisons; this chapter too will be exclusively set around this.

Agents of the tripartite model of accountability represent an interlocking collective through inspection, monitoring, and investigations of prisons, providing opportunities to recognise issues that emerge within prisons (Behan and Kirkman, 2016; Owers, 2010). However, whether they can be preventative and proactive, in terms of tackling issues, is difficult to decipher, due to the limited roles they play in reporting and advising to 'political masters' (Shute, 2013a). This produces opportunities for political masters to either ignore their claims, as it could be counter to policy initiatives, or that advice can be mobilised by different political parties – with some following and agreeing, and others mobilising them for political arguments. I argue that HMIP offer a different level of accountability from that seen with the PPO and IMB, that Harding (2006) identifies as 'standing accountability agency'. By this Harding refers to the limited capacity of the PPO and IMB to constitute and impact on the prison. This suggests that these processes mostly work on complaints and build no case law, are often seen as the prisoner's last resort and often lead to a cynicism amongst feeling to the prisoners (Harding, 2006). In comparison, HMIP have the 'advisory' role when dealing with prison accountability, which provides prospects for HMIP to hold ministers to account around aspects of the prison environment, without HMIP being constrained by complaints and procedural fairness (Harding, 2006). However, defining the key role inspection plays within prison is further complicated by comparison to other public service inspectorates.

3.3: Theories on Public Service Inspection

To explore the organisation of prison accountability frameworks this section explains how literature addresses the commonalities, differences, and theoretical principles that underline the varied practices of inspectorates across the public sector (Davis and Martin, 2005). This body of literature characterises a wider sociological use of inspection for public services, such as education and skills, government services, social care, health services, and criminal justice agencies. I use this body of literature as a background to understanding the organisation of prison accountability frameworks and the role that HMIP play within the political management of prisons. However, the challenge with addressing all public service inspectorates together is that it cannot distinguish the nuances of each inspectorate – as each have different roles, practices, methods of conducting and reporting, legislative and administrative agreements with political counterparts. Therefore, a more specific account of prison inspection will be required following this section.

Public service inspection has a long history. They often existed as administratively agreed roles, which refers to a practice of ministers agreeing for a group to conduct inspection, rather than having any legislative powers and responsibilities derived through law (Davis and Martin, 2005). The history of Prison Inspection is associated with penal reformer John Howard who in 1777, with agreement from Parliament, published a report on *The State of Prisons* after lengthy visits to all gaols, prisons and bridewells across England (Howard, 1929, Hardwick, 2016; Shute, 2013a; Stockdale, 1983). Since then, prison inspection has existed in different guises, until legislative changes in the Criminal Justice Act 1982 (CJA) established the formal role, responsibilities, and ‘powers’ for a chief inspector. Other bodies of public service inspection have emerged since, with the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) in 1992 and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in 2009, both examples of newer models of inspectorates which have replaced older forms of inspection on education and health, these inspectorates also have a role within prisons, monitoring health and education (Lee and Fitz, 1997; Davis and Martin, 2005; Morgan, 2004).

The development of inspection of public services have been suggested to have developed through the values of accountability, a focus on raising standards, and practicing auditing (Davis and Martin, 2005). This created a practice for inspectorates, which Morgan (2004: 81) suggests

“have a variety of functions – public interest accountability, giving independent advice to Ministers, identifying good and bad practice, driving up performance, safeguarding the interests of the customers, users, and other beneficiaries of services, and so on”.

Morgan’s characterisation of HMI Probation demonstrates a similar style of public service inspection which Davis and Martin (2008) suggests recognises that administration of the public service is at the forefront of inspection. Many other authors identify these characteristics as being associated with New Public Management (NPM) (Boin et al., 2006; Dunleavy and Hood, 1994; Schedler and Proeller, 2002). Dunleavy and Hood (1994: 9) explain this change through five key areas, first is through alternative forms of budgeting with a focus on transparency, the second is by reframing organisations as “a network of contracts linking incentives to performance”, third, constructing quasi-markets or quasi-contractual forms to replace combined process for provisions, fourth increasing competition between agencies, and finally to produce opportunity for choice of providers more easily. These five areas of change indicate a shift towards an adoption of NPM within public services. Inspection can therefore be seen as a key element of NPM and has been theorised as such by Davis and Martin (2008). They identify three approaches to public service inspection; a traditional approach based on quality assurance, an approach to encourage quality assurance and improvements, and as a surrogate for competition. These approaches provide a model for understanding the role that inspection plays within public services at that time, considering their roles and contributions.

The first model of inspection, which Davis and Martin (2008) refer to as a ‘traditional’ approach, characterises inspection as a part of a quality assurance process, with inspectorates offering scrutiny over practices seen within public services. As independent checkers, inspectorates are used to ensure accountability for the public

and can be “regarded as the fourth arm of governance, one which straddles and is embedded in each of the principal arms” (Grace, 2005: 577). The principal arms that Grace (2005) describes are the executive, legislative and judicial arms which form the foundation for all public services as they constitute and maintain the management, procedure and justice offered. For Grace (2005), inspection is instrumental in checking and assuring practices within services so that quality is monitored and bodies are held accountable. Owers (2009), former HMCIP, views prison inspection in the same way, suggesting that the role of prison inspectorates is to act as a bridge between what she calls the ‘virtual prison’ and ‘actual prison’. The ‘virtual prison’ is the bureaucratic managerial view, which is a data driven or an experience laden viewpoint, for example this might be prison Governor’s having their own discourse on the management of a prison, but a discourse which assumes that certain successes exist, which in fact do not (Hardwick, 2016; Owers, 2009; 2010; Bennett, 2014). Inspectorates, therefore, provide an alternative view to public services managers and can be used to allow the ‘arms of governance’ to bridge between the virtual to the actual service (Owers, 2009). The ‘actual public service’ is the interpretation that inspectorates construct through data they gather and is provided so that support, critique or acknowledgement of good practice can be shared between managers and the ministers in control, in the aim of increasing quality (Hardwick, 2016; Owers, 2009). The ‘actual prison’ in this instance is valued by authors like Owers (2009) and Hardwick (2016), demonstrating the view and value that previous chief inspectors pay to this style of public service inspection. The role played by inspectorates therefore supports Grace’s (2005) description of inspection being a fourth arm of governance as this can be used to help the work of managers, support legislative and policy development, and ensure that rights are maintained in the outcomes of the service.

The traditional model takes the assumption that inspectorates build an entirely valid interpretation of an institution through their methodology of inspection; something that has been challenged in relation to prison inspection (Liebling, 2004; Padfield, 2017). The methodologies used in public service inspection are different based on the setting, for prison this involves surveys, data analysis, interviews and/or focus groups with prisoners, prison staff and managers, as well as continuous observations

(Bennett, 2014; HMIP, 2017a). A challenge with discussing HMIPs methodology is the limited exploration offered by penological and policy research, as “little has been written on the effectiveness of prison monitoring, especially in the academic literature, and empirical studies are even rarer” (Padfield, 2017: 1). Indeed, few authors have offered a critical examination of HMIPs inspection methodology, with no current studies existing that test the reliability of prison inspection, yet this is seen for other public services inspectorates (Liebling and Arnold, 2004; Boyd et al, 2017). In comparison, the CQC, which inspects hospitals and healthcare providers, include observations and engagements with staff and patients, one-to-one interviews or focus groups with different professional or occupational groups, informal record audits and pathway tracking (Walshe et al, 2014). The inspections by CQC have also been subjected to academic evaluation (Boyd et al, 2017; Walshe et al: 2014), which has identified that the reliability of inspections is largely dependent on subjective assessments of inspections, leading to training being provided to support greater consistency between inspectors to build reliable findings (Boyd et al, 2017). However published evaluations of a similar vein to health inspection are not present for prisons and are necessary in order to justify whether HMIP offer the level of quality assurance that this first model assumes as a feature of public services inspection (Padfield, 2017).

A second model offered by Davis and Martin (2008) and Kelly (2003) characterises inspection as having a dual role in providing quality assurance and supporting quality improvement. Whilst this model still offers assurance, it is different to the traditional model in that guaranteeing and developing the quality of the service is seen at the core of inspection practice. Assurance, for Kelly (2003), is seen by identifying if a public service is working to a minimum standard, requiring judgements based on criteria that are used to observe the quality of services. As there is no standardised strategy or criteria which can be used across all public services, they are contextually different. However, there are some shared standards, such as those establishing through human rights legislation, for example those institutes that have the authority to hold people in custody; police, prisons, courts and hospitals (OPCAT, 2002). This is a common model of inspection and is aimed at providing quality assessments to the general public and to identify any areas where improvements are made, which could be

argued to support voting during election processes, where MPs might use suggestions of improvement to build their own political capital (Davis and Martin, 2008).

An example of this model can be seen through the common judgement offered to Schools and Further Education Colleges by Ofsted. Ofsted use their own defined standards to judge the quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, personal development, leadership and management, which informs the inspection framework used to determine the quality of education provided (Ofsted, 2019). They announce their judgement to the public by using a specific term that establishes their position within criteria such as '1-outstanding', '2-good', '3-requires improvement' and '4-inadequate' (Hollingsworth et al, 1998; Ofsted, 2019). Recent changes to Ofsted have also seen alterations to their judgement practice, as a result of public critique following the suicide of a Head-teacher. Ofsted judgements are now given thematically based on four areas of their inspection: "quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, personal development and leadership & management" (Gov, 2024), a similar practice seen within HMIP. This model of inspection also acknowledges that to produce and judge public services there is an essential role played by the inspectorate in maintaining the criteria which the service is being judged by. This is so inspectorates target audiences can be informed about the quality of the service, supporting informed decisions on enhancement and improvements. Therefore, inspectorates criteria are used to ensure relevance and safeguard standardised methodologies which are used to gather findings to make judgements on quality and improvements, to supporting parents exercise choice of school (Hollingsworth et al, 1998). For example, there are four inspection themes offered by HMIP when inspecting a prison which is designed to gather evidence and information on their set criteria, titled *Expectations*, which has been built around the 'healthy prison' test, identifying safety, respect, purposeful activity, and rehabilitation and release planning during their inspections and reporting (HMIP, 2017a; Hardwick, 2016).

The generation of criteria and methodologies are different for each public service. Some inspectorates work closely with their political counterparts, such as health and education, and other such as prisons producing them independently with greater

distance (Hardwick, 2016). Furthermore, the different legislative requirements impact on how criteria are produced, dependent on whether standards are provided through legal or legislative means (Davis and Martin, 2008). The criteria also connects to other areas of legislation that go beyond local and national governments. For example, HMIP are also guided by human rights legislation with OPCAT featuring widely within prison inspection. OPCAT is seen through HMIP's criteria, (2017a:4) and said to be "designed to promote treatment and conditions in detention which at least meet recognised international human rights standards". Establishing criteria that follows legislative means allows inspectorates to justify their claims when providing a graded judgment. Further, a criteria-based judgement can be used instrumentally to influence change on an institute, to drive up standards and guide improvements. This can be achieved through altering or adapting the criteria used for inspection, requiring practical and institutional changes from the service. However, it is important to note that inspection can only influence such development rather than demand it as public services are connected and controlled by political means, providing no authority for inspectorates to demand change or prescribe it (Davis and Martin, 2008). This is achieved by modifying the criteria set by inspectorates, adapting the minimum standard slowly over time to change the expectations of the service (Kelly, 2003). Davis and Martin (2008) therefore claim that standards do not always directly affect or change policy but instead promote improvements to practice within the service.

The third model offered by Davis and Martin (2008) describes how inspection of services can be used as a surrogate for competition. Some public services are limited in their ability to be incorporated within the free market, due to their national or governmental regulation, resulting in a lack of competition which is seen elsewhere. Accordingly, this view of inspection is that in their capacity to be 'independent' or 'autonomous' there is the possibility to encourage innovative thinking within these services to substitute the pressures companies use for improvement of services (Davis and Martin, 2008). Benchmarking is an important quality assurance tool to consider with this model, as it can be understood to build a systematic process of evaluation between services, processes of measuring services and practice, continuous innovation of practices to be the leading competitor in the service, and a process to

identify best practice through self-evaluation (Wolfram Cox et al, 1997). Benchmarking processes utilises the independence of public sector inspectorates providing surrogacy for the otherwise free market, this practice also implements the free market values of competition being more cost effective and of high quality (Bundred, 2005). Inspection is therefore suggested to provide these contests for public services, (Davis and Martin, 2008). This model is particularly supported by free marketeers who believe that professionals in public services are more likely to be motivated according to their own egoism, rather than focusing on the public interest or the interest of those consuming services (Shefer and Liebling, 2008; Le Grand, 2007). For example, those in private markets have been forced into competition to win consumers to their product, if they are not successful, they are then encouraged to engage in new market research to make their product or service a higher quality than the others (Davis and Martin, 2008).

A market orientated focus, or a surrogate market, is not new to public services as many operate in a manner that allows parts of their services to be filled by private companies to tender their services. Thus, creating quasi-markets or areas of privatisation that generate the competition which can be identified in both HMPPS and the National Health Service (NHS) (Propper, 2012). The NHS is one such public service that has allowed a quasi-market ethos, which is intended to create “competition between suppliers [which] will encourage efficiency and raise quality...increasing choice will meet consumer demands for a more personalised service” (Propper, 2012: 33). However not all public services have the potential to include such market orientated ideals, for example within prisons there is privatisation, but this does not offer an alternative ‘product’ to prisoners but instead allows management of a prison in the hands of a contractor, usually the company Group 4 Securicor (G4S) (Alonso and Andrews, 2016). Private prisons are often organised around ““DCFM [design, construct, finance and manage] contracts”” which “leave the private contractor with the onus of putting together a business consortium to cover the whole range of activities which go into turning a green-field site into an operational prison” (Harding, 1997: 12), however, the practice and rules within these private prisons are still controlled centrally. With private prisons, quality is often

discussed as being at two ends of the spectrum, with Crewe and Liebling (2018) highlighting that they do not provide the competition as previously suggested. However, as a result of DCFM private prisons have the potential to run with less staff due to their purpose-built design and more efficient technology to manage offenders (Vipond, 2023; Hargreaves and Ludlow, 2020). The adoption of the inspectorate as a surrogate for this style of competition is often considered essential, in particular for prisons, where privatisation has led to, from 2010 at least, “serious failures in standards of treatment” (Jacobsen and Hough, 2018: 185) noting that although privatised, there is still only the focus on DCFM and not on the services offered within. Padfield (2017) suggests that the increasingly prevalent values of privatisation and competition in prisons make it challenging for inspection, as differentiated practices, processes, and outcomes do not provide a clear and equal field for inspection, requiring strategies from HMIP to increase surrogacy in competition whilst being surrounded by diverse practices.

The three models offered by Davis and Martin (2008) represent some of the main characteristics that are theoretically recognised as part of public sector inspection, identifying shared practices of scrutiny as the third arm of governance, quality assurance and improvement, and a surrogate for competition. Encountering these theories is useful in establishing a starting point to public service inspection, yet they do not provide the nuanced practices and experiences seen around specific inspectorates for certain public services. Despite many similarities between public sector Inspectorates, the contextualised difference each services offers is essential to unpack in order to characterise each inspection, their relationships with politicians, public services, service users, and in playing a role in public accountability. Davis and Martin (2008) acknowledge that there are differences between public services inspectorates and that these differences are products of progressive development and utilisation that each service has had, acknowledging the development of inspectorates through specific events or public scandals – as with other developments on criminal justice policy (Garland, 2001). For example, health and social care are given far greater political focus and concentration than punishment and prisons as this is directly affected by the public’s desires and values (Lacey, 2008; Pratt, 2007;

Hardwick, 2016). For prisons, the historical and legislative development has a long history and can be traced back to the origin of prisons as a form of punishment (see Stockdale, 1983), however, understanding the construction of the current prison inspectorate only requires discussion since the Criminal Justice Act 1982, which introduced the role of the Chief Inspector as a legislative duty.

Inspection of the criminal justice system in England and Wales includes four main bodies and a joint inspectorate, including HMI Prisons, HMI of the Constabulary, HMI of Probation, and HM Crown Prosecution Inspectorate, and the Criminal Justice Joint Inspectorate (Raine, 2008). Each inspectorate has different practices and a focus on their own institution within the criminal justice system, however collaboration does exist in specific cases and themes which transgress just one inspectorate, such as HMIP Prisons and HMI Probation conducting a joint thematic review of Indeterminate Sentences for Public Protection (2010) and lifers (1999), which allowed a holistic inspection of practices seen within prisons, through the gates and within the community (Shute, 2013b). Likewise, Chief Inspectors from across the criminal justice system also participate in the Criminal Justice Chief Inspectors Group (CJCIG), which was established in 1999 to support joint working through sharing knowledge, practice and findings to support cooperation, and to acknowledge any similar issues that appear in their individual inspections (Shute, 2013b). However, there has been pressure in the past that encouraged a merger between these different inspectorates, to build a Joint Inspector Unit, an initiative supported heavily by the New Labour government in the Police and Justice Act 2006. Through attempts to bring around multi-agency working (Vipond, 2023; King and Willmott, 2022). However, this was rejected due to the fears that this would turn, or reduce, the inspectorate into smaller groups, with Shute (2013b) claiming that HMI Prisons were concerned that the focus on prisons could be lost or blurred alongside the constabulary or courts. Since then, criminal justice inspectorates have maintained their independence, alongside occasional joint inspections.

3.4: Prison Inspection and Legislative Responsibilities

Understanding the models of inspection supports recognising commonalities in the practices seen across public sector services, such as having the potential to influence and promote development, alongside quality checking and forming a basis for public accountability. Yet, the challenge of applying these models comes with the diverse range of services that they characterise, with individual inspectorates having vastly different practices with their “political masters” (Shute, 2013a). As mentioned above, Prison Inspection can be seen within a tripartite model of accountability, where HMIP are seen to have an advisory role to the SoSfJ. The specific political relationship and interaction that HMIP has requires more detail, as questions emerge around the power of the inspectorate, what reactions they can expect from their reports, and how they can hold prisons and the government to account are yet to be addressed. In establishing an explanation around the relationship that prison inspection has with politics it is important to understand the legislative formation of prison inspection. The formalisation of prison inspection arrived within the CJA 1982, which was the first formal legislation to require a HMCIP, with earlier practices having no clear legislative foundation (Shute, 2013a). Those who write on the development of prison inspection (Shute, 2013a; Morgan, 1985; Hardwick, 2016; Stockdale, 1983) agree the Mountbatten Report (1966), which focused on prison escapees, and the House of Commons Expenditure Committee (May Committee) (1978), on the pressures of the prison system, are the two reports which influenced the legislative formation of prison inspection.

The Mountbatten Report (1966) emerged from the escapee scandal during the 1960s, when several escapes brought strong media attention and public concern, most notably George Blake - a soviet spy who escaped from Woodworm Scrubs in 1966 (Soothill, 2013: 45). Blake’s escape was one of many, with 29 escapes in 1955, and 114 escapes in 1961 (Priestley, 1989: 181). The Home Office sanctioned the report to establish three areas for improvement; (1) to address issues of security, (2) to address punitive arrangements, and (3) to address issues resulting from modernisation and dated structural buildings being used by the Prison Service (Klare, 1968). Following

investigation, Mountbatten called for strengthening prison inspection, seeing value in establishing a formalised independent body who

should go far beyond inspection and involve command and leadership functions as well as responsibility for advising the Home Secretary on all professional matters... to get first-hand reports on the morale of the Prison Service, the progress in developments of all kinds, and information on any major problems unresolved (Mountbatten, 1966: Para 251).

Mountbatten's (1966) suggestions were centred on the values of political engagement, leadership, and quality assurance. He recommended a close political connection that recognises the responsibilities of the inspector as an essential feature in prison management to encourage quality assurance, something Grace (2005) suggests is a main quality of public service inspection (Mountbatten, 1966; Shute, 2013a). Mountbatten suggested that there should be newly appointed managers and an 'Inspector-General' who would be tasked with bridging the need of the Prison Service with managers ensuring consistency and 'effective penal conditions' to prevent escape and ensure consistency of punishment (Hardwick, 2016).

Alongside Mountbatten (1966) the May Committee (1978) presented the need for a legislated inspectorate to benefit the prison system. Their report, titled *Reduction of Pressure on the Prison System*, was set to consider reform of the prison service by informing future practice and policy on a range of areas of the prison estate. Within these reforms they suggested that the inspectorate should be provided with a form of independence from the Prison Department (now HMPPS) and placed within the Home Office, so that some distance from 'political masters' could be made between prison managers. The committee argued that this would enable HMIP to have some autonomy to produce more robust conclusions about the state of prisons (Shute, 2013a; Morgan, 1985; Hardwick, 2016; Stockdale, 1983). The May Committee further rationalised this need by claiming that "such an office did exist before the nationalisation of the prisons in 1877 and until then played a very significant part in shaping the policy and regulating the administration of our prisons" (House of Commons, 1978: 176). The Home Office were not initially in support of the

recommendations set by the May Committee (1978), particularly with the idea of prison inspection being removed from Parliamentary and the Prison Board's control. In response to this the May committee commented that

We accept that in both theory and practice no inspection can be independent of Parliament, and thus generally cannot be independent of government: we also accept that in theory and practice no inspection carried out by a member of the Home Office can be independent of that government department nor thus of a prison service which also forms part of it (May Committee, 1978: 95)

The Committee's justifications were clear, they wanted to establish the inspectorate with as much distance from the Prison Board as possible, whilst still using the Home Office as a source of funding and resource (Stockdale, 1983). They also acknowledged that this was an impossibility due to the nature of the inspection being proposed; which was set around three types of inspection; efficiency audits, propriety audits, and investigations of grievances (Stockdale, 1983). Such inspection practices would then lead towards a heavy focus on quality assurance (Grace, 2005) and taking on much of the role conducted by the PPO, where audit and complaints would be dedicated to managerialist values rather than public accountability. The topic of distance in the May Committee also presented prison inspectorates as having a unique position in the organisation of prison management, as the report proposed the complex position of the inspectorate being included in the Home Office and the Prison Service. However, Hardwick (2016) rationalises independence by suggesting that because prisons are centralised and controlled by ministers, political interests could impact on the quality of inspection and thus reduce the quality of their findings, a view shared by the May Committee (1979). However, there are debates about the nature of independence for inspection, with many arguing that the distance established between the inspectorate and the government might not allow for effective change due to inspectorates having different standards and criteria that might otherwise conflict with political policy or initiatives (Stockdale, 1983; Hardwick, 2016; Morgan, 1985, Shute, 2013a). Padfield (2017: 2) goes so far as to suggest that "'independence' is not necessarily a driver of effective monitoring: too much 'independence' can mean a body is isolated and ineffective". However, the suggestion for independence was

taken by the Home Office which brought forward changes in legislation to implement the inspectorate into statute.

Debates about the necessity of the role of Chief Inspectorate of Prisons was answered through the CJA 1982, which formalised the role as well as providing the responsibilities and the relationship between HMIP and their political masters (Shute, 2013a). The act established the HMCIP to be centred around three key duties: to organise, to conduct, and to report on prisons in England and Wales. Shute's (2013a) assessment of this legislative development recognises that the act limits only duties and responsibilities to the Chief Inspector, providing them with no powers evident alongside the role, such as to enforce or demand action by politicians or prison managers. Instead, all power resides with the SoS, who has the authority to instruct on specific matters for inspection, present findings to Parliament, and to determine the 'salary and allowances' for the Chief Inspector. The references in full are:

1. Her Majesty may appoint a person to be Chief Inspector of Prisons.
2. It shall be the duty of the Chief Inspector to inspect or arrange for the inspection of prisons in England and Wales and to report to the Secretary of State on them.
3. The Chief Inspector shall in particular report to the Secretary of State on the treatment of prisoners and conditions in prisons.
4. The Secretary of State may refer specific matters connected with prisons in England and Wales and prisoners in them to the Chief Inspector and direct him to report on them.
5. The Chief Inspector shall in each year submit to the Secretary of State a report in such form as the Secretary of State may direct, and the Secretary of State shall lay a copy of that report before Parliament.
6. The Chief Inspector shall be paid such salary and allowances as the Secretary of State may with the consent of the Treasury determine.

(CJA, 1982, c. 57)

The CJA 1982 offers a vague overview for HMIP to follow, providing no specific information on how or what inspection should focus on beyond 'treatment of prisoners and conditions' in prisons. This leaves much open for interpretation and Hardwick (2016) explains that the terms are, in practice, interpreted differently by each HMCIP. This can be connected to the relationship that the Chief Inspector has

with the SoS, opening space for contradictory views on what should be seen as the standards of 'treatment and conditions' in prison, perhaps providing scope for contradiction, disagreement, and conflict in competing interpretations. The relationship between HMCIP and the SoS is also based around practices of 'reporting', with no reference made to the advisory role highlighted earlier (MoJ, 2016a). This restricts the legislative standing of HMIP.

HMIP have also seen the incorporation of Human Rights legislation into their responsibilities and powers. This incorporation came in 2005 with the adoption of OPCAT, a convention that forms as a preventative Human Rights mechanism, with principles based on independent inspection of any persons who are deprived of liberty in an attempt to avert potential degrading treatment (OPCAT, 2002). According to Hardwick (2016) there are two main features that OPCAT brings to prisons; firstly, there is recognition of those prisoners who are particularly vulnerable, such as those with mental health issues, disabilities or other protected characteristics. Secondly, it recognises the role that inspection can play in preventing rights abuses, as continuous monitoring and judgement of these institutions can, in theory, identify potential issues that might lead to problems in the future (Hardwick, 2016). The adoption of this convention has national requirements which further support the purpose of inspection for prisons, as it requires all nation-states to establish, designate or maintain visiting bodies for prevention of abuses set out in OPCAT. It also requires all states to strengthen the protection of persons against torture once visits are done and recommendations are made (Hardwick, 2016; OPCAT, 2002). Those visiting places where people are held who are deprived of liberty are referred to as National Preventative Mechanisms (NPMs), there are 20 within the UK (HMIP, 2017b). By implementing OPCAT, nation states require the use of NPMs to support the preventions of abuse and there are sets of requirements given to relevant bodies. The requirements include i) being independent with autonomous personnel, ii) a range of experts, genders, and representation from different ethnicities, and iii) that they are provided with resources needed to complete the task of inspection (HMIP, 2017b). Such requirements have been encouraged in an attempt to sustain NPMs in a position where there are not issues with interpretation of institutes and where personal bias

can be overlooked and were strengthening for all individuals can be represented (Hardwick, 2016). The responsibilities offered to NPMs are similar to the terms already held by HMIP. Adding powers of entering and accessing all places of detention, making recommendations to relevant governmental authorities whereby the state is required to act, submitting proposals and evaluations of current or developing legislation, having private interviews with prisoners, having access to all information about persons in detention, and having all information collected regarded as privileged (HMIP, 2017b). The implementation of such protocol further reinforces HMIP into statute, with OPCAT offering further clarification to the role and powers than previously seen in the CJA 1982.

Further legislative development was attempted in the proposed Prisons and Courts Bill 2017 (HC Bill, 170). However, this was withdrawn at committee stage on 20th June 2017 due to the dissolution of Parliament (Parliament, 2020). The bill, which was to be the first legislative change to effect prisons since the CJA 1982, proposed a significant update for the role of HMCIP and body of HMIP, bringing more detail to the duties and powers of the prison inspectorate. There were 10 significant changes that the bill (HC Bill 170) proposed, which set out clearly the powers and practices that HMCIP and HMIP were to have as well as how the SoS must respond to these powers (HMCIP, 2020).

1. The bill was to establish HMIP within legislature, identifying them as a body of accountability, alongside HMCIP.
2. With those who make up the HMIP staff being given the same “functions” as HMCIP.
3. The power to begin an Urgent Notification Process (UNP) was brought forward, giving HMCIP the power to require the SoS to act around a particular establishment that HMCIP or HMIP have deemed in need of urgent intervention.
4. HMCIP were given certification from the courts to obstruct with the UNP.
5. The bill brought in OPCAT into the legislative responsibility of HMCIP.
6. Allow HMCIP and HMIP to inspect ‘prison vehicles’ or those vehicles used to detain prisoners.
7. Established a relationship between HMCIP and the Lord Chief Justice, who had to give consent to HMCIP to use their powers.
8. HMCIP was also expected to consider the effectiveness of leadership of the Governor, Director of Prison, Prison Officers and any other they see as relevant. Expanding the inspection remit beyond ‘treatment and conditions’.
9. The SoS was required to publish a response to any recommendations made within HMCIP and HMIP reports within the 90 days after the publication of the report.

10. The SoS was required to respond to Urgent Notifications within 28 days of the publication of the notification, within this response actions must be set around the need for the urgent notification.

The above indicates a broadening of legislation, which positioned HMCIP and HMIP to recognise a wider body for prison inspection, a body which would have held powers to intervene with prisons who they deem require urgent political intervention. The points above also situated clear powers and responsibilities that would have rearranged the relationship between prison inspection and the SoS - focused on the Urgent Notification Process (UNPs) and requirements for recommendations from HMIP to be addressed and responded to by political controllers of prisons. The proposed bill would also have sought to establish a report and recall strategy between HMIP and the SoS, which would not only provide greater evidence of discussion, but would impose action from the SoS over the inspections from HMIP which is something not evident with current legislative arrangements. The reforms proposed in the Prisons and Courts Bill 2017 have yet to be tabled again for further consideration, possibly due to other political challenges, not least Brexit, COVID-19, the cost-of-living crisis, and a General Election.

3.5: Organise, Conduct, and Report: HMIP inside Prisons in England and Wales

The legislative relationship between HMIP and political stakeholders is limited due to a lack of new legislation, leaving gaps in structures of responsibility and authority that could strengthen practices of inspection. Despite administrative agreements and withdrawn Bills which offer this development, HMIP remain limited by their terms of engagement set out in the CJA 1982. However, there are challenges that exist around this role and questions need to be asked around the legitimacy of HMIPs reporting and recommendation setting – as they have the autonomy and independence to choose their own strategies and approaches to reporting on treatment and conditions. The practices of prison inspection are therefore important to consider for this study, as without recognition of their practices, procedures, and processes,

assumptions would have been made during this CDA (van Dijk, 2015). Beyond CDA, there are other critical questions that need to be asked around the use of prison inspection. Legitimacy of inspection needs to be critically considered to unpack the debate on independence. As discussed earlier, the arguments surrounding this produce opportunities for inspection to be of higher quality due to the lack of political control over inspection (Hardwick, 2016), or leading to a body which is “isolated and ineffective” (Padfield, 2017: 2). There is an impossibility to determine which position holds more truth in the context of independence, but without more detailed evaluation this cannot be achieved. However, critically assessing how HMIP organise, conduct, and report on their inspections of prisons allows opportunities to analyse how HMIP legitimise, rationalise, and promote their practices as trustworthy, worthy of public and political attention, a theme of questioning that is seen throughout my thesis.

3.5.1: Organising Inspection

A significant feature of the development of HMIP and in their plans to organise inspection comes with the construction of set criteria that they use in their judgements. Providing criteria shows prisons and political stakeholders the expectations on quality standards, supporting HMIP legitimising their reports with judgments appearing from formalised criteria. HMIPs criteria was developed by the fourth HMCIP, from 1995 to 2001, Sir David Ramsbotham. Ramsbotham is often characterised as a leading figure in the changing practice of HMIP (Hardwick, 2016; Shute, 2013a; Harding, 2006). Such characterisations draw on his determination and reactive attitude for wanting to expose poor prison management (Shute, 2013a). Hardwick (2016: 644) goes further when discussing Ramsbotham, crediting him with bringing in the “the age of heroic inspection”, crediting the changes he produced to inspection practice. Ramsbotham had provided his own account of his experiences of the role of HMCIP in his book *Prisongate: The Shocking State of Britain's Prisons and the Need for Visionary Change* (2003) reflecting on the experiences and relationship with the then SoS, Michael Howard. Yet these accounts focus on personalities and

shift attention away from the developments to increase the legitimacy and credibility of prison inspection. Furthermore, they present a discourse which seems to suggest that change for HMIP lay in the capacity of one individual rather than an account to address others who were involved with developing inspection criteria, something which Annison (2018) notes as an approach often taken to discuss penal policy. With the above in mind, focus on Ramsbotham's legacy should not be attached to his passion and dedication to an unjust prison experience, but instead to how change was organised and negotiated. It is clear to see that change during this period was essential, and without change, current practices over criteria and independence would not exist.

The inspection of HMP Holloway was particularly important to HMIP, as it was seen as a catalytic event for changing inspection practice (Hardwick, 2016; Shute, 2013a). Ramsbotham's (2003: 4-5) own reflections highlight this.

“The story that they [the inspection team] told me ... was almost unbelievable. They had investigated all the concerns ... and found them to be entirely justified and extremely accurately presented... they were puzzled as to why neither ministers nor the Prison Service appeared to have investigated or responded to them. The team's immediate conclusion was that they have never seen a worse situation ... and did not know what to do about it.”

The reaction to the treatment and conditions at Holloway exposed an issue with the legislative terms of HMIP, that the CJA 1982 provided no duty or responsibility for the SoS to respond to the inspectorate's concerns. The resulting conflict of this case warranted the appointment of a Select Committee to investigate the management of prisons and to establish how to correct the concerns presented (Hardwick, 2016). The committee, chaired by Lord Laming on *Modernising the Management of the Prison Service* (2000), set five main themes for their inquiry: blocks to effective performance, systems of delivery, setting standards, levels of accountability and the role of the community (Laming, 2000). The committee highlighted several challenges seen within prison management which were filtering into wider issues, including matters around health, training, and education. However, Laming (2000: 22) raised concerns around how inspection was conducted, suggesting that “until recently... Governors

complained that they did not know the basis upon which their establishments were being judged. Understandably, this resulted in a sense of ambush and disgruntlement". In response, HMIP proposed to publish criteria for inspections so that all prison staff and managers, as well as the SoS, could be aware of the measures they would be judged against during inspections, this was published within HMCIP report 2001 (Ramsbotham, 2003). HMIP developed criteria as a published set of *Expectations* (HMCIP, 2001). Laming's committee strongly suggested that HMIP and the Prison Service develop a "set of standards determined jointly... these standards should enable the totality of a prison's functions to be evaluated using an evidence-based approach" (Laming, 2000: 23). This joint venture was not taken as a recommendation, with Ramsbotham (2003: 218) believing that the two services worked on separate agendas and should remain doing so; with inspection focusing on "treatment and conditions" while the Prison Service focused upon "compliance with rules and regulations ... a myriad of targets and performance indicators". This reinforced Ramsbotham's value on distance between HMIP and the government, resulting in HMIP generating their *Expectations* document independently. Establishing independent criteria for inspection provided HMIP the opportunity to set their values of inspection around outcomes on treatment and conditions, rather than procedure and audit – seen as the responsibility of the Prison Service and therefore disconnected to HMIPs legislative responsibilities (Ramsbotham, 2003).

By developing inspection criteria with a focus on treatment and conditions, HMIP made the decision to theme areas of their inspections. This concluded in what HMIP refer to as the 'healthy prison test' which summarises the prison's 'health' and bases judgements on four thematic areas (Laming, 2000; Hardwick, 2016; Bennett, 2014). Other public service inspectorates also provide thematic strategies to their inspection criteria (Davis and Martin, 2008); such as Ofsted who provide 'strategic priorities' which are based on the roles and responsibilities for education inspection set out by the Education and Inspection Act 2006 (Ofsted, 2022; 2024). However, HMIP have a different legislative make-up, providing them the opportunity to construct their criteria independently along narrower and vaguer conditions. The resulting thematic separation of their inspection criteria, summarised in figure 7, demonstrates the

separation and focal points of their inspections. Four areas were selected for the healthy prisons test and whilst there have been some changes to clarify terminology, the core theme of each term remains the same (HMCIP, 2020). They include safety, respect, purposeful activity, and preparing for release. These themes were, according to Ramsbotham (2003), universally accepted as the correct standards as they covered the areas experienced by prisoners. The ‘health’ of the prison is therefore judged by inspection on the four areas influenced through the Woolf Report (1990) which were to prevent prisoners escaping, prevent prisoners being disruptive, to treat prisoners with humanity and fairness and to prepare for release.

Test	Description (HMIP, 2020; Padfield, 2017; Hardwick, 2016)
Safety	Ensuring that all prisoners are held in safe environments, with focus given to prisons who are more vulnerable, such as those who self-harm or attempt suicide.
Respect	Based around the treatment of prisoners and their interactions with staff and other prisoners. This is a test for human dignity.
Purposeful Activity	Considered how time is spent in prison and the ability for prisoners to engage in beneficial activities. This is to test whether prisoners are engaged in activities that will benefit them.
Rehabilitation and Release Planning	To assess the support offered to prisoners in maintaining family connections and to promote desistance from crime upon release into the community.

Figure 7: The ‘Healthy’ Prison Test (HMIP, 2020a; Padfield, 2017)

Authors have highlighted that the ‘Healthy Prison Test’ provides a vital structure to prison inspection, allowing for accuracy in reporting and consistency in HMIP’s approach to providing judgements (Liebling and Arnold, 2004; Bennett, 2014). Thus, allowing inspectors to focus on specific areas during inspection and during reporting (Hardwick, 2016; Bennett, 2014). Padfield (2017: 7) goes further stating that “for the outsider, they provide fascinating glimpses inside the prison. But... it is difficult to comment on the ‘effectiveness’ of these inspections”. Whilst debate around effectiveness of prison inspection stand, we can see that HMIP consider their thematic

testing of prisons to be of value, they argue it allows for prevention of maltreatment and to demonstrate positive features of imprisonment (HMIP, 1999). Since the launch of *Expectations* (2001) different editions have been published to build on lessons learnt from inspections and through thematic reviews, to contextualise the different forms of imprisonment and custody that HMIP inspect. As it currently stands there have been five versions of the male prison criteria, with the latest published in 2017; and for female prisons the first version came into practice in 2014 (HMIP, 2017b; 2014). The justifications for having gendered criteria are widely connected to the distinctive experiences, treatment, and conditions that differentiate the male and female prison estate. Indeed, there is wide range of penological literature that contextualise these differences and calls for a gender-responsive approach to imprisonment (PHE, 2018; Bloom et al, 2004; Corston, 2007; Women in Prison, 2017; Covington et al, 2008; Miller and Najavits, 2012; Crewe et al, 2017).

To date the literature on HMIP (Padfield, 2017; Bennett, 2014; Hardwick, 2016) has provided little in terms of explaining and evaluating inspection criteria, with no studies offering critique to their design, content, or effectiveness. Indeed, the layout and organisation of *Expectations* will have practical circumstances on the practice of prison inspection. To consider HMIPs *Expectations*, I accessed two documents for male prisons (HMIP, 2017a) and female prisons (HMIP, 2014) to consider the style and layout of the documents. The initial break down of the criteria can be seen in the separation of criterion into different 'expectations', totalling 100 for men and 123 for women. Each 'expectation' is thematically organised within the 'Healthy Prison Test' and presented as general themes; the wording of which can be characterised as lacking detail and not having enough information to inform specific inspection practices. For example, expectation 20 for male prisons is "Safe outcomes for prisoners are supported by effective leadership and management" (HMCIP, 2017: 15). Expectations in this style are not SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely), but themed so that more specific 'indicators' can be used to make a judgement on each expectation.

Indicators used are comparatively distant to the expectations highlighted above. They offer the unambiguous and specific points of criteria that HMIP consider during their inspections. Certain indicators are specific, directing inspectors to access specific information or ask certain questions during their visits; for example, “Prisoners who wish to begin gender reassignment are permitted to live permanently in their chosen gender identity and can access appropriate medical and other specialist support” (HMIP, 2017a: 27); requiring specific questioning or evidence for inspectors to ascertain. Other indicators are more nuanced, requiring judgments that are subjective, for example, “Prisoners are meaningfully occupied during induction and are allocated regime activity swiftly” (HMIP, 2017a: 7). Within this example the measure of ‘meaningfully occupied’ could be approached differently by each inspector, indeed this could be the case of prison staff and prisoners. Whilst there are some visible differences in the linguistic construction of indicators, little has been done in terms of evaluation of these documents; with limited discussion offered which tend to focus on a descriptive account of indicators, rather than evaluation (Hardwick, 2016; Liebling and Arnold, 2004; Harding, 2006). Evaluation of this sort is necessary when considering the number of indicators that appear in each document; with male prisons (see figure 8) having 745 indicators for England and 770 for Wales (due to different educational indicators); for women’s prisons (see figure 9) there are 874 indicators with an additional 44 for specialist units.

Breakdown of Indicators in HMIP <i>Expectations</i> for Male Prisons 2017 - Version 5		
Overall, 100 Expectations broken down into 4 main sections.	816	745 (England) 770 (Wales)
Safety		159 Indicators
Early days in custody	25	
Encouraging Positive Behaviour	61	
Security	28	
Safeguarding	37	
Leadership and Management of Safety	8	
Respect		322 Indicators
Staff-Prisoner Relationship	25	
Daily Life	94	
Equality, Diversity and Faith	100	
Health, Wellbeing and Social Care	96	
Leadership and Management of Respect	7	
Purposeful Activity		82 (UK) 107 (Wales) Indicators
Time out of cells	36	
Education, Skills and Work Activities (OFSTED) - England	46	
Education, Skills and Work Activities (ESTYN) - Wales	71	
Rehabilitation and Release Planning		182 Indicators
Children, Families and contact with outside	46	
Reducing risk, Rehabilitation and Progression	46	
Interventions	25	
Specialist Units	43	
Release planning	22	

Figure 8: Breakdown of Indicators in HMIP *Expectations* for Male Prisons 2017 - Version 5

Breakdown of indicators in HMIP <i>Expectations</i> for Women's Prisons 2014 – Version 1		
Overall, 123 Expectations broken down into 4 main sections		874 total - Additional 44 for specialist Units
Safety		249
Courts, Escorts and Transfers	19	
Early Days in Custody	45	
Safe and Supportive Relationships	37	
Self-Harm and Suicide Prevention	26	
Safeguarding and Women with Complex Needs	17	
Security	24	
Disciplinary Procedures	65	
Substance Misuse	16	
Respect		358
Residential Units	35	
Staff-Prisoner Relationships	36	
Equality and Diversity	128	
Faith and Religious Activity	16	
Complaints	17	
Legal Rights	15	
Health Services	83	
Catering	14	
Purchases	14	
Purposeful Activity		71
Time out of Cells	13	
Learning and Skills and Work Activities	47	
Physical Education and Healthy living	11	
Resettlement		196
Strategic management of resettlement	12	
Offender Management and Planning	48	
Reintegration Planning	136	
Specialist Units		44
Units for Women with Personality Disorder	20	
Therapeutic Communities	24	

Figure 9: Breakdown of indicators in HMIP *Expectations* for Women's Prisons 2014 – Version 1

The organisation of the expectations and indicators has changed overtime, with the above explanations differing from Liebling and Arnold (2004). They observed 26 'subject areas', with expectations within these areas, for example there were 48 expectations on 'reception and induction', and 66 expectations on 'good order'

(Liebling and Arnold, 2004). Further changes have also been made to the expectations and indicators, which Hardwick (2016) associates with HMIPs shift to inspection based on outcome and less on process. The reason for such a shift, he claims, is based on the circumstances that prisons experienced with budget cuts during austerity measures, as well as other managerial issues, suggesting that HMIP needed to be flexible on how prisons achieve goals and that it would be unfair to judge prisons based on process (Hardwick, 2016). Hardwick (2016) reflects on the use of *Expectations*, suggesting that the documents are clear to prisons in how they are being assessed, and this is not the same with ministers who do not always agree with the expectations as, according to Hardwick, HMIP take a more critical stance than ministers do. Yet, critical consideration must be recognised with the strategy of organising prison inspection, as it stands no evaluations of their practices has taken place in line to what can be seen with health inspection (Boyd et al, 2017; Walshe et al: 2014), and authors who are critical of HMIPs actions (Padfield, 2017) also comment on the challenge or difficulty to discuss the effectiveness of HMIPs organisation.

3.5.2: Conducting Inspections

Through developing expectations for inspection, HMIP provide excessive information to prisons and prison management about what they require to make their full assessment. Gathering this information, however, is a challenge to HMIP and they require specific methodology to complement their criteria and to operationalise this during inspections. HMIPs inspection methodology has changed dramatically since 1982, with attempts to legitimise and strengthen the overall findings and judgments they provide; therefore, reviewing methodology supports increasing the validity and quality of their work (Morgan, 1985; Liebling and Arnold, 2004; Harding, 2006; Bennett, 2014; Hardwick, 2016; Padfield, 2017). Strengthening the legitimacy and accuracy of inspections through a rigorous methodology also supports increasing transparency in how HMIPs inspections are constructed as “evidence-based” – a focal point on inspection suggested by Laming (2004: 4), that should not rely on the personal operational experiences of individual inspectors or their Chief. Reducing the

personal experiences and opportunities for Chief Inspectors to heavily influence reports is important when HMCIPs are often referred to as having “strong ‘personalities’” (Padfield, 2017: 7). It was also Laming’s (2000:23) view that inspection should attempt to construct “informed and objective” findings on prisons, so that comparisons can be made fairly against other prisons. Since there have been many practices used by HMIP when conducting their inspections, with methods shifting in focus from being informal and open-ended to formal and specific (Liebling and Arnold, 2004; Hardwick, 2016). Literature around inspectorate methodology is quickly dated, with each piece offering a snapshot of practices of their time. Below (figure 10) illustrates the changing methodological practices during different terms of HMCIPs.

HMCIP Anne Owers (Liebling and Arnold, 2004)	HMCIP Nick Hardwick (Bennett, 2014)	HMCIP Peter Clarke (Hardwick, 2016: 649)
Informal	Confidential survey of prisoners	Prisoner voice – statistical survey of representative sample of the population.
Open-ended	Gather primary data	Discussion with randomly selected prisoners.
Questionnaire being used	Interviews and focus groups	Speaking to managers, staff and visitors/volunteers.
	Observations	Review the prisons policies, records and data.
	Data analysis	Observations – “Follows the noes of the inspectors”

Figure 10: Inspection Methodology for each HMCIP

The diversity of practices and the values associated with the methodological decisions taken by different HMCIPs provides a challenge in explaining the methodological

practices over time. Many of these changes have resulted from HMIPs reflections and analysis of their inspections providing an internal drive to increase legitimacy and credibility. Whilst other changes have been brought around following wider public issues, such as the coronavirus pandemic in 2020. However, their previous and current methodologies are available through their website, alongside HMIP Inspection Framework (2019) and the Guide for Inspectors Framework (2018) in an attempt to offer a transparent view of what data and information they collect and how they gather it.

Inspections are usually organised over a two week period, including a mixture of activities alongside feedback and dialogue with prison governors or directors (Hardwick, 2016). There are also 'follow-up' inspections which address any specific areas of concern (Padfield, 2017). All inspections completed by HMIP are unannounced (HMIP, 2019b), with literature often providing anecdotes about inspectors ringing the prison to notify them from the prison's car park (Hardwick, 2016). Whilst all inspections are unannounced there is the requirement that HMIP must give no more than 30 minutes notification to the prison before they arrive (HMIP, 2018a). Unannounced inspection is a topic for debate within public service inspection, due to the wide-ranging use of notification from inspectorates. Within these debates two positions emerge, centred on whether unannounced inspections are beneficial for both the public service and for the inspectorate. One position is that by not providing notification of inspection, the prison does not have time to react to a pending inspection and therefore quick fixes to practice (or 'sweeping under the rug') strategies can be implemented. The advocates for this approach suggest that this provides greater authenticity to the setting, allowing prison inspectors to see the 'actual prison' (Hardwick, 2016) – which supports the position suggested by Owers (2009). The alternative position is that announced inspections provide greater use of time, providing opportunities for the preparation of relevant data which the inspection team gain value from. Other public services inspectorates have similar views, with Klerks et al. (2013) finding that unannounced inspections on elderly care homes did not provide greater clarity in the risks associated with the setting but did provide greater ability to consider the standards of care. The contextual differences

seen within public services need to be considered in this debate as the practical implications of announced inspections can support inspection practice. For example, Ofsted give a notice from midday the day before inspection is due to start so that schools and colleges have time to communicate with parents, providing opportunity for Ofsted to gain parental views of the setting to inform their judgments (Ofsted, 2019). However, with prison inspection no research has been conducted around evaluating the use of announced or unannounced inspections and no view is offered from the prisons on this matter. However, as HMIP have greater independence and distance from their political masters (Shute, 2013a) they have the ability to determine practice, in comparison to other criminal justice inspectorates who appear as “‘in-house’ management monitors” (Padfield, 2017: 8). Therefore, HMIP can be seen to rationalise their own legitimacy through their practices on unannounced inspections, based on what they believe should be considered as best practice for their data gathering and inspection protocol (HMIP, 2019b).

After notification of inspection has been sent, HMIP dispatch an inspection team to the establishment. In HMCIPs 2019-2020 annual report, HMIP has seven inspection teams. Each team include a selection of inspectors and a group leader who takes organisational responsibility for the inspection alongside the Chief Inspector. Each team has a focus on different types of custody; ‘A Team’ focus on adult male prisons (including four inspectors), ‘O Team’ focus on prisons holding women (6 inspectors including a team leader), and ‘N Team’ focus on adult male and young adult prisons (5 inspectors including a team leader). The other teams focus on immigration centres, YOIs, Police Custody Suite and a specialist team for health services (HMCIP, 2020). Then follows a two-week inspection, separated in focus for each week. The first week involves the dissemination of surveys to all prisoners, an inspection of all crucial areas, meetings with managers, and an initial view of the prison in terms of cleanliness and quality (Hardwick, 2016; HMIP, 2019b). With the first week focused on data gathering, it allows the second week to be informed by the data collected, leading to a rigorous inspection of specific areas. During the second week a full team of inspectors enter the prison, including one team leader, four core inspectors, one healthcare inspector, one substance misuse inspection and joint inspection by Ofsted, CQC, HMI Probation,

and the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (Hardwick, 2016; HMIP, 2018a; 2019). During the more in-depth inspections, data is collected based around outcomes. This second week includes further meetings with governors and managers, documentary evidence, inspecting the areas within *Expectations*, triangulation of evidence and data, feedback to managers, and the overall conclusion to the inspection (HMIP, 2018a; 2019).

Triangulation, noted by Hardwick (2016), forms the main justification for a varied multi-methods approach during HMIPs inspection – used to further legitimise their overall claims and findings. As shown in figure 10, the five sources of information that are collected and analysed by HMIP are used for triangulation. The first method gathers prisoner voice, collected through a survey of a representative population within each prison. The second is based on discussions from randomly selected prisoners. Third, by speaking to managers, staff and other ‘visitors’, including IMBs. The fourth, is through the prisons records including their own policies, data and analysis around their records. The final focuses on HMIPs observations, where inspectors “follow their noses” (Hardwick, 2016: 649) to see if anything concerns them or requires further inspection. Whilst this offers a methodological approach to increase credibility on their judgements, there is limited discussion around whether or not this is the case (Padfield, 2017). Also, no evaluation is seen on how this triangulation process is completed to construct judgements. Such evaluations have been seen in other public inspections who demonstrate that groups of inspectors make more reliable decisions during inspections of the NHS (Boyd et al, 2016).

There is limited information available on how HMIP conduct their methodology, and very little offered in terms of evaluation of such methodological practices (Padfield, 2017; Liebling and Arnold, 2004; Bennett, 2014). Indeed, much of the methodology of HMIP appears within practical documents and frameworks that seek to enhance transparency around inspection practices (HMIP, 2018a; 2019b). For example, the below is taken from HMIPs guide for inspectors document, which discusses the practice of observations.

2. 70 Inspectors will be allocated to observe evening association where it is available. You should verify that it starts and finishes on time, find out about the range of activities provided, including any recreational education, and check that access to telephones and showers is adequate.

2. 71 You should observe the behaviour of wing staff, both in terms of their interaction with detainees and how well they are supervising the safety of association. Staff should be aware of detainees who do not associate with others and the reasons for this.

2. 72 You can also gather photographic evidence to illustrate conditions that cannot be adequately described, to emphasise a finding, or to provide evidence for disputed findings. This may include the physical state of the cells, internal and external communal areas, cleanliness, notices and communal facilities. Photographs should not identify any individual and care should be taken to reassure prisoners and staff about this. Photographs can be included in the inspection report.

(HMIP, 2018a:19)

Guidance in this style is useful in establishing the level of competency conducting inspection within a prison. However, there is limited discussion around what to consider during data collection; with only a short note appearing later in the document reinforcing the need for inspectors to test their claims from data collection and offering further investigation if evidence is not consistent after triangulation (HMIP, 2018a: 21). Presentation of methodology like this supports Liebling and Arnold's (2004) and Padfield's (2017) call for an evaluation of the process and effectiveness of inspection methodologies, as claims are made around how to conduct research, but without the evaluation of previous practice or guidance on how to provide 'objectivity' (Hardwick, 2016). The need for this evaluation is essential when considering HMIP in a critical light, as their position on gathering information during inspection can often be idealist in their approach to offer findings that are 'objective' as possible which was requested by Laming (2000). This is problematic when considering findings from other evaluations conducted on other public service inspections (Griffiths et al., 2016; Walshe and Phipps, 2013; Walshe, et al., 2014; Boyd et al., 2017), with evaluations acknowledging how greater reliability is found when inspectors work closely together rather than alone (Boyd et al, 2017).

HMIPs methodologies were disturbed from March 2020, when Covid-19 obstructed the ability for HMIP to enter prisons (HMCIP, 2020). HMIP were forced to adapt

practices to continue their responsibilities in providing inspections of treatment and conditions of prisons. The then HMCIP stated the importance of this within his report, highlighting that scrutiny is needed “at a time when people in detention were even more isolated” (Clarke, 2020: 165). The adaptation of HMIPs methodology for times of national restriction was completed after consultation with ministers, HMPPS and others to allow inspections to resume before the end of April 2020. These visits were to focus on three features of imprisonment in relation to coronavirus. Firstly, HMIP decided to analyse the practices within prisons to ensure that laws, policies and practices connected to Covid-19 were being followed, to acknowledge the impact of these on prisoners. Second, to collect and analyse information about treatment and conditions, so that this could lead into the third focus on using this information to inform a one-day Short Scrutiny Visit (SSV) (HMCIP, 2020). Inspections therefore became focused on issues relating to Covid-19 in SSVs and not of the regular ‘healthy prison test’. HMCIP (2020) also stated that no recommendations would be given during SSVs and the subsequent reports, instead these visits would conclude with any areas of concern and a focus on shared good practice seen across prisons.

3.5.3: Reporting on Inspections

Once inspection is complete HMIP begin summarising their judgments. Whilst there is no literature on this process some authors do engage with explanations of how inspectorates communicate their findings as well as unpacking the consequences of reporting (Hardwick, 2016; Bennett, 2014; Liebling and Arnold, 2004; Morgan, 1985; Padfield, 2017). The reports for inspections on individual prisons all follow the structure of the ‘healthy prisons test’ followed by “a summary and recommendations, housekeeping points and examples of good practice” (Padfield, 2017:7), thus constituting a ‘house style’. However, the reporting ‘period’ of each inspection is much more nuanced than publishing a document for political and public viewing, capturing significant relational action between HMIP, the prisons, and political stakeholders. For example, Hardwick (2016) highlights that on the last day of inspection the Governor or Prison Director are given feedback based on the

inspection. During this feedback Hardwick (2016) suggests that dialogue is taken on their judgements, to consider any 'push-backs' that the prison have and to provide opportunity for further evidence building. The practice of providing feedback can be seen as a strategy for promoting credibility and legitimacy with HMIPs report, building an approach to claim that the prison agrees and that their inspection practice is not a practice of conflict (Hardwick, 2016). There are practical benefits to this, namely that such opportunities allow for an agreed action plan and recommendation list that include all views. Creating agreement on recommendations can be useful to justify some of the changes that the prison might already want to make but have otherwise been unable to justify (Bennett, 2014).

The content of the reports follows the values of *Expectations*, not only in the structure of the healthy prison test, but also in terms of the reports being outcome focused, rather than focusing on processes (Hardwick, 2016). Reports are also constructed with criteria-based language as a technique to present judgments, alongside a final judgment on the overall quality of conditions and treatment of each prison. As with other inspectorates, HMIP offer a grade to each prison, which can be seen in figure 11 (HMCIP, 2020: 9).

<i>Numeric</i>	<i>Definition</i>
4	<p>Outcomes for prisoners/detainees are good</p> <p>There is no evidence that outcomes for detainees are being adversely affected in any significant areas.</p>
3	<p>Outcomes for prisoners/detainees are reasonably good</p> <p>There is evidence of adverse outcomes for detainees in only a small number of areas. For the majority, there are no significant concerns.</p>
2	<p>Outcomes for prisoners/detainees are not sufficiently good</p> <p>There is evidence that outcomes for detainees are being adversely affected in many areas or particularly in those areas of greatest importance to the well-being of detainees. Problems/concerns, if left unattended, are likely to become areas of serious concern.</p>
1	<p>Outcomes for prisoners/detainees are poor</p> <p>There is evidence that outcomes for detainees are seriously affected by current practice. There is a failure to ensure even adequate treatment of and/or conditions for detainees. Immediate remedial action is required.</p>

Figure 11: Grade system from HMIP based on the 'Healthy Prison Test' (HMCIP, 2020: 9).

There are noticeable differences between the language used in the judgment grades between HMCIP and other public service inspectorates, namely in the way that praise can be offered through the judgements, with no option of highlighting outstanding or exemplar practice beyond the phrase 'good'. Other inspectorates, for example Ofsted, offer four grades, 1 – outstanding, 2 – good, 3 – requires improvement, and 4 – inadequate (Ofsted, 2019). But both act in a similar capacity as an approach to not only inform a specific setting and those responsible for the setting, but also an opportunity for the 'public gaze' of the setting (Bennett, 2014; Liebling and Arnold, 2004).

Providing a public gaze of prisons could be seen to be one of the central practices that HMIP achieve through their reporting, as it provides some ‘truth’ over the conditions and treatment of imprisonment (Bennett, 2014). This is how inspections seek to form a part of wider public accountability, which Bennett suggests allows scrutiny by firstly, highlighting issues that are often marginalised, secondly, drawing on a range of voices to construct ‘truths’, and third, highlighting problems and identify recommendations to create organisational norms (Bennett, 2014). However, others disagree with Bennett’s (2014) summary of how the reports provide a platform for accountability, with Padfield (2017: 7), claiming that

“the reports of the Prison Inspectorate, perhaps inevitably, often focus more on the fabric of prisons, or the general standards to be found, not the treatment of prisoners as such. And it is easy for some of the Chief Inspector’s complaints to be ignored”.

Therefore, being able to determine the usefulness, effectiveness, and influence that these reports have is difficult, as the necessary research needed to address these matters has not yet taken place. Whilst the public gaze is beneficial for purposes of accountability (Behan and Kirkham, 2016; Bennett, 2016; Hardwick, 2014) there are some strengths and weaknesses that emerge alongside the public reaction to inspectorate reports. For example, inspection reports can receive media coverage, particularly when poor practice and unacceptable standards are presented (Bennett, 2014). The reports can often be identified as focusing on generating public concern. Whilst this is necessary for the purposes of public accountability (Harding, 2006) it can bring challenges for HMPPS and the SoS and potential conflict between these bodies and HMIP. This is because the usually internal issues seen within prison are presented in a public domain, which could be problematic when reports are highly critical of HMPPS or government policy (Bennett, 2014; Hardwick, 2016; Liebling and Arnold, 2004). A weakness of media attention comes with the challenges that HMIP experience due to the extent that penal populism (Pratt, 2007; Jennings et al, 2017; Garland, 2001) and populist punitivism (Bottoms, 1995; Hutton, 2005) has on the public gaze on prisons. Where HMIPs reports are not seen as ‘truth’ but disregarded as fallacy, due to their focus on prisoner voice and identifying poor experiences of

imprisonment – going against populist sentiments of punitivism (Pratt, 2007; Jennings et al, 2017; Garland, 2001). This can indeed be seen as the case when HMIPs reports seek to share good practice seen during inspection (Bennett, 2014; Hardwick, 2016).

Morgan (1985) discussed the importance of publishing HMIP reports in his chapter during the early years of HMIP having legislative responsibility, claiming that reports needed to be quickly published and in full detail to maintain relevance to the public gaze. However, he found some reports were taking up to 12 months to progress through inspection to publication, meaning that much of the content was no longer relevant (Morgan, 1985). Liebling and Arnold (2004) further this by suggesting that time for publication had improved but there were still subject to time restraints, which may have been due to other bodies influencing the publication stage of the reports, with the Prison Service and the Home Office both having opportunities to reply and respond. Liebling and Arnold (2004) also claimed that the more critical reports were often 'rebuffed' by the Director General of the Prison Service, opening a question on how much prison managers or ministers have over the reports. However, context to these claims are needed, as this somewhat contradicts the HMCIP of the time, Owers (2010), who claimed that in her nine years in the office, she "was never under any political pressure to amend the content of reports, even when they raised potentially politically-embarrassing concerns - such as, for example, the safety of one privately-run prison" (Owers, 2010: 1543). Indeed, such adaptation of HMIPs reports could impact on the ability for reports to be an accurate and timely representation for public accountability, but instead a construction based on the presentation of prisons from different bodies that have diverse invested interest in the reports on prisons.

Recommendations are an essential feature within HMIPs reports, they form an option for prisons to follow or seek changes to improve an area of imprisonment (Bennett, 2014). They also form as the strategy that they use to influence change to a particular feature of a prison or imprisonment, due to having no statutory ability to enforce change (Liebling and Arnold, 2004; Bennett, 2014). As already noted, the lack of legislative support has been in consultation between HMIP and the SoS (MoJ, 2020b), with the attempt to implement further powers seen within the Prison and Courts Bill

(2017). However, Hardwick (2016) discusses this in relation to other public service inspectorates, claiming that bodies such as the CQC and Ofsted have moved away from a 'light touch inspection', having sought to gain greater legislative power to enforce their inspection findings and standards. He discusses this in relation to other bodies closeness to government and political support, giving them greater means to hold and enforce; with schools and hospitals having much less control from central government, with new powers offered to these bodies they can use these as a means to maintain standards (Hardwick, 2016). Whereas prisons are under the ultimate operational control of the government, requiring HMIP to be distant to make their inspections independent of political control (Hardwick, 2016).

Since Hardwick's (2016) chapter, efforts have been made to offer greater credence to HMIPs inspection findings, an ambition during Clark's time as HMCIP, with the Prison and Courts Bill 2017 suggesting new powers for HMIP into statute (MoJ, 2020b). Of particular importance within this bill are the attempts to bring powers of enforcement to HMIP, through the use of the Urgent Notification Process (UNPs). However, with the Bill being withdrawn this has not yet come to fruition through legislative means. Instead, HMIP and the SoS have agreed, through administrative means, the incorporation of UNPs into HMIPs responsibilities. This was presented in HMIPs Protocol (2017, later updated in 2019), and since several UNPs have been applied. The current practice of UNPs fits alongside the legislative proposal of the Prisons and Courts Bill 2017, and sets out the agreement of when, why and how UNPs will be performed and actioned by both HMCIP and the SoS following a poor inspection (HMIP, 2019b). Another contemporary development for HMIP comes with another administratively agreed practice of Independent Reviews of Progress (IRPs), which was agreed in 2019 following ministers wanting to see how far prisons were implementing recommendations made by HMIP. IRPs are set to be short visits of two and a half days where recommendations made on the previous full inspection are followed up. HMIP intend to make one of four judgments following an IRPs, ranging from no meaningful progress to good progress based on the evidence they collect over the previous recommendations, HMIP also intend to make no recommendations and will not grade

the prison following the IRP (HMIP, 2019a). However, UNP and IRPs are yet to be seen within wider literature.

3.6: Conclusion

The present literature on HMIP can be summarised as being limited in detail and critique, with much of this chapter highlighting that the existing literature provides a descriptive account of the role and function of HMIP. There is still a need for researchers to engage in a critical and evaluative outlook on the practices of HMIP, with this chapter highlighting the potential issues with criteria, methodology, and reporting. Also, the chapter offers discussions on the relationship between HMIP and the SoS, detailing their collaborative working, offering some accounts (Liebling and Arnold, 2004; Morgan, 1985; Owers, 2010) of how their relationship can manifest through to HMIPs reports. However, there is a clear gap within literature, as most literature discusses the practices of HMIP with limited discussion on how HMIP understand the causes for problems within prisons and on their views on how and why change such be implemented. Indeed, many of the authors mentioned in this chapter observed HMIPs approach to being objective and impartial, however is this achievable with the criteria that HMIP have set themselves within *Expectations*? However, there is an empirical limit to what research could be conducted without observing and questioning HMIP directly, with the clearest research needed around the discourses that HMIP offer, so that contextualisation on their positions on imprisonment can be formulated and applied to future reading and analysis of their outputs. This is particular important when there is academic credit given to their reports, where penologists utilise reports as a strategy to engage in the ‘truth’ within prisons and as evidence for the experiences of imprisonment. This chapter, however, has built a contextual background to the roles and practices of HMIP, which provides a practical overview to how the reports have been constructed through criteria, methodology and reporting. The chapter also sought to position HMIP in connection to the other bodies who they connect with, identifying any legislative and administrative practices that agree between HMIP and the SoS, to understand how

they have worked to provide action and change within prisons through their recommendations and judgments.

Chapter Four: Comparative Critical Discourse Analysis

4.1: Introduction

This chapter sets the methodological objectives of this study, explaining what Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is and why it was chosen as a strategy for this thesis. I establish how a comparative CDA was used to analyse 16 documents selected from HMIP and political stakeholders. This chapter discusses the practices of CDA as a research strategy and establish how I operationalise these for my analysis. Comparative CDA is a style of analysis that can explore similarities and differences between discursive perspectives, investigating how different groups contribute to a particular issue or social problem, such as violence, self-harm, and suicide in prison (Fairclough, 2010). This study therefore utilises methodological practices associated with CDA, pertaining to the role that discourse plays in the production and reproduction of power relations (van Dijk, 2015; Wooffitt, 2005). In this study, this is the power relations between HMIP and other political stakeholders, including HMPPS, the SoSfJ, and the MoJ, who Shute (2013) names as HMIP's political 'master'. As highlighted in the introduction, CDA begins differently to other studies as analysts are encouraged to take a position about social problems under investigation rather than constructing a research question (van Dijk, 1997). This approach allows CD analysts to make clear how they view the problem and identify where they believe changes can be made. In theory, this makes CDA research not only transparent but, more importantly, proactive in creating potential social and political change (van Dijk, 1997). The position I take on these problems is based on the need for language to shift from dehumanising prisoners who engage in violence, self-harm, and suicide towards language practices that engage in care and compassion. It is in this vein that I challenge the dominant discourses seen across the documents selected, calling for altering language to support change. This is not only an intellectual problem but involves real issues and real-world harms. Therefore, the basis of this challenge lies in unpicking and exposing how these topics are constructed by and between the written reports

of a sample of stakeholder bodies and by understanding how they interact discursively (Wooffitt, 2005; Fairclough, 2010; Wodak, 2001).

This chapter opens with a summary of the previous chapters, drawing on the literature reviews on epistemological traditions on violence, self-harm, and suicide and on the organisation of prison accountability. This summary is used to support the methodological decisions that this study takes, considering document selection alongside how they were read, interpreted, and analysed. The chapter then moves to discuss the principles of CDA, detailing why I chose CDA over other forms of discourse analysis and how I operationalised CDA to practically conduct analysis. Following this I detail the sampling strategy employed to select the 16 documents that make up the corpora for this study – that is the two groups of documents based on HMIP and political stakeholders. The final section details the strategy of data collection, processes of quotation extraction, and critical questions asked during analysis.

4.2: Violence, Self-harm, and Suicide in Prison

CDA, as a method of study, allows researchers to make their personal positions clear, making analysis driven by individual political interest (Wooffitt, 2005). This is therefore an attempt to encourage change and to challenge dominant discourses (van Dijk, 1997; Wooffitt, 2005). The view of the analyst becomes clear by identifying a position based on an object of analysis, for example a perspective on poverty which places blame and fault on an individual's 'idleness' compared with one which is dissatisfied with political and welfare practices (Fairclough, 2010). By focusing on a social problem, it is essential for analysts to acknowledge their own position on the topic, as this will agree and conflict with discourses that are presented within the study and will alter overall conclusions. Fairclough (2003: 206) argues that the position of the researcher is likely to be with the "marginal or oppositional, or 'alternative'" discourses that emerge around the social problem, as the intention of CDA is to challenge the dominant discourse and advocate for those with lesser power (van Dijk, 1997). Fairclough (2003: 209) suggests this as part of the "schematic picture" of how CDA

works and that starting on a problem rather than a research question supports the critical intent of CDA, more on this later.

Chapter three provided a background of the different epistemological traditions on violence, self-harm, and suicide, separating literature based on two approaches – RMT and CT. As stated within the conclusions to the previous chapter, I identified weakness in the RMT, arguing that the reductionist tendencies atomise the generative explanations of the problems to small datafied indicators. Critically, I argued this practice reduces and ignores important factors within penal culture and individual experiences of prisoners which are too significant to overlook. Whilst the RMT works in a reformist manner through interventions, the method of reaching the conclusions avoid necessary consideration to compassion, empathy, and dignity of prisoners. I also identified weaknesses with the CT, particularly with studies that embrace heavy focus on importation models, I argue this problematises prisoners, encourages dangerization, and generalises a population. I considered that imported models overlook prisoners reactions to prison and underestimates the traumatic experiences of prisoners. Through the evaluation of these traditions, I concluded that value can be seen in adopting various combined approaches following the CT as this allowed studies to highlight how social inequalities experienced preprison can add to troubling experiences seen within prisons and can be exacerbated through imprisonment. This framework for understanding the causes of violence, self-harm, and suicide in prison allows for strategies to emerge that seek to support prisoners through reforming penal culture, such as Trauma Informed Practices (TIP) to promote changes in language, understanding behaviours, and appropriately seeking to change prisoners. This sort of reformist intervention seeks to embed gradual change in prison culture, life, and discourse. It does not reject prisons nor seek radical reform associated with prison abolitionism, but instead addresses gradual changes through challenging normalised practices of interaction and treatment of prisoners to build more compassion into imprisonment.

The organisation of prison accountability is a vastly complex structure and therefore difficult to understand positionality on how to improve this, particularly when I have

past experience as a member of the IMB. My position is based on the critical conclusions that I drew around the organisation and use of HMIP within this organisational structure, where I argue that evaluation, evidence, and challenge to their practices is needed in order to increase their legitimacy and their policy pull. The value placed on HMIPs work can often be difficult to comprehend, particularly when HMIP has strong attention in academic circles – yet no critical evaluation of their practices exists to challenge and strengthen their claims. I also highlight that HMIP has the potential to be an effective voice for change, where they can provide necessary challenge and encouragement for the betterment of prisoners. However, due to the decisions that have been taken on their development, mostly around independence and distance from government, they have little opportunity to stand as a critical body to political decisions – something weakened by a lack of legislative power. I argue that with greater consideration to the organisation, conducting and reporting on inspection would lead to more value in HMIPs comments, thus giving them greater voice in discussions on violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons, thus influencing change. Yet, I also believe that there are greater social pressures at play which limit politicians having a penal reformist stance or to take stronger rehabilitative goals within their policies.

4.3: What is Critical Discourse Analysis?

4.3.1: Discourse Studies and Social Science Research

As this study is based on a model of comparative CDA, it is important first to discuss the use of CDA in social science research. CDA is an approach typically associated with linguistics but useful in social science as it allows for greater theoretical explanation to appear around the social practice of language, considering the power that language has as a social activity (Fairclough, 2003). CDA is a method set in a “solid ‘linguistic’ basis” (van Dijk, 2001: 97) where language is used and interpreted in a written, verbal, and/or conversational form. Fairclough (2003; 2010) explained that CDA is part of wider critical social research, supporting the practice of asking critical questions to

show how wider social life works by exploring social practices that have a positive or a negative consequence on people. It is this critical research ethos, alongside studying the construction and action within texts, that makes CDA a useful methodology for understanding discourse and how they offer an interpretation on the power dynamics that structure the social world. When looking at language in this way, CD analysts acknowledge that discourse can be found in texts, with Fairclough (1993: 63) defining 'discourse' as a term which refers to "language use as a form of social practice... discourse is a mode of action, one form in which people may act upon the world and especially upon each other, as well as a mode of representation". Language, following this definition, is therefore more than just a mode of communication, but an essential part of social life, providing representations that people have of social life and their social practice. The social practice of language is therefore in all forms of social life but is yet to be considered in how bodies contend with violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons.

As a result, language can be understood as an important focus for social research, it offers representations of the world, or discourses, which are used to inform and constitute action and the representation of relationships between social practice and social structures, where power is situated (Fairclough, 1993). Therefore, many researchers in Discourse Studies (DS) focus on textual analysis as a method of understanding social interaction, situations, and structures (van Dijk, 2016) which are used to produce theoretical explanations on specific social phenomena. CDA does this in a critical way, through critical questioning. For example, Wodak (2021) depicts how Far-Right discourses have become normalised across Europe, providing vignettes to demonstrate and analyse how language uses discursive strategies, employed to support normalisation and populist processes. Similarly to Wodak, this study understands specific social phenomenon seen within prisons and analyses the use of language in texts to comparatively understand how different groups construct their discourse on violence, self-harm, and suicide, explaining positions on action. Other studies in penology have addressed discourses and language within their works, for example, Birkett (2014) analyses how 'message structures' or 'frames' used by campaigners can be used to support and encourage penal reform, understanding the

modalities at play and to explain how they are represented. Another example is Cox (2020) who addresses the use of language for prison research, calling for researchers to work intentionally with their use of language to construct meaning. However, this study differs due to the comparative approach taken in this style of CDA, not addressing language use in one area but by different groups who each have a specific purpose for reporting and who have different actions within their documents. The above examples, instead focus on action around prison campaign and research, whereas this study tackles issues faced by prisoners within the estate through the discourses of others who inspect and make decisions on prisoners.

A central feature of this study is based around texts being a product of discourse and discourse being a product of texts. Texts are seen as both the location and production of discourse, they can be seen as a social practice that have action and activity within communicative events (Fairclough, 2010). As with the sample for this study, inspection reports within the public sector have a certain activity of sharing findings based on their independent assessments of “performance management and measurement” (Bennett, 2014: 449), and political texts have the action of setting the agenda for policy in prison (Charteris-Black, 2014). The texts of both groups are therefore constitutive of discourses around a specific topics, and the texts engage in social practices in contextually different ways. Texts are understood by CD analysts in a broad manner, referring to both written and verbal language as having the same qualities (Fairclough, 2010; van Dijk, 1997). As both modes have “‘users’, namely authors and readers” (van Dijk, 1997: 3), and both constitute communicative events which can be seen as a particular interaction between author and reader. What is important when considering language in text is the context that they are being used in, which sets the practice of activity (Wodak, 2001; Fairclough, 2010). For example, HMIP contextualise their discursive positions on violence, self-harm, and suicide through the social practice of inspection, set through their legislative position and ideals around how they present their findings. Whereas political stakeholders see their practice having power that “establishes, sustains and changes power relations, and the collective entities between which power relations obtain” (Fairclough, 1997: 67). The contextual practice of text is, therefore, where power is situated through the

action used as a discursive strategy; Fairclough (2010: 173) suggests that “text is physical activity, is power, is knowledge and desire”, depending on the contextual nature of it. Either way texts constitute action in many forms. Different texts are important to study sociologically, as the action and social practice within has real consequences beyond the talk or writing seen within the communicative event (Fairclough, 2003: 2010).

CDA is a part of wider critical social research (Fairclough, 2003) and is part of wider critical discourse study, albeit “discourse study with an attitude” (van Dijk, 2015: 466). It is therefore an alternative style of DA, which aims to draw out change on a specific issue (van Dijk, 2015). As such, this style of study is centred around asking critical questions about text and what can be seen within language and discourse that represents a specific interaction and practice of power that surround those discursive perspectives. Importantly, thinking reflexively about such critical questions before conducting analysis is essential. CD analysts are not passive readers but instead make judgements and offer a viewpoint to consider wider analytical questions such as, ‘what is and is not being said, how and why is it being said, and how does it invoke a feeling for the reader?’ demonstrating a thorough and active analysis (Young and Fitzgerald, 2006; Richardson, 2006). Nevertheless, CDA is different from other forms of DA through four principles (van Dijk, 2015). First, that there is a focus on a primary problem and a specific political issue above observations of the discourse structures that exist, this takes CDA into more theoretical than descriptive discussions as it requires investigation on the problems at hand, rather than simply explaining what a discourse looks like in documents. Second, CDA is usually multidisciplinary in nature, including wider disciplines to help make sense of the issue at hand; in this study this can be seen through sociology, criminology and penology being integrated to form analytical questioning. Third, CDA offers explanation to accounts rather than describing them, as usually seen in DA, allowing wider discussions on the different discourses that emerge around topics. This is done through the critical questions asked about the use of language and presentation of discursive strategies in texts. Finally, CDA focuses on how discourse legitimates and reproduces power abuse and dominance within texts and social life (van Dijk, 2015). This last point is essential for

this study, as I am analysing discourses to understand why the issues of violence, self-harm, and suicide are not actioned through recognising the inadequacies that emerge from the discourses used by HMIP and politicians. Through comparative analysis of these discourses, I explain why these issues are represented, discussed and framed through different groups. What van Dijk (2015) outlines here are the steps beyond DA, that CDA can offer, which help justify this project as the aims are to draw out critical explanations of these issues within prisons, not descriptive accounts.

CDA has therefore been seen as the ideal method for the aims of this study, and as such has been used to offer linguistic insights into the nature and representation of discourses in reports around the issues. This strategy was selected around a range of other approaches within DS, which van Dijk (1997) highlights as extensive. However, social science analysts seem to favour CDA, Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA) or discursive psychology (Wooffitt, 2005). Whilst all offer discussion to the role of language in action and social life there are subtle differences which made CDA more appropriate for this study. For example, FDA researchers start with a clear theoretical intention which establishes the topic and attempts to reflect on power relations and inequality in society (Wooffitt, 2005). FDA therefore requires analysts to take a theoretical position to explain the material basis of oppression (Wooffitt, 2005). Whilst CDA still requires a primary problem or political issue to be one of the foundations of the study, it does not frame discussion around discourse being built around a particular theoretical framework, instead CDA seeks to explain the ways that discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimise, reproduce and challenge dominance in society (van Dijk, 2015). CDA is therefore about the consequence of discourses and builds theoretical discussions on how conflict and competing attitudes can appear around a social problem, research in this manner “does not have a unitary theoretical framework” (van Dijk, 2015: 468).

4.3.2: Context, Genre, Style, and Intertextuality

As this study’s aim is to identify differences within discourses in texts by different stakeholders, a comparative style of CDA seemed the most appropriate

methodological strategy. This offers discussion beyond description, which is important when seeking to explain similarities and differences in a comparative style (van Dijk, 2015). However, to achieve this I had to take each document in the context that it was produced in, such as a political debate based on a bill, or a letter from HMCIP to the SoSfJ enacting the UNP. Understanding the given context enabled me to recognise the specific circumstances for presuppositions around violence, self-harm, and suicide. Context, Wodak (2001) claims, is one of the essential features of CDA as it allows researchers to consider the 'actual' or 'immediate' use of language, the relationship between texts and discourses, the socio-political context of the writing, and the historical context of the script. It is through identifying the contextual nature within texts that discourse can be explained, as context allows analysis to construct an account of a particular subject position (Wodak, 2001). This is important in this study as "discourses are diverse representations of social life which are inherently positions", as this study seeks to explain how the "differently positioned social actors 'see' and represent social life in different ways", through "different discourses" (Fairclough, 2003: 206), to then be able to offer comparison on these positions to draw conclusions.

Context can be seen within each text or document, providing "the context of situation, the institutional context, and the wider societal context or 'context of culture'" (Fairclough, 2010: 95). This study must, therefore, recognise the context of each document, not only does it assist in understanding the position of the text but more importantly it helps to situate the social practices of texts. For example, when looking at HMIP reports on individual prisons the contextual background of an unannounced inspection helps provide some circumstantial setting, likewise the nature of these documents, being an inspection, helps to recognise that presuppositions are to be judgmental in nature, as is the contextual nature of inspection reporting. During the analysis for this study, the sampled documents include contextually different purposes and therefore required explanation of this context before analysis was conducted. This was done by considering two important factors of each document, genre, and style.

Without discussing the genre, it is difficult to consider the context of the language choices made within texts and difficult to consider how this is presented to the audience. For CDA, genre refers to the “semiotic ways of acting and interacting” that dictates the communicative style that the author follows when writing for an audience (Fairclough, 2010: 232). Genre, therefore, indicates the practice of interaction between the author and reader. There are consequently different genres that authors follow depending on the action presented within their text, dependent on the desired interaction with audiences. For example, there is difference between inspection reports that interact with the audience by providing judgments of a prison, to debates in House of Commons (HoC) where Members of Parliament (MPs) interact with the audience through presentation of partisan values (Charteris-Black, 2014). This is then presented through the choice of technical language used and the referential strategies that target the audience through a particular communicative interaction (Machin and Mayr, 2012). Understanding genre within texts is essential, as the ‘semiotic way’ of engaging with audiences dictates communication and presentation. As the sampled documents represent different genres, the need to consider how this situates style and linguistic technique within each document is important, so that style and language can be analysed in context. In comparison to other studies in CDA it could be suggested that analysis on texts like inspection reports, Government documents and political debates requires greater context on the genre due to the diversity of interactions that they represent, and the many discursive devices and strategies employed within communication as the ‘semiotic way of acting and interacting’. This is important when we consider discourses to be “semiotic ways of constructing aspects of the world... with different positions or perspectives of different groups of social actors” (Fairclough, 2010: 232). Therefore, genre is a key element of the analysis of text, as the semiotic ways of acting, interacting, and constructing views of the world are an essential component of the interaction between authors and readers.

The ‘style’ of a document demonstrates the extent to which authors construct “ways of being” in the interaction they have with their readers or audiences (Fairclough, 2010: 232). Style therefore constitutes an important semiotic element of communication within texts, seen through micro-textual analysis of words, sentences

and modality that contextualise the semiotic approach of the author or speaker (Richardson, 2006; Fairclough, 2010). For example, in political debates there is a style of argument offered by the Government and a different style for Opposition, each are based on specific semiotic styles that situates their identity within discursive discussions to support how they construct their positions and perspectives on subject matters. For example, in the HoC debate used within this study, there were clear stylistic differences. The Government did not mention or explain previous decisions negatively, for example on the topic of prison officer numbers; whereas the Opposition continuously refer to what they believe as previous Government failings, even when they are in support of a new initiative. Style therefore demonstrates the discursive devices and strategies used to present ‘truths’ believed by groups or actors to audiences or readers. Through style within texts, authors construct their chosen form of representation in identifying themselves and their readers, through the way that propositions can be used to construct narratives (Fairclough, 2010).

The above emphasises the contextual importance of genre and style in communicative events, drawing on how they constitute an element of discourse. However, each document cannot be interpreted as an isolated communicative event, as analysis of texts “is always concerned with specifying how different genres, different discourses, and different styles are articulated together in particular sorts of relationships” (Fairclough, 2010: 175). The discussion on the genre and style of the documents selected for this study must be considered to contribute towards an “order of discourse” (Fairclough, 2010: 175), or the network of genre, style and discourses that constitute a way of “meaning-making” (Fairclough, 2010: 233). The discourses used within texts therefore draw towards and form this order of discourse. However, understanding the differences between genre and style, often referred to as intertextuality or interdiscursivity (Fairclough, 2010), helps to draw out the discourses seen within the corpus. This requires analysis to not only consider the genre, style, and discourses within each document, but to consider them intertextually with each document being locating in a wider network and order, rather than an isolated event. The corpus can therefore be analysed for its distinctions and its shared meaning.

CDA in this study goes a step further, as a comparative approach to CDA is applied in discussions between the two groups under investigation. A comparative CDA centres on drawing theoretical discussions to explain the similarities and differences between discourses of groups (Fairclough, 2010). Theoretical discussions in this frame are based on providing the necessary explanations to why similarities and differences emerge. It therefore has the ability to ask further questions about diversity in discourse, an important feature which supports in making discourses analysis critical (Fairclough, 2003; van Dijk, 2015). These questions, however, are not just based on the two groups, but instead centre around the three issues that are the object of investigation throughout this study.

4.4: The Structure of CDA

The challenge around designing a strategy comes with CDA not having a standardised or commonly used methodological strategy for researchers to follow. All types of CDA are distinct and non-restrictive in their approach (van Dijk, 2015). Therefore, no common strategy for conducting analysis exists, such as can be seen with methods of grounded qualitative research (Urquhart, 2013) or thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Instead, strategies are set around an ethos applied to the documents (Fairclough, 2003; van Dijk, 2015; Wood and Kroger, 2000), with monographs written in a reflective capacity that draw attention to individual processes seen for studies (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975). As highlighted earlier, van Dijk (2015: 467) suggests that the differences between DA and CDA is the critical approach to analysing language in documents, moving beyond description and towards explanation in a multidisciplinary manner to identify the way that discourses “enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce and challenge” dominance. However, these principles help establish what steps are needed for CDA to go beyond DA more generally and to give it the attitude he identifies. This allows analysts to justify their strategy being based on descriptive data which is then used to form theoretical explanations of discourses. Theoretical explanations allow discussions of power, dominance and ideology seen within discourses, showing how powerlessness and inequality are manifested and

reproduced within language (Wooffitt, 2005). For this study a similar approach was taken, albeit with a comparative element, which allowed me to develop analysis from description to theoretical explanation. This approach is central in this study as Fairclough (2010) highlights that descriptive qualities are necessary for comparative CDA, in drawing similarities and differences, but with critical engagement of questions that draw out theoretical discussions. Explaining comparative discourses leading to “interesting similarities or differences in discourse structure or organisation”, allowing conclusions to be drawn on relationships and discursive positions on violence, self-harm, and suicide (Fairclough 2010: 51).

To help capture the critical element of CDA suggested by van Dijk (2015), there was a strategic approach that I used for data collection and analysis to support comparison. This approach supported the descriptive and comparative layers of this study, which helped to situate the practical steps that I used during analysis (Fairclough, 2010). As literature often approach strategies for developing practical steps for CDA being individualised and personal (van Dijk, 2015; Fairclough, 2003; 2010), it was considered important to take this into consideration and allow my own strategies to emerge. However, a basic structure to CDA was followed using Fairclough’s (2003: 209) “schematic picture” loosely used around the topic and focus of the study. This schematic picture of CDA was based on a method of language critique from Bhaskar (1986) but was developed further by Fairclough (2003) to give greater application to social science. Within this schematic he highlights five points that allow for structure to appear when conducting CDA. To summarise Fairclough (2003: 209-210), the five points can be understood as.

1. Begin with a social problem rather than a research question, the problem should allow for criticality to emerge and should lead to some sort of emancipatory aim.
2. Identify challenges to the emancipatory aim through analysis of the networks of practice within the discourse, the relationship identified through language, the discourse and its structure and lexis to understand how the problem arises and is rooted in place.

3. Critically consider whether the problem is necessary and think about if others benefit from this problem and how this can be seen within social life.
4. Identify ways past the problem and consider approaches for change.
5. Reflect on the analysis completed and think about the position taken by the analyst during the study to consider the impact that this has had.

This schematic is useful as it provides some reflexive structure when conducting CDA. Whilst it does not provide a definitive style of practice, it does acknowledge the staged approach that this style of research often takes from lexicon through to theoretical discussion. However, the stages used for this study had to be different, due to the comparative analysis that was completed. This required more than what Fairclough (2003) offers in his schematic, as the problems under investigation are not the only central topic of investigation, which is shared with the authors of the documents. This study, therefore, adds comparison to this process. Fairclough (2010) suggests that comparative CDA is purposefully descriptive, that findings in these studies often build explanations about a problem through identifying differing and similar ideological positions between different bodies. This meant that data collection for this study took the form of two samples, or corpora, so that discourses from different bodies could be gathered, contextually understood, and analysed separately before they are compared to identify similarities, differences and interactions that offer theoretical discussions.

Structure and narrative to the process of conducting a CDA, is only one part of the parcel. Within the schematic Fairclough (2003) provides, there are layers of analysis that are at play, from micro-analysis to macro-analysis. Indeed, he acknowledges a wide range of literature to micro-analysis in his *Analysing Discourse* (2003) text, which aims at addressing the challenges and the extensive nature of discourse analysis and interpretation required for CDA. Stressing that CDA is

a resource ... that is best used in combination with theoretical and analytical resources ... one possibility which such a combination of resources opens up is researching the understanding and interpretation of texts (Fairclough, 2003: 210).

What can be taken from this is the importance of CD analysts to consider their analytical strategy as a blend of different tools that can be used for micro-analysis through to macro-analysis. Each study therefore produces an individual strategy for analysis, by considering how analysts will interpret and read texts to unpack, extract and make sense of discourses before then offering theoretical discussion. For this study analytical stages were made by taking a two staged approach to support the comparative nature of this CDA. I did this through studying and then analysing each corpus individually, to unpack and identify structures of discourse and linguistic presuppositions. For each corpus I first approached the genre and style of the document and how this is presented intertextually; taking care to consider the semiotic ways of interaction and how authors present to readers. This was an important step to bring in context to my deeper and more specific analysis, context that provided more detail to the lexical and ideological strategies that the texts presented, which features as the second approach I used when analysing each corpus. Once both corpora were analysed, a process of thematic analysis was carried out where central themes from each corpus were identified, representing the discursive strategies and orders of discourse seen in an intertextual nature. This then allowed comparison to be completed, where differences, similarities, and positions on their presentation around the issues of violence, self-harm, and suicide can be explained and drawn into conclusions.

4.5: Corpus and Document Selection

The documents used in this study involved a challenging process of selection, as there is limited advice offered in CDA literature to direct analysts on how to begin or consider selection (Wood and Kroger, 2000). The reason for this comes with the highly personalised and diverse practices seen within CDA research, where some studies require a large corpus which are analysed in full and others analysing different types of texts, such as advertisements, pictures, or speeches, which can be short in nature. It was therefore impossible to determine how many sources could or should be used for a particular study, instead it is for the analyst to justify their own choices within

the parameters of their study. Wood and Kroger (2000) suggest that selection for discourse studies is somewhat different than other forms of research methods and that selection should not be based on suggestion, recommendation, or advice from literature. Instead, selection should be based on a justification for what is needed for the analysis to be completed and for conclusions to be drawn. When contending with selection for this study I relied heavily on the work of other authors, notably Woodall and Freeman (2019), who conducted analysis of HMIP reports with a focus on health promotion during inspection. During conversation with Woodall (Simpson, 2019), he highlighted the challenging extent of approaching HMIP documents and accessing specific information. Woodall and Freeman (2019) used a sample of 38 individual prison reports for their research and conducted a range of qualitative analytical methods to gather their findings, with thematic analytical strategies. Their findings were extensive, with Woodall describing the length of time it took to read and analyse sections of all 38 reports, on average 4-6 pages (Simpson, 2019). Woodall and Freeman's (2019) study also had different aims and strategies of analysis based on theming and quantitatively tracking information within each report, therefore selection for this study needed to represent a dataset which was solely qualitative and appropriate for CDA. Yet their study does provide some guidance for this project, as they demonstrated and discuss how long analysing HMIP reports can take. This is something that was carefully reflected upon when establishing the selection strategy for the corpus in this research.

This study employed a specific strategy for selecting the corpus, through following the reflections above and using a focused selection based on a justification for analysis and on manageability. On justifying the corpus for analysis, Fairclough (1995: 51) offered a description of selection for CDA as a process engaged with a "principled basis for selecting cases", where he claims that such a basis is possible when analysts "treat their sample as *objets trouvés*". By this, Fairclough is referring to the capacity for the analysts to approach texts that are found to have a particular aesthetic value, where the analyst is not looking to change or adapt this value but to study the document for its worth. Therefore, an analyst approaches different texts by appreciating the contextual nature of each document and the overall corpus in terms of their relevance

to the problems under investigation within the study. Further examples within CDA demonstrate how authors acknowledge the genre and style of the text at the beginning of the analysis, as mentioned above this is an important part of contextually understanding the document (see Till, 2018). This is a common theme, which emphasises the importance of the process used for selecting the corpus for study. However, to do this, the study needed to consider the criteria of the corpus, to achieve the aims of the analysis, which required establishing a principled basis for each selection. Not having a strategy for selection for this study would be problematic due to the excessive number of documents available from HMIP and in the political sphere on prisons. Manageability and relevance to the subject of violence, self-harm, and suicide were therefore prioritised whilst selecting the corpus for this study.

The principled basis for selecting documents for this study was therefore based on the application that the documents have to the topics of violence, self-harm, and suicide; however, there was a difference for each corpus. Namely, that inspection documents always discuss these issues, whereas political debates, documents and commissions will not always draw on these subjects. It was at this point where two corpora needed to be considered separately due to the relevance and context to the discussions that they provide, where criteria for selection had to be based on different principles as the same would not apply. To determine the basis for selection I began by exploring different documents, first starting with inspection documents by reading and testing analysis on HMCIP's Annual Report for 2018-2019 (HMCIP, 2019). The main purpose of this was to consider how much content on violence, self-harm, and suicide could be seen within annual reports, to consider how many annual reports would be included in the prison inspection corpus. The same process was not needed for inspections on individual prisons as the discussions I had with Woodall, as well as my past experiences of these documents, provided an insight into the extent to which violence, self-harm, and suicide were seen within reports on individual prisons. This pilot study demonstrated the ability for CDA to be used on inspection documents, with clear conclusions drawn around the discourses seen within the document. The test also demonstrated how much analysis would arrive out of one document, which was important in considering the manageability of the project, in considering the

conversation with Woodall (Simpson, 2019). One important finding that emerged from this pilot was that the HMCIP report often referred to other documents and reports that they have contributed to, including reports and documents from political stakeholders. This provided a useful strategy to select the other corpus for political stakeholders, which until this point did not have a principled basis on which to select documents, there was therefore an opportunity to use the references seen within HMCIP and HMIP documents to support selection.

The selection strategies applied therefore provided a two staged approach for gathering the corpora for this study. The first stage was based on selection of Annual Reports from HMCIP and individual prison reports from HMIP and the second set of documents arriving from references within these reports for the political stakeholder corpus. Each approach offered a clear principles basis for their selection, and through testing, provided enough findings for CDA for extensive conclusions from each document. Manageability was therefore an important factor to still be considered. The reflections of the pilot study provided clear justification for selection based on relatively low numbers of documents, due to the amount of analysis that reading one document in its entirety could produce. Therefore, I decided that eight documents from HMCIP and HMIP would be appropriate, four annual reports and four individual prison reports. Selection for the HMCIP annual report was straight forward, four years were selected based on the start of Clarke's tenure as HMCIP in 2015, as this was the start of his time as HMCIP and thus allowed the study to focus on only one person in this position. Alongside the annual reports, four individual prison inspection reports were chosen, the method of selection for these documents was based on two criteria. The first is that they must have been published within the same years as the annual reports selected (2015 to 2019), secondly that they represent all types of prisons seen within England and Wales for adult offenders; local, high secure, female, and trainer prisons. Four prisons were chosen using the search engine embedded into HMIP's website, with searches using the names of the different types highlighted above. The corpus, of eight, for HMCIP and HMIP were therefore selected, detailed in figure 12. The four individual prison reports selected did have some limitations, as they were disproportionately representative of prisons from the north of England, with no prisons

being selected from Wales, and Birmingham being the most southern prison selected. This is due to the selection choice from the HMIP website presenting these prisons first when I searched for different prison types. However, it did include a variety of outcomes from HMIP, with HMP Humber receiving an overall positive inspection in comparison to HMP Birmingham, which received a negative report resulting in the UNP being used for immediate action. I argue that if the project was focused solely on prison inspection discourse, then a wider variety of prisons from across England and Wales could have been selected, building in geographical distance and prison population size into the principled basis for selection.

The second stage of selection was based on documents that were mentioned or highlighted within the Prison Inspection Corpus; however, I did not select every document cited within the reports, choosing instead documents cited in paragraphs that mentioned, violence, self-harm, or suicide. This approach took a strong reliance on HMCIP and HMIP referring to documents and was not fail-safe, as it relied on HMIPs choice to refer to a specific political document, and did not ensure that an equal number of documents were to be selected. However, it was considered that if eight documents did not appear then the study would utilise the most contemporary documents by the Home Office, MoJ, SoSfJ or HMPPS that directly addressed violence, self-harm, and suicide, as this would allow for a greater focus on the problems to emerge and will allow for a more detailed analysis of the multiple documents. This strategy did not ensure that each of the political stakeholder documents referred to by HMIP would include discussions on violence, self-harm, or suicide directly; indeed, within the final corpus there was one document that did not mention these problems directly and only provided fleeting comments on these issues (MoJ's (2016) review on the care and management of transgender offenders). Yet, I support this strategy for the study, as there was no other principled basis for selection. This is due to the widespread and dispersed nature of political documents, as opposed to HMIP documents they are not located in one database with clear searching facilities.

After the analysis of the prison inspection corpus was complete, eight documents were identified from a range of authors, with different means of communication and

stylistic practices. As the documents were much more diverse than the prison inspection corpus, I took careful consideration when reading them and often noted reflections on the type of communicative event they held.

Document Name	Author	Date	Context	No. of quotes selected (Total = 331)
HMCIP Annual Report 2018/2019	HMCIP	2019	Prison Inspection Annual Report	25
HMCIP Annual Report 2017/2018	HMCIP	2018	Prison Inspection Annual Report	34
HMCIP Annual Report 2016/2017	HMCIP	2017	Prison Inspection Annual Report	24
HMCIP Annual Report 2016/2015	HMCIP	2015	Prison Inspection Annual Report	39
HMP Humber (Trainer)	HMIP	2017	Individual Prison report	16
HMP Manchester (High Secure)	HMIP	2018	Individual Prison report	13
HMP Birmingham (Private Local)	HMIP	2018	Individual Prison report	32
HMP New Hall (Female)	HMIP	2019	Individual Prison report	11
Prisons and Courts Bill, Second Reading	House of Commons Debate	2017	House of Commons Debate on the Prisons and Courts Bill 2017, including many authors from different political parties held in verbal conversation in the House of Commons	28
Gauke to Clarke re .HMP Birmingham	Secretary of State for Justice – David Gauke	2018	A letter from David Gauke the SoSfJ to HMCIP Peter Clarke in response to the UNP sent about HMP Birmingham	3
Action Plan for HMP Birmingham	HMPPS	2018	HMPPS response to HMCIPs UNP letter, detailing the actions and intentions for practical changes in HMP Birmingham	9
Changing Prisons, Saving Lives: Report of the independent review into self-inflicted deaths in custody of 18-24 year olds.	The Harris Review	2015	A review commissioned by the Minister for Prisons in 2014. Constructed as a report to inform Parliament and produce recommendations on self-inflicting deaths.	51
Prison Reform: Part 1 of the Prisons and Courts Bill	House of Commons Justice Committee (JC)	2017	A report following a HoC Committee based on an inquiry into prison reform following the publication of the Prisons and Courts Bill 2017.	3

Document Name	Author	Date	Context	No. of quotes selected (Total = 331)
Prison Safety and Reform	Ministry of Justice (MoJ)	2016	A White Paper concerning the Conservative Government's agenda for prison reform, forward by the then SoSfJ Liz Truss.	25
Review on the Care and Management of Transgender Prisoners	Ministry of Justice (MoJ)	2016	A review conducted by the MoJ to update evidence and changes to the care of transgender prisoners.	4
Prison Health	House of Commons Health and Social Care Committee (HSCC)	2018	A report following a HoC Committee based on an inquiry into health concerns in prisons.	14

Figure 12: All documents selected for analysis, including information on author, year of publication, contextual information and the amount of quotations extracted.

The selection of the above corpora is by no means a perfect group of documents for this study, as there is an immeasurable amount that could be used to address these issues by these different groups. However, the selection for each corpus represent a diverse range of documents that address the issues of violence, self-harm, and suicide in prison through different communicative events and interactions with contextual differences in prisons, annual summaries of these issues, political messages, political communication, action planning and debate. The nature of the corpus used is also limited to time and circumstance, they quickly become positions that are often changed or outdated through changes in penal practice, political strategy, or changes in public policy. For example, two of the documents refer directly to a Bill that was withdrawn due to political decisions around suspending Parliament (see chapter 2). Also, the corpora selected did not represent findings, statistics, or discussions on self-harm during the Covid-19 pandemic and the initial lockdowns in 2020. Where circumstantial changes had impacted on the nature of these issues, which the new HMCIP Charlie Taylor identifies in his 2020-2021 (HMCIP, 2021: 31) report “with prisoners locked up for so many hours, incidents of violence initially fell, as did recorded self-harm among men in this period. However, the level of self-harm for

women in prison was consistently high". As a result, there are limits to a corpus used but these are limitations that cannot be overcome.

4.6: The Strategy of Analysis

Once the corpus for the study was selected, consideration needed to be given to the strategy of analysis, and how I was going to approach the documents. The 16 documents in the corpus had a large amount of material to access, interpret, and analyse, requiring careful management and organisation to make analysis accessible. The management of this analysis needed to be more than handwritten notes on documents, but instead focused on recording detailed thoughts on each quotation taken from the documents. This section outlines the strategy used to analyse, which was achieved through drawing together different analytical strategies from CDA and DA authors. Whilst CDA literature offers several approaches to analysing documents, not one alone can be selected for this study, as the examples seen in literature are not in context to this corpus and therefore not fully applicable to use as an analytical tool (Fairclough, 2010; 2003; Richardson, 2006). Instead, the CDA literature was used to draw out techniques and tools for conducting analysis, rather than replicating other researchers approaches.

4.6.1: Accessing Documents and Gathering Quotations

Accessing the corpus required online searching to find and download the PDF file for each document. The HMCIP and HMIP documents were taken directly from their website, and the political stakeholder documents were accessed through web-searching the document name, all except one - which was taken from the House of Commons Hansard website and copied onto a Microsoft Office Word document to make it accessible for reading. Once all documents in the corpus were downloaded, I approached each document individually to read them without drawing out quotations or conducting analysis. I did this for two reasons, the first was so that I could get a feel for each document and to understand the general discussions offered within, the second was to reflect on the context, genre, and style of each document, gathering

some notes to support analysis. This initial read was conducted for similar reasons seen within qualitative data analysis, where I treated the corpus as akin to an interview transcript, where familiarity with the transcript before analysis is often identified as best practice (Mason, 1998).

Once all documents were read, a thorough process was conducted to draw out the quotations that would be analysed. Quotations were only selected if they referred to violence, self-harm, or suicide, or were synonyms for these terms, such as ‘assaults’, ‘aggressive behaviour’, ‘self-harmer’, ‘self-inflicted death’, or any reference to ACCT. These terms were seen as connected or directly related to actions or behaviours of prisoners that are linked to the initial issues, such as the ACCT process beginning at signs of self-harm or suicidation by prisoners (Pike and George, 2019). Drawing out quotations was more straight forward in some documents, due to the separation and categorising of discussions as part of the style of the text. For example, the four HMCIP annual reports and the four HMIP reports have sections that specifically contextualise these issues; seen within the introduction and the sections on male and female imprisonment in HMCIP reports and ‘Safety’ in the HMIP individual prison reports. Therefore, the other sections were checked using word searching tools on the documents, rather than reading them again in full, with only a few quotations been found elsewhere in these documents. On the other hand, the documents from political stakeholders did not have similar stylistic subheading or structuring, they were therefore read in full, with word searching only being used to check that all quotations had been extracted from the document. The extraction of quotations does have some shortcomings, as paragraphs were only taken if terminology was present, therefore some other sections were not included due to them not using the terminology highlighted above, even if they were connected or a draw on from the quotation selected.

The importance of reflecting on these practices is analytical, as the genre and style of the text directed the separation and presentation of discussions, therefore giving credit to the ‘house’ format that communication and interaction is presented in. For example, inspection documents are to advise and report, policy documents and

debates are to provide political action and direction. Without appreciating these contextual differences in the genre of text the layers of meaning, could be missed in analysis as texts organise discourses and develop ideologies differently (Wodak, 2001; Wooffitt, 2005). Using the process above, quotations were extracted for the documents and places into a Microsoft Office OneNote document. The reason for using this software is due to the ease that it provided in working with a large proportion of texts in a seamless manner, as the software allows the use of tables to help organise and make analysis manageable. It is a tool which can utilise supportive software for dyslexia, through reducing lines and information on the screen, whilst allowing dictation and handwritten notes (Tessier, 2012). OneNote has already been attributed as a useful tool in qualitative research and particularly to the use of this software for transcribing, data management, the ability to use a search engine for notes, and to store files (Tessier, 2012). I found OneNote far easier during the pilot study - when I compared using OneNote, Microsoft Office Excel, and NVivo 12 - finding OneNote to be easier in recording analysis and in being able to view and use this analysis once completed.

4.6.2: Analysing Language and Discourse

Once quotations were gathered from each document a system of analysis followed which sought to unpack and draw out wider linguistic devices and discourses from within each quotation. This analysis was complex and often complicated, requiring thorough consideration to the quotation to be able to ask certain critical questions. Furthermore, the quotations needed to be analysed in context to the document, so that interpretation reflected its stylistic and discursive techniques to give greater credit to the overall analysis. Interpretation was important to consider due to this being my first experiences of conducting CDA, support for this from literature was helpful in providing some reflexive questions that were useful during analysis which supported interpreting linguistic techniques and discourses, allowing critical interpretations of texts. Wood and Kroger (2000: 91-95) offer guidance on interpretation in 15-points, although for DA more generally, these were used as an important reflexive tool when reading the documents and I found supported the

linguistic analysis more than the critical questions that this study applied. Below I summarise each point offered.

1. Consider reaction when reading the text, what emotion does it evoke and why?
2. Be careful of ignoring the obvious.
3. Focus on what the author is doing with the language, not ignoring the literal meaning, but how the literal is attempting to do something.
4. Consider what is not in the text – both content and form.
5. Consider the critical issue and whether that has any underlying tendencies in what is being said.
6. Play with the text, consider if phrases were omitted what the message might be, also consider syntax and what the text would sound like by a different speaker.
7. Look at the structure, shape, and order of how the text is constructed.
8. Be alert to functions of discourse, where is the text offering action, dominance, or repression.
9. Consider thinking about doing analysis as an English Literature student.
10. There may not always be the appropriate terminology to name a discourse or in naming one of its functions.
11. Categorising is not only something done during analysis, but also something that the author might do themselves.
12. Take nothing for granted, take a questioning as well as a comparative stance.
13. Be critical of how language is being used, consider grammar and terminology.
14. All ideas offered during reading will become a part of the analytical resources collected for the study.
15. Allow yourself to be an analyst, allow interpretive work to happen to help generate results.

Wood and Kroger's (2000) offer demonstrates the challenging analytical skills needed when undertaking analysis, providing a realistic, yet honest, account of where mistakes could be made during analysis and how fatiguing it can be. This study has taken these points as essential reflexive thinking which supported the interpretation of the quotations and to draw out discourses within the documents. Point 12 was particularly poignant for this project, as it reminded me of the importance of

constantly questioning what was being presented, and to consider how the language in documents presented specific ideological, rhetorical, and semiotic stance on the topic in question. Whilst also ensuring that I consider each quotation as being intertextual.

Such a reflexive approach for interpretation is useful for CDA as the purpose of the study is to address discourses, which “differently positioned social actors 'see' and represent ... in different ways” (Fairclough, 2003: 206). However, Wood and Kroger’s (2000) suggestions were not enough to begin analysis on the quotations drawn from the corpora, instead they supported the preparation for analysis, and provided a reflexive approach which was used to read them. Whilst a strong analytical base is needed for interpretation of a document, as it allows a researcher to explain the contents and main qualities of the quotation, it misses important features which seek to go beyond the quotation, addressing the discourse and action within texts. These features lay in the critical approach taken to analysis, brought out by analysing the linguistic techniques and discourses of texts (Fairclough, 2003; van Dijk, 2015; Richardson, 2006). Further questions are needed for DA to become critical, adding thoughts on misrepresentations, discrimination, or positions of power within analysis (Young and Fitzgerald, 2006). van Dijk (2016) suggests that by asking critical questions analysts can discuss and make claims around how power is used within the representation of the text, making claims about power abuse and dominance. Power presented through discourse in this manner is often referred to as the discursive power (van Dijk, 2015).

Identifying power, van Dijk (2015: 470) argues, can be found by asking several questions about the text and the context of it. The first is around “how do powerful groups control the text and context of public discourse?”, this question engages CD Analysts in asking how and in what capacity, powerful groups are presented and have agency to control the text and discourse at play. In other words, how is the document an example of discursive power? The second question posed by van Dijk (2015: 470) is “how does such power discourse control the minds and actions of less powerful groups, and what are the social consequences of such control?”, this question engages

analysts in addressing how discourses have the propensity to influence and provide action around the social problem, based on a discursive position of those who have agency to direct action. The third question relates to the structure of the discourse, where van Dijk (2015: 470) asks “what are the properties of the discourse of powerful groups, institutes and organisations and how are such properties forms of power abuse”. This question brings together the content of the discourse and seeks to identify how powerful bodies use content to organise, carry and reproduce power. The importance of van Dijk’s (2015) critical questions helps support and identify the sort of overarching thinking that is required for CDA and supports a further reflexive approach to analysis beyond that which was seen by Wood and Kroger (2000). For this study van Dijk’s critical questions were essential in providing discussion points for conclusions, as they encourage discussions on power, relationships, and context of discourses. Such questions are useful for a comparative CDA as van Dijk’s (2015) questions help theoretical discussion beyond the ability to explain similarities or differences that is often identified with comparative CDA (Fairclough, 2010).

The above strategies from Fairclough (2003), van Dijk (2015), and Wood and Kroger’s (2000), offer excellent theoretical discussion on the use of CDA. However, there were practical limits to their advice. Whilst they provide essential thinking tools for analysts they did not demonstrate how and in what capacity the analyst will look for answers to such questions. There are also pieces of advice that would appear to be too vague for those who might consider themselves novice in discourse analysis. To tackle this, I explored wider literature that offered practical insight to discourse analysis, where focus is paid to the process of conducting textual analysis. Within this reading, I used Richardson’s (2006) explanation when analysing newspapers, he demonstrated different levels of textual analysis supporting the process from reading a document and finding discursive techniques used from micro-textual through to macro-textual. Richardson (2006) notes this as a progression which he represented schematically, below, based on where propositions lay, and what type of textual analysis is being completed (Richardson, 2006: 47).

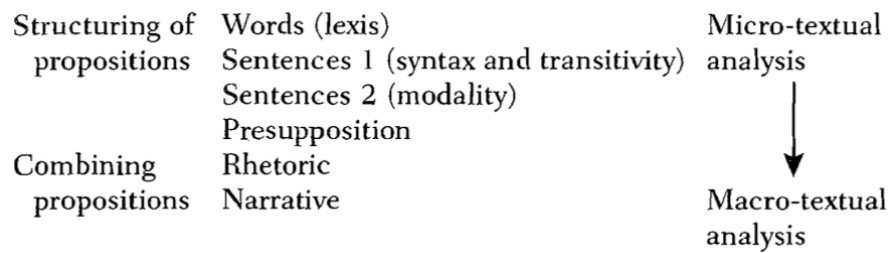


Figure 13: Richardson's (2006) schematic from micro-textual to macro-textual analysis

He demonstrated that analysis of text tends to scale from discussions on terms through to narrative of the text, from the micro to the macro, and from structuring propositions to combining them. Whilst Richardson (2006) uses this scale to explain linguistic analysis of newspaper text, it can also be seen as a schematic of what is taken during linguistic analysis of discourses. Interestingly, this levelled approach to analysis was seen throughout the pilot study as the findings presented a discussion on the propositions from words, naming and referencing, sentence construction and the judgments that were presented throughout, denoting a particular discursive position. The pilot study therefore demonstrated the ability of Richardson's (2006) linguistic analysis to work for other reports, and therefore parts of his analytical strategy were implemented for this study.

The strategy for analysis used in this study therefore needed to be a combination of the reflexive questions offered on discourse analysis (Wood and Kroger, 2000), the critical questions used for CDA (van Dijk, 2015), and the practical considerations of micro to macro-textual analysis (Richardson, 2006). Whilst there is extensive literature surrounding more intricate and nuanced practice of CDA, with leading authors offering extensive works on the skills needed for linguistic analysis for social science (Fairclough, 2003; 2010; Richardson, 2006; Young and Fitzgerald, 2006; Machin and Mayr, 2012; Wodak and Mayer, 2016; Wood and Kroger, 2000), it seemed appropriate for this study to orientate analytical strategies to fit the necessity of this project. Furthermore, as this study focused on a comparative CDA (Fairclough, 2010), it was also considered that the advice on critical questions needed to be contextually different to allow for clearer analysis that draws on comparative explanation. As highlighted above the sort of critical questions asked by van Dijk (2015) represent

questions that explore powerlessness in discourse, whereas the questions needed for this study, highlighted earlier, focus more on the identifying similarities and differences between discourses. Such contextual differences are important for each project and as such this study drew on different questions, albeit in a similar style, to van Dijk.

4.6.2: Developing Critical Questions

Taking the above advice, I created a system of questions to support my analysis of each quotation. The questions were used to remind and record analytical thoughts based on the reflexive and critical questions addressed by Wood and Kroger (2000) and van Dijk (2015), to not only guide analysis but to make recording analysis manageable. I started these questions by considering the micro-textual structure and content of each quotation, looking specifically at the choice of language used and the extent to which they structure propositions within each quotation (Richardson, 2006). I drew on the specific terminology, phrases, and noted my reflections on the terms in that context and whether it lends to a referential strategy, or a term used as a discursive device. An example of this from the inspection corpus was the use of terminology to denote statistical significance, where terms like ‘increase’ or ‘decrease’ were used instead of providing the numerical statistic (more on this later). Interpretation of such terminology provided questions on why terms were being used rather than numerical figures, and reflections were based on how such lexicon choices guided interpretation of rates on violence, self-harm, and suicide in prison. The next set of questions focused on what is represented within sentences, focusing on transitivity and modality (Richardson, 2006), or what Fairclough (2010: 94) calls “pragmatic analysis” which “lies between text and discourse practice”. These questions therefore sought to make more meaning beyond what is seen in micro-textual analysis and focuses on the gap between micro and macro textual analysis. For example, such as ‘what action can be seen within sentences?’, ‘how is truth being presented?’, and ‘what is missing from the text?’ were used in this study to consider specific terminology that highlights action and direction, truth (authoritative) and

obligatory (when an author believes in a specific action or position) modality, and what is missing from explanations and discussions. Such 'pragmatic analysis' is important and useful in demonstrating particular representations and experiences of the world, identity of the author and reader, and the location of belief and values within texts (Fairclough, 2010). The next set of questions included were based loosely on van Dijk's (2015) critical questions, focusing on the presentations of the use of power and the location of power that the author demonstrates within texts. The final questions gave opportunity to reflect on any comparative or conflicting discourses at play and an opportunity for any additional notes or thoughts that appeared during analysis.

The above staged questions were then placed into a matrix to support the manageability of analysis and to give greater focus to each quotation directly with each question. The information collected for each quotation was therefore based on 11 pieces of information.

1. Quotation: verbatim from the document.
2. Page number: to support referencing.
3. What terms or phrases are used and what do they represent, and what does thoughts do these give to the reader?
4. What action or transivity is the quotation presenting?
5. What context is this action presented in, how does it apply to violence, self-harm, or suicide?
6. What is missing from the quotation?
7. How is truth presented in the quotation, and how is this modality presented?
8. How is power presented within the quotation?
9. Where is the location of power within the quotation?
10. Does the quotation offer any comparison or conflicts with other discourses?
11. Were there any additional thoughts that?

These questions are by no means the ideal for analysing documents for CDA, indeed other researchers will benefit from their own questions contextualised to their project and their experiences of navigating through literature. However, I felt that the above questions captured a mix of the advice I had taken from literature and therefore

supported what I believed to be the correct questions for conducting my analysis. Using these questions proved to be helpful in engaging and critically thinking about each quotation, whilst each quotation did not provide an answer to every question, the reflexive thinking felt supportive during analysis.

Each quotation was then processed with the questions above, until both corpora were completed to create a detailed matrix which provided analysis for all quotations extracted from documents. There were 331 extracted quotations from the 16 documents, each was processed through the matrix and associated questions, producing a large-scale analytical data set (see example in appendix 1). As this was an extensive data set for qualitative research, it was essential that I could sort, organise, and access my analytical notes in a manageable style. To do this I used a separate OneNote page for each document, so that I could use the software's search engine on individual documents, and so that all extracted quotations were not presented in one long matrix. This provided space to note the important contextual information of each document, as well as recording reflections on style and genre. Whilst I applied techniques of data set management, I had to also develop a strategy to move beyond data analysis in large matrix tables and move towards thematic narratives that I could use to draw out conclusions. As already mentioned, Richardson's (2006) schematic for producing analysis from micro to macro was utilised for this study so that lexicon choices, truth modalities, and wider discourse structures could emerge during the discussions. Indeed, this development of discussion from lexicon to narrative would then form the basis for the four analysis chapters that follow, therefore I had to approach my data set in a manner that would allow for these different levels of analysis. Yet, I took the strategy of approaching the dataset in full in four different occasions, the first to thematically develop lexis analysis, the second to contend with propositions, the third to consider modalities, and the fourth to consider wider discourse structures. Whilst this was a timely process, it yielded four thematic narratives for discussion on datafication, accountability, causality, and veiling. The benefit of the final stage of thematic analysis supported the development of recognising the comparative use of discourses in both corpora, supported by the critical question highlighted earlier on 'how do any similarities and differences explain

the issues of violence, self-harm, and suicide; and what are the consequences of these similarities and differences?'. This final stage of analysis was done similar to other inductive strategies, as it brought forward other theoretical explanations to explain the consequences of the comparisons between the two corpora. The final stage of thematic analysis required taking selected quotations and collections that could be grouped together to form smaller collection of quotations, allowing easier narrative construction for writing.

4.7: Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the methodology of this study, addressing the choice of using comparative CDA and how it was applied to the corpus. CDA as a research methodology has the potential to open important critical questions for social sciences, around how language can enact, produce, reproduce, and reinforce powered difference through action seen in language and discourse (van Dijk, 2015). This study utilised CDA in a comparative style, one which allowed for similarities and differences to be seen between two groups and their positions on violence, self-harm, and suicide. I outline how comparative CDA is justified for this study, through recognising that it provides an outlet for a staged approach to analysis, taking inspiration from Richardson (2006) in developing analysis from a micro-linguistic to a macro-discursive approach that allows a build-up of discussion to support the critical questions that have been established for this study. The 16 documents selected from two groups provides a corpus which has a clear principled basis for selection, centred around the contextual narrative of violence, self-harm, and suicide within their documents. Once the corpus was selected the documents were then analysed utilising advice seen from CDA literature (Fairclough, 2010; 2003; van Dijk, 2015; Wood and Kroger, 2000; Richardson, 2006) on interpretation, asking critical questions, and moving from micro-textual analysis to macro-textual analysis. These suggestions from literature were therefore used to produce a matrix for which quotations were analysed to draw out specific linguistic and discursive devices used in the presentation of claims around violence, self-harm, and suicide. The production of this matrix allowed the vast collection of quotations to be thematically analysed through the stages approach

suggested by Richardson (2006), so that conclusions could be drawn. The following chapters demonstrate the conclusions of this analysis, starting with a discussion on datafication and dehumanisation through micro-linguistic techniques, second on discourses of accountability through analysis of rhetoric and practice, then discussion moves towards discourses of accountability through identification of wider discourse structures seen intertextually in the corpora, before finally drawing discussions together to recognise the consequences of the similarities and differences from the two groups.

Chapter Five: Dehumanising Through Datafication

5.1: Introduction

The previous chapter highlighted the approach taken in conducting comparative CDA on the selected corpus for this thesis, presenting an overview of how I understand the practices of CDA and how I constructed a strategy for analysis used throughout the thesis. Within the previous chapter (figure 13) I detailed how CDA often starts micro-textual analysis before moving to macro-textual analysis, recognising the range of analysis seen within studies. The analysis completed in this study likewise follows Richardson's schematic, with this chapter exploring a key range of diverse findings on the discursive positions of HMIP and different political stakeholders on violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons. Throughout my analysis I identified a prominent micro-linguistic theme, where datafication was seen as a dominant practice in the style of communication offered – however I identified this as a practice that dehumanised prisoners. There was evidence that datafied approaches to the three problems existed in a dehumanising fashion, which had become normalised within speeches and documents by different actors. Dehumanisation can be understood to take many different guises (Stollznow, 2008: 183), and has been referred to as to “psychologically ‘stripping’ away the human characteristics of someone through mistreatment”. It therefore represents a process whereby the individuals or processes lose or become detached from perceptions of humanity, or a reduction into something being ignored or meaningless. However, in this chapter, I apply this term to describe this strategy of de-personalising the human experiences of violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons, through tactics of communication. In this chapter, I claim that dehumanisation is seen within the language used in the corpus and that this has become normalised to downplay the human experiences on the issues. In this chapter I discuss two discursive practices, dehumanisation and normalisation, by identifying how the documents use a range of discursive devices and lexicon technologies based on data. This chapter therefore proposes a challenge to do dominant strategies used in communication, calling for humanised and compassionate language use on the topics of violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons.

Within the corpus examples of dehumanisation were identified through the choice of words and phrases presented by different actors. Examples were identified where choice phrases had connotations that presented dehumanising tropes, where a prisoner's human characteristics were stripped away and replaced with data. This section unpacks these examples, exhibiting them as 'discursive devices' that are used within the documents. Within discourse analysis literature, the concept of a 'device' is recognised through the strategies applied in language, used to present a reality and position on a matter (Wodak and Meyers, 2016; Whittle et al, 2009). Discursive devices are therefore how language can be used to communicate a position. They represent the "micro-linguistic tools that people use in interaction to construct a particular version of the world and their relationship to it" (Mueller and Whittle, 2011:189). By exploring the dominant discursive devices that use dehumanising tropes, this chapter advances the overall aims of this research by explaining how language shapes rhetoric and realities around violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons. To do this, the chapter begins with establishing the practices of discursive devices and how they are applied to dehumanise prisoner's experiences. Next, I explain how datafication and data-visualisation are seen throughout the corpora, before going on to address how HMIP and political stakeholders use these discursive devices. The final section of this chapter explains how these devices have become normalised by both groups, identifying the dominance of this approach and challenging these practices.

5.2: Datafication and Data Visualisation

To develop my argument on dehumanisation seen within the documents analysed, I want to start by drawing attention to how the use of data subtly mobilises dehumanising tropes. Within many disciplines discussions on numbers are connected to the concepts of datafication and data visualisation. These concepts are discussed alongside key debates in business (Mayer-Schönberg and Cukier, 2013; Lycett, 2013), media and social media (Mejias and Couldry, 2019), sociological studies of big data

(Sadowski, 2019), education, and journalism (Kennedy and Hill, 2018; 2016; Kennedy et al, 2019; Kennedy, 2018), all offering a contextual application to data practices. Datafication refers to the process of social phenomena being communicated through data (Mejias and Couldry, 2019), and data visualisation, referring to the practice of the presentation of data and reactive audiences (Kennedy and Hill, 2019). Throughout the corpus, data was used and normalised during discussions on violence, self-harm, and suicide, which I noticed as a concentrated finding. However, this use was beyond the simple presentation of findings or ‘facts’, but instead constituted a discursive device that promoted several forms of action, including reductionism, dehumanisation, and guiding readers interpretation.

Datafication is a concept that details the process of how human life has transformed into numerical measures, bringing a quantification that provides the ability to ‘tabulate and analyse’ social life through different quantitative analytical frameworks and tests (Mayer-Schönberg and Cukier, 2013). It involves data collection through the separation then rebundling of social life, by recording information numerically and without nuanced explanation (Lycett, 2013). This transformation includes the process of abstraction, referring to altering and converting information through specific value sets that are constructed and determined by data collectors and controllers. A process where data can transform “life processes into ‘things’ with value” (Mejias and Couldry, 2019: 5). For example, applying specific criteria to determine the extent of a violent incident or self-harm – which is often seen within penological literature (Fazel et al, 2011; Slade et al, 2014; Hawton et al, 2014). ‘Value’ from data denotes action that is applied to different practices, like fuel for a car, it provides the energy that allows movement and direction to take place. For example, datafication can be seen through practices in online streaming services, like Netflix, as it quantifies people’s pleasure over certain viewing preferences to make suggestions and to promote shows to audiences (Lycett, 2013), or how a business might seek to advertise, and in how prisons are reported on and discussed in different locations in political and public life. There is therefore a “datafication of everything” (Mayer-Schönberg and Cukier, 2013: 93-94) and a datafying of the world, which is evident throughout social life, interaction through technology, business, education, advertisement, and prison life.

The datafication of the world provides a way of seeing and interacting with human life through different means, encouraging data as a means of communicating human experience, social life, and daily interaction, becoming a cultural artifact through the way data is used to produce reality (Sadowski, 2019). Data is now used as a dominant method of discussing, assessing, and judging social life and as such has seeped into all areas of human existence (Mejias and Couldry, 2019). Indeed, datafication is a prominent feature of neoliberal change in all public services (not just prisons), with the rise of NPM producing the need to measure standards and performance, a key feature of auditing, with the principal notion of measuring accountability being seen through datafied means (Boin et al, 2006; Hood, 1991; McLaughlin et al, 2001). Throughout the corpus, I identified that data dominance was seen during communications on violence, self-harm, and suicide by both groups. When one of these topics was introduced, it was typical to see data offered early in discussions, with narratives starting with data before then applying this to wider rhetoric. I saw this as a specific example of a discursive device, as it is a chosen strategy employed by authors and speakers so that they can base their claims and judgements on data. For example, the White Paper *Prison Safety and Reform* (MoJ, 2016a: 6), opened its main discussion on violence and self-harm through data, to set the scene, scope, and tone of the claims offered throughout the document.

“Rates of violence and self-harm have increased significantly in recent years. Assaults on prison staff increased by 43% in the 12 months to June this year, while self-harm increased by just over a quarter. The number of self-inflicted deaths increased by 13% in the 12 months to September this year”.

The quotation demonstrates a data dominance in discussions of violence, self-harm, and suicide, with the device reducing the human elements on the three issues. It shows omission of phrases or comments to demonstrate the victimised experiences, traumatic responses, or pain that prisoners experience. Instead, the quotation presents data to communicate an increase in these problems, leaving readers open to interpretation on the origins and the solutions to the problem. The example also depersonalises prisoners, as there is no discussion or acknowledgment to prisoners,

to the gender of prisoners, and to any incidence of staff-on-prisoner violence. The quotation is pre-occupied with setting a narrative based on data, or a data story, rather than indicating who is experiencing the violence and self-harm. I argue that this represents the extent to which data dominance prevails in communication of the topics and how depersonalising can occur during early stages of data visualisation, with authors seeking to problematise rather than humanise. Datafication as a discursive device can therefore be used to mystify the human experience based on the authors choice of how and when explanation beyond data is offered. For example, with the data shown above, there was the option to use the data after explanation for the rise in incidents. Such a revision would reflect a choice to humanise before problematising. The quotation above therefore demonstrates a datafied dominance, to dehumanise the problems in prison through missing details and explanations that can be observed during closer critique. Kennedy and Hill (2018) recognise that in processes of data visualisation arguments are often missed, such as why are experiences in prison so dangerous for prison staff, and what is causing the increase in suicides in prison?

A second important concept for this section is data visualisation, which Kennedy and Hill (2019: 831) discuss as the methods by which complex data is delivered and presented to audiences with the intention of making data “transparent and accessible” for non-experts. Methods of data visualisation are an important component of presentation, as it contends with both numerical and visual styles of communication that produce claims and arguments for audiences. Kennedy and Hill highlight in several works (2018; 2016; Kennedy et al, 2019; Kennedy, 2018) that the need for data visualisation has become excessively combined with the increasing datafying of human and social life that has previously been presented through qualitative means. The consequences of datafication and increasing diversity in data visualisation results in a reduction of detailed knowledge on specific social issues and limits critical explanations that allow scrutiny to take place (Kennedy, 2018). The visualisation of data has increased to a cultural practice where data is now interpreted as ‘objective’ in its approach of providing information, thus appearing as ‘factual’ and unquestionable to readers (Kennedy and Hill, 2018). By presenting

data as objective unquestionable truths, authors can avoid critical information in data analysis, such as how the data was collected, and who was used as a sample. This means that those presenting data must focus on how their audiences visualise information, how they interpret the data, and how they emotionally react to it. This engaged with processes of information and impression management, and thus the omission of key information (Kennedy and Hill, 2018). Data visualisation therefore represents a practice that attempts to be objective and personable at the same time, presenting a contradictory state. The benefits of having personal connections to data helps people make judgments, such as claims of good or bad, effective or ineffective; making context important in producing decisions and the choice of how the data is visualised for a specific argument (Kennedy and Hill, 2018). An example from the corpus was seen in the HoC debate on the Prisons and Court Bill (2017), where Labour MP Harriet Harman utilises discursive devices to make her claim on the issues of suicide in prison.

“When the state takes someone into custody, we have a duty to keep them safe—their life becomes our responsibility—yet prisons are not a place of safety. Last year, 12 women and 107 men took their own lives while in prison in the custody of the state. This Bill affords us the important opportunity to change the law to prevent these tragic deaths, and we must seize that opportunity because the problem is urgent and growing.”

Harman’s comments provide both an emotive connection to the issue through her purposeful emotional language, such as ‘tragic’, and a personal connection she draws to the issue, through referring to ‘our responsibility’, and ‘we must seize the opportunity because the problem is urgent and growing’. Harman also makes a noteworthy choice of words when referring to ‘women and ... men... while in prison’, removing the stigmatised trope of ‘prisoner’, maybe to personalise and humanise those who take their own lives. These phrases sandwich the data offered in an instrumental way to produce greater connection between the people she is speaking to (other MPs) and direct wider audiences. Weaponizing the data to encourage interventions. There are arguments to suggest that this example humanises the data, through purposeful presentation of emotion and ownership of the issues. However, I

claim that this quotation is still dehumanising, as there is a presentation of data for a political reason, rather than for the betterment of experiences of prisoners.

This example therefore demonstrates how dehumanisation through datafication can be layered or presented in nuanced ways. One way can be seen through the use of datafied language itself through data stories, as expressed earlier this depersonalises human experiences and navigates narrative away from lived experiences. A second way can be seen through mobilising human stories for political gain, where the politicalisation of prisoners appears to put pressure on report writers through mobilising prisoner's experiences, thus dehumanising prisoners lived experiences for political ends. This second way of dehumanisation can be argued to be an outcome of neoliberal rule, of dysfunctions of the British state, and the rise of data working synonymously. Such an approach recognises the politicisation of prisoners, which draws on wider stylised ways of addressing problems and framing information. Whilst Harman's response is personal and emotive, it focuses on supporting political action, not on detailing the human suffering and distress in prisons, which is still missing in this quotation.

5.3: Datafication and Prison Inspection

The predisposition of datafication can therefore be seen to be a widespread practice within public services, with HMIP not falling short of this dominance in language and presentation. Within the HMIP corpus examples of datafication and data visualisation were seen in contextually different practices to politicians, with a comparative difference between the two groups. For HMIP, data had a dominant position in most discussions on violence, self-harm, and suicide and was often presented and applied in a diverse range of different datasets and through differing practices of visualisation. Calling the practice of HMIP datafied is justified, as they continuously refer to data that they gather to generate their findings, which then produced their judgments on each prison and for all prisons across England and Wales. With much of this data taken from the questionnaires that are given to all prisoners and from the data that is taken

from the prison directly –often referred to as part of the prisons own analysis of the three problems. Their utilisation of data goes beyond description of individual counts, as they base their judgements on wider data sets allowing for historical and national comparisons. I argue that the HMCIPs have a large part to play in the styling of HMIPs reports, as changes in practice have been identified in readings from other HMCIPs. For example, Taylor (HMCIP from 2020 till present) provides quotations from prisoners much more than Clarke. The below therefore demonstrates a snapshot and summary of the datafied practices that were seen during the leadership of Clarke as HMCIP – with no comparative analysis with other HMCIPs included. The example below presents a clear reliance on data around violence, and whilst the presentation here is not shown in a quantified capacity (to be discussed later) it does demonstrate claims around datafied practices to support and provide weight to the concern that the inspectorate had over violence. This example demonstrates that HMCIP uses data from different sources, which could be a practice they are utilising to increase the legitimacy of their claim and to indicate a pattern to produce greater weight and credence. This makes audiences confident about their judgements and limiting opportunity for criticality.

“Violence had once again increased in almost every prison across the male estate. National offender management service data (NOMS) up to December 2015 confirmed this concerning increase in reported assaults” (HMCIP, 2016: 20)

Throughout this quotation there are several claims being presented from data, such as the first sentence which outlines an increase, but without presentation of numerical form and with the added phrase of ‘once again’ demonstrating a continuation within the trends. Directive language is also used to position audiences on the data, such as ‘concerning increase’ which denotes that the increase is unwelcomed and a cause for worry. Whilst HMCIP are making several claims within this example, they are carefully presenting this data specifically in attempt to demonstrate the source location and ownership, such as when they mentioned NOMS data and through carefully presentation of data with phrases ‘reported assaults’, suggesting the possibility of more incidents taking place that are not presented within the dataset.

Within reports HMIP often referred to several locations that they use to gather data and to construct datasets. Despite gathering and interpreting their own data during inspections, they often refer to this data as a way of demonstrating prisoner's voices on the topics, rather than quotations. This is often demonstrated in their reports through similar practices to this example from HMP New Hall.

“In our survey, 46% of prisoners said that they had felt threatened or intimidated by other prisoners and much of this was linked to debt” (HMIP, 2019c: 12)

Phrases such as ‘prisoners said’ or ‘prisons told us’ are common throughout the documents and work as a device for HMIP to show prisoners thoughts, emotions, or experiences. There could be some claim here to say that this is an attempt to humanise prisoners, providing a platform to engage in discussions on violence. However, an important finding in my analysis is that this ‘prisoner voice’ was only ever presented through numerical or datafied phrasing. It is highly likely that the ‘voice’ being gathered was not through direct conversation, but instead through HMIPs internal questionnaire to all prisoners. For example, the quotation above offers a percentage based on the number of prisoners that agreed with a statement in a questionnaire, it provides a closed answer to a closed question and does not give opportunity for more complex or nuanced claims. The quotation demonstrates how datafied approaches to showing prisoner voices reduces detail, this device is therefore reductionist. Indeed, the quotation does not even tell us how many prisoners were surveyed, leaving this percentage - a choice selection for data visualisation- to provide this claim. This is a long way from the humanised experience that the quotation denotes through the word ‘said’, early in the sentence, misleading the reader into a humanised thought process – instead the word ‘reported’ or ‘responded that’ would have been more truthful and accurate. The choice of terminology in this sentence is an important example of an attempt to humanise in a datafied discussion – which I argue is misleading and deceptive to the reader. There is also an important caveat to add to my analysis here, in that the above is novel of the documents I had selected for analysis. Since the end of Clarke’s tenure as HMIPC, prisoner voices have been engaged

with differently in documents, with Taylor using direct quotations from prisoners to engage their experiences; this was first seen in a thematic review *What Happens to Prisoners in a Pandemic* (HMIP, 2021). Demonstrating that different HMCIPs hold authority over the house-style used within inspectorate reports, and not all approach the issue of prisoner voice in the same way as they choose different visualisation practices.

It is clear from my analysis of HMIP documents that persuasion is a prominent feature of their writing and engagement with offering judgements on prisons. A particular discursive device I noted was how HMIP built several datasets into one claim or argument. This, I believe, is HMIPs process of applying data to ‘triangulate’ their findings which they use to strengthen, legitimise and solidify their judgments (Bennett, 2014; Hardwick, 2016). The example below draws on claims on the opening of ACCT within HMP New Hall, a female prison. Within the example HMIP refer to three data sets, one is from data collected by HMP New Hall, the second, is on the data that HMIP used when they last inspected the prison, and the third is using data from other female prisons that HMIP have inspected. The discussion of the data in this quotation is limited, with only statement like attention being given to this section of the quotation. Indeed, the section on data avoids phrasing of judgment, as can also be seen elsewhere in the example.

“There had been 419 ACCT opened in six months before the inspection, which was higher than when we last inspected and compared with other women's prisons. A knew ACCT case management system had been introduced and all those subject to the process now had a named case manager in the residential unit. Most staff understood self-harm triggers and prisoners individual care needs. The majority of care maps included targets and specific actions, but too many daily entries were purely observational and lacked any detail of staff interactions with prisoners. Prisoners we spoke to are positive about the support they receive from staff. As at the previous inspection, not all ACCT reviews were multidisciplinary.” (HMIP, 2019c: 21-22).

The distinct lack of discussion or detail within this example further demonstrates HMIPs attempt to outline and present findings based on a range of sources. The data

at the opening is set to provide a wider backdrop to the issue of self-harm and suicide, but the latter explanation offers limited connectivity to this data. However, HMIP attempt to triangulate their data findings through alternative methods, yet these claims are often limited in discussion and depth, leaving the reader to interpret the data and the claims that they are offering in this quotation. This can be further exemplified through the use of the phrase 'too many', where we are not told the numerical basis for this claim, instead we get a value judgment presented in a datafied manner. These vague quantifiers, such as 'most', 'the majority', and 'not all' are often open to interpretation as their meaning is shaped by the author and what they wish to present.

Data was also used throughout HMCIP and HMIP reports by providing specific and direct presentation of numbers. For example, practices of visualisation expand beyond providing only the count for a specific issue, such as self-harm, but promote the importance of such rises in counts through applying a yearly comparison to present and produce an outlook which shows a worsening for prisons. There are many examples throughout the corpus which seek to demonstrate these comparisons, such as auditing practices are evident within inspection across public services (Davis and Martin, 2008) and something that Bennett (2014) suggests HMIP are trying to resist in their practices. Bennett (2014) argues that one role of HMIP which forms their practice of public accountability is to highlight problems, identify alternatives and give a benchmark of acceptable and unacceptable standard which prisons can be measured and judged against. To do this they shape and create organisational norms, by constructing new standards and identifying improvements, they are advocating and agitating for improvement (Bennett, 2014). Whilst this can be seen to some respects within quotations, I argue that the practice of datafication reduced the quality that Bennett suggests, instead comparison and benchmarking is offered with omission to the advocacy suggested. HMIP instead often relied on data stories, producing a reduction in detail and atomising the human responses to issues of self-harm. The below quotation is an example of this, presented more as audit or data stories, rather than addressing the lived experiences of prisoners. Such data stories are presented in different ways, one way is to utilise precise numerical figures, an alternative approach

is to provide no numbers but instead a claim over the audit. In this case an arguably positive reduction in self-inflicted deaths which HMCIP choose to not provide a numerical comparison to.

“Levels of self-harm had risen, from 40,161 report in incidents in 2016, to 44,651 in 2017 - an increase of 11%. Self-inflicted deaths had reduced over the last year, but numbers remained high” (HMCIP, 2018; 23)

The data stories utilised in inspection reports are purposefully chosen. Choice is an important feature of writing, and the strategies of presenting data stories are different in this quotation for specific reasons. The first sentence utilises precise numerical presentation due to a high range that it can show to a reader, however the numbers offered do not account for wider changes in the prison, such as the changes in prison population. The choice of the author to not offer this detailed discussion over the construction and consequences of prison life on this data is therefore missing and would not constitute the advocacy that Bennett (2014) suggest is seen within the ‘art’ of prison inspection. The second sentence offers a device which chooses not to present data in a numerical form, instead applying choice phrases to keep discussion data dominant, but to guide interpretation with vague quantifiers, such as ‘reduced’ or ‘numbers remain high’. There is much that could be speculated around this choice, for example is this because the reduction in question looks low in numerical form by small percentage margins, or through one or two incidents less? I argue that this is a clear discursive device that seeks to present a guided interpretation for the sake of the claim HMIP wish to make. But the device guides readers interpretation through omission of information, rather than showing them directly. This approach does not mislead readers, but instead reduces the complexity by removing the avenues for readers to include their own analysis and judgement.

The above examples represent devices that HMIP utilise to present a particular reality to these issues within prisons, using wide datasets to increase legitimacy and through using vague quantifiers to guide readers interpretations. But they also provide a starting point on which judgments can be made. Judgement construction is a central

feature of HMIPs reports, as a body of public accountability they are legislatively tasked with ‘reporting’ on treatment and conditions in prisons (CJA, 1982). Therefore, HMIP seek to produce statements that allow for their judgments to be legitimised by readers, which is where other datafied discursive strategies are then applied. For example, some of HMIPs claims are legitimised using comparative data, which they draw on to conclude claims around the quality of work done in prisons on violence, self-harm, and suicide. This example is about violence in HMP Manchester and uses a comparative count-based method of demonstrating increase.

“Forty-five of these were assaults on staff compared to 30 previously, and 132 were assaults on prisoners compared with 44 at the last inspection. There had been 45 fights over this period compared with 39 last time.” (HMIP, 2018: 20)

This quotation shows clear judgement on the rates of violence, despite not directly stating this as part of the quotation. Judgement is shown through the choice statistics, where each can be shown to have increase since a previous inspection. HMIP use phrases such as ‘compared to’, ‘last inspection’, and ‘last time’ to denote a change in period and to allow readers to produce judgements. HMIP are taking an approach here of allowing the data to ‘speak for itself’, so that readers can recognise issues of violence at HMP Manchester are increasing and that this is problematic, requiring blame to be located. It delivers to readers an unquestionable judgment with comparable data, without providing detail behind the change in data or to rationalise why these increases might be the case. As with other examples, HMIP choose to be vague in their details, as to deliver a ‘heavy punch’ and data story around issues of violence.

Throughout HMIPs reports the discursive devices show the extent to which they engage in a data dominant practice, which quantifies and presents issues of violence, self-harm, and suicide through careful choice in data presentation. The quotations above show the different devices used, demonstrating how data dominance had become a method of communication and a device for assessing and judging the prison(s). I claim that this is like the discursive shift seen elsewhere in policymaking (Hajer, 1995) and public accountability (Walsh, 1995). It can therefore be claimed that

the “‘things’... transformed into data” (van Dijck, 2014: 1478) are their judgments on the prison, thus data becomes the discursive device through which audiences can assess each prison through the metrics, evaluations, and performance management that are seen during inspection practice. There are some interesting practices seen within the HMIP corpus, such as the dominance of data, the attempt to problematise before humanising, reductionist tropes used which provide limited detail, and how phrasing is used to guide readers interpretations with vague quantifiers.

5.4: Datafication and Political Stakeholders

The context of each document within the political stakeholder corpus is important to consider, as political debates have different communication activities than that of a Parliamentary Report or Commission. I therefore need to discuss these documents as heterogeneous and cannot discuss them with homogeneity, as can be said with HMIP documents. This means that there were different discursive devices at play depending on the contextual nature of that document (van Dijk, 2015). For example, the Harris Review was a report commissioned to review self-inflicted deaths of young people in prison between 18-25. The report was thorough in its explanation, application, and recommendations made to contend with the issues of self-harm and suicide. The thorough nature of this report also applied rigorous detail on the use of data, where statistical overview was chosen to be visualised, throughout, with depth and precision.

“The rate of self-inflicted deaths amongst 18-24 year olds has tended to vary, due to the smaller numbers within the group. In 2003 there were 1.20 incidents per 1,000 18-24 year olds within the prison population. Since then, the rate has generally declined, with the lowest rate of 0.29 incidents per 1,000 18-24 year old prisoners in 2006. Similar to the trend for all prisoners, the rate of self-inflicted deaths increased in 2013 for 18-24 year olds” (Harris, 2015: 22).

The Harris Review was the most similar in style to HMIP, in that much of the document was reporting or reviewing self-inflicted death in prisons, as well as offering recommendations based on the analysis of information reviewed. It is therefore surprising to see the extent of difference. This quotation demonstrates the

datafication of self-inflicted deaths, demonstrating specific and detailed data visualisation, where numerical figures are mixed with phrases that likewise unpack the data in discussion. In contrast to HMIP documents, the Harris Review offered data in connection to rates per 1,000 prisoners, rather than an absolute number, demonstrating a different strategy of data visualisation which did not seek to reduce complexity. The Harris Review utilises a range of methodological practices to gather data, through applied qualitative studies from academics, interviews with organisations (HMPPS), and primary data collection for its conclusions. The consequence of this is that datafication of the problems crept in. The commonality of datafied discourses suggests a data dominance can be seen within all the documents, but further suggests that discussions on these topics has a common practice of scene setting through data. I argue that the foregrounding of discussions on violence, self-harm, and suicide in prison all begin by presenting the issues in a dehumanised datafied manner, presenting the issues by rejecting discussions of causes, explanations or the human experiences of these problems, instead relying on discussions of extent or prevalence when problematising these issues.

Throughout the corpus other examples emerged that demonstrated similar devices that dehumanised prisoners and diverted attention away from human experiences, such as using data as a form of political point scoring. Included within the corpus was a debate on the second reading of the Prisons and Courts Bill 2017, the debate was based around legislative changes to prisons. As part of the debate, discussion moved to the topics of violence, self-harm, and suicide as MPs discussed the issues that the Bill was seeking to legislate against, including mental health provisions and staffing. This example is taken from the debate from Labour MP Richard Burgon.

“It has been the Secretary of State's misfortune to inherit a brief that has been dominated from day one by the crisis in our prisons. That crisis is not of the Secretary of State making, but it was created by the Conservative government's cuts agenda. The relevant statistics are often cited in this place, but they are worth repeating. There is overcrowding in 68% of our prisons, with more than 84,000 people for approximately 77,000 places. In the last 12 months in September 2016, there are more than 25,000 prisoner assault incidents, which represented a 31% increase on the figure for September 2015.

Assaults on prison staff reach 6430, which was an increase of 82% since 2006 and a 40% increase on the year before. There were more than 37,750 incidents of self-harm, which was an increase of 61% compared to September 2016 and a national increase of 23% on the previous year. In the 12 months to December 2016, there were 354 deaths of prisoners in custody, 34% of which was self-inflicted. This government's decision to cut 7000 frontline prison officers no doubt contributed in large parts to the crisis, but that was allied with the disastrous decision to part privatise our probation service, meaning that the effective rehabilitation of offenders has become all the extinct under the successive Conservative Governments". (Burgon, Hansard HC Deb., 20 March 2017).

There are three elements of this quotation which I want to discuss further, as they demonstrate elements of dehumanising tendencies and data dominance for the use of political point scoring. First, there is a claim in this quotation about statistics 'often cited' and 'worth repeating'. These are important phrasings in identifying the extent to which data dominance is valued in political debate, discourse and data visualisation for political argument. Notably, Burgon is suggesting that these topics are usually discussed as data stories, and that he wishes to express this data again in the construction of his own discursive narrative. Choice here is significant, as he chooses to not humanise the issues, instead using data stories to frame political point scoring through using 'evidence' to problematise the Government's action. I argue that this demonstrates that political debate sees value in data visualisation as a strategy to construct persuasive political arguments. Second, Burgon lists several statistical 'facts' ranging from the population in prisons, to the number of officers; he draws on assaults, self-harm, and self-inflicted deaths within this bombardment of data. This is similar to devices by HMIP, in that data is used to problematise rather than humanise. Instead, the volley of data demonstrates the three issues being used as indicators of failed political action, not a failure of care to prisoners. It likewise steers clear of the complex experiences connected to these problems. Finally, Burgon accuses the Government of this data, referring to specific decisions that the Government have made that 'contributed in large parts to the crisis...'. These datafied practice therefore produce two actions, with the first centred around highlighting the cause of raising figures of violence and self-harm – drawing on reductions in staff and privatisation to present a data story to frame a reality. The second is that the data story presented is

done so to associate blame with the Conservative Government, highlighting policy choices that were made which resulted in reduction to staff and further privatisation. Together these elements demonstrate how Burgon uses data on violence, self-harm, and suicide in prison as a means of political gaming.

Burgon's quotation above is a clear example of political point scoring, which uses datafication of the issues to do so. Importantly, Burgon was a member of the Opposition, making the political gaming that can be done with data as a different discursive device than that seen with those in the Government. As Opposition politicians seek to critique and attack the Government within claims, data is therefore devised as a means of showing the result of Government policy or to present the concluded outcomes of a particular government strategy, in this case the issues of funding and reduced staffing (Charteris-Black, 2014). However, members of the Government utilise datafied devices in alternative methods as they are required to justify a particular policy or proposed initiative. One way that this can be achieved is through reducing the "discursive complexity" (Hajer, 1997: 63) of a particular problem, utilising tropes to dispel nuanced argument and to provide clarity on the issue, by constructing a singular and unquestionable narrative on reality. I argue that in the corpus, discussions on suicide or self-inflicted death were presented in a way that reduced discursive complexity, which speakers did during the Prison and Court Bill Second reading by presenting data in an objectively visualised manner.

"The fact that it is difficult for prisoners to get access to telephones and that the suicide rate in prisons is high – I understand that 119 prisoners took their own lives last year - suggest that we cannot push the subject aside lightly as one of the consequences of someone going to prison". (Harnier, Hansard HC Deb., 20 March 2017).

In this quotation Harnier provides an example of reducing the discursive complexity of a given argument by using data on suicide to make the claim appear nothing but obvious or factual. Giving a singular figure to present an unquestionable fact around the extent of suicide, without highlighting the many diverse methods, strategies and reasons for such suicides. However, there is political motivation within this quotation,

with the phrase ‘we cannot push the subject aside lightly’, which gives justification and support to the Bill in discussion. It is a presentation of a reality and an objective means of fixing a ‘factual’ issue, without questioning or raising nuanced concerns surrounding suicide. The political use of data furthers my claims on data dominance as an issue, problem, and a fracture in management. The promotion of a problem demonstrates a tendency within the two groups in this study to put ‘the devil in the data’, as authors skirt around the detail, distressing experiences, and traumatising nature of violence, self-harm, and suicide for prisoners and their families. This quotation also offers the ability for Harnier to close or reject alternative suggestions – of prisoners not having access to telephones for family contact – and therefore establishes a dominant position within his claim. A position that others are then set to follow easily without disputing or combating without persuasive success.

The political use of data on violence, self-harm, and suicide is varied. As the above mentioned there are practices seen through opposition MPs where data is used as indicators to be failed policy and political actions on prisons. This ‘indicatorisation’, the process of applying and framing data to represent a judgement on a particular outcome, is also used within policy documents seen within the corpus. But the indicatorisation of violence was interestingly applied as a means of addressing a shortcoming by the Government. The below quotation taken from the White Paper, *Prison, Safety and Reform* (MoJ, 2016a: 41) demonstrates an example of indicatorisation, which I refer to as a data dominant discursive device.

“These changes have come after a period of change for the prison workforce as a result of making efficiencies. The number of bands 2 to 5 frontline operational staff reduced from 29,660 on the 30th of March 2012 to 23,080 on 30th of March 2016. As violence has increased it has become harder to retain existing staff, this creating a vicious cycle of staff pressure and violence”

The quotation speaks of a justification for the reduction in prison staff, suggesting two reasons why numbers had reduced by 6,580 in a 4-year period. The first is due to the ‘efficiencies’ that the government made to prisons, this claim is left purposefully vague and does not include any numerical or datafied expressions to address this or the

financial extent of these efficiencies. Likewise, the term 'change' is also presented as a value free action, not detailing whether the author has value or judgement on the changes that were made. We then see the comparative figures for the 4-year period, followed by a datafied claim around violence. The last sentence in this quotation, despite mentioning violence, is still focused on the reduction in staff, but the sentence uses a vague quantifier through the phrase 'as violence has increased' to apply an indicator to why staffing has reduced. This presents an assumed relationship for the reader and, as mentioned above, seeks to reduce complexity to address why violence might be relational to staffing issues, projecting blame for staff shortages towards issues caused by prisoners, rather than a resources issue caused through government policies framed as 'efficiencies'. Thus, diverting blame through framing violence as an indicator.

Discursive devices have been employed in a manner to construct support for specific data stories which reduce the discursive complexity of an argument and allow for minimal competition to the reality that information is used to create an objective truth. This is significant when using data and numerical measures to indicate and point towards specific focal points. Further examples exist, but specifically with lexicon strategies which suggest a distinct style of data analysis and complexity that furthers my claim above around how data is used in a discursive nature. A key example of this comes with political discussion which applied the term 'correlation' in arguments. The phrase correlation is usually applied to address a statistically significant relationship between two variables, usually through a Pearson's R and Spearman's rho test, providing a statistical indicator to relationships (Bryman, 2012). Yet the examples below do not show these tests and only hints towards their data analysis, arguably to avoid presenting complexity whilst wanting to appear objectively clear on their claims – which requires an intricacy with data. The two quotations below demonstrate this term in action, the first is taken from the HoC debate from MP Harriet Harman (member of the opposition), which suggests there is a correlation between staff numbers and prison suicide; and the second from the White Paper *Prison, Safety, and Reform* (2016), which presents an argument around number of staff and violence.

“We can either cut the number of people going to prison or increase the number of prison officers, but the Government have been cutting the number of prison officers while the number of prisoners has increased. We can see a clear correlation between the falling number of prison officers and the rising number of prison suicides — I put the graph, which shows this very clearly, on a tweet just now. Unless the prisoner to prison officer ratio changes, the death toll will continue to rise. We have an opportunity to put into the Bill a legal maximum prisoner-prison officer ratio” (Harman, Hansard HC Deb., 20 March 2017).

While it was right to seek to operate prisons more efficiently, the disabling effects of changes in the operating environment, such as the introduction of new psychoactive substances — described as a game changer by the prison and probation ombudsman — means we must now reconsider staffing levels. Our analysis shows a statistical correlation between the numbers of staff and the level of violent incidents. We now need more frontline staff, and we need to change the way they work to better support offenders and respond to the new threats as they arise. (MoJ, 2016a: 41).

Both quotations present similarities in that they address one of the issues and support their claim through utilising data and ‘correlation’ to construct arguments which are unquestionable. Whilst both putting forward the proposition of increasing staff numbers, they do so with discursive differences. The first quotation uses ‘correlation’ between staff numbers and suicides as a way of blaming the Government for their reduction in staff, weaponizing prison suicides to indicate failings. Whilst this quotation is focused on reducing suicides it still dehumanises as it fails to bring in any human elements to suggest why staff can reduce suicide, such as increasing time out of cells, offering greater surveillance at times when suicide is more likely to happen, increase access to medical and specialist care, increase time in activity, and provide personal care to prisoners (Liebling and Ludlow, 2016). Instead, Harman centralises her claims on increasing staff numbers without recognition to the important role they play, however there might be limitations to the time that she has to speak in Parliament which could reduce the changes of Harman building this argument. Her comment “Unless the prisoner to prison officer ratio changes, the death toll will continue to rise” demonstrates the data dominance within the discussion, and presents a call for reducing numbers, rather than humanising the support that prisoners need. Blame is therefore placed on the Government for the reduction in prison staff, which reduces the complexities of prison suicide to one specific indicator

for change. The second quotation similarly locates blame, but instead of framing this as government policy, failure from the reduction in prison staff, the author blames New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) for the rising issues of violence and the prisoners for taking such substances. The use of correlation in this quotation similarly provides no explanation to the extent of the correlation, and likewise is not shown in context to the issues it claims create problems – such as NPS. This demonstrates omission to the distress or consequences of prison to prisoners, offering no context to why drugs might be increasing due to deprivational factors or pain experienced (Crewe et al, 2020). However, the reduction in detail around this correlation provides the author the opportunity for a discursive shift, which is interesting considering they claim ownership of the analysis.

5.5: The Normalisation of Datafied Practices for Prisons

Datafication is evident within the corpus for this study and has been shown above as discursive devices that engage readers in different ways. However, collectively they demonstrate how the corpora dehumanise violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons through a data dominance which frames, alters, and diverts attention away from prisoners distress, trauma, suffering and towards other actions. There are comparative differences between the two groups in this study, but the similarities draw closely to three main themes. The first is a reductionist discussion on the three problems, where authors choose to utilise data early and dominantly, offering vague quantifiers and indicatorisation. I use the phrase ‘devil in the data’ to represent the extent to which the data dominance is practiced over quality of detail or humanising discussions. The second, is based around a tendency to use data to problematise violence, self-harm, and suicide either through judgement making, or through argument construction. HMIP utilise data throughout to express where problems in prison arise, data is seen as the first point of evidence for their claims and is often based on a range of sources. For political stakeholders problematising is actioned differently and depends on the contextual nature of the document or discussion – as during political debate we see problematising seen differently to that of policy

document. The third theme can be understood through the steering that both groups do through using data to guide and direct interpretation of prison realities. HMIP do this through vague quantifiers when offering statistical information, as a form of data visualisation which reduces complexity and guides readers interpretations around data. For the prison stakeholders this is achieved through using data to reduce discursive complexity for the policy rhetoric they put in place. However, before further analysis of the corpus greater consideration to where arguments on datafication in wider theoretical discussions is needed, so that explanation can be offered to why this approach sees authority with different actors.

Discussions on datafication related closely to reporting of quantitative rates of violence, self-harm, and suicide to judge and indicate approaches taken by prisons to offer a reduction. The analytical tendency to offer comparative assessment only furthers this judgment, which not only informs arguments but opens key discussions and debates within the documents where data is situated. I also suggested that indicatorisation occurs due to the datafication of these three issues, which results in authors favouring data stories to match the quantitative accountability usually identified within NPM. Generating indicators within NPM is essential. Indicators represent both the target and standard setting for public services, and represent the outcomes of achievements or failings (Hood, 1991). Indicators therefore become fuel for measuring standards, performance, and accountability. The management of prisons is therefore centralised around measuring elements of prison life, which requires translating lived experiences into a measurable entity to consider performance (Boin et al, 2006; Hood, 1991; McLaughlin et al, 2001). The next chapter will explore the discourses of NPM in much more detail, but within this chapter I argue that NPM is causing the datafication of the treatment and conditions within prisons and prisoner's experiences. This results in presentation in a depersonalising manner which HMIP and political stakeholders both present. With NPM forming a large part of political rhetoric and language (Hood, 1991; Charteris-Black, 2014) it is unsurprising that this results in the normalisation of datafied discourses on the subject of prisons, seen through the examples above and the weight given to data stories within HMIP judgements and political argument. The normalisation of datafied discourses

demonstrates why the devil is in the data, rather than the detail. As datafication has seemingly found itself in all elements of prison dialogue and discussion, shown through the “datafication of everything” within the prison walls (Mayer-Schönberg and Cukier, 2013: 93-94).

An alternative explanation for the normalisation of datafied practices for prisons can be seen through considering how authors might choose to speak about those whose lived experiences are reduced into quantitative form. The authors within each corpus recognise that they are discussing prisoners suffering, pain, and distress, which they might consider to be politically unpopular views. I do not suggest here that my analysis has found evidence for this direct choice, to reduce prisoner experience due to their status of being undeserving of empathy and humanisation - this would require further research to consider. However, it must be recognised that theories do exist which suggest that the worth and value of prisoners is often brought into question during discussions in penal politics (Lacey, 2008) and on the intersection between populist views and political practice (Garland, 2001; Pratt, 2006). This brings around two suggestions, the first is that degrading practices take place within the political and accountability organisations due to cultural practices that are seen by voters and the wider community. Such cultural values might seek to dehumanise prisoners due to their criminality, which might favour identifying prisons as places of harsh treatment and punishment due to the less eligibility thesis, which stipulates that prison conditions must be more unpleasant than the lowest standing of living in the community (Rusche and Kirchheimer, 1939; Lacey, 2008). As a consequence of these social and political pressures an explanation for an overly datafied discourse could be understood, as this could dehumanise the experiences of prisoners for members of the community who might wish to see retributive treatment.

A similar argument could be made around the dehumanisation through datafication resulting as a consequence of wider penal populism that exists around the political practices of engaging with voters. Populism, according to Pratt (2007: 9), is seen in the “moods, sentiments and voices of significant and distinct segments of the public ... those segments which feel that they have been ignored by governments ... those segments which feel they have been disenfranchised in some way or other by the

trajectory of government policy which seems to benefit less worthy others but not them". This refers to those who appear as disillusioned by political action on criminal justice, projecting a viewpoint which sees non-criminal individuals as less important than criminals – calling for a reshaping of political focus and policy change. Therefore, the possibility for political and inspectorate language not to further humanise prisoners could be seen as a choice by authors to not further those who feel disenfranchised by political and managerial structures. Even if politicians and the inspectorate take a liberally penal reformist view, can their comments and judgments be seen to further the values of penal populism? Therefore, could the normalisation of datafied language in documents be a result of an attempt to politically neutralise language – to avoid fuelling the fire of the populist sentiment. Indeed, Garland (2001: 13) recognises that "the dominant voice of crime policy is no longer the expert or even the practitioner but that of the long-suffering, ill-served people – especially of 'the victim' and the fearful, anxious members of the public". Suggesting that language can become framed towards audiences, resulting in authors choice of terminology, use of discursive devices and strategies of framing their claims. There is no doubt to suggest that datafied practices provide a simple strategy of data visualisation to appear objective, impartial, and factual.

My explanations here are speculative, appearing as opportunities to explain how and why datafication has become a normalised practice and why language on violence, self-harm, and suicide dehumanises prisoners through reductionist styles. There is, however, a limit on what I can argue following my analysis, yet the normalisation of datafication should be considered as a choice by authors – either surrounding a specific dominance of presentation and language style, or through influence from outside political practice. This is an important consideration if the moral worth of prisoners is to be engaged with politically and through organisations of accountability.

5.6: Conclusion

This chapter has explored findings from my CDA that identified dehumanising practices through the datafication of violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons. Within this chapter I have examined how data-driven approaches within documents dehumanises prisoners, whilst recognising that this choice is central to this framing of the three problems. This datafied dominance works to reduce the complexity of the three problems, instead reducing the human experiences of violence, self-harm, and suicide into numerical metrics which overshadows prisoners humanity. Both HMIP and the political stakeholders utilise data points and data stories within their reporting and presentation of the issues, losing sight of the human experiences, and shaping the perception of the issues for readers. I argue that the quantitative measures only do so much in terms of discussing and highlighting the problems for prisoners and within prisons – yet argue that datafied discursive devices have power to inform and direct arguments. This is why I claim that the devil is in the data, as arguments and judgements are presented whilst missing, ignoring, and overlooking the essential detail surrounding these issues. This chapter also argues that datafied discourses have become normalised, thus that the dehumanisation of prisoners, through rejection of key details and generative explanations, becomes commonplace with both the prison inspectorate and political stakeholders, because their focus remains on operating their presentation around metrics to measure performance of prisons and data in an attempt to hold others accountable. I argue that this results in a reductionist and dehumanising tendency, that without challenge cannot produce a political landscape without recognising the distressing, traumatic and painful realities of those who live and work within prisons.

Chapter Six: Discourses of Accountability

6.1: Introduction

As discourses provide the framework through which action is shaped and framed in social life, identifying discourses within documents is essential to understand how realities – the believed view that authors take - are constructed and how actors seek to address specific problems. The previous chapter highlighted how discursive devices, through micro-linguistic technologies, phraseology, and terminology, present specific actions such as blame allocation and identifying problems, using data and data visualisation. I did this through building arguments around datafication seen within the documents, providing opportunities to express how data use can be dehumanising through the omission of empathy and focus on prisoner's experiences. However, this micro-linguistic analysis is only one layer to the claims that can be made following my analysis. In this chapter and the next, I explain and theorise discourse structures – that is a network of social practices that are structured through language - that were seen throughout the corpora. To achieve this, I build on my analysis around discourses of accountability that were connected to the ideological dominance of New Public Management (NPM). This chapter therefore considers how NPM is presented through orders of discourse, intertextually throughout the corpus, where I identified comparative “ways of representing the world [problems] from particular perspectives” (Fairclough, 2010: 418). Within this chapter I discuss how the ideological foundations of NPM are used to construct forms of action within the documents, action that is framed around dealing with the issues of violence, self-harm, and suicide. Thus, addressing how the documents demonstrated strategies that “cease to be merely imaginaries for change, and effect real change” (Fairclough, 2010: 369) through proposing interventions based on the order of discourse.

6.2: Prison Accountability: Practice and Rhetoric

As the corpora for this study is based on documents produced by the prison inspectorate and political stakeholders, it is not surprising that much of their content was focused on accountability. In these documents, authors reported and debated treatment, conditions, and outcomes of prisons, providing judgement on good practice, blame, or failings. Indeed, the legislative responsibilities of both the inspectorate and political stakeholders are central in prison accountability. As highlighted in chapter 3, Behan and Kirkham (2016) identified a tripartite model for prisons referring to the functioning of civilian monitoring through the Independent Monitoring Board (IMB), professional inspection through HMIP, and ombudsman for complaints handling and investigations to deaths in custody through the Prison and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) as the three arms that seek to make others, such as politicians and prison management, accountable for treatment and conditions in prisons and power imbalances within prisons. The IMB, HMIP, and PPO are the three bodies that contend with wider accountability frameworks, such as UN conventions, on human rights and punishment (i.e. OPCAT), and domestic policy, such as the Prison Act 1952, whilst also featuring as bodies “to enhance the quality of justice, and in particular, the procedural fairness experienced by prisoners” (Behan and Kirkham, 2016: 439). Whilst this model is key in understanding specific bodies of public accountability in prisons, there are more locations within prison organisation and management where accountability operates, with different action and purpose, such as intervention called for in the HoC, or intervention made to occur through HMIPs use of the UNP. Unfortunately, Behan and Kirkham’s model does not consider how different groups attempt to hold prisons and prison management to account over failings and procedural fairness, such as the members of the opposition who focus on addressing the fault in government policy through providing critique and assessment, lobbyist groups who focus on the state of prisons and prisoners’ rights (such as the Prison Reform Trust or the Howard League for Penal Reform), and the voices of prisoners and families who seek accountability for individual prisoners. However, this study can build these discussions through the use of CDA, adding a new layer to Behan and Kirkham’s analysis of prison accountability frameworks.

When conducting CDA on ideological entities, such as NPM, it is important to recognise that texts represent forms of social action on the physical world and that this is seen discursively through rhetoric and ideological framing. The social practices seen within literature can be anything that involves “a relatively stabilised form of social activity” (Fairclough, 2010: 264), which can include forms of action conducted within a particular social setting, such as the use of data analysis when considering violence, self-harm, and suicide in prison. Social practices therefore involve several elements that can be identified in CDA, which Fairclough (2010: 264) claims can be seen in “activities, subjects, and their social relations, instruments, objects, time and place, forms of consciousness, values, discourse (semiosis)”. Elements of practice and rhetoric are therefore internalisations of one another, whilst we can look at them micro-linguistically, they cannot be fully separated nor detached from the other, as they both inform and constitute elements of a social order. However, structure of discourse that can be seen as ideological entities, like NPM, can become dominant and mainstream within communication. This produces dominant discourses where the values of the ideological structure become commonplace, shared, and integrated with the ideals presented within the social practices seen on different topics. This is particularly important when discussing NPM, and the following analysis takes Fairclough’s (2010) understanding of the way social activity can be understood as part of a wider order of discourse when unpacking NPM for violence, self-harm, and suicide in prison.

6.3: Shifting Accountability

Within this much wider consideration of public accountability for prisons, a range of stakeholders seek to allocate or transfer accountability, involving shifting and negotiating where responsibility and blame are located. Across both the Inspectorate and political stakeholders documents it was common for authors to establish where responsibility lies. Within the documents, action was identified in how authors constructed values, beliefs and ideations on where they believe accountability should

be placed and which ‘agent’ (this being an individual, an office, or an organisation) should be responsible. When examining the documents from political stakeholders, I recognised that documents created by the Government sought to redirect accountability away from themselves, with a particular focus on placing blame and responsibility on ‘Prisons’ or ‘Governors’. The example below demonstrates this, from the White Paper *Prison, Safety, and Reform* (MoJ, 2016a: 29).

“Bringing down the levels of assaults, self-harm and self-inflicted deaths in our prisons is critical to achieving a more stable estate, in which staff and prisoners have the time and headspace to address the causes of re-offending. To achieve this, we will move accountability for the management of all but short-sentenced prisoners to governors, alongside giving them the right levels of resource to support a new model in which dedicated officers can support and challenge a caseload of prisoners. We know that managing offenders this way, at a local level, and giving them targeted and individual support to address their behaviour is the most effective way of reducing violence in our prisons”

The quotation demonstrates the extent to which the ownership of accountability is shifted, by those with the authority to allocate and distribute responsibility for prisons. In summary, this quotation expresses a practice shift for prison governors (except for those who hold custody of short sentence prisoners), and a discursive value on this transition of responsibility. Notably, the example refers to practices of decentralisation, or devolution, of responsibility away from the central government and towards the provider of the service. This is a practice completed across the public sector services, such as local authorities and health care (Walsh, 1995). This discourse of accountability is reminiscent or sustained from wider values seen in penal policy emerging around 2010 as a key feature of the ‘Rehabilitation Revolution’ (MoJ, 2010b; Skinns, 2016; Bochel and Powell, 2016). Skinns (2016) highlights a key theme of the initiative being decentralisation of accountability of the Government through practices of outsourcing rehabilitative providers, through a “revolutionary shift in the way that rehabilitation is delivered and financed” (King and Willmott, 2022: 122). This demonstrates that there are two forms of decentralisation that occurs within discourses of accountability, outsourcing and ‘empowerment’. The former recognises that the private sector will produce and maintain responsibility for rehabilitative

activity, whereas the latter recognises Governors are responsible, with the Government relinquishing some of their control and 'empowering' the governor with decision making and accountability. Within the example above it is clear to see that shifting accountability is presented through empowering Governors, representing a practical shift which the last sentence seeks to justify – that giving more control and accountability to Governors for reducing violence seems the most 'logical'. The author presents this through the utilisation of a truth modality stating that 'we know that managing offenders this way... is the most effective...', such modalities set the dominant value of authors, offering no justification or evidence to persuade readers that this is the case. This demonstrates a clear discursive mechanism in attempt to rationalise shifting accountability.

This practical and discursive shift in responsibility, seen in the above quotation, is also a mechanism to deflect blame for failing services by placing new actors to account for managing violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons. However, I argue that this quotation highlights a limit on accountability, mostly with the presentation of 'right level of resources' to support governors. This phrase suggests that the government can determine what the right level of resource is and therefore limits the governor in the finances and resources (such as staffing) needed to meet expected outcomes. The use of the phrase 'right level' also takes the presupposition that there is a definitively correct and incorrect range of resources that has been set and which can be measured, however as this is not defined nor explained, it places the responsibility for setting the 'right level' with the Government. Such phraseology identifies how these documents present both a practical and discursive action which are codependent. This shift also ignites contradiction, as the Government suggest that Governors should be able to make decisions – as local provider knowledge is best suited to adaptive practice - but that the Government knows best in terms of funding this decision making. This opens the potential for conflicting discursive views on where blame can be located, the funder or the manager. Whilst there is much more to unpack in this quotation around accountability it importantly shows that political discourse and policy making are actioned through documents, leading to restructuring lines of accountability following the dominant discourse presented by authors. This therefore

shows how the realities and organisation of accountability within the prison estate are adapting through discursive strategies within documents. This is also recognised as a form of public presentation, as it is here where the Government are making Governors publicly responsible for violence in prisons.

Accountability discourses throughout the corpus, I argue, are underpinned by the ideology of NPM and penal populism. Take the example above, a quotation that contends with all three problems this study investigates, it can be identified that practices of accountability are seen around managing and targeting key performance indicators (KPIs), setting clear responsibility for the different groups involved. Whilst there are many approaches to understanding NPM (Dunleavy et al, 2005), there are agreed themes between authors who recognise similar consequences that NPM has had on prisons and criminal justice. For example, McLaughlin et al (2001) on criminal justice and Mennicken on prisons (2013) draw on several claims around NPM, stating that there is an emphasis on achieving results rather than processes within accountability practices in criminal justice. They suggest that NPM provides a means of target setting and establishes indicators for the purposes of audit, and that NPM works to externalise responsibilities away from the central government and towards individual prisons or constabularies (McLaughlin et al, 2001; Mennicken, 2013). These three themes of NPM could be identified throughout the corpus and were represented in different guises, such as an outcome-centred approach from HMIP, which reduces discussion on processes and instead draws on results achievements in making and drawing claims.

6.4: New Public Management

A key activity of NPM identified within the literature is target-setting, or the use of indicators as a means of conducting and engaging in audit and framing public accountability (Boin et al, 2006; Hood, 1991; Dunleavy et al, 2005; McLaughlin et al, 2001; Walsh, 1995). Whilst indicatorisation has already been highlighted in connection to datafied practices (see chapter 5) there are still practices of this which

demonstrate a very different discursive purpose. This is often demonstrated in prisons through using KPIs and Key Performance Targets (KPTs) for auditing process as seen through monitoring prisons for the Home Office and the Treasury (Mennicken, 2013). Within the corpus KPIs and KPTs were often referred to within discussions on violence, self-harm, and suicide, with the three problems expressed in terms of indicators to judge specific penal practices and to determine success of individual prisons. The example below is taken from the White Paper *Prison Safety, and Reform* (MoJ, 2016a: 23), within this extract the author demonstrates a clear attempt to utilise violence and self-harm as indicators for success, thus framing them as an auditing tool and KPT.

“Prisons need to be and feel safe for both staff and prisoners. Violent incidents are the most obvious issue, but this is also about the wider culture and atmosphere of the prison and the support it provides to vulnerable prisoners.

Safety

We want to use the measure of the rate of assaults on prison staff and the rate of assaults on prisoners. This knowledge will also help us improve the stability and culture of our prisons and provide a safe working environment.

To monitor the success of a prison’s strategy for dealing with vulnerable prisoners we will also include the rate of self-harm by prisoners in performance standards”.

The quotation is clear in expressing and framing violence and self-harm as indicators for managing internal organisation cultures and practices. Setting an accountable and auditing strategy where incidents of these two problems can be associated with the success and performance of those who manage the prison. The quotation, however, does not explain why indicatorisation is an appropriate strategy, offering no explanation of how gathering data on these indicators can function to improve cultures and environments in prisons. This approach, according to Hood (1991) and Diefenbach (2009), is typical of NPM, as the quotation demonstrates a definition of a goal through presenting violence as a failure of prison management and prison culture, and a means of monitoring and assessing this through KPTs. The quotation demonstrated another factor associated with NPM which is the reference to a shift in responsibility and ownership of accountability (McLaughlin et al, 2001). This is seen in the last sentence, which details the ‘prison’s strategy’ and the KPIs and KPTs associated to their practices, with the strategy responsibilising prison managers or

governors for the outcomes. This decentralisation, devolution or outsourcing of accountability, away from the government, creates political pressure for the managers of the prison, setting expectations to meet the required standard or reduction in measured incidents.

This assignment of accountability overlooks allocation of resources needed for the prison to meet the KPIs set, with responsibility placed on managers for future blame if failure occurs, it overlooks how measurements will lead to change - as this has not been addressed or provided within the document. Locating accountability towards “hands-on professional management” (Hood, 1991: 4) is key within NPM and evident across documents, as well as the quotation above. This is demonstrated in a complex manner within the corpus of the political stakeholders, with accountability aimed towards numerous groups without a clear overview of where responsibility lays – when considering these documents intertextually this is compounded with interactions - between groups in attempt to shift blame or point towards those who others deem as responsible. These complex interactions are often demonstrated through engaging with the main components of NPM, for example the quotation below - taken from the HoC Health and Social Care Committee on prison health (2018: 29) – which utilises specific identifiers to locate the responsibility for management and action.

“There are well known risks related to suicide and self-harm for people in prison. While rates of self-inflicted deaths in prison have fallen since reaching a peak in 2016, there is no room for complacency as instances of self-harm remain at a record high. We expect to see a concerted effort from government to reduce suicide and self-harm in prison, supported by ambitious targets and a clear and credible plan for achieving them. The newly identified role of a minister with responsibility for suicide prevention is welcome, but we expect the government within its response to report on how this role will extend to suicide and self-harm within prisons and on release.”

Within this quotation there are direct discussions offered to considering hands-on management in response to self-harm in prisons, with the committee claiming that they want ‘effort from the government... supported by ambitious targets and a clear

and credible plan for achieving them'. This directs responsibility towards the government for two actions in reducing self-harm, the first being the construction of targets as a form of measuring outcomes (KPTs), the second is a plan for achieving these outcomes (KPIs), with vague detail offered around both practices. I argue that this can be read in two ways in terms of hands-on control as the author does not specifically direct who has responsibility for the outcomes. The quotation offers no references to suggesting policy change or new Prison Service Orders (PSOs), developing direct initiatives to contend with self-harm in prisons, nor does it present trickle-down accountability which should place responsibility on specific prisons or prison managers. I argue that, instead, the committee provide a suggestion for strategic control or political steering on the issue. Which Boin et al (2006) argues allows politicians to manage the aims of the outcomes whilst being at 'arms-length' distance so that accountability is decentralised and they are not seen as responsible for any blame. Importantly, I think this quotation demonstrates the way that NPM does suggest a hands-on approach to management, but also how this is often achieved through distance between the government and the prison.

The ideological power of NPM can be seen throughout the corpus as a central discursive feature across all documents from political stakeholders, which included direct responses to prison inspections. One document in the corpus (Gauke, 2018) was a response from the previous SoSfJ (David Gauke) to the then HMCIP (Clarke) about the HMIP report on HMP Birmingham (HMIP, 2018c) and the triggering of the UNP. The inspection of HMP Birmingham drew attention to significantly poor quality of care offered by the prison, with judgements pronounced on the prison following the 'healthy prison test', with claims that the "prison had deteriorated dramatically and was in an appalling state" (HMIPc, 2018: 5). HMIP claimed, that the prison was unsafe, has an open culture of drug taking, poor behaviour from prisoners, lack of control from staff, poor management, and overall poor living conditions. Gauke's Letter (2018) included an action plan provided by HMPPS (2018) on the specific recommendations and actions set following HMIPs Urgent Notification Process. Importantly, these documents were unlike other political stakeholder documents selected for this study, as it provided a direct practical overview of a specific prison.

Thus, it engaged with values of NPM in a contextually different style, with the ability to directly apply actions and indicators to a prison and specific setting. There were clear tropes that can be associated with NPM within Gauke's (2018: 3) letter, with the below demonstrating discussions on reviewing and monitoring reductions alongside clear action setting in the second sentence, which matches concepts of NPM.

The priority actions concerning safety are now underway and include:

Reviewing and ensuring effective implementation of the local safety support plan to address suicide and self-harm and violence reduction.

A new Challenge Support and Intervention Plan will be implemented to address violence while assuring the management of violent prisoners is discussed at weekly multidisciplinary meetings.

As this quotation is a response between a political master, SoSfJ (Shute, 2013a), and the prison inspectorate it does not provide extensive detail surrounding what the actions are and how they will be achieved, they are merely the communication of actions being taken – which is all that is required of the SoSfJ through the administrative responsibility agreed through the UNP (see chapter 3). But the promise of setting these actions matches what Hood (1991) highlights as a component of NPM, with the first sentence demonstrating clear 'hands-on' management of the issues through the declaration of 'now underway' to show that the SoSfJ has engaged in immediate action to support his responsibility towards these issues. The first sentence also sets a new tool of accountability, through recognising that reviewing implementation of changes is conducted and measured through clear and specific goals and targets, providing a tool for measuring accountability and "assignment of responsibility for action" (Hood, 1991: 4). The second sentence likewise engages these core components, through further target setting and the creation of an action plan, with similar assignment of responsibility.

The action plan (2018) set by HMPPS in response to the HMIP report on HMP Birmingham, demonstrated further components of NPM but with contextual nuance to the situation of HMP Birmingham. Whilst the below quotation similarly engages in the ideological components of NPM, which authors like Hood (1991), McLaughlin et

al (2001), and Mennicken (2013) provide, they do so in the context of the prison more specifically with more detailed information provided to managers. This first quotation demonstrates a range of examples from theories of NPM, such as the use of private and third sector organisations to support prison management, clear assignment of responsibility for reporting and auditing action and setting provision for specific information sharing to support joint work on achieving KPIs and KPTs, seeking to use independent groups to make changes (Hood, 1991).

The Prison Reform Trust (PRT) has been invited to run an Active Citizen Panel (ACP) at HMP Birmingham. This ACP will analyse the causes of violence and anti-social behaviour. These sessions will run for a period of 4 weeks and at conclusion will provide a written report for the Governor. Direct feedback will be given to the Governor and mitigating actions with the prisoners as part of the action delivery team will follow. These actions will be monitored using a checkpoint matrix system to provide management information via the Safety Diagnostic Tool (SDT) to track a projected downward trend. To support the violence reduction strategy the SDT will form the basis of the Governor's daily briefing to Senior Leads, managers and staff. This will be supported by ongoing training.

A team of psychologists have been working with prisoners to identify trends and rationale for the levels of violence. This team will also produce an independent report which will recommend areas of concern and solutions to address them. The Safety Team will provide analysis on a weekly basis to the Governor in the form of management information to steer the actions needed to reduce violence at HMP Birmingham. (HMPPS, 2018: 3-4).

In contrast to other quotations, this example has distinctively more action as opposed to rhetoric, unsurprising given the contextual purpose of an action planning document. However, this does mean that the discursive elements of this quotation are interpreted differently as social action through activities, interactions with groups, and instruments of action are the objective of investigation here. Importantly, these examples demonstrate a movement away from usual management style seen within prisons and public services, as the technique of using outside organisations and independent groups of psychologists promote the transition to a "private-sector style of management practice" (Hood, 1991: 5) with actions set by groups removed from the government, HMPPS, and prisons. I argue that using external bodies to inform action is that this can be used by HMPPS to increase the legitimacy of their response; by having an outsourced group delivering and evaluating practices it permits

‘objectivity’ of the actions proposed. There are also datafied truths presented in this quotation, with the reference to trends being offered without detail or explanation, presented as truth modalities to frame ‘objectivity’. This works to reassure that no political or ideological pressures are demonstrated within these actions from the government or HMPPS. This also means that the reports and recommendation from both the PRT and the team of psychologists provide a way of diverting responsibility away from the political and prison managers, allowing these independent groups to be at fault should the reports and recommendations be ineffective at meeting KPIs and KPTs. I further argue that the lack of necessary detail within some of these claims further the framing of these actions as apolitical. For example, there is use of technical language and action-based instruments that are not explained nor defined, such as the ‘action delivery team’, the ‘checkpoint matrix system’ and the ‘Safety Diagnostic Tool (SDT)’. The use of technical and specific instruments for measuring action are being presented as operating as truth tellers, providing readers with an awareness that targets and goals are measured, assessed, and met due to these instruments – allowing apolitical auditing to be seen as objective and valid in their usage. This too is a form of directing interpretation of the reader for a discursive purpose.

The action plan associated with this letter likewise shows discourses of NPM from HMPPS in both a practical and ideological manner. Where quotations such as those below engage with several components that are typical in literature on NPM, particularly those who focus on NPM within criminal justice (McLaughlin et al, 2001; Mennicken, 2013).

The prison will revise the violence reduction (VR) strategy. This will include the timely investigation of all violence and antisocial behaviour and a system that will make firm recommendations for support via a comprehensive support plan. Each support plan will include planning to access to regime activities in order to fully reintegrate victims back into normal prison life. These plans will be quality assured and monitored for compliance by the safer custody team and senior residential Leads. (HMPPS, 2018: 11)

This example shows the development of strategies of ‘hands-on’ management through technocratic means, utilising targets, indicators and output control through

‘the monitoring of compliance’, all components that Hood (1991) suggest are ‘doctrinal’ for NPM. This demonstrates the extent to which the ideological power NPM has over the actions taken following HMIPs UNP, and the responses provided by their political counterparts. Such NPM components also demonstrated the action seen by HMPPS in response to challenges that others face over violence in prison, where managerial practices are applied not only to reduce incidents but also to rectify some of the consequences of these issues to others – such as victims of violence. However, whilst it is refreshing to see attention paid to victimised individuals it is important to recognise that these actions are specifically targeting individual issues through indicators and output control, even with victimised individuals. I argue that this further demonstrates the extent to which NPM builds on a reductionist discourse seen throughout all documents, limiting generative actions due to the ideological and discursive structure through which NPM engages in.

6.5: Accountability and Blame

Prison inspection is positioned as a central body to hold the government to account for treatment and conditions in prisons. They do this both symbolically through their independence and public presence; and legislatively through powers and responsibilities, supported through international conventions, such as OPCAT (Hardwick, 2016; Owers, 2010; 2009). As such, reporting is directed towards making judgments, based on their duties and responsibilities defined in the CJA 1982 and OPCAT, on treatment and conditions in prison. Whilst their reporting features characteristics of NPM discourse, they do not feature or exhibit in the same style seen as the political stakeholders. A common trope in how HMIP demonstrate accountability is through providing claims of blame or issues, however, the strategies employed to achieve this are restrained due to the discourses and practices of NPM. As mentioned in the previous chapter, HMIP engage heavily in datafied practices, yet when they engage in blame or reporting an issue there is, occasionally, the utilisation of graphic detail to show conditions and concern over treatment. The use of graphic detail, such as the example below on the cleanliness of cells, offers distinct

experiential circumstances of prisoners, breaking away from the conventional style of NPM seen by political stakeholders (HMCIP, 2019: 28).

[some] particularly vulnerable prisoners were living in squalid cells which were not fit for habitation. One prisoner on assessment, care in custody and teamwork case management procedures was living in a filthy, flooded cell. The blood of another prisoner, who had self-harmed two days previously, had not been cleaned from the cell floor... Rubbish was left lying around in bags and there were problems with fleas, cockroaches and rodents.

Even though the quotation raises significantly poor conditions, it omits recognition of who is accountable. I argue that the explanations of these conditions, in this style, seeks to shock audiences whilst simultaneously suggesting that there are problems in prisons which are a cause for concern. By presenting the graphic details behind the conditions, HMIP are able to present inadequacies with the prison without stating so directly. The reader is left to determine who placed this prisoner within the cell, and why this was done to a vulnerable prisoner. The reader is therefore left with a claim of failure without HMIP having to locate and direct blame, thus having plausible deniability by not referring to a specific abuse of power. The quotation therefore allows HMIP to highlight that action needs to be completed, whilst simultaneously presenting blameworthiness without reference to those responsible. This example presents an opening for readers to participate in accountability – I argue that HMIP are applying specific linguistic techniques to provoke and shock readers, allowing their own interpretation of institutional or organisation failure. HMIP therefore hold prisons to account through different styles, datafied measures and indicators as presented earlier, and through omitting direct blame and allowing readers interpretation through vague referential strategies that do not provide clear or directive information.

The example above demonstrates where referential strategies are based on the choice not to name the accountable agent for that failing, to avoid apportioning blame and accountable actors. However, this was not the most used referential strategy throughout the HMIP corpus. HMIP referred to the PPO, using their recommendations and reports to produce statements of failure, this was presented as both a collaboration between HMIP and the PPO and in a style akin to quality assurance, with

HMIP checking the implementation of PPO recommendations. In the next quote the referential strategy has the appearance of blaming, presenting the failure of all prisons, rather than specific individuals or roles (HMCIP, 2018: 7).

The increase in levels of violence that we have seen in recent years continues and self-harm and assaults reaches new highs. Although there was a welcome decline in the number of self-inflicted deaths, which have now returned to levels last seen more than five years ago, it was still worrying that one third of the prisons we inspected had not properly implemented recommendations from the prison and probation ombudsman (PPO) following deaths in custody. There were repeated patterns of failure in far too many cases, and even when those prisoners with vulnerabilities were identified, too often the subsequent case load was weak.

This quotation is useful in demonstrating different referential strategies within the reports, there is a denotated reference with the last sentence where ‘patterns of failure’ is used as a judgment by HMIP towards prisons failing, which implicitly places blame on prison managers. I argue that this mobilises discourses of NPM, as the reference to patterns and case load demonstrate an indicator and measuring facility with this judgment. The referential strategy to the PPO is just one example of this practice, which is a tactic that HMIP employ in every document that was selected for my analysis. Usually, reference to the PPO is used to make an obvious assignment of blame and authoritative statements of failings, which HMIP based on the PPOs recommendations on deaths in custody. Nevertheless, these referential strategies with the PPO promote a relational connection, which could be suggestive of Behan and Kirkham’s (2016) tripartite model of accountability and that there exists a discursive and practical relation intertextually in HMIP documents. HMIPs reference to PPO recommendations within their reports demonstrates a practice of output control, where the prisons are measured on the standards of the PPO recommendations by a further independent body. Secondly, this referential strategy by HMIP demonstrates a choice which projects the PPO recommendations into a discursive position where they are seen as arbiter of standards – as HMIP strengthen the recommendations and position of the PPO to benefit from a shared accountability towards their political masters.

Using the PPO findings and standards to assert blame can be seen to legitimise HMIPs comments, building greater credibility in both the claims from HMIP and the PPO, thus strengthening accountability. Showing how interactions and relationships within prison accountability exist as an interdependent collaboration to hold the prisons and government to account. The importance of blame as a frame for accountability here is important, as the example above shows how blame is used through the use of recommendations. This is why blame is a prominent feature of accountability, as HMIP and the PPO use blaming to stress inactivity around recommendations. This is why the referential strategies employed by HMIP are an important feature of blame accountability, as they cannot themselves impose any real action within the prison.

6.7: The Performance of Accountability

Referring to the PPO also demonstrates a key trope in accountability for HMIP, which focuses on offering a 'claim-only' or 'statement-centred' approach when producing claims of accountability. This trope is usually seen through limited detail, explanation or description to justify the claim or statement, which avoids interpretation and omits information for readers. A descriptive nature, positions HMIPs claims as truth modalities, that is when an author takes the "judgements, comments and attitudes" of a claim and stands firm on them being factual, evidential, and real (Richardson, 2007: 59). The use of these modalities is then exaggerated when HMIP offer limited detail or description for their claims, as shown in the example below which highlights prisons actions towards strategies for violence reduction (HMCIP, 2019: 23).

Despite the continued increase in violence, many prisons had poorly defined violence reduction strategies and failed to address the causes of violence effectively. There was limited analysis of data to provide learning from previous incidents, and ineffective meetings that failed to progress action plans. Wandsworth, however, had implemented a collaborative staff and prisoner approach to reduce violence.

The quotation shows engagement with accountability in two ways, first through presenting a truth modality which expresses a failure to address causality and action planning. Importantly with these claims, the author only presents their versions of truths, through their claims of failure and ineffective practices. However, this example demonstrates how vague detail and explanation is used by HMIP to practice their agency as actors of accountability. As throughout, there is limited detail to what they see as the causes of violence, what makes the violent reduction strategies 'poorly defined', and what makes meetings ineffective. Thus, they only present their version of reality, which provides them some space to avoid justification and position their reports, findings, and recommendations as the arbiter of truth. Such a discursive practice demonstrates a choice on what 'truth' is shown, with the information about why and how these judgements are made being missed, placing importance on the judgements themselves. This is typical when using truth modalities in communication, which Wodak (2021) likens to Goffman's (1959) notion of performance in discussion of political presentation. This involves the inclusion of a frontstage and backstage performance, the former sees the public facing space where presentation is done, whereas the backstage includes the preparation and where impression is arranged for the audience. I claim that the presentation of truth modalities in the example above likewise demonstrates a performance. With HMIP choosing to present judgements to their audience, without revealing the backstage justification for these claims. Constructing a presentation where their judgments appear as self-evident and objectively true, through utilisation of vague or missing detail. There are limitations that this style of discourse can present, mostly in connection to readers of such reports to construct interventions to ensure that they are not following similar dissatisfactory practices, and to build on the good practice shared. However, this is not attainable when limited detail and explanation is provided, readers are left to assume that there is a backstage practice of sharing information. The last sentence in this quotation shows vague judgment but does so even when highlighting good practice. Yet, the last sentence does not demonstrate the good practice with the use of positive language, instead the modality focuses on work done by HMP Wandsworth through a frame of 'effective' in reducing violence.

Drawing on the above quotation, the last sentence does pose important critical questions which fit the theme of this chapter. The first is around the practice of the presentation of accountability in a positive light, as HMIP often limit the presentation of positive language around these claims, yet do so through vague truth modalities. First is to question whether the lack of positive reporting demonstrates the reality of prison management and penal culture, where we could claim that HMIPs observations are valid and that the lack of positive accountability is due to this not being seen. Second, we could question whether the inspection framework, *Expectations*, is overwhelmingly focused on finding negative features of prison life, thus creating findings more likely to be negative in response. Third, we should question whether the lack of positive accountability is a choice presentation from HMIP, not wanting to show the positive work prisons perform which could be due to rising social pressures that emerge from penal populism (Pratt, 2007; Garland, 2001) and populist punitiveness (Bottoms, 1995) and wanting to maintain trust of readers through not presenting a positive depiction of prisons and the work of prison staff (see chapter 5). Whilst there is a limitation in this study in being able to address these questions what can be identified is the lack of positive engagement often seen in HMIP and HMCIP reports.

Within the corpus there was limited engagement in positive language, with only one quotation selected for all HMIP and HMCIP reports that used the phrase ‘excellent’, from the report for HMP Manchester in reference to the complex case meeting to work with those affected by violence (HMIP, 2018b: 12).

“One in three prisoners reported feeling unsafe. Levels of violence had increased significantly since the last inspection and were too high. A new case work approach to the management of poor behaviour and support for vulnerable people through support and intervention plans showed promise but was not yet embedded or understood by all staff. Excellent complex case meetings helped to direct work with perpetrators and victims of violence to good effect. The strategy to reduce violence did not consider the negative impact of poor living conditions and boredom on violence and substance misuse. The incentives and earned privileges scheme were not used effectively to encourage good behaviour. The adjudications process was generally fair and well monitored. Vulnerable prisoners were located safely in a separate unit”

The content of this quotation is overwhelmingly critical of HMP Manchester and demonstrates many of the claims I have already highlighted in this chapter, such as lack of detail around the background of the judgements made, the statement-centred focus on judgements, and the distinction between the discourses of NPM and the practices of NPM in prisons. The positive comments are fleeting, overshadowed by critical judgements. However, the positive language used, with the phrase ‘excellent’, is a discursive practice through the lexicon choices that HMIP offer throughout their inspection framework. The highest ‘graded’ outcome from a HMIP inspection is the phrase ‘good’, which in comparison to other inspectorates, such as Ofsted for education can reach ‘outstanding’, is limited in the presentation of positive findings that are beyond expectation or satisfactory standard.

Other examples of ‘positive’ language can be seen where the phrase ‘good’ is used to engage with accountability measures surrounding good practices of data monitoring and analysis. The phrase is used alongside discussion of HMIPs ‘healthy prison test’, a key technique and tool used by the inspectorate in judging practices in prisons. Nonetheless, and regardless of the extent of positive terminology, each quotation seen around HMIPs comments still appear in a ‘statement only’ style – even when applying positive or negative judgments. I argue that vague identifiers of accountability restrict the action following each claim and limit the mechanism for change, such as praising and encouraging prisons to follow similar practices, processes, and initiatives to likewise meet good practice. Further examples below demonstrate this claim.

“Levels of self-harm were relatively low. Management of prisoners at risk and analysis and monitoring of data were good. Case management documents demonstrated good multidisciplinary care... prisoners subject to at-risk case management spoke positively about the care they received, and Listeners... also provided valuable support to those in crisis.
Feltham B” (HMCIP, 2018: 24)

“Most prisoners felt safe and, although levels of violence had increased, hardly any incidents were serious. Antisocial behaviour was managed well, but incentives and earned privileges (IEP) scheme was not effective. Prisoners at risk of self-harm are positive

about the support they received and those with complex personal needs were managed well.

Outcomes for prisoners were good against this healthy prison test.” (HMIP – New Hall, 2019: 12).

The explanation behind the use or limited use of positive language is difficult to determine based on the analysis of the documents alone. Whether this is for the same reasons as not providing explanation and detail when making judgements, or whether this is to avoid challenge or wider social pressures, is difficult to determine. However, the positive language within HMIP documents has been discussed previously, with Padfield (2017: 62) considering the positive displays in HMIP reports, suggesting that there is an ethos around the “promotion of positive outcomes”, which she claims allow HMIPs writing to appear “more realistic and vaguer” in the practice of positive claims. I agree, but speculate that this is connected to the discursive style that HMIP actively create, but also, I question whether the limited positive comments were a purposeful choice due to wider social pressures seen around public attitudes towards prisons and imprisonment (Pratt, 2007; Bottoms, 1995), as highlighted in the previous chapter. Therefore, a shift has occurred which instead of rehabilitative and positive experiences of punishment being seen in the public, now provides a harsher and more punitive presentation of imprisonment. Whether prison inspection is caught in the tide of these social movements is still up for greater discussion. Yet this can support speculations on the choice of positive expression, with HMIP limiting positive claims to not create too much conflict with the voices of populism.

I argue that we can summarise all the quotations offered in this section thus far, by recognising how they present an outcome-centred discourse when engaging in accountability which reflects the features of the ideological power of NPM (Hood, 1991). That is, the construction of reality in prison through judgement of KPIs, KPTs, measurable outcomes over actions, practices, and processes by prison staff, prison management, and other figures of prison accountability (the PPO). The quotations also largely omit explanations around processes, with some vague comments offered that do not form the substance for claims, leaving focus on the result, judgments, and outcomes of a strategy or intervention. Whilst there are some identifiers and symbols that highlight process, such as phrasing judgements on data analysis, case

management, and multidisciplinary care; there is little to no detail offered to give the reader clear justification for why HMIP are judging them as good or poor. Discursively, this is something that HMIP had actively chosen to do, with Bennett (2014: 450) stating that HMIPs framework for inspection, *Expectations*, openly expresses the methodology used to focus on outcomes for prisoners. Likewise, Owers (2010: 1541) demonstrates that an outcome-centred approach is about “minimum auditable standards” that details “what a well-run prison should provide”. She furthers this approach by highlighting that HMIP “look for best practice, not compliance; for outcome, not process for quality as well as quantity. Taken together, they allow inspectors to assess the ‘health’ of a prison” (Owers, 2009: 16). Bennett (2014) and Owers (2010) offer an interesting characterisation of the role prison inspectors play in providing public accountability. However, it is important to remember the nature of the values that each HMCIP bring to their roles, and how this produces discursive practices. Similarly, it is important to remember that inspection practices can change (see Hood and Goldacre (2021) on Ofsted inspection) and that discourses of inspection change as a result. Yet, I argue that HMIPs choice to produce an outcome-centred discourse when engaging in accountability has been achieved during discussions on violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons, as a result of the ideological and practical pressures from the discourses of NPM which have been seen across the public sector. I question if this approach offers audience the essential explanation or signposting to better share good practice in attempt to draw up quality in all prisons – as the corpus of HMCIP reports (which are annual reports only) did not cite, source, or direct readers to further documentation which can be used to share knowledge and best practice of showing what good and bad looks like for interventions on violence, self-harm, and suicide.

6.8: Conclusion

In summary, this section has shown how NPM has framed the discourses and practicalities of accountability seen within the documents on Political Stakeholders and HMIP. NPM is seen clearly in the practices of the former, where quotations from

the corpus demonstrated how targets and indicators are paramount in the processes of auditing and managing the issues of violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons. There are clear examples where politicians seek to use these three problems as measurable indicators to demonstrate a failing prison, with political managers of prisons using them as KPTs and KPIs in their approaches to hands-on management in attempt to reduce them. These practices are evident within the body of literature that characterises NPM (Hood, 1991; Dunleavy et al, 2005; Walsh, 1995) and more importantly those who discuss NPM in context of prisons and Criminal Justice (McLaughlin et al, 2001; Boin et al, 2006). I also discussed how examples from the corpus demonstrated practices of assigning accountable actors, through political stakeholders managing this assignment to shift responsibility and blame away from political managers and to prison managers or third-party organisations. These findings further reflect NPM discourses (Hood, 1993) and demonstrate the extent to which practical features of NPM have become engrained in the political control over prisons. The corpus on HMIP documents demonstrated a different discourse of accountability, whilst this was expected due to the contextually different purposes of the document selected, what it did demonstrate is how they seek to engage with making claims for their political masters, and how they set clear discursive practices of using referential strategies and truth modalities to construct their arguments. I argue that HMIPs discourse of accountability can be characterised by a statement-centred rhetoric, where claims are made with often limited explanation or justification. Indeed, this incorporated an outcome-focused approach to their judgments, with limited discussion paid to addressing or explaining the procedural occurrences within prisons, which was applied when highlighting both poor and good practices on the three problems. Yet, within their vague justifications I identified discursive practices of referential strategies, in both a denoted and connoted form, and truth modalities that allowed them to present themselves and other bodies of accountability as arbiters of truth and standards.

Comparatively there are features of these discourses of accountability that appear as similar, unsurprising considering they are seeking parallel actions on reducing violence, self-harm, and suicide within prisons. First, they both engage in practices of

audit, which Power (1996) claims to have grown in prisons in the early-mid 1990s, and which Bennett (2014) presents as occurring within prisons. Their discursive practices seen within these two groups are suggestive of the rise in penal managerialism and demonstrates a continued practices of what Garland (2001) promotes as practices of responsibilisation which correspond with the components of NPM. I also suggest that a key similarity is with the focus of assigning blame and responsibility. HMIP demonstrate this through their chosen referential strategies and truth modalities, whereas the political stakeholders demonstrate assignment through their shifting responsibility and identifying ownership of KPIs and KPTs. Simply put, HMIP are assigning blame and the political stakeholders are setting up those who could be blamed. I, therefore, argue that HMIP and the political stakeholders operate as separate reflective mechanisms of accountability in the context of violence, self-harm, and suicide. They are both considering responsibility to some extent, and both are looking to engage in practices that attempt to reduce the problems. However, when doing (HMIP) and setting (political stakeholders) accountability the two groups did not demonstrate any form of agreement, attack, or engagement with the other. The relational connection is therefore weak, yet there is attention paid to the same areas of focus, with similar discourses of causality (more on this in the next chapter) at play. Yet, assignment of target or assignment of blame is not seen as a relational entity within these documents. The next chapter will continue to discuss the discourses seen within the corpus, yet stepping away from NPM and instead considering how the groups play into discourses of causality. This will support in identifying wider synthesis with this chapter, as discussions will resonate with the discourses of accountability.

Chapter Seven: Discourses of Causality

7.1: Introduction

In the literature review (chapter 2), I highlighted that there are distinct epistemological traditions present in discussions on violence, self-harm, and suicide which I named the RMT and the CT. Whilst the chapter highlighted different constructions of these topics it also drew close attention to how authors frame causality. During analysis I found discussions of causality to be situated around three central themes: (1) trauma, (2) victimised experiences, and (3) a connection between drugs and violence and I recognised that HMIP and political stakeholders reproduced a set of related tropes based on these discourses. In recent years, attention to trauma and TIP has intensified in criminological disciplines (penology, victimology, and criminal justice practice). It is considered a progressive practice for penal culture that shifts discourses away from management and towards care and compassion for prisoners (Petrillo and Bradley, 2022). For some, TIP has become “fashionable” and “faddish” within policy rhetoric (Jewkes et al, 2019: 2), a claim which I address in this chapter arguing that the application of trauma discourses does not match academic discourses, but instead are framed as managerial discourses. Discussions on the association between drugs and violence were also present throughout the corpus, with documents like *Prison, Safety and Reform* (MoJ, 2016a) framing an emerging challenge around NPS leading towards increased violence. In this chapter, I argue that the drug-violence association has become a normalised and scapegoated discourse throughout the corpus, highlighting how this omits wider generative discussions on violence and self-harm, and that this association is often synthesised with discourses of risk management and NPM. As a result of this normalisation, the corpus did not present compassion or empathy in relation to drug use and instead utilises the association to blame and praise prison(er)s, whilst supporting political diversion. Both areas of discussion hold merit to wider criminological and penological studies, and it is important to recognise that the aim of this thesis is to address their discursive power within the corpus, with this chapter not seeking to add to these wider discussions but

address them as discourses seen intertextually in monitoring and policy generation for prisons.

7.2: Discourses of Trauma Informed Practice (TIP)

The literature review (chapter 2) identified several CTs on causality that drew on a range of research and penological theories to explain the causes of violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons. Within the CT, I drew attention to how the literature on causality is divided into three models: the importation, deprivation, and combined. Laying across all approaches was that of trauma theories and TIP, suggesting the three issues are caused through past traumas alongside traumas of imprisonment (Armour, 2012) and as a gendered reaction to traumatising events (Miller and Najavits, 2012). However, the analysis of the corpora unearthed forms of TIP rhetoric and practice which contrasted with that found in the literature review. For example, throughout the analysis the topics of trauma was often framed from the experiences of individuals (staff and prisoners) who witnessed violence, self-harm, and suicide. Rhetoric around this practice saw the three problems as the cause of trauma and victimised experiences, not that trauma causes the three problems. Throughout the corpus I found that prisoners with current or past trauma were not those who are doing the violent acts, the self-harm, or those who kill themselves through suicide. Rather, authors use rhetoric of trauma to frame those who witness or who come into contact with these problems as traumatised victims.

In a theoretical, practical, and political sense, discussions of TIP are seen as new, with no decisive or completed definitions offered within literature, legislation, or policy initiatives (Petrillo and Bradley, 2022). The body of literature surrounding trauma recognises that it represents a diverse practice of dealing with a deeply personal, emotional, and shocking experience that a person has previously had, having consequences for the behaviour, actions, and wellbeing that a person demonstrates (Covington, 2015; Sweeney et al, 2016; SAMHSA, 2014). The challenge comes with identifying what is meant by TIP. In 2022, the Office for Health Improvement and

Disparities (OHID) developed a definition that was applied to the health and care sector. OHID (2022) constructed this in connection with international work on trauma conducted by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA), who define trauma as

“...results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as harmful or life threatening. While unique to the individual, generally the experience of trauma can cause lasting adverse effects, limiting the ability to function and achieve mental, physical, social, emotional or spiritual well-being”.

The definition, in principle, supports the development of prisoner welfare practice. With prison staff expected to build compassionate relationships by recognising that past experiences can shape relationships between prisoners and staff, interactions between prisoners and others, and the opportunity for re-traumatisation to occur. Crucially, within prisons the impact of trauma has been connected to issues of substance abuse, self-harm, suicide, mental health, and behavioural issues (Covington, 2015; Kubaik et al, 2017; Armour, 2012), calling for TIP to be included as a mode of alleviating the incidents. As a result of the literature and campaigns for a progressive use of TIP within prisons, there have been policy shifts where trauma has been presented as the cause of issues. Most notably in the Female Offender Strategy (FOS) (MoJ, 2018; 2023b) where discourses on trauma appear on female offenders. The FOS demonstrated a resonance with the above literature and definitions of trauma, offering the discursive shift in understanding female offending and drawing association between experiences of “chaotic lifestyles involving substance misuse, mental health problems, homelessness, and offending behaviour...” which are seen as the “product of a life of abuse and trauma” (MoJ, 2018:5). This demonstrates the changing discourse towards a trauma causality of offending by framing this as an outcome of abuse and traumatic experiences, with the FOS further promoting progressive discourses and practices for use in prisons.

Given the focus of the FOS (MoJ, 2018) on women in prison, it is unsurprising to see that within the corpora discussions on TIP were often connected to women, which could be discursive seepage from the FOS. Indeed, the response for the FOS delivery

plan for 2022-23 (MoJ, 2023b) further demonstrated the extent to which TIPs have become an essential feature of staff training and to develop a service that avoids re-traumatisation. Trauma as a discourse of causality, like that seen within the FOS (MoJ, 2018; 2023b), can be seen within certain claims from the HMIP corpus with inspection on female prisons, recognising victimisation and traumatisation as essential features of women's criminality and offending behaviours. This causality was often applied in context to self-harm, where truth modalities were presented around incidents in female prisons (HMCIP, 2018/2019: 13).

“It remained the case that women were far more vulnerable to self-harm than men, and levels had increased significantly. The levels of victimisation suffered by many women before entering custody emphasised the need to continue and develop the vital trauma-informed work that has been implemented in recent years...”

This quotation demonstrates a trauma-informed discourse of causality, it references past conditions of women before imprisonment, drawing on their victimised and traumatised experiences to explain why and how self-harm is more evident within female prisons. This quotation demonstrates a form of causality that connects to the ‘importation model’, as the origins of self-harm are presented as an external influences that females bring into prisons, shaped by past experiences that the prison then must work around (Armour, 2012; Dear, 2006). Self-harm, as an imported factor, is then presented as a population characteristic within female prisons, one which requires adaptive practices that focus on interaction and compassion to avoid further re-traumatisation. However, this quotation does not consider how prisons can generate situational factors that initiate trauma and what practices need to be implemented to support the reduction in self-harm in the female estate. This approach would also consider TIP to be a strategy to deal with ‘damaged’ people, which might then detract the damage that prisons can have on an individual's sense of self and overall wellbeing, leading to mental health problems and an exacerbation of the trauma previously experienced (Armour, 2012). Utilising trauma as a cause of self-harm and suicide therefore emphasises imported problems of the prison population, with this quotation omitting how prisons can cause deprivational factors

which can exacerbate or produce traumas that result from interactions of staff, penal culture, or environmental factors, such as distance from families (Crewe et al, 2017).

The discourses of trauma are therefore reminiscent of the RMT as they are represented in practices done by the prison and in attempt to implement risk managing techniques. This exists in contrast to the literature on TIP. Taking this point further, we can suggest that the claims by Jewkes et al (2019) about TIP being faddish are accurate. The above example demonstrates this through vague mention of TIP implementation, without explaining how and where outcomes have been achieved with this practice. I interpret the above quotation similarly to how Jewkes et al (2019: 15) critically discuss TIP, claiming that

“It is not enough for prison staff to speak a trauma-sensitive language, or even engage in trauma-informed practice, if it is not fully embedded in the prison’s culture, fabric and design philosophy. When implemented in unsuitable or even dangerous trauma-generating environments, a trauma-informed mode of engagement may be of no greater value than a disregard for imprisoned women’s complex histories and biographies”.

My findings would agree with this sentiment as the discourse seen with TIP were applied by HMIP in a vague manner – arguably due to the outcome and statement focused style of accountability as mentioned earlier – or as a mechanism to explain why women self-harm. My analysis of HMIP documents suggests that the implementation of TIP in prisons is acknowledged, but that the practices are difficult to fulfil, maybe due to a lack of TIP being entrenched in the cultural fabric of prisons and penal culture. Likewise, the use of TIP in practice and discourse could be acknowledged as a boundary object, which would see various actors interpret and mobilise this practice in a manner to suit their own needs (Allen, 2014). The example below demonstrates the extent to which TIP has not become embedded within prisons, it details self-harm and suicide in HMP New Hall, a female prison in Wakefield, reviewing women who are disproportionately represented in self-harm incidents at the prison (HMIP, 2019c: 12-13).

There had been three self-inflicted deaths since June 2015. Most of the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman recommendations had been

addressed, but we were concerned that the response to one recommendation was disproportionate. There was no specific strategy or action plan for managing self-harm, but data were analysed so trends and themes could be monitored. A small number of prisoners was responsible for a significant proportion of self-harm incidents and a third had been carried out by those with complex needs living in Holly House. Most staff knew about the issues linked to prisoners' self-harming, and assessment care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) case management for prisoners at risk of suicide or self-harm had improved. Prisoners we spoke to who were subject to ACCT case management were positive about the support and care they received. There were too few Listeners (prisoners trained by the Samaritans to provide confidential emotional support to fellow prisoners), making access problematic.

The report offers a damning judgement on HMP New Hall, yet HMIP demonstrate that practices in prison could be recognised as understanding the nature of trauma as a causality for self-harm and suicide. Here they claim that 'most staff knew about the issues linked to prisoners' self-harming' which demonstrated an awareness to causality of self-harm incidents, albeit through an attempt to minimize it. Such phrasing recognises knowledge around the challenges presented by self-harming, yet provides no detail on how staff actions have been informed by this knowledge, presenting the ownership of knowledge as a positive outcome for the prison. Essentially, the quotation above provides a particular view on causality through the approach to frame self-harm within women's prisons as not something endemic, but infrequent and limited to a small number of prisoners with 'complex needs'. This provides a discourse of causality that identifies self-harmers as a small 'complex' group, who can be othered or detached from the general population of prisoners, which is separated through accommodation in a specific 'house' to symbolise the complexity of their needs. Furthermore, other familiar tropes seen within HMIP documents, such as datafication, are seen as a central practice in the judgements offered around the trauma of female prisoners, through data analysis being assessed and proportion being addressed. I argue that this shows a lack of practical awareness of HMIP to address the quality of TIP seen within HMP New Hall, or that the inspection framework disregards the possibility to consider this as a procedural entity, hence the lack of judgement offered. HMIPs discourse on causality therefore attempts to situate

trauma within prisons through a datafied and risk management style, neglecting the wider cultural compassion needed for TIP, which Jewkes et al (2019) suggests.

In opposition to the above discussions, which locates trauma as an imported cause of self-harm and suicide, there were also claims within the documents which presented situational and deprivational trauma experienced by prisoners. These references drew connections to previous literature seen within the literature review, on the situational or deprivational model of causality, offering richer – but still limited - explanatory frameworks for the problems that exist within prisons. This situational trauma was identified within the HMIP corpus as well as the Political Stakeholder corpus with the former connecting this to experiencing violence and the latter with environments where suicide and self-harm are reoccurring. The example below from HMIP, is presented as a reflection from the Chief Inspector during the introduction to the annual report for 2016/2017 (HMCIP, 2017: 8).

“I have seen many prisoners who are obviously under the influence of drugs. I am frequently shown evidence of repeated self-harm, and in every prison, I find far too many prisoners suffering from varying degrees of learning disability or mental impairment. I have personally witnessed violence between prisoners, and seen both the physical and psychologically traumatic impact that serious violence has had on staff. My anecdotal experience is no substitute for the broader evidence-based findings, but if I have experienced this during the course of inspections, what must be the impact on the prisoners and staff who endure these things every day of their lives?”

This reflection can be interpreted as a critical question asked by the HMCIP, as the quote positions the extent to which traumatic experiences occur for both prisoners and staff. However, trauma is only presented as a situational experience in connection to violence, with self-harm being presented as an endemic issue, rather than a response to imprisonment. The quotation demonstrates a vague response to these traumatic experiences, referring to ‘impact’ without applying clear explanation to what this refers to, or the consequences that these violent incidents have had on prisoners and staff. This leaves the reader with an acknowledgment of situational challenges, but with open interpretation. We must question why detail on prison experiences are often so limited. The above quotation also offers other worrying

semiotics as the detail offered around violent offenders and self-harmers, which sits in contrast to TIP. The quotation details violent prisoners and self-harmers as drug-users or having a learning disability and ‘mental impairment’. This others and stigmatises drug users, self-harmers, people with learning disabilities, and people with mental health problems. In drawing this approach to discuss the causality of violence and self-harm, the author is distinguishing prisoners as blameworthy for their violence and self-harm, rather than seeing them as victims or traumatised individuals – thus omitting the opportunity to bring forward trauma-informed rhetoric into this discourse of causality. This outright rejects trauma-informed values. Instead, the HMCIP refers to causality as something that is either chosen by the prisoners or referring to only imported characteristics that are seen as preprison individual deficits. Further demonstrating a rejection of situational factors and problematising violent prisoners and self-harmers as individually dangerous through their own will.

Experiential factors are a key feature when looking into the sociology of imprisonment, with many drawing arguments to how situations within prisons lead to negative reactions, where prisoners fail to adapt to their environments (Liebling, 1999; Liebling and Ludlow, 2016; Crewe et al, 2020; Armour, 2012). As with the above example, authors from the political stakeholder corpus discussed the ‘impact’ that traumatic experiences can have on an individual, demonstrating that they have a discursive view on such a reality, but are often unable (or unwilling) to address this specifically or directly. The quotation below attempts to unpack the idea of ‘impact’, where Lord Harris, from the review on self-inflicted death for young people in custody, discussed a case to demonstrate the experiences and the traumatic event which had taken place (Harris, 2015: 173).

The impact of a death of someone with whom they were living had a profound impact on some young adults from whom we have heard. This was brought home to us powerfully when we spoke to a group of young adults who had previously been in custody. We heard first-hand accounts of the trauma that some of these vulnerable young people still lived with as a consequence of a self-inflicted death in a nearby cell. For example, one young woman told the Panel: “there was a lady self-harmer, she cut too deep. Night staff didn’t have keys so prisoners heard the woman screaming and

die... the staff couldn't go into the cell." The young woman said she still remembers the sound of the woman screaming.

This example demonstrated a shared discourse with that of HMIP. They contextualise trauma as something that is experienced by individuals in prisons, but framed as a victimised experience by those who do not conduct acts of violence, self-harm, and suicide; but instead, who witness them. This demonstrates how witnessing self-harm has traumatising consequences, with the claim around remembering the sound of the scream providing a distinct traumatic event where auditory experiences are held with the person post-event. These two examples detail how traumatising experiences appear as a result of the violence, self-harm, and suicide with limited detail to the experiences that could lead an individual towards these three problems. Whilst I do not think that the authors neglect these experiences, it is clear to see that they do omit them from their discussions on trauma. These examples present a practice of drawing attention to those considered innocent or vulnerable bystanders – demonstrating how authors in this corpus are not engaged or discursively influenced by current trends or “faddish” policy rhetoric that has been associated with TIP (Jewkes et al, 2019: 2). But instead recognise the trauma that the issues of violence, self-harm, and suicide can bring to those who do not do these acts, further problematising those that do, individualising them as the cause for wider penal trauma and, tacitly perhaps, categorising and constructing prisoners as deserving or undeserving of care and compassion that TIP promotes.

7.3: Discourses of Victimised Experiences

Victims are mentioned throughout the corpus and follow a similar theme that can be associated with discussions on trauma, in that discussions are focused on the experiences of victims of violence, rather than the violent culture of prisons. They do this via a RMT framework. Within HIMP reports experiences are often mentioned, through the presentation of vague descriptions of prisoner's situational circumstances. The referential strategies used around victims of violence likewise uses this trope. As HMIP refer to safety as a key feature of their reports –one of the four

main healthy prisons tests – and is seen throughout discussions on victims. The first quotation below indicates HMIPs views from HMP Bronzefield, a female prison, discussed in the annual report 2016/2017 to indicate attitudes towards safety. Within the quotation the central frame that can be seen is around the challenges this presents with managing prisoners who experience one of the three problems. The second quotation, from the report on HMP Birmingham (2018) highlights how management techniques are applied to contend with challenging behaviours of prisons, identifying a vulnerable group who are victim to violence.

The prison accommodated a highly complex, challenging and varied population. Over half of those surveyed and more than at our last inspection said they had felt unsafe at some time during their stay and many said they had been victimised. However, most women said they felt safe at the time of the survey, levels of violence were not excessive and most incidents were minor. Staff knew the women well. (HMCIIP, 2017: 55).

Prisoners convicted of sexual offences were located onto wings (N and P). P wing accommodated prisoners who had been remanded or convicted of sexual offences and N Wing held a mix of vulnerable prisoners, including those who had been victimised elsewhere in the prison. We were concerned at the level of violence on N wing and the continuing harassment and victimisation of some very vulnerable prisoners. We found evidence of several prisoners who had experienced ongoing bullying from other prisoners, and many examples of an adequate staff presence to deter antisocial behaviour and prevent or deal with bullying, victimisation and violence. (HMIP, 2018c: 25).

Victimised experiences are used as indicators to determine whether a prison can be considered safe, however this is not an outright claim made by HMIP but one the reader is left to make on their own. Claims around victimisation are left vague with limited explanation offered to provide detail around those who experience it, the trauma they experienced, or suggestions for intervention. Instead, discussion is statement-based and vague. Victimised experiences are merely stated and framed under the guise of dangerization (Garland, 2001), as highlighted in chapter 2. As such the quotations frame victimised experiences as a menacing feature within prison, utilising phrasing such as ‘concerned’ and ‘ongoing’ to demonstrate a threat that produces the possibilities of harm for staff and other prisoners. It challenges the attempt to defend prisons and staff against violence and does not offer resolve but a

fear around the experiences of imprisonment (see Lianos and Douglas, 2000; Hudson, 2003). Dangerization in this context omits discussion on the pain or trauma that the violent prisoner might be experiencing (Miller and Najavits, 2012), it individualises their violence as choice and focuses instead - using a zero-sum frame - on the victims or those who are affected by the 'choice' to be violent. The dangerization trope seen in the second quotation contrasts with the first quotation, where violence is presented as individually problematic but not endemic, requiring a management of individual prisoners rather than an issue with penal culture or prison management. I speculate that a feature of this changing discourse could be due to the gendered division in presentation, however little is offered within these quotations to be able to build this into a more succinct argument. I would argue that the vague referential strategy to victims, dehumanises prisoner's experiences, as their victimhood is weaponised to show a failing prison, rather than to express discussions on treatment and push for change. This claim is something that I wish to build on in the next chapter, as the condemnation offered in prison inspection onto prisons, rather than understanding, supporting, and reforming, is something which requires further analysis and discussion.

Throughout the corpus similar examples appeared, whilst they linked to other findings, they all appeared to use similar modalities demonstrated above. However, one quotation appeared to be inconsistent from this approach, where in the Harris Review (2015: 103) one quotation clearly linked victimised experiences to self-harm and suicide directly.

"The PPO submission proposed that greater recording and data on the instances of bullying should be undertaken, proposing that "indications and allegations of bullying should be recorded, investigated and acted upon to protect the apparent victim and addressed that the behaviour of the alleged bully or bullies. The impact on the risk of suicide and self-harm for victims should always be considered"

This appeared as an anomaly as it was the only quotation that offered a recognition of the consequences of victimisation, presenting the victimised experience as having the potential for self-harm or suicide to be situational. The impact of crime on a victim

is a topic widespread within victimological studies and charities, collectively presenting the emotional, social, and psychological trauma of victimhood (Daigle and Muftić, 2016; Walklate, 2018; Davies et al, 2017). Dinisman and Moroz (2017: 16) demonstrate this in their collaborative report with Victim Support, acknowledging the effects on the victim through key themes found in qualitative research; that emotional and psychological effects were negatively expressed 83.7% of the time, manifesting in anxieties about their sense of safety and security (80.7%), physical health (59.8%), financial wellbeing (57.1%), confidence in the CJS (46.4%), and relationships with families (41.4%). This study demonstrates the extent to which distress and trauma were experienced by victims, which others (Campagna and Zaykowski, 2020) discuss through gendered differences, that explain the changing behaviours exhibited by victims. This example from the corpus serves only as a reminder that these victimised experiences should be recognised and considered in context to self-harming and suicidal behaviours, yet this does not appear as a standard trope associated with discussions about these prisoners.

I speculate that the limited detail and description above can link to ideas of 'undeserving' victims (Walklate, 2002; Richardson and May, 2001) or the concept of the hierarchy of victims (Carrabine et al, 2004; McEvoy and McConnachie, 2012). What can be identified in the above is that the lack of detail demonstrates the extent to which HMIP and political stakeholders choose to not present the reality of imprisoned victims and that a lack of explanation can avoid claims of being sympathetic towards offenders – a common trope seen within discussions on penal populism (Garland, 2001; Pratt, 2007). The vague expression and lack of detail presents two counter positions. The first is that the authors consider these prisoners to be undeserving victims; individuals who are not identified as having legitimacy in their victim status and therefore are not worthy of compassion or sympathy (Greer, 2017). Secondly, that authors avoid presenting compassion and sympathy due to the pressures of penal populism which emerged due to the "decline of deference [which] has led to a public that is more insistent on having its own 'say' on public affairs" (Pratt, 2007: 36). This also involves rejecting voices which seek to bring resources of sympathy and support into their work. This second approach invites a key question

that is often considered in penological research: why should we care? Liebling (2001) details this classic prison studies dilemma, building on Becker's (1967) discussion on Social Problems; she argues the case for synthesis and analysing the whole – arguably a generative approach – to consider different perspectives and positions when contending with prison research. Taking her encouragement, I do not wish to simply suggest that HMIP or political stakeholders are actively engaging in dehumanising tropes when discussing victimhood as a cause for violence, self-harm, and suicide. Instead, I argue that many different social forces are at play during the writing and construction of these documents and that these forces are likely to externally coerce the choices made by authors, leading to dehumanising tropes.

The above discussion demonstrates the extent to which writing on victimhood as cause for violence, self-harm, and suicide is framed in a particular style due to wider social pressures that exist around the challenges of engaging sympathy to prisoner's experiences. As a result, discussions on victims were often presented alongside the theme of violence and risk managing, as this provides the presentation of dominant discourses that can be linked to RMTs (see chapter 2 and 6). Violence and victims were often discussed by HMIP through similar linguistic styles to that of NPM in chapter 6, which employed managerial expression to frame accountability. For example, the below recognises victimised experience as a result of violence within prisons, but does so through limited description, explanation, or analysis when presenting a truth modality (HMCIP, 2019: 24).

“The national roll-out of challenges, support and interventions plans (CSIP) was under way and provided a consistent and effective process to help improve safety. However, not all establishments used the process effectively. For example, Channing Wood, despite the introduction of CSIP, support for victims was poor and there had been no effective monitoring of perpetrators of violence. But elsewhere the system was being implemented effectively”

This particular example reads as a review on CSIP, which is an intervention that has been in place since 2018, prisons use CSIP to manage and support prisoners that are assessed as showing an increased risk of violence towards others (PRT, 2022; CoE, 2020). However, HMIPs comments are vague in their description of their judgements,

with 'poor' and 'no effective monitoring' being used to make claims and to provide a truth around the practices in HMP Channing Wood. This fits with the discourses and practices of NPM seen during inspection, as there is no clear defence of these claims, making the reader unaware of failure and prisons unable to utilise this information for progressive development. The vague detail is often applied in truth modalities, which I identify as a trope employed throughout HMIPs documents. The same trope is applied for positive judgments – also discussed previously – and is used to highlight minor procedural findings, particularly around multidisciplinary working, another discourse associated with NPM (Hood, 1991).

Multidisciplinary complex case meetings were well attended and work with perpetrators and victims of violence was direct and monitored very well. However, residential managers and officers relied on the safer custody team to carry out investigations of violent incidents and to manage perpetrators and victims support plans. We were not confident that there was enough focus on the increased risk of violence caused by poor living conditions, staff attitude and illicit drug use. (HMCIP, 2018: 21).

The positive truth modalities seen within this quotation exemplify how vague detail continues throughout, whilst also recognising the importance of working with victims. Yet, the limited detail and description early in this quotation does not draw on how victims' voices are engaged and used within monitoring or development of initiatives. I argue that these vague descriptions offer a dehumanising trope due to the disengagement of compassion, empathy, and understanding that could seek to humanise victims of violence. However, the ending of this example does demonstrate some attempt to move away from only taking a RMT, where some generative framing is offered to discuss poor living conditions, staffing, and drugs to connect and build risk variables for violence. Whilst there is some holistic framing applied; I argue that this still demonstrates a dominance discourse on risk that is present throughout HMIPs report writing.

Risk management is another common theme when HMIP discuss victims of violence in prison. This draws together the dominant discourse on risk-modelling alongside NPM strategies. The union of this results in examples, such as the quotation below,

which sees managerial strategies utilised for the benefit of risk over the benefit of the victim. I argue that the unification of risk modelling and NPM therefore places more importance on the offender of violence over the victim.

Much of the violence seemed to be linked to drugs and debt, as well as mental health and poor prison conditions. Some prisons had dedicated wings for prisoners seeking protection from bullying and victimisation. Elsewhere, we continued to find prisoners too afraid to leave their cells who were left isolated on wings; support for these prisoners was often weak. (HMCIP, 2018: 25).

This example draws on discussing the managerial practices seen within prisons with a focus applied to how the prisons strategised specific wings to reduce violence, which was done through isolating the victims onto a dedicated wing – a managerial strategy of removing the problem rather than the cause. Whilst the quotation presents judgments to the reader, there are specific linguistic techniques employed that can be interpreted to represent managerial and risk-modelling motives. The first sentence presents a list of variables which atomise why prisons believe violence takes place, I can determine that this is the prisons information rather than the inspectorates through the phrasing of ‘seemed to be linked’, which suggests that they are not presenting their own truth modality – the process of judging something as true in language - but referring to the analysis that prisons have provided them. I also argue that this sentence presents a juxtaposition with the second and third sentence, as both present isolation of victims yet the latter is presented with negative judgement, with ‘support for these prisons...often weak’. HMIP are omitting those prisoners who are on dedicated wings due to their victimhood, yet they do not present any judgment to this practice; but when prisoners self-isolate on wings that the support is weak. I question whether this provides a discourse that problematises prisoners as victims of violence, presenting them as difficult to manage in attempt to reduce violence.

Self- secluded prisoners were also discussed elsewhere in the political stakeholder corpus and were recognised as a problematic and challenging group to manage. However, there was a quotation from the HMPPS action plan for HMP Birmingham which sets a different precedent to that seen as the dominant discourse identified

thus far. This quotation offered a new strategy to managing self-secluded prisoners due to their inherent victimhood (HMPPS, 2018: 12).

The prison will introduce a self-secluded strategy as these prisoners are contraindicated as victims of violence and anti-social behaviour. This level of comprehensive support plan will include planning of access to regime activities and mental health support in order to fully re-integrate segregated and self-isolating prisoners back into normal prison life.

Whilst the quote recognises the victimhood that self-secluded prisoners have; it still suggests that a plan is needed through a style of support that has not yet been seen within this prison. The quote does not necessarily individualise the problem of self-secluded prisoners as it suggests that re-integration of this group is needed as a recognised outcome. However, the target set does not detail a strategy to contend with the issues of violence or anti-social behaviour, suggesting an intervention that encourages individual change on an issue, violence, that has otherwise been framed as widespread and pervasive within prison life. I argue that this quotation demonstrates the prevalence of NPM within discourse and rhetoric on victims of violence, as it sets a targeted outcome on a generative problem, without providing specific means on how violence and anti-social behaviour can be targeted by the suggested interventions offered.

The same discourse appears within documents from the political stakeholder's corpus, with victims of violence seen as a managerial concern that must be considered around risk. However, this is expanded to highlighting particular vulnerabilities that some prisoners might have, particularly recognising the imported vulnerabilities that female prisoners might bring with them. Within the document Review on the Management and Care of Transgender Prisons, the MoJ (2016b) draws attention to the imported victimisation of female prisoners, mostly their experiences as a result of domestic violence and sexual abuse. However, these experiences are framed as risk categories within this document, with transgender prisoners – who were being placed in women's prisons – presented as posing a threat to these vulnerable prisoners (MoJ, 2016b: 5).

“Decisions to transfer serving prisoners between male and female prisons (or vice versa) should be based on clear criteria, with reasons given for the outcome and appeal process clearly explained. As part of the process, it will be necessary to factor in the impact on and risk to those in current potential establishments especially, for instance, in the women's state when many prisoners may have been victim of domestic violence or sexual abuse and may continue to be exceptionally vulnerable.”

Risk is framed here through the dangerization of trans-prisoners. Presenting them as the object and recipient of risk and vulnerability within the prison, thus requiring careful management of this group as to safeguard potential victims of domestic or sexual violence. I argue that the discourse to problematise violence in prison is therefore connected or labelled towards the trans-prisoner group in this quotation. The context of this particular document is important to recognise the socio-political landscape for trans-prisoners, which van Hout and Crowley (2021: 440) express in a highly negative light, suggesting that “prison settings amplify vulnerability, trauma and transphobic abuse... including misgendering, ... violence by other prisons and prison staff (sexual coercion, rape) ... or denial by prison authorities of access to gender affirming medical care”. Recognising the challenges faced by trans-prisoners is important to identify how the above quotation problematises through a risk-modelling lens, and a further rejection of the wider generative conditions and experiences considered by this group. It can be suggested that the lack of focus within the corpus on the violence experienced by trans-prisoners (such as sexual coercion or rape) could be within itself a recognition of a transphobic rhetoric within policy; however, this is beyond the scope of this current study and further analysis of discourses on trans-prisoners would be needed to justify this claim.

7.4: The Drugs and Violence Association

A discourse that was seen throughout the corpus came in the form of a commonly associated link between drugs and violence. I refer to ‘drugs’ loosely within my explanation of the association, as the documents are likewise vague in how this term is applied, with some examples drawing close association to drug use, abuse, dealing,

marketisation of drugs by prisoners, and the consequences of wider penal-social dynamics such as victimisation, isolation, debt, and gang association. This loose way of discussing drugs has an important function, in that it allows the authors to discuss the individual actions surrounding drugs whilst simultaneously referring to the wider dynamics that surrounds drugs as a penal practice. The variety and range of association offered to drugs and violence is a dominant discursive claim, providing a rhetoric that informs discourses on values and actions for violence and self-harm. In this section, I argue that the association made between drugs and violence is discourse, that problematises prisoners through an RMT framework; one that forecloses counter discussions, such as a trauma-informed approach to drug use, or political handling of prisons. This discourse has achieved dominance within the corpora through the use of truth modalities and linkages to other discourses seen within, such as the rhetoric and practice of NPM and RMT. This section draws on how this association is applied as a dominant truth modality when actors plan interventions, where I argue that blame is placed on prisoners who are othered and dangerised.

One reason for why the drug and violence association could be considered as a commonality within this corpus is connected to the time period of the document selected for this study. At this time, prisons in England and Wales were grappling with the use of New (or Neuro) Psychoactive Substances (NPS), referred to as synthetic substances, spice, or mamba (Duke, 2019; O'Hagan and Hardwick, 2017; Ralphs et al, 2016). NPS is a form of synthetic cannabinoids which had been a 'legal high' until the publication of the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 which sought to criminalise the production, supply, and possession of these substances (Ralphs et al, 2016). Duke (2019: 2) argues that NPS had become very popular in prisons due to the novel structure of the drugs which make it undetectable by routine Mandatory Drug Testing (MDT) as they "do not have a distinctive 'drug' smell, easy to conceal, relatively cheap to purchase, help to relieve the boredom and monotony of prison life, offer an altered state of reality and are perceived not to be 'illegal' by prisoners". As a result of the 'new' or 'novel' challenges presented, NPS was often referred to directly in the

documents as a cause for the rising violence in male prisons, which HMIP do within the two quotations below.

The report pointed out that these synthetic substances, often known as spice or mamba, were becoming even more prevalent in prisons and exacerbating problems of debt, bullying, self-harm and violence. The effects of these drugs can be unpredictable and extreme. The use can be linked to attacks on other prisoners and staff, self-inflicted deaths, serious illness and life changing self-harm. (HMCIP, 2016: 8).

Category B and C men's local and training prisons account for the numerical bulk of prisoners. With their high through-put of prisoners, their often-worn-out fabric, their vulnerable populations and their levels of violence and illicit drug use, they were this year the prisons that, as in previous years, caused us most concern. Staff shortages had been so acute that risks to both prisoners and staff were often severe, and levels of all types of violence had soared. Meanwhile, the appalling impact of illicit drugs, particularly new psychoactive substances (NPS) had been underestimated and as a result many prisons are still suffering from the debt, bullying and violence they generated (HMCIP, 2019: 8)

The identification of NPS within these quotations highlights the extent to which the drug was problematised and discursively utilised to express particular blame for a rise in violence and self-harm within this given period. NPS is represented as 'unpredictable', 'extreme', and 'underestimated', as a drug that proves challenging and pressurising for risk modelling and identification. Indeed, Ralphs et al (2016) highlighted how NPS became the drug of choice due to the ability to access, store, and sell the drug much easier owing to the inability to detect the drug through means otherwise used in prison to identify other illegal substances, such as MDT and searching staff and visitors into the prison. I argue this is why HMIP signify the unpredictable and underestimated nature of NPS, as prisons are incapable of tracking or responding to the drug within the population. Referring to 'unpredictability' demonstrates the dominance in risk modelling discourses, identifying NPS as a novel entity which increases the risk of violence and self-harm for prisoners, a risk factor that needed to be managed out of the population. However, the discussions above often present the taking of drugs as a cause of violence due to the wider penal-social implications that drugs bring, mostly debt, bullying and violence. I argue that the time between the above two quotations is an important indicator to address the

development in the drug - violence association. The first quotation refers to wider individual circumstances to drug taking, highlighting 'attacks on other prisoners and staff, self-inflicted deaths, serious illness and life changing self-harm', which presents drug use as a cause of an assembly of issues. Whereas the second quotation, 2-3 years later, presents the consequences of drug taking as 'debt, bullying and violence' as the main outcomes, eliminating health and illness, and suicide within discussions of causality. I argue that this development in the discourse presents a growth of an association between drugs and violence, with a rejection or a movement away from understanding the individual consequences on prisoners, but instead this problematises prisoners drug use to address the risk management of NPS in prisons and attaching this symbolically to all within the prison.

The shifting discourse towards an association between drugs and violence also frames blame for violence onto the prisoner's decision to engage in drug use. This serves to essentially omit other possible reasons why prisoners engage in drug use, circumventing compassion that could be shown through TIP. The quotations above only demonstrate that prisoners engage in drug use, with authors using this drug use to explain the causes of other negative consequences, such as violence. This omits discussion of the consumption of drugs in prisons, which is not a new or under-researched subject, with many highlighting that depressant drugs like cannabis and heroin are typical in prisons (Edgar and O'Donnell, 1998; Wilkinson et al, 2003; Ralphs et al, 2017). Crewe (2005: 477) goes further, stating that heroin in prison was often used by prisoners to help them cope with the deprivations of imprisonment, providing sanctuary and relief in temporary stints and experiencing a penal-social environment which "both increase and alleviate the everyday pains of imprisonment". I argue that the quotations above only show how drugs are there to increase the pains of imprisonment through the increasing focus on violence. Drug use has also been discussed in literature to be a consequences of previous traumas, with Covington (2008) highlighting how past sexual abuse, physical abuse, and emotional abuse are all influences in leading women into drug use, abuse, or addiction. This is furthered by Crewe et al (2017) who highlighted that drug misuse was often a precursor to women's criminality and imprisonment. The quotations above therefore disassociate

from the causality of drug and substance misuse seen within academic discourses, excluding discussions on the issue of drug use in the first instance, and favouring discourses dominated by tropes of the RMT. HMIP are therefore only adding to the dominant discourses on risk management, which reinforces a reality behind the drug and violence association.

Overlooking why people use and take drugs in prison provides an opportunity to recognise the dominant perspective authors seek to take around the drug and violence association. Authors therefore avoid constructing generative realities around prisoners' drug use and the wider consequences of this drugs use, as seen in the academic literature. Instead, the dominant perspective identified throughout the corpus favoured reductionist and atomising approaches to understanding drug use. Rejecting generative explanations that can be applied to prisoners and the wider consequences of penal-drug culture. Within the corpus strong truth modalities around the drug-violence association were offered, where authors did not seek to justify nor detail other causes of violence when the topic of drugs is apparent. I argue that this is a choice by the authors, as they choose not to take alternative or generative outlooks on drug use. These modalities are explicit in their presentation, such as the below from the 2017-2018 (quotation 1 - p.8) and 2018-2019 (quotation 2 - p.11) Annual Report from HMCIP.

As I have reported in the past, the ready availability of drugs in too many of our prisons sits behind much of the violence.

Too many prisoners were still being held in prisons that were unsafe. Levels of violence had increased in more than half the prisons we inspected. A total of 28 local and training prisons were inspected during the year, and in 22 of them we judged safety to be poor or not sufficiently good. Given the clear link between illicit drugs and violence, it was disappointing that too few prisons had developed a comprehensive or effective drug strategy. It was also notable that self-harm had increased in two-thirds of the prisons we inspected.

The quotations leave little room for uncertainty around the assumptions frame on the drug-violence association. HMCIP utilises phraseology to construct truths that are presented as unquestionable fact, such as 'drugs...sits behind much of the violence',

and ‘given the clear link between illicit drugs and violence’. Such presentation techniques demonstrate a strong constructed reality and view which the readers are not invited to question or critique, thus presenting a discourse on how the inspectorate identify cause and effect. Within the first quotation there is a reinforcement of this discourse, by the author stating that this issue is a repeat from the previous annual report, demonstrating the longevity of the issue and the dominant discourse presented on this association. I argue that this association between drugs and violence is therefore amplified over discussions on health and wellbeing, to encourage prison management and political masters to provide intervention on what they deem is an obvious and objective source and consequence of violence. The second quotation utilises the belief in this association further, framed as ‘obvious’ and ‘a given’. Therefore, the lack of knowledge of this link by prisons, as evidence by the lack of strategy to alleviate drugs, is rendered more severe in contrast. This is demonstrated strongly through labelling this as ‘disappointing’. The final sentence, on self-harm, further showcases a lack of action on prisons to deal with drug use, a strategic placement to express a cause of self-harm for prisoners.

Truth modalities used in documents on the drug-violence association were presented with strength, even when utilised against otherwise holistic discussions on the use and consequences of drugs in prison. *Prison Safety and Reform* (MoJ, 2016a: 45) a White Paper published at the height of the NPS crisis, had an example of this where the association holds a dominant position over other generative consequences to drugs.

Drugs cause crime because of the enormous profit to be made and the dependencies they create this makes them a major challenge to the efforts to turn prisoners away from crime and the criminal lifestyle. Drugs also cause violence and health risks, including a risk of self-harm. They cause unpredictable and violent behaviour, put pressure on families to supply them, and form the basis of a trade which involves debt, intimidation and violence. But illegal drugs now have a foothold across the prison estate. We need to move to a position where drug use is not the norm in prisons.

The quotation exhibits explanation behind the association but draws particular attention to violence through the repetition of this alongside risk management tropes

of unpredictability. However, the document only looks towards the consequences of drug use and does not provide explanation as to why drug taking is seen within prisons, highlighting actions after taking the drugs and during intoxication. I argue that this demonstrates a reactionary approach to contending with the issue of drugs in prison, as the choice to not ask 'why do prisoners take drugs?' produces discourses and action that do not seek a resolution to the root cause of the behaviour, and only seek to manage the consequences of drug use. Discourses of this kind are the same as those seen in the RMT as there is a focus on a specific variable that can be seen as a cause to a problem in prison, yet that indicator is often left in an assumed or vague manner without focus, or attention being paid to understand it. Furthermore, this approach seeks to blame prisoners for the problem, rather than the penal culture, experiences of imprisonment, or treatment by those with authority.

The discourse that associates drugs and violence has also become normalised as an 'obvious' feature of prison life, with the association being presented by authors as a baseline for what should be actioned over the course of prison work. This normalised effect brings the discourse into action through the judgement of HMIP, presenting the drug-violence association as commonplace knowledge that all prison staff should have and use over the course of their intervention and strategy planning (HMIP, 2018c: 74).

The first priority at any prison should be to keep those who are held or work there safe. In this regard, HMP Birmingham has completely failed. Levels of violence had increased and, when measured over the last 12 months, were the highest for any local prison in the country. Many of these assaults were serious and the number was rising. Prisoners and staff are frequently required hospital treatment. In our survey, 71% of prisoners told us that they had felt unsafe at some time in Birmingham, an extraordinarily high figure. 37% felt unsafe at the time of the inspection and many reported being bullied and victimised by other prisoners. The prison's response to this was wholly inadequate. Most violent incidents were not investigated. There was inadequate analysis or understanding of the violence. In short, the prison strategy for confronting violence was completely ineffective. It did not, for example, even address the potential impact that the widespread availability of drugs had on the violence.

This quotation, taken from the HMIP report on HMP Birmingham, which included a letter on the UNP, demonstrates my claims above. Much of the quotation addresses

the judgements of the prison through data on violence, before moving onto criticising the prison's strategy for tackling violence. However, the last sentence proposes that the prison did not consider the drug-violence association, claiming that they did not address the impact of drug availability on the violence in the prison. I argue that this is a consequence of the normalisation of the association, as the phrase judges the prison for not making the most obvious connection, which is used to demonstrate a neglect or lack of work offered by the prison – further justifying HMIP engaging the UNP. The association is therefore used as a means of demonstrating blame and dissatisfaction by HMIP, framing the drug and violence association in a style that suggests the prison is idle.

The normalised discourse on the drug and violence association is used as an explanation for the reduction of staff numbers during this time period, as a way of preventing blame allocation to politicians and prison managers. Within the Prison Safety and Reform White Paper (MoJ, 2016a), NPS were framed as the foremost problem seen within prisons at that time and was used as a causality for many consequences such as violence. NPS were framed as problematising in several ways, firstly for its undetectability with pre-existing drug tests unable to identify NPS making the drug easy to provide to prisoners. Secondly, NPS were identified as a drug that exacerbates already dangerous offenders, suggesting that they were likely to be more violent due to this substance. Thirdly, NPS were presented clearly as associated with violence (MoJ, 2016a: 41).

More recent developments have made these challenges much harder to manage. Since 2012, the use of psychoactive substances in prisons has risen dramatically, which presents our prison staff with real challenges. Their effects in prisons have made some already dangerous offenders even more volatile, and their reactions more difficult to manage. We know that local prisons with higher rates of drug finds have higher rates of violence. But until this year, there have been no effective tests available to establish whether prisoners have taken these drugs.

The framing of NPS were outright problematic, causing many consequences for those inside the prison, such presentation can be used to deflect wider discussions on what

other generative features could be causing the issues of violence, such as reduced purposeful activity, limited access to families, or a lack of poor-quality facilities for prisoners. However, within the document the then SoSfJ, Liz Truss MP, weaponised NPS and the association between drugs and violence to explain the reductions in prison staff. Violence is presented as the definitive reason for the reduction of staff and the challenge for retention. The quotation below demonstrates the deflection, even mentioning that ‘efficiencies’ in the form of funding cuts to HMPPS have been in place from this particular government. The quotation below is also closely located to the above, which presents this association as an obvious truth modality (MoJ, 2016a: 41).

These changes have come after a period of change for the prison workforce as a result of making efficiencies. The number of Band 2 to 5 frontline operational staff reduced from 29,660 on 31 March 2012 to 23,080 on 31 March 2016. As violence has increased it has become harder to retain existing staff, thus creating a vicious cycle of staff pressure and violence.

Using violence as a leading factor behind staff reduction and retention places specific discursive values to the problems in prison, it displaces blame towards prisoners as the problematic source rather than any other reason. The lack of detail about ‘efficiencies’ is important within the quotation above, as this provides some scope to suggest that other decisions had been made that could be impacted on staff retention, such as a pay freeze in the public sector, the emotional and physical demands on the role, and the wellbeing of prison officers (Kinman et al, 2017). Indeed, on the discussion of self-harm and suicide Nixon (2022: 14) recognises that “officers feel undervalued, unsupported and under-skilled to perform tasks around coping with trauma and the emotional labour required to perform the role of the officer can lead to burnout, desensitisation, guilt and shame, dissonance and moral conflict”. Nixon’s autoethnography of the experience as a prison officer further questions whether violence, as a consequence of drugs, can be recognised as a core factor for staff reduction, as her account suggests that resource and support, arguably where ‘efficiencies’ have been made, could be a key feature for staff retention. However, the Prison, Safety and Reform paper takes this further, creating an absolute by using the

drug and violence association to justify not only the reduction in staff, but as a means of justifying future intervention – or a policy U-turn – in bringing in more staff to deal with the consequences of NPS (MoJ, 2016a:41).

While it was right to seek to operate prisons more efficiently, the destabilising effect of changes in the operating environment, such as the introduction of new psychoactive substances – described as a ‘game-changer’ by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman – means we must now reconsider staffing levels. Our analysis shows a statistical correlation between the numbers of staff and the level of violent incidents. We now need more frontline staff, and we need to change the way they work to better support offenders and respond to new threats as they arise.

Truth modalities are evident throughout this quotation, with the identification of the association bringing changing and challenging environments, through to using the PPO as a means of ‘objective’ accountability and through claims of ‘correlation’ – two examples that have been discussed with the HMIP corpus. I argue that the same conclusions can be drawn from this quotation as already discussed. But more importantly, the claims here of truth around the challenge of NPS is the principal feature of this justification for more staff. By using the drug-violence association the author is able to deflect tension away from the political decision to make efficiencies, instead blaming the prisoners and the use of NPS for the need to bring in more prison staff so that offenders can be managed better.

7.5: Conclusion

In the discussions above I note the extent to which trauma has become a feature of the documents selected for the corpus. Demonstrating a discourse that recognises trauma as imported into the prison, through women’s victimisation and abuse preprison, and experienced in prison, in this case by staff and prisoners who are witness to traumatic events like violence, self-harm, and suicide. I argue that these findings suggest that TIP is not being effectively enacted in prisons, nor is trauma being highlighted as allied to the actions of prisoners who engage in violent acts, self-harm, or end their own lives. However, I think we must recognise the limits of this study; as I cannot direct my claims towards the practices seen within prisons directly, but

instead towards the authors I have analysed – as it is their interpretations of the prisons which I argue do not have a trauma-informed discourse. Furthermore, the documents that were selected for this study are relative, i.e. must be understood in context, to their time both politically and organisationally, as since the publication of these documents there have been changing policy rhetoric in Governmental practice and changing organisation of the Prison Inspectorate, with a new HMCIP who is directing HMIP into a different stylistic practice and discursive values. Yet, I argue that the omission of discussion directed towards TIP or the trauma of the person conducting the act can be likened to theoretical ideas associated with victimised offenders or undeserving victims.

Discourses on victims are therefore widespread throughout the documents, but are presented in a manner which frame violence, self-harm, and suicide as creating victims rather than an action by victims. For example, the use of trauma within the documents is often limited to the experiences of those performing one of these acts. I argue that the discussions on victims of violence are particularly important in this thesis, as they support a discursive practice which shifts focus away from the central issues this study is investigating and instead pays greater attention to the potential victims of these problems. This therefore shifts discussion of causality away from the prisoners who are violent, self-harming, and suicidal, moving focus to how another prisoner's victimhood can be seen as a risk variable for self-harm or suicide. Yet even discussions on those who experience victimisation within prison are presented in a vague and limited manner, with little depth or explanation offered beyond identifying their victimhood. I question whether external forces are adapting the discourse presented by authors. Finally, I see this section demonstrating that even when investigating a different element of discourse, that risk management and modelling are appearing still as dominant for both groups.

The corpora universally present an association between drugs and violence as a causality, but does so by focusing on the consequences of drugs in prisons rather than detailing distinctively that drug consumption leads to violent behaviour due to the physical and psychological reaction to substances. As a result, this discourse

problematizes prisoners by blaming them for the violence and subject drug users as a dangerised group who are there to be managed and controlled by prison staff. It is clear that the dominance of this discourse is a result of the challenge that shaped prison risk management with the rise of NPS, due to its unpredictability in testing and monitoring, and the extreme hold it had over prisoners due to the ease of access and use. A notable feature of this discourse is the missing discussions on the generative understanding of drug use, with no discussion offered to discourses that present a compassionate or empathic understand of drug use. I also argued that there was missing connect between the discourses offered here with what is seen in academic discourses on drug use, supporting Garland's (2001) remarks on the separation of 'experts' within criminal justice. This missing academic discourse and movements away from generative explanations for drug use, support the construction of a dominant discourse for violence, which had become central to the judgements offered by HMIP which was identified through using the association to place blame and provide praise to prisons. The political stakeholders to utilise this association for the purpose of political diversion and to redirect focus and attention away from political decision making, and instead using the risk modelling approach alongside this association to provide a logical rhetoric on increasing the number of prison staff. The drug and violence association are therefore an example of how discourses of causality become dominant within the two groups and how they are used within inspection practice and political discussion.

Chapter Eight: Veiled Through Discourse

8.1: Introduction

The style of CDA applied throughout this thesis asks questions to explain how discourses “enact, confirm, legitimise, reproduce and challenge” action and power on violence, self-harm, and suicide in prison (van Dijk, 2015: 467). I do this by narrating analysis from micro-linguistic techniques through to macro-socio-political discourses (Richardson, 2006). This chapter continues this approach by considering how discourses held by HMIP and political stakeholders are used to ‘veil’ potential action, obscuring particular possibilities and imaginaries, whilst rendering others visible. This chapter discusses the veil by drawing on Hajer’s (1995) work on ‘storylines’ used in policy debate. I build on these ideas by addressing organisational discourses constructed by HMIP and political stakeholders. In doing so, I offer explanations behind how discourses of datafication, causality, and accountability can be seen to weave together as part of the organisational discourses of HMIP and political stakeholders. To achieve this, this chapter builds an explanation of the mechanical and calculated construction of organisational discourses, recognising the consequences that they have on the actions proposed by different groups on the topics of violence, self-harm, and suicide. This chapter begins with the metaphorical concept of the veil to frame analysis, before unpacking the different threads seen within HMIPs and the political stakeholders veils, building discussion around the key discourses already highlighted in this thesis in a thematic manner.

8.2: Storylines, Organisational Discourses and the Veil

To help develop the metaphor of the veil I build on Hajer’s (1995) theorisation of ‘Storylines’. Storylines are a strategy for recognising how narratives are constructed through truth modalities in order to reduce complexity, utilise tropes and devices to construct ‘discursive cement’ and expand the boundaries of narratives to legitimise and increase discourse coalition. Broadly, storylines refer to the “narratives on social

reality through which elements from many different domains are combined and that provide actors with a set of symbolic references that suggest a common understanding” (Hajer, 1995: 62). Engaging with storylines is therefore advantageous for CDA, as they provide a way to explain the narratives that inform potential actions by authors. The idea of storylines asserts that actors argue, justify, and rationalise their stance based on multiple interacting discourses, but that they do so through linear narratives – or stories - to make realities by a group understandable and unquestionable. Storylines play a key role in policy change and debate due to three key features. The first is that storylines reduce discursive complexity by enabling policymakers to ‘make sense’ and define a reality, providing a narrative for change. Through the reduction of complexity “specific ideas of ‘blame’ and ‘responsibility’, and of ‘urgency’ and ‘responsible behaviour’ are attributed” by actors producing discursive simplicity and legitimising actions (Hajer, 1995: 65). Throughout the corpus, the reduction of complexity was often presented through truth modalities seen in statements, presenting unquestionable facts. For example, the HMCIP Annual Report 2018-2019 (2019: 8) blames prisons for a lack of supervision or management for self-harmers, providing a statement of accountability that presents a single truth and reality.

“Some examples from this year that are particularly concerning relate to the tragic issues of self-inflicted deaths in prisons. Inspectors sometimes found an **inexcusable lack of supervision or management intervention to ensure men at risk of self-harm were held safely.**” (bold represents truth modalities)

Similarly, the political stakeholder documents demonstrated the reduction of complexity in a direct manner. The example below is taken from Hansard during the second reading of the Prisons and Courts Bill, where Labour MP David Hanson presents truth modalities about the reduction of prison officers and how this led to a rise in self-harm (Hansard HC Deb., 20 March 2017).

“**Nobody will disagree** with the statement the Lord Chancellor has made in relation to clause 1, **because they are sensible and sound**, but she must recognise that the indicators on self-harm, assaults and everything else arising, and that there are 6500 fewer officers then there were seven years ago. Can she tell us how many offices she has recruited to date; how many she expects to recruit and how she can keep a prison population that is at the level it was in 2010 with fewer officers?” (bold represents truth modalities)

The above demonstrates the use of truth modalities to reduce complexity, with phrasing of “because they are sensible and sound” producing an unquestionable narrative to provide a definitive truth against which other politicians seemingly cannot argue.

The opportunity to reduce the complexity of particular issues enables truth modalities to legitimise a storyline. This links to the second feature, which is that storylines build a dominant discursive position, producing defined meaning through tropes, discursive devices, and rationalising of moral missions to others, fostering support for actions (Hajer 1995; Annison 2022). The framing of a storyline achieves dominance by establishing “discursive hegemony” (Hajer, 1995: 65), involving a collective “struggle ... in which actors try to secure support for their definition of reality” (Hajer 1995: 59). By seeking support actors legitimise the storyline by increasing dominance and coalition. The example below was taken from the letter from Gauke (SoSfJ) to Clarke (HMCIP) where discursive hegemony is presented through establishing familiarity and using collective terminology such as ‘we’ and ‘us’ (Gauke, 2018: 5).

“Unfortunately, the story at HMP Birmingham is a relatively familiar one **to all of us. We** recognise the issue of drugs, violence, management and training, and the impact that these can have **on our prisons.**” (Bold added)

The same trope used to establish the discursive hegemony is used to build a dominant position and agreement, supporting the consideration of a “discursive-coalition” and “discursive cement” (Hajer, 1995: 65). Building a discursive coalition is an important element of a storyline, referring to how a “group of actors” have a common definition and shared practices set around a dominant discourse (Hajer, 2006: 70). The use of

‘we’, ‘us’ and ‘our’ in the quotation demonstrates a representation of a group of actors in agreement about reality, thus a discourse coalition. Such phraseology works as “discursive cement that keeps the discourse-coalition together” (Hajer, 1995: 65). This establishes a discursive unification that creates agreement in specific values that challenge, or exclude, alternative discourses, and establishes dominance.

The third feature of storylines is their role in framing support for a narrative by drawing on broader narratives to support and foster stronger discursive cement. This is achieved through inviting contributions of expertise to fill missing information from other fields, allowing “whoever, to illustrate where his or her work fits into the jigsaw” (Hajer, 1995: 63). Building wider support for a specific storyline increases coalition reach, legitimacy, dominance, and the drive for action that is being proposed. By adding the voices of others from different discursive fields, a storyline can achieve stronger and reinforced discursive cement, in doing so, building a more persuasive narrative to reach dominance. Throughout the corpus, practices were seen to expand discourse coalitions to legitimise claims of blame, such as overcrowding or prison officer numbers. As mentioned in chapter 6, HMIP utilise the PPO to allocate blame and legitimise their own judgements. In the documents from the political stakeholders, there is reference to ‘expertise’, framed as independent and credible, to legitimise narratives and increase coalition. This was prominent in the Harris Review (2015: 70), where academic authors and research bodies were referenced to build legitimacy.

“This is a view that is also reflected by prison staff themselves. **The qualitative study that we commissioned RAND Europe/University of Cambridge** to conduct on the perspectives of staff found that ACCT foundation training was too focused on procedure at the expense of mental health awareness. Some staff are unprepared for how they should manage self-inflicted deaths risks and respond to instances of self-inflicted deaths. The report says that “prison staff suggested training could be improved by providing more focused mental health training as well as training involving role-plays and questions and answer sessions” (2015, P. XI)” (bold added).

The reference to RAND and the University of Cambridge within this quotation is significant as it identifies a broadening of the evidence base for the storyline, used to

support the argument around prison staff. This legitimises the claims offered, as the inclusion of independent assessment away from the Government or HMPPS provides necessary support that cannot be seen to be provided due to institutional pressure. By quoting specific authors the Harris Review is constructing a wider discourse coalition with integrating views of independent expert actors, providing external legitimacy for their claims.

Within my theorisation of the veil, I refer to storylines as organisational discourses. Using the three features of storylines to recognise how organisations construct their own view on reality, influencing what they identify as their role, purpose and place within debates. I therefore argue that organisational discourses constitute a collection of different storylines, like individual threads that are woven into a collective veil. In turn, the veil constructs the assumed collective personality, values and ethos that organisations hold at their core. Importantly, organisational discourses form a discursive construction of the normative standpoint that the actors within organisations are expected and assumed to embrace, established through internal frameworks, organisational cultural values, definitions of professional standards, or political positioning. I argue that the discourses already discussed in this thesis, on datafication, accountability, and causalities are common threads seen within the veils of HMIP and political stakeholders.

When considering organisational discourses, I apply the metaphor of a veil, similarly to other social theorists who recognise the nuance this brings to identifying struggle and difficulty (Baehr, 2019). I see the veil in a similar light to that of Du Bois, who uses the veil “as a means by which people come to understand their social condition and resist oppression” (Baehr, 2019: 545). The veil is an obscurer. For Du Bois, the veil is used to explain the double consciousness that exists for Black Americans, with this group being able to identify social life through black and white experiences, whereas White Americans were said to be obscured from seeing the black experiences, blocked by the veil (Baehr, 2019). The visualisation of the veil is applied in this study similarly to Du Bois, in that it represents a particular group’s view of reality being obscured, opaque, and blurring. However, my application of the veil is unlike Du Bois who argues

that the wearer has a full view of reality and that those looking upon the wearer cannot see through. I argue that in the context of organisational discourses that the veil works in reverse, meaning that it is the wearer's (i.e. HMIP and politicians) view which is obscured. The organisational discourses therefore act more as a "barrier as much as a curtain" (Baehr, 2019: 547), they do not obscure all, but restrict what the wearer can see. My analysis of the veil is centred on what is in the veil, how the strands that are used to construct the veil manifest, and how organisations and actors are the choice makers in producing each thread. I do this below by drawing on discursive threads that are used in the construction of the veil for HMIP and political stakeholders – drawing on the key threads to theme this analysis.

8.3: Prison Inspection

Previous chapters evaluated the unique style and strategy of inspection offered by HMIP, discussing the different ways that inspection is conducted and the challenges that arise as a result of the choices they make in methodology, presentation, and framing accountability. Many claim that HMIP offer excellent findings in their inspections, such as their thematic reviews, providing essential information on the nature and state of imprisonment in England and Wales leading to change and policy bite (Bennett, 2014; Hardwick, 2016; Padfield, 2017). Yet I argue that questioning the discourses and practices that construct the parameters of inspection is essential for legitimising the action that they influence, particularly on the topics of violence, self-harm, and suicide. Crucially, I offer supportive critique to HMIPs practices, using the metaphor of the veil as a way of explaining how the discourses constructed around their organisational practice and cultures obscure or block the possibilities for action. This section opens this discussion, addressing how normative practices that have been constructed and promoted in HMIPs inspection process limit actions. I do this through discussing some of the 'threads' that make up HMIPs discursive veil, including the threads of impartiality, outcome-focused methodology, and independence¹.

¹In preface to this analysis, I recognise that my critique is based on documents found in the public domain. Beyond, this, I recognise that there are private communication between HMIP, individual prisons, and political counterparts which could offer different or contradictory discursive strategies.

8.3.1: The Thread of Impartiality

Presenting recommendations is a key practice to all forms of public inspection (Davis and Martin, 2008). However, typically inspectorates have no power to mandate policy change. For HMIP recommendation setting is the only strategy they can employ to influence change in prisons. Recommendations are presented throughout documents, alongside other non-documented strategies, such as social media and media representations through press releases and news output. Padfield (2017: 9) emphasises this, stating that “unless [HMIP] have the trust of the Governor and his/her senior management team, their interventions may be quite ineffective”, demonstrating that recommendations might be applicable to prison management only if the Governor has value in them and have resources available to act. Recommendations, therefore, are as such that they can be ignored, dismissed, or disagreed by different actors who hold the power and authority to enforce change. Within the HMIP corpus recommendations were often limited in specific and directional detail on violence, self-harm, and suicide. This raises critical questions around the benefit or purpose of being limited in detail, and whether this is an example of the discursive veil of HMIP.

I begin this analysis by considering the style of recommendations, which were not presented in a uniform style, with some clearly labelled (including bold typeface), some with subheadings, and others within the introduction. However, all recommendations can be characterised as limited in detail and description, which might be considered as a specific choice by HMIP. The example below references recommendations in a summary to an annual report (HMCIP, 2017: 20), and presents a judgement on the outcome towards prison responding to HMIPs previous recommendations.

In almost three-quarters of our reports on men’s prisons we were critical of the establishment’s response to one or more of the key factors that can contribute to prisoner self-harm or even suicide. We made main recommendations about this in eight establishments. These findings are clearly unacceptable.

This quotation focuses on the use of recommendations in a vague style to address a problem on self-harm and suicide seen in prisons that year. However, vagueness is evident throughout, with 'key factors' not being identified, defined, described, or explained. This style of recommendation could be seen to be purposefully vague, representing a discursive choice in the context of an annual review, which is set around summarising and characterising the entire prison estate - thus cannot offer contextual specifiers. Yet, the omission of key information needed for accountability and trust building to take place is not present, limiting readers' knowledge on specific elements of their recommendation. However, the use of vague description can be purposeful, as HMIP do not have the power to demand action, as the action of recommendations are to advise and suggest rather than direct.

Organisational discourses can also be identified within recommendations used in the corpus, such as impartiality and objectivity (see chapter three). These themes of inspection are seen to be at the core of HMIP (Hardwick, 2016; Bennett, 2014; Padfield, 2017), therefore form as the main threads seen within HMIPs veil. As a result, I argue that these themes have consequences for the vague offering within recommendations. Impartiality limited HMIPs ability to present any specific intervention or action to reduce issues, nor allowing HMIP to take a clear discursive position on a problem. Taking away any subject value or belief around intervening in violence, self-harm, and suicide. Within the reports for HMP Humber and HMP Birmingham, examples of recommendations were presented alongside concerns following the 'healthy prison test'. Yet these recommendations were presented in an overly vague manner, with direction of recommendations not supporting clear and precise intervention.

Recommendation 1.14 Perpetrators of violence should receive support to change their behaviour (HMIP, 2017c: 21)

Concern: prisoners rarely faced any sanctions when they committed violent acts or involved in antisocial behaviour, fostering a culture of near impunity. **Recommendation: perpetrators of violence and antisocial behaviour should be subject to appropriate administrative or disciplinary actions.** (HMIP, 2018c: 19)

The length of these recommendations is significant in addressing the discourse of impartiality offered by HMIP, which I argue can be identified through the brief and vague description offered. The lack of detail is significant, it presents limited explanation and discursive positioning, allowing HMIP to hold their impartial stance by not asserting a position on what they believe constitutes appropriate actions. Further, recommendations were presented impartially through offering statement-only presentations of 'reality' rather than framing an action needed to produce better judgements. This 'matter of fact' approach to recommendations does little in terms of action setting, nor holding prisons to account for not following procedure, indeed the recommendations hint at operational failing without suggesting directly what should be done. The recommendation offered in HMP Humber's report is limited in specific detail to recommend what 'support' the prison should implement; all they indicate is support missing. The quotation from HMP Birmingham's report likewise limits detail and lacks precision in what the recommendation is asking the prison to aim towards, as 'appropriate administrative or disciplinary actions' are not defined, outlined, or identified.

The lack of detail can be explained through HMIPs thread of impartiality, as by not offering directive and specific action they are able to remain distant to the prison, maintain their position as observers and avoid challenging wider prison management or policy, allowing prison Governors to make their own decisions and interventions. Indeed, Hardwick (2016) outlines this as best practice for prison inspection. This offers a potential for plausible deniability, to avoid accountability for potential failure of intervention. Alternatively, this could be seen as purposeful vagueness, by HMIP not recommending what processes prisons need to include to achieve outcomes. Whilst I cannot assume to understand the intention of HMIP – although Hardwick (2016) provides some justification for this, what I can identify is how the details of these recommendations appear to the reader. Within recommendations readers are presented with a definition of HMIPs reality (with Owers referring to HMIP showing the 'actual prison'), which sees 'should be' tropes used as a means of establishing the agreeable and disagreeable. However, the lack of detail around the assumed reality of

the 'should be' tropes leave too much to interpret, demonstrating that vague description do not work to remove complexity, but instead adds complexity. The thread of impartiality therefore presents a reduction of action through limiting information to readers, by avoiding positionality on interventions. As a result, this leaves vague descriptors in the form of truth modalities for recommendations. Further, vague descriptions provide an opportunity for conflict between HMIP and Prison management, where the decisions on how to reduce violence could be opposed. This is due to recommendations not providing any mandatory practices, which instead provides freedom for Governors to choose the action they take. Therefore, HMIP might utilise vague explanations as to circumvent conflict with prison management and political stakeholders, allowing them to maintain relationships whilst providing direction for violence reduction. Thus, the thread of impartiality obscures HMIPs position on practice of reducing violence, self-harm, and suicide – to the point where they do not present anything of the sort within their recommendations.

HMIPs maintenance of their thread of impartiality is evident throughout my analysis, where I argue that this thread reduces opportunities to influence, suggest, or inspire actions to reduce the three problems. The examples above demonstrate that explanation ambiguity exists within recommendations, indeed we might argue that purposeful ambiguity is being utilised in support of impartiality. However, not all recommendations appeared in the same style and format, with some presented in more descriptive detail. Yet, even within the longer recommendations similar tropes and vague expression were apparent, which I argue demonstrated the thread of impartiality can be seen in different styles. The following, taken from the HMP Birmingham report (HMIP, 2018c: 20), demonstrates claims of poor care offered to prisoners who self-harm, where HMIP take a holistic approach, suggesting prisoners are ignored, live in poor conditions, and have negative experiences during their imprisonment.

Concern: Care for prisoners in crisis and at risk of self-harm was poor. Too often, their needs were ignored, and many lived in squalid conditions, without access to activities and locked in their cells for

long periods. ACCT procedures to meet the needs of those most at risk were poorly managed and were ineffective.

Recommendation: There should be a fundamental improvement in the quality of care for prisoners in distress. Those at risk of self-harm should be properly supported, and triggers such as poor living conditions and isolation should be addressed. The care of those most at risk under assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) procedures should focus on their assessed needs through a well-managed and effective casework approach.

The ‘concern’ section shows discussions on judgements - through claims such as ‘was poor’ and ‘were ineffective’ - and on the conditions seen during inspection – such as recognising squalid conditions and limited access to activities and time out of cells. I argue that these specific findings from their inspection are presented in an attempt to legitimise the recommendation in an impartial style. In this example HMIP use their inspection findings to guide and structure recommendations, linking squalid conditions and isolation as a cause of self-harm. This overview of conditions causing self-harm are presented as risk factors and indicators that the prison need to consider within their actions. Furthermore, HMIP utilise a discussion on risk factors without providing detail on what establishes poor care of prisoners and poor management of ACCT and omit what basis it was and can be deemed ineffective. The presentation of this truth modality demonstrates how HMIP define the nature of self-harm as being associated with penal conditions and culture. This truth modality, which I have called the ‘should be’ trope above, is a strong representation of HMIP defining a reality on actions that they believe ought to be apparent, using the frame of ‘truth’ to remain impartial. However, clarity is not always identified for the reader due to the added complexity that vague explanation provides. For example, when HMIP claim ‘fundamental improvement in the quality of care for prisoners in distress’, they do not identify or define information to support action, instead recommendations are left open for others to decide what ‘fundamental improvement’ might entail or how prisoners ‘should be’ supported. Recognising the difference between this quotation and the examples above bring forward the question of why different levels of description are used when providing recommendations, as the consequences of using a range of details could lead to indirect confusion, subjective interpretation of recommendations, and discursive complexity thus reducing discourse coalition.

Furthering Padfield's (2017) concern around effective and ineffective intervention in prisons through prison inspection. This demonstrates how the thread of impartiality reduces the opportunity for HMIP to direct influence within their recommendations, as they do not allow themselves to provide or state any perspective or position on action.

The thread of impartiality can also be understood by recognising HMIPs existing powers in relation to other organisations (see chapter three). HMIPs legislative position therefore restricts any actions presented as recommendations only, having the opportunity to advise, not enforce. HMIP also value impartiality, recognising this as a distance they hold away from government and prison management – which they argue supports their trust and legitimacy (Hardwick, 2016). Impartiality is then presented within recommendations in a style that allows for plausible deniability, resulting in HMIP relying on their inspection observations and findings to influence change and action. However, both Padfield (2017) and Bennett (2014) highlight that many HMIP staff have had previous experiences working in prison and thus have valued stances on how progression can be made. Which could be a strategy to “enhance their credibility” (Padfield, 2017: 7). Yet, my findings do not suggest that this knowledge is being presented for the production of credible recommendations for interventions on violence, self-harm, and suicide – at least not seen in this study. Instead, the thread of impartiality seemingly limits and obscures the ability to provide clear and direct actions, whilst simultaneously being used to legitimise HMIPs position as apolitical and distant from political practice (Hardwick, 2016). This results similarly to other critiques from Padfield (2017) and Morgan (1997) that HMIP lack “policy bite”, I argue that this is a result of the discursive thread of impartiality, and the limited detail offered within recommendations the does not persuade or work as discursive cement.

8.3.2: The Thread of Outcome-Focused Methodology

HMIPs lack of policy bite is a result of cumulative practices and relationships. As discussed in chapter 3, HMIP have methodological practices they employ to increase their legitimacy, with “the use of ‘expectations’ is a clear advance... but the Inspectorate can still be criticised for a lack of ‘bite’ which may result from the difficulty of fixing clear standards” (Padfield, 2017: 8). Within this claim Padfield notes that the methodological practices employed alone cannot withstand critique and that even with a clearly defined methodology HMIPs ability to influence action and change is still lacking. The challenge with creating standards and criteria for inspection are furthered by the diversity of values and beliefs over what should and what should not happen in prisons, with different groups, actors, and organisations taking a different stance. Padfield’s argument raises an important question for my analysis, which I see as centred on the organisational discourses of HMIP which have been used to build criteria and inspection strategies that do not consider or content with alternative views.

Chapter three highlighted the methodological practices that HMIP follow, discussing the four key areas of the ‘healthy prison’ test, their approach to unannounced inspections, and the two week period that follows the notification of inspection. I then discussed the process once inspection has been completed, detailing how data collection is collated and thematically structured on the ‘healthy prison’ test. The main characteristic of HMIPs methodological practice is based on how all of these practices are based around observing outcomes, not procedures. This approach is a value that Hardwick (2016) considers to a high regard. HMIP therefore construct their recommendations through outcomes, limiting any procedural interventions to ensure prisoners are treated with care and respect. Indeed, this veils HMIP from offering any underlying theory or system of change within their reports. Further critique of HMIP is currently lacking, with no evaluation conducted on HMIPs inspection criteria, methodological practices, and interpretation of data (Padfield, 2017). Whilst a CDA does not provide the opportunity to look at the efficiency of HMIPs ‘expectations’ and

methodology, it does provide some insight to the consequences that their criteria and methodology has on how they discuss violence, self-harm, and suicide.

During my analysis, quotations selected mentioned the healthy prison test referring to this test when presenting a finding, both categorising and highlighting (through bold typeface) a judgement within the opening summary to each report. Making the reference to the healthy prison test both clear and unambiguous. The style of summaries presented a list of short and vague findings following by a judgement. The two examples below demonstrate this for male - HMP Humber (HMIP, 2017c: 12) and female prisons HMP New Hall – (HMIP, 2019c: 12).

The reception area was welcoming and induction was informative. Despite good violence management work, a high number of prisoners reported being victimised and levels of violence were high. Use of force was high and governance was weak. Segregation was managed well and used sparingly, and reintegration was good. Security was generally proportionate and there had been some effective work to reduce incidents involving new psychoactive substances (NPS); however, availability of drugs remained high. Self-harm was high but at-risk prisoners had good support through case management. **Outcomes for prisoners were not sufficiently good against this healthy prison test.**

Most prisoners felt safe and, although levels of violence had increased, hardly any incidents were serious. Antisocial behaviour was managed well, but the incentives and earned privileges (IEP) scheme was not effective. Prisoners at risk of self-harm were positive about the support they received and those with complex personal needs were managed well. Some aspects of security were disproportionate and the use of force was high. The use of special accommodation needed better oversight and the regime in the segregation unit was limited. Illicit drugs were too easily available, but measures to address drug use had improved and were good. **Outcomes for prisoners were good against this healthy prison test.**

Analysis of these quotations demonstrates how the healthy prison test involves a combination of disconnected findings in a 'tick box' style to present judgements. Importantly, the lists that are included are not demonstrated to reference each other, ignoring causative connections that are made between the indicators, save the use of sentence connectors like 'despite' and 'however'. Indeed, the content presented

above is purely descriptive and outcome orientated. As a result, this presents issues as sitting in isolation, without consideration to the interlocking or essential connections. The focus on outcomes leads towards contradictory judgements being presented, where a claim is made about a good outcome, followed, by a conflicting judgement (figure 14 presents these contradictions). The presentation of these contradictions is important to note, as the opening comment often links towards an outcome of a practice, like ‘management’, ‘work’, ‘support’, and ‘measures’ followed by a claim over outcomes that are based on datafied measurements on violence, self-harm, drug use, and the IEP scheme.

Outcome of Process	Measurable Outcome
HMP Humber (2017c: s4, 12)	
“...good violence management work”	“...levels of violence were high”
“...some effective work to reduce incidents involving new psychoactive substances (NPS)”	“...availability of drugs remained high”
“...at risk prisoners had good support through care management”	“...self-harm was high”
HMP New Hall (2019: s4, 12)	
“Most prisoners felt safe...”	“...levels of violence had increased”
“Antisocial behaviour was managed well...”	“...the incentives and earned privileges (IEP) scheme was not effective”
“...measures to address drug use had improved and were good”	“Illicit drugs were too easily available...”

Figure 14: Presentation of contradictory comments from HMP Humber and HMP New Hall Report

This figure identifies the contradictory pitfalls in the approach taken in HMIPs methodology around measuring and observing outcomes. The consequence of an outcome-orientated methodology is that information is presented as ‘fact’, without consideration to background information. Yet, missing from the above contradictions is the recognition of the processes leading to these outcomes. For example, claims such as ‘measures to address drug use had improved’ are included without

recognising the procedural measures that has resulted in this outcome. Outcomes appear within the assessment of each prison in episodic fashion, such as dealing with violence management and NPS issues, with each criteria point its own focus and attention. I argue that this is the thread of methodology in practice, as the limit and inability to present process is restricted and obscured by the methodological frame that HMIP employ and value. Leading to them skirting around clear and evidenced discussions that appear obvious to readers.

The two quotations above demonstrate another important feature of an outcome-focused methodology of inspection which see judgements being presented without justification – often making HMIPs final judgements unclear to readers. This comes as a result of an outcome focused summary of findings, as no explanation is offered to persuade the reader of their final judgements. Taking the first quotation from HMP Humber, the final judgement is confusing, I identified six outcomes that are framed as positive and five as negative, but with a statement of the prison not being sufficiently good against the healthy prison test. The second example likewise presents a judgement without clear justification, four positive claims and six negative, but with a result of ‘good’. I argue that the judgements are presented as disconnected descriptions of dimensions on the test, rather than a clearer narrative that works to legitimise a judgement. The ability for readers to interpret the justification is blurred through a high quantity of information, contradiction, and illogical balance in positive and negative judgements. As a result, it appears HMIP are not looking at and do not identify specific procedural and interactive activities that happen within a prison.

Outcome-focused judgements are also a product of the discursive make-up of HMIP. This is particularly important when considering that for an outcome to be available there needed to be a constructed notion of what is poor, acceptable, and good, which I argue cannot always be identified with an impartial eye. HMIP offer this in their *Expectations* (2017a; 2023), see chapter three, a document that establishes their methodology and set criteria for inspection. Within this document each outcome is connected to a group of indicators with a statement stating that “indicators describe evidence that may show this expectation being met, but do not exclude other ways of

achieving it” (HMIP, 2017a: 6). The caveat within this quotation is important in demonstrating an outcome-focused approach, as the focus on ensuring that ‘ways’ of meeting the outcome are not excluded means that HMIP cannot discriminate, expect, or limit their judgements to a prescribed practice or process. An example of indicators offered on self-harm and suicide are demonstrated in figure 15 below.

Expectations

Suicide and self-harm prevention

16. The prison provides a safe and secure environment which actively reduces the risk of self-harm and suicide.

The following indicators describe evidence that may show this expectation being met, but do not exclude other ways of achieving it.

- *There is a clear strategy for preventing suicide and self-harm.*
- *Staff are clear about their responsibility to preserve life, when to enter a locked cell and what to do in an emergency.*
- *Staff are trained in suicide prevention processes and know how to support prisoners who self-harm.*
- *Staff are trained to identify and support prisoners who may have mental health problems, or who have been affected by trauma.*
- *Prisoners' family and friends know how to raise a concern about the risk of self-harm or suicide, can ask for assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) processes to be initiated, and are kept appropriately informed.*
- *Appropriate first aid equipment is readily available and sufficient discipline staff are trained to use it.*
- *A multidisciplinary committee monitors the prison's self-harm and suicide prevention policy and procedures and ensures support for the most vulnerable prisoners.*
- *Self-harm data is monitored and any emerging patterns are identified and acted on.*
- *Investigations into serious 'near miss' incidents are thorough and appropriately independent and identify opportunities for improvement which are rigorously pursued.*
- *Staff respond quickly and comprehensively to Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) death in custody investigations.*
- *PPO and Coroner's Court recommendations are prioritised, acted upon and regularly reviewed.*
- *Prisoners at risk of suicide or self-harm are only held in special/unfurnished accommodation or given anti-rip clothing in clearly documented exceptional circumstances on the authority of the governor and in consultation with the mental health team.*
- *Personal possessions are only removed in documented exceptional circumstances, following a multidisciplinary review.*

13

Figure 15: An extract from HMIPs “Expectations” document (HMIP, 2017b: 13)

The above demonstrates the extent to which criteria is offered to inspectors and prisons, defining the background for how judgements are made. The development of criteria and indicators in this style provides an expansive platform for HMIP to check on outcomes, by collecting information that presents ‘tick-box culture’. Tick-box

cultures are not a new phenomenon, Lapsley (2009) claims that this was just one feature in the growth of NPM and the ‘audit society’. Examples from the above extract demonstrate this, as the work of HMIP is set around identifying specific tick-box exercises – such as first aid training for staff and appropriate equipment. This is not unique to HMIP as a public service inspectorate, as many other services have fallen to audit culture (Davis and Martin, 2008). For example, Baxter and Clarke (2013: 703) discuss how tick-box culture has resulted in education inspection being “a narrow, check list driven approach to the evaluation of teaching quality”, rather than an “exercise in professional judgement and discretion”. Bennett (2014: 453) directs this specifically to HMIPs practice, stating that “this could lead to a ‘tick boxing’ approach where procedures were observed or recorded without regard to the underlying purpose of effects on individuals in prison”. The ethos that HMIP has around outcome-focused inspection is centred in a discursive value, forming part of the thread of methodology that can be identified within HMIPs discursive veil.

The construction of an outcome-focused approach to inspection means that HMIP fall into a rhythm of providing statements. My argument here is in contrast to other authors on prison inspection (Bennett, 2014; Owers, 2007), who claim the auditing done by HMIP offers “expert, external, objectified measure that provides scrutiny and assurance” (Bennett, 2014: 461), and that prison inspection produces a reality of what goes on behind prison walls –Owers’ (2007) ‘actual prison’ (see chapter three). My research does not lend support to their claims, as this study is limited to document analysis and does not consider the wider communication events shared between the Inspectorate and prisons which is not available in the public domain. Instead, my analysis identifies quotations such as the below, that demonstrate how HMIP centre presentation within their reports in an outcome-focused approach, leaving out the necessary nuanced information that would support raising standards and quality assurance and which would identify the description of a ‘virtual prison’.

Some prisons had begun to take appropriate strategic action, but even then, violence remained high and more sustained action was required. (HMCIP, 2018: 24)

Too many violent incidents were not investigated. During June and July 2018, 191 investigations had been required but only 13 had been completed. This meant that the prison was not protecting all victims or challenging perpetrators, and was missing opportunities to identify casual factors and establish patterns and trends, to learn important lessons. (HMIP, 2018c: 24)

I selected these two quotations to demonstrate why I argue against Bennett and Owers, as the examples show an outcome-focused approach to addressing violence. A significant feature that these quotations share is in the lack of specific action in prison, where both only state that action has been done, but claiming more is needed. The lack of detail and reference to any clear area of blame or accountability does not provide the level of public accountability that is suggested to come from audit (Bennett, 2014). The second quotation is different in approach and instead offers a brief explanation to the consequences of the lack of investigation completed by the prison, in doing so it brings around a reality based on HMIPs findings; however, the detail that follows is limited and does not explain why these investigations were not completed, only the outcome of them being missed. Arguably this poses an important and critical point of feedback for public accountability as this could show a practical incompetence in prisons, or other challenges in dealing with violence that could challenge political stakeholders – for example that these were not carried out due to working pressures or resource issues – however this is not identified or disclosed by HMIP.

The outcome-focused approach that is produced through HMIPs methodological practices results in limits and restrictions to public reporting. HMIP take value in this approach by building this into their inspection methodology and criteria to establish their set practice and to provide transparency on their strategy and focus when conducting inspections – to build confidence, trust, and legitimacy in their reporting. I argue that the outcome-focused approach that HMIP take is a strategy that encompasses what they identify as high-quality inspection. However, the above section demonstrates how this approach can be seen as a thread in HMIPs discursive veil, as the outcome approach utilised throughout reporting methodologies limits discussion on processes, identifying blame, and addressing the nuances that appear

within practices – information which support in advocating for humane and compassionate care to support prisoners. With outcome being an organisational discourse, it could be considered that they have the choice to change, to move to a focus on the quality on interaction and support offered to prisoners. Other public service Inspectorates have made this change, such as Ofsted who developed a regulatory framework which is said to “create a more holistic picture of the school, to counter criticism that the previous system left little room for professional discretion and that the algorithms involved in analysis of the data only painted part of the overall picture” (Baxter and Clarke, 2013: 709).

8.3.4: The Thread of Independence

The threads of impartiality and methodology are important for HMIP and their organisational values, as demonstrated above these themes appear as an undercurrent to many of their contextual arguments on violence, self-harm, and suicide. As a consequence of these threads there is an omission in providing detailed and specific recommendations, alongside discussing processes within prisons. However, an additional thread can be identified within HMIP document – that of independence. All literature on HMIP express the importance of independence for prison inspection, highlighting that prisons are one of few institutions in England and Wales that are centrally controlled by Government, stressing that independent inspection is essential due to the closeness to political masters (Hardwick, 2016; Bennett, 2014; Padfield, 2017; Shute, 2013a). Hardwick (2016) extends this claim to argue that independence is necessary for prison inspection stating five reasons. First, as there is an obvious power imbalance between detainee and jailor, based on prison staff having authority over prisoners, seen in staff use of force, but also due to the dependency that prisoners have on officers for every aspect of their daily lives. Second, as prisons are closed institutes, it limits the public and media gaze – distancing prison from daily conversations and concerns. Third is the lack of trust of prisoner and detainees, as their criminal pasts provide an assumption, or stigma, around truth telling, making prisoner complaints difficult to access and manage. Fourth, is around

the normative effects of custody, as prison staff and managers become desensitised to seeing events that others would find shocking, such as violence, self-harm, and suicide. Finally, Hardwick argues independent inspection is necessary to present an 'actual prison', taking on the concept from Owers (2007), that HMIP have the opportunity to see beyond the prison governor's administrative overview of the prison. Hardwick's (2016) analysis of the independence of prison inspection is important to take forward in this analysis, as he was the HMCIP before Clarke and one of the first to write extensively about the independence of HMIP. It is therefore expected that these values on HMIPs independence inspired and continued with HMCIPs and sets the organisational discourse of independence in prison inspection.

The focus on independence was emphasised as an important feature of HMIPs organisational discourse by Clarke, who discusses independence as an essential feature, practice, and basis for prison inspection. Throughout the quotation Clarke (2016) utilises truth modalities, that is the author claiming what they determine as truth, on the topic of independence. He states that inspectors should be able to report on exactly what they see within each prison, without question or contention. The statement was presented at the end of the introduction of Clarke's first annual report, establishing key hegemonic framing of independence as a core value of HMIP practice (HMCIP, 2016:11).

"HM Inspectorate of Prisons repeatedly asserts its independence from government and others, and it is right that it should do so. But true independence is about more than simply making an assertion. We must be able to report exactly what we find. My distinguished predecessor Lord Ramsbotham has written that 'My orders were to report what I saw.' In essence that is still the case. HM Inspectorate of Prisons neither validates nor criticises government policy, except insofar as it affects the conditions and treatment of prisoners. Uniquely we focus on the prisoner experience. We make our judgements based on international human rights standards, in support of the UK's treaty obligations. The Inspectorate is not a regulator in the sense of having powers to enforce standards. Our power comes from the ability to publish our reports, persuade the unwilling, encourage the good and expose that which is unacceptable. We will continue to report what we see"

The quotation includes claims around Clarke's definition of 'true independence', where he sets out prospects for how HMIP achieve this and why Clarke sees the ability to publish and report as a key feature of their powers. Essentially, he reflects on the limit placed on HMIP by legislative positions, highlighting that they cannot enforce change, but encourage and persuade others on the conditions inside prisons. Early in the quotation he expresses that 'true independence is about more than simply making assertion', which I suggest presents a critique over how reporting should be done and that HMIP are going to move towards practices that go beyond stating findings. Clarke further defines 'true independence' practices, stating HMIPs focus and that the basis for their judgements are a result of human rights standards. The recognition of human rights standards serves as discursive cement and coalition, as it connects HMIPs independence with legal obligations and internationally controlled standards on custody. I argue this quotation is significant in establishing Clarke's framing of 'true independence' and that this is valued in his approach to HMIPs practice of prison inspection, making this a central discursive thread in their veil which I argue has consequences for their practices of reporting and providing recommendations.

The value placed on independence from Clarke's definition of 'true independence' can be identified as a key discursive position that HMIP adopt during their reporting. Indeed, this was often expressed above the concerns on violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons, with HMIP commenting on their past recommendations and their reactions to prisons not following their claims. However, at times the referential strategy to past recommendations appears as a tactic to shame prison management, rather than push the agenda to supporting prisons in crisis. The expression of being 'ignored', I argue, is connected to the thread of independence as it often appeared that greater credence was paid to the missed recommendations over the extent of the three issues and other factors that could be at cause for incidents of violence, self-harm, and suicide to be raising. The extract below, taken from the Annual Report of 2018-2019 (HMCIP, 2019: 8), demonstrates this in relation to increases of self-harm and suicide.

We believe that our recommendations, if effectively implemented, give prisons a path to improvement. It has therefore been of particular concern to see that, in some prisons, our reports have not been taken sufficiently seriously. In some cases, they appear to have been almost completely ignored. This is disappointing and counterproductive...

Some examples from this year that are particularly concerning relate to the tragic issue of self-inflicted deaths in prisons. Inspectors sometimes found an inexcusable lack of supervision or management intervention to ensure men at risk of self-harm were held safely...

These are just three examples from the past year. More broadly we found that, as in the previous two years, recommendations made by the PPO following a death had not been adequately addressed in about a third of prisons we inspected. This is a key responsibility of leadership, and where we see failures, we will report and offer views as to how those failures have come about. This is clearly our responsibility and a vital contribution to effective accountability.

HMIP offer a lot of justification for why they feel ignored by prison management, emphasising disappointment towards managers for not taking recommendations they and the PPO made. As a result, HMIP place blame on prisons for the lack of engagement, referring to management and leadership within prisons to address the failures and utilise the initiatives suggested by independent bodies. I argue that this shows HMIP framing a binary conflict around recommendations and suggestions, as they only promote the recommendations from independent bodies – such as themselves and the PPO – but reject alternatives. The importance placed on independence is further justified through suggesting that independent recommendations are ‘effective’ and ‘vital’ for reducing the issues of suicide in prison, whilst not suggesting what makes their recommendations superior to HMPPS or how their recommendations can be achieved in practice. HMIP use the phraseology of ‘ignored’ early in these quotations, denoting that prison management are outright refusing to acknowledge and consider HMIPs recommendations, bringing forward the question of why their recommendations are not being met, or acted upon in a style that HMIP and the PPO can identify.

The expression of being ignored was continued in other areas of the HMIP corpus, developing a particular trope that emphasised continuous dissatisfaction for rising issues in violence, self-harm, and suicide, and the higher value that they place on their

recommendations. This was often presented with the phrase ‘despite our recommendations’, as seen in the examples below, to draw on similar claims around the value that HMIP put within their recommendations and where they blame prisons for not trying to engage.

Self-inflicted deaths in custody remained a concern, despite a fall in numbers. Self-harm figures to the end of 2017 showed an increased in incidents. **Despite our recommendations**, prisons were still not making enough effort to address the needs of prisoners in crisis. (HMCIP, 2018: 22)[Bold added]

Despite our repeated recommendations, we continue to find men on ACCTs in segregation units with no exceptional reason to justify this. Segregation is inappropriate for those at risk of suicide or self-harm, and prisoners really receive the care and support they need in its restrictive and punitive environments. Our inspection report is on in 2016 to 2017 found that at least five men took their own lives while in segregation units, of whom four were subject to ACCT case management. (HMCIP, 2017: 21)[Bold added]

These tropes are a continuation of the previous frustration around the claims of HMIP being ignored by prison management. Such tropes work to situate previous recommendations made by HMIP to be of significant value, as the trope is used before a claim of failure of prisons – such as the above quotations, on the needs of prisoners in crisis and no reason to justify men being on ACCT. The trope is suggestive that HMIP have an ability to consider the causative factors which indicate a rise in self-harm and suicide, through their claims that the recommendations they provide would reduce worsening experiences, raising incidents, and continuous poor outcome. However, HMIP do not explain what recommendations were ignored, the actor who ignored them, and any justification for why the recommendation could be ignored – thus unable to locate blame and hold individuals to account. The quotations also seek to foster a view of HMIPs recommendations as being ‘effective’ and ‘vital’ and that through independence from government and prison management they can identify and suggest changes to reduce the problems. However, without specific information this cannot be acknowledged, making HMIPs claims here appearing similarly to the trope of ‘*I told you so*’ seen within daily conversation or argument.

Another commonality on HMIPs discussions on independence is the continuous referential strategy that they provide to PPO recommendations, which they present similarly to the above. I interpret this within the documents as HMIP building greater discourse coalition by presenting similar experience of the PPOs recommendations not being followed by prisons or the government, thus exhibiting a much wider issue for independent public service bodies of accountability. The PPO are important in the context of this study, as they are an independent body who focus on complaints management and hold investigations into each death in custody followed by a specific report on that incident. PPO recommendations following suicide are therefore valued by HMIP in reducing the prevalence of this issue within prisons, resulting in HMIP acting as auditors for the PPO – which we can identify as discursive coalition in action.

It is widely recognised that the conditions in which prisoners are held has an impact on the sense of well-being. In this context, it is particularly concerning to see that the number of self-inflicted deaths has more than doubled since 2013, and that in the 12 months to March 2017 113 prisoners took their own lives. Self-inflicted deaths are investigated by the prisons and probation ombudsman PPO, who also make recommendations to prevent recurring. We found that one third of the prisons were inspected have not implemented PPO recommendations well enough, and they were offering recurring themes of failure in process and practice. This report points out that in many of these prisons, there have been subsequent self-inflicted deaths. (HMCIP, 2017: 7)

There had been three self-inflicted deaths (in addition to the three potential drug related deaths; see above) since the previous inspection. Although not all of the PPO investigations were complete at the time of the inspection, early indications suggested serious concerns about standards of care at the prison. The action plan in response to PPO recommendations was incomplete and not kept under review, so some actions were not sustained. Investigations of serious incidents of self-harm were not sufficiently detailed and did not identify lessons learned. In our survey, only 31% of prisoners, far worse than the comparator, said that it was easy to speak to a listener when they wanted to, and listeners told us that prisoners were often refused access to them. (HMIP, 2018c: 14)

The quotations demonstrate HMIP building discursive coalition between independent forms of accountability, promoting dissatisfaction that another independent organisation's recommendations about self-harm and suicide in prisons are incomplete. HMIP seek to legitimise their claim of independent bodies being ignored

by the echelons of prison management, seeking to frame independent bodies as having valued knowledge to recommend strategies of reducing the three problems. This is central to the thread of independence that HMIP have within their discursive veil, where the value of independence produces a dominant view that HMIP have the correct knowledge and experience to recommend intervention, knowledge that they value over others. I argue that independence and impartiality play a dual role in constructing HMIPs knowledge as superior, as HMIP might identify their lack of political engagement and their distance from political interaction as providing greater insight and space to make claims and recommendations. It is therefore unsurprising that HMIP seek to make prisons accountable, yet favour their own recommendations rather than presenting the wider political and managerial challenges that are involved around significant issues like violence, self-harm, and suicide in prison – however, this would counter their values of impartiality and independence.

The challenge of the thread of independence is that HMIP do not consider whether independence is valued by others or whether this builds necessary trust and confidence for prison management and leadership. Padfield (2017: 58) takes a critical outlook on the consequences of independence, suggesting “‘independence’ is not necessary a driver of effective monitoring: too much ‘independence’ can mean a body is isolated and ineffective”. Padfield’s comment provides the opportunity to critically consider independence of inspection as a characteristic that is positional, relating to the distance that an inspectorate can have to government and thus the opportunity to become insular and disconnected from the wider debate and interaction around specific issues. This results, as shown in the above quotations, in HMIPs recommendations being ignored – which appears to them as an ineffective and counterproductive reaction to their work. The conflicting factor with these threads in the veil is the inability for HMIP to recognise that independence might not carry the valued weight that they see in their own inspection recommendations, where they are unable to identify that their recommendations appear to come from an ‘isolated and ineffective’ body in the eyes of HMPPS, prison leadership, and politicians.

8.4: Political Stakeholders

The corpus for political stakeholders is a discursively complex group due to the nuances that emerge around political ideology, political party policies, and diverse strategies that are characterised by an ever-present conflict on debates and problems around public sector services. The opportunity to discuss a unified group who share organisational discourses is therefore diminished, as discourses take political lines. However, the corpus demonstrated veiling on the topics of violence, self-harm, and suicide in prison, with key threads appearing within debates, policy documents, and reports. The organisational discourses that this group show are centred around ‘being political’ or ‘politicking’ and thus has similarities in the key threads which make up the veil of discourse. Politicking was seen through the performances of authors and speakers, presenting specific discursive techniques that demonstrated what authors believed should be done and how they choose to present it (Palonen, 2003). Palonen (2003: 177) argues that politicking is understood as “politics-as-activity”, therefore this section considers performative approaches to the three problems under investigation to identify the threads seen within the discursive veil. These threads are more intertextual than HMIPs, as this corpus included a wider genre of documents from debates in the HoC, Parliamentary report, specific action plans and letters around HMP Birmingham, and House of Commons Committees. Within this analysis I offer critique to how politicking establishing crucial discursive threads that prevent action on violence, self-harm, and suicide in prison, using the veil metaphor as a way of recognising how the interactions seen within political practice can be the location where action is lost or obscured on important political decision making.

8.4.1: The Thread of Risk

A common theme seen throughout this thesis was the prominence of risk within discussions of violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons. The dominance of risk, as highlighted in chapter two, has become a leading feature of policymaking, and thus has informed the language used to discuss the three problems. It is unsurprising to

see that many of the quotations selected from the political stakeholder corpus frame, identify, and prioritise risk within discussions. Indeed, many of the claims analysed provided an insight into how this thread manifests an approach of management rather than care of prisoners; defined by the tendency for politicians to present prisoners as a dangerous population to be controlled and supervised, rather than a group who require care, compassion, and understanding (see Garland, 2001; Feeley and Simon, 1991). I have already offered similar critique within this thesis - chapter seven discussing the way that trauma and victimisation were framed within the documents. In this section, I continue this argument by demonstrating how the thread of risk leads to political stakeholders taking an actuarial approach to the problems of violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons which obscures the actions taken on the problems.

A key tendency within the political stakeholder corpus was focused on presenting violence, self-harm, and suicide as problems that can be 'managed out' of prisons. This was shown through an approach to consider that resources are in places to maintain a 'balanced' prison estate, such as ensuring that the prisoner to staff ratio was manageable and appropriate for the prison population. Balance was often placed on having the right number of resources, e.g. staff, to be able to manage out issues, e.g. violence. The quotation below demonstrates this through a debate in the HoC on the second reading of the Prisons and Courts Bill 2017, from Labour MP Holly Lynch (Hansard HC Deb., 20 March 2017).

A report by the Prison Officers Association revealed that there are more than 42 incidents of violence in prison establishments every day. Given, as the Minister said, that all the numbers by which we measure the effectiveness and safety of our prisons are pointing in the wrong direction, it is perhaps surprising that we have seen a reduction of 7,000 prison officers since 2010. I appreciate that the Government have closed 18 prisons in that time, but the prison population has still increased. In fact, it peaked at an all-time high in 2011. By any analysis of prisoner to prison officer ratios, the number of officers will surely be found to be inadequate to meet the challenges, and I support the call from my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Camberwell and Peckham (Ms Harman) to look at how we can introduce ratios into the Bill.

This quotation, from an opposition MP, addresses the need to establish a legal grounding for the ratio between staff and prisoners, arguing that a legislatively set figure can be used to guarantee that political management of resources does not have a consequence for the management of issues. Framing the prisoner to staff ratio as legal rather than political, suggests that some politicians believe that they have the responsibility to maintain and establish 'safe standards'. I argue that this demonstrates the risk-based thread, as the claims around reduced prison staffing are framed as the reason why violence is problematic within prisons, and thus presented as a failure of management. Risk management strategies are therefore prioritised over other potential explanations around increased violence, with Lynch MP justifying this position based on the ratio of prisoners to staff. The focus on risk also comes with the calls of inadequacy to meet the challenges seen within prisons, suggestive of claims that resource management can help alleviate the problem or the cause of the problem – thus demonstrating a risk-based rationale to manage out the issues and challenges of violence within prison.

The thread of risk therefore obscures political view of wider causes of violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons, through risk-management strategies omitting or reducing these problems to specific factors that can be targeted through management interventions (see chapter 2). This is demonstrated within the action plan by Gauke in relation to HMP Birmingham. Within this particular example it draws on how technologies born through data analysis in identifying specific risk factors can be used to support managing out violence. This example is also significant as the genre of an action plan is set as a form of 'managing out', thus we can identify management practices which set out management techniques and strategies (Gauke, 2018: 3).

The Prison Reform Trust (PRT) has been invited to run an Active Citizen Panel (ACP) at HMP Birmingham. This ACP will analyse the causes of violence and anti-social behaviour. These sessions will run for a period of 4 weeks and at conclusion will provide a written report for the Governor. Direct feedback will be given to the Governor and mitigating actions with the prisoners as part of the action delivery team will follow. These actions will be monitored using a checkpoint matrix system to provide management information via the Safety Diagnostic Tool (SDT) to track a projected

downward trend. To support the violence reduction strategy the SDT will form the basis of the Governor's daily briefing to Senior Leads, managers and staff. This will be supported by ongoing training.

The development of Safety Diagnostic Tools (SDTs) is based on attempting to manage out violence, through a reliance on data analysis software to present “an easy-to-use tool that can inform population management has had a transformative effect on the conversation around violence in custody” (Wauben et al, 2020: 45). The idea surrounding SDTs is to provide a simple platform which officers can use to share information and analysis on violence and self-harm methods – utilising “dashboards that show trends over time: what are the most common reasons for assaults? What self-harm methods are on the rise? When and where are incidents happening” (Wauben et al, 2020: 45). This produces a normative approach to understanding risk through data visualisation and active analysis of incidents to promote risk reduction. There is also evidence to suggest that this has become a normalised practice across the criminal justice system, with the police using evidence-based technologies and statistical modelling within their practices (Stoneman et al, 2019). Wauben et al (2020: 46) suggest that SDTs have been successful within prisons and that they are now routinely used by prison officers to produce “data-driven decisions” which “has created a lasting culture shift, with demonstratable benefits for the front line”. The use of such risk adverse technologies as a reaction to the violence and self-harm seen within HMP Birmingham demonstrates the extent to which risk dominates the discursive field on these issues, no doubt supporting reactive suggestions and strategies for officers within prisons. This risk adverse reaction shows the thread of risk has created reliance, normalisation, and ‘easy everyday’ technologies that are likely to reduce wider critique and discussion on preventing future issues. Indeed, Gauke highlights that the SDTs are to “form the basis of the Governor's daily briefing” which forces risk discourses above other frames when considering violence reduction. This therefore presents a obscured view on other causes of violence and holistic interventions – such as connections to family (Farmer, 2017) or trauma (Miller and Najavits, 2012).

Gauke also offers alternative suggestions in attempt to manage out risk, taking a generative approach to considering the wider experiences of living conditions and prison isolation. He addresses these features of prison life through the need to ACCT assess prisoners and to manage generative issues within these pre-existing strategies on self-harm and suicide prevention strategies (Gauke, 2018: 6-7).

There is a risk of self-harm should be properly supported, and triggers such as poor living conditions and isolation should be addressed. The care of those most at risk under assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) procedures should focus on their assessed needs through a well-managed and effective case work approach (S65).

The quotation furthers the priority given to risk, representing a consideration of triggers and management of environmental factors as being part of the essential practice around recording and supporting self-harm. Importantly, this quotation recognises that discourses on risk management go beyond a data-driven focus, with recognition provided to living conditions and experiences of imprisonment. Yet these features are only defined, they are not explained or drawn out to explain lived experiences. The use of ACCT has also been noted by Pike and George (2019) to be beneficial and problematic for prisoners who self-harm, where they found that prisoners experienced difficulty with being risk managed when on ACCT. This was due to the disruptions of sleep due to staff observations, a lack of clarity and confidence in the process, and often stigmatised due to officers walking around with individual ACCT folders (identifiably orange) which allows other prisoners to identify prisoners who are self-harming or suicidal (Pike and George, 2019). This demonstrates how the risk-management thread can often blind and obscure the boundaries between management of prisoners and the care they need following incidents of self-harm and suicide.

Throughout the corpus focus was paid to demonstrating a failure in the risk management of self-harm and suicide, where authors detailed a lack of engagement with known risks and presented the benefit of newer managerial strategies being engaged to help reduce incidents. Authors pointed towards self-harm and suicide

being represented as a managerial issue with blame placed on the Government for not reducing and enacting strategies for prevention and reduction (Liebling and Ludlow, 2016). Within the HoC Health and Social Care Committee's (2018: 29) report on *Prisoner Health* this was identified in the following statement.

There are well known risks related to suicide and self-harm for people in prison. While rates of self-inflicted deaths in prison have fallen since reaching a peak in 2016, there is no room for complacency as instance of self-harm remain at a record high. We expect to see a concerted effort from government to reduce suicide and self-harm in prison, supported by ambitious targets and a clear and credible plan for achieving them. The newly identified role of a minister with responsibility for suicide prevention is welcome, but we expect the government within its response to report on how this role will extend to suicide and self-harm within prisons and on release.

This quotation draws attention to risk based knowledge, highlighting 'well known' risk factors and 'complacency' to demonstrate that a lack of engagement with risk knowledge has resulted in increased incidents. It is through a lack of action on this knowledge that the HSSC place blame on the Government, holding them accountable for the record high. The HSSC then look towards using language of NPM to construct a style of 'managing out' the issues of self-harm and suicide, by suggesting that 'ambitious targets' and a 'credible plan for achieving them' are put in place by Government officials. This normalised style of risk-based language further exemplifies the thread of risk, detracting from providing a specific recommendation to benefit prisoners, but instead referencing that blame is located where inadequate use of risk based knowledge is applied.

Risk based knowledge was also applied in recognition of managing the risk posed by the prison population, resulting in the increasing practice of dangerization – that is the presentation of a particular group as posing as menace and to blame for wrongdoing (Mythen, 2014; Garland, 2001; Lianos and Douglas, 2000; Hudson, 2003). The presentation of a dangerous and risk defined population was seen through recognising imported characteristics that were associated to young violent males with antisocial attitudes. In this approach, the authors weaponised risk based discourses to problematise the population, rationalising managerial strategies to present the cause

of the three problems as something driven by prisoners, not as a result of institutional confinement (MoJ, 2016a: 40).

Our analysis identifies a number of personal and situational factors that have driven this increase in violence, self-harm and self-inflicted deaths since 2012. We know that younger, male prisoners are more likely to be involved in violent incidents, as are those with a history of violent offending as well as current or previous drug use and gang membership. Antisocial attitudes and poor self-control also increase the risk of violence in custody. Longer term shifts in the nature of the prison population are likely to have played some part in the increased violence in the prison estate. In 1993, violence against the person, sexual offences and drug offences together accounted for around two in every five sentence prisoners (including the recall population). By 2016, this had increased to 3 in 5.

Risk based knowledge is used to frame and detail issues with prisoners, which is seen through the listing of the ‘personal and situational factors’ that are argued to increase the three problems. The particular knowledge constructed within this quotation is framed heavily from the imported model of causality (see chapter 3), referring to preprison characteristics to classify and actuarially create a dangerous group. The actuarial nature of this quotation is evidenced through the lack of characteristic risk factors that are seen during imprisonment, for example gang membership preprison is highlighted – but not gang membership in prison which is widely recognised (Maguire, 2021; Dooley et al, 2014; Maitra, 2023). The dominance of actuarial language within this quotation results in missing detail that would be necessarily for more holistic discussions on the rise of violence, such as the tension between prison staff numbers alongside the rising use of imprisonment and wider prison expansionism (Jones et al, 2024). The thread of risk therefore obscures wider sociological issues surrounding prisons, further demonstrating an actuarial stance and the dangerization of prisoners in attempt to frame the problems through risk.

The thread of risk demonstrates a particular dominance that exists within the political discursive veil, built around the allocation of management techniques over other compassionate strategies, a belief in a ‘manage out’ approach, and the actuarial response to blaming preprison characteristics for the increase in incidents. The action

that is presented within this section demonstrated further examples of the thread of risk, with control and supervision seen as the social practice that exists over violence, self-harm, and suicide rather than compassion or care. This thread therefore grounds the causes and response to the problems within risk, which is why when holistic tropes are used by political stakeholders the underlying theme is still based on risk. I argue that through this thread many technologies, strategies, and management methods are justified by authors, reinforcing risk language, analysis, characterisation and action on the three problems, and blurring other holistic alternatives.

8.4.2: The Thread of Blame

Within the political stakeholder corpus, I identified that blame appeared as a continuous feature of debate, argument, and reporting. HMIP also referred to blaming throughout their documents, however, the approach and style of this in political activity was different. Blame features as a form of politics-as-activity, as one of the central practices used to neutralise, justify, and persuade, thus forming as a style of politicking that “consists of asking not only *what* should be done by also *how* to do it” (Palonen, 2003:177). With the topics of violence, self-harm, and suicide this appeared around the different strategies that were employed by authors within the corpus to provide, reject, or neutralise forms of blame. The central feature of this thread is that the three problems become captured by blaming rhetoric, taking away the priority of making reductions and using them as a strategy for blaming others. There is therefore discursive use of violence, self-harm, and suicide as features of blame – with Government being blamed, all politicians being blamed, prisoners being blamed, alongside techniques used to neutralise blame.

Blame took many forms, employed to justify, legitimise, and neutralise different actors for different reasons. One form of neutralisation that I identified within the corpus came with authors discussing immediate and rapid action being done around violence, self-harm, and suicide. This worked to neutralise blame through referencing specific issues – such as increases in incidents and low levels of staffing – alongside claims and

tropes of immediacy. Two documents demonstrated this attempt to neutralise blame: including the White Paper *Prison, Safety and Reform* (MoJ, 2016a: 40-41), and the HoC debate on the second reading of the Prisons and Courts Bill 2017 (Hansard HC Deb., 20 March 2017). This trope frames increases of the problems as a potential blameworthy measures, which the author themselves claim, before moving onto claims around quick changes to resolve the issues.

We need to take decisive action to realise this vision. No one can be expected to change their behaviour and turn their life around while they are dependent on drugs, in fear of being assaulted, or considering harming themselves. Nor can I will staff be expected to develop the kind of constructive relationships with prisoners we know make a difference when they are worried about being attacked, and when much of the time is spent responding to serious incidents.

We have already taken urgent steps to tackle the growth in prison violence, self-harm and self-inflicted deaths. There was a net increase of 295 prison officers between 31 December 2014 and 30 June 2016 and we introduced a new and more extensive initial training course for prison officers, which is carried out at the Prison Service College at Newbold Revel and at other centres in England and Wales. In May of this year, we gave an additional £10 million to prison governors to help promote safety and provided them with discretion about how to spend that money.

We have worrying levels of self-harm and deaths in custody. The prison safety and reform White Paper, which I launched in November, set out a clear plan, combining immediate action to increase staffing levels and track drugs, drones and phones with radical reforms to get offenders off drugs, into work and away from crime for good.

Phrases within these examples highlight that authors recognise potentially blameworthy circumstances, highlighting the issues of violence, self-harm, suicide, staffing levels and drugs in prison to express a failing estate. However, the quotations also use phrases like ‘decisive action’, ‘we have already taken urgent steps’, and ‘immediate action’ to neutralise the potentially blameworthy measures by presenting action. Crucially, timescales are not mentioned beyond the phrases around immediacy, with timelines not provided nor assigned. For example, the third quotation is set six months after the publication of the MoJ (2016a) White Paper and details no progressive findings from the immediate action that they claim. The third

quotation demonstrates a reinforcement of this technique of neutralisation, again following the style of highlighting potentially blameworthy information – such as ‘worrying levels of self-harm and deaths’ – by then claiming that action has been done. I argue this shows an obscuring practice where authors are unable to continuously assess worsening conditions and provide clear detail on actions, but instead uses language as a form of social action to neutralise blame. Arguably this is important in politicking as the Government do not wish to be seen as inactive or blameworthy on important issues.

Time and blame were also used in the reverse to the above, where authors referred to the length of time taken for reform and change to be implemented. This was seen from opposition MPs in attempt to blame the Government for a lack of control and action on the three problems. The below demonstrates this from Labour’s Harman MP during the second reading of the Prisons and Court Bill 2017 (Hansard HC Deb., 20 March 2017).

The bill gives the house, the Secretary of State and her prisons minister the chance to do something that should have been done a long time ago, but this is now urgent, which is to end the death toll of suicidal mentally ill people who take their own lives in our presence. When the state takes someone into custody, we have a duty to keep them safe – their life becomes our responsibility – yet prisons are not a place of safety. Last year, 12 women and 107 men took their own lives while imprisoned in the custody of the state. This bill affords us the important opportunity to change the law to prevent these tragic deaths, and we must seize that opportunity because the problem is urgent and growing.

This particular example references those who are seen to be ‘suicidal mentally ill’ before reciting the data that appears over the last 12 month period on suicides in prison, furthering claims of dehumanisation through datafication (see chapter five). Interestingly, this quotation does not attempt to draw direct blame to the Government, but instead to politicians more broadly, using phrases like ‘our’, and ‘when the state takes someone into custody, we have a duty to keep them safe’. Whilst we might argue that the semantics here are around the definition of the state (and the Governments role in organising and running state action) are important to

define, I would suggest the real attention needs to be drawn to the blaming that this produces. Referring to a lack of political action, thus presenting support for the bill in allowing the SoS and the Prisons Minister to provide necessary changes that are considered long overdue. The use of blame here, presented as a collective blame, is being utilised to support political change. However, the thread of blame does provide an example of obscuring from the issues of suicide in prison, making the political action more important than action in prisons.

Blame was also direct and obvious within the corpus, where claims were made without any nuance or trope that sought to neutralise or redirect blame. The debate on the Prisons and Court Bill 2017 saw blame directed towards the Government and their previous administrations – as the Conservative and Coalition Government saw many individuals in significant ministerial positions, such as SoSfJ and prisons minister. Interestingly, these claims of blame were centred on attaching violence, self-harm, and suicide alongside prison staff numbers (similarly to that already discussed). Blame was presented by Labour MPs, Burgon (first quotation) and Symonds (second quotation), through utilising statistics to demonstrate increases in problems and failure to resource staff, highlighting the failure of previous government policy (Hansard HC Deb., 20 March 2017).

It has been the Secretary of State's misfortune to inherit a brief that has been dominated from day one by the crisis in our prisons. That crisis is not of the Secretary of State making, but it was created by the Conservative governments cuts agenda. The relevant statistics are often cited in this place, but they are worth repeating. There is overcrowding in 68% of our prisons, with more than 84,000 people for approximately 77,000 places. In the last 12 months in September 2016, there are more than 25,000 prisoner assault instance, which represented a 31% increase on the figure for September 2015. Assaults on prison staff reach 6430, which was an increase of 82% since 2006 and a 40% increase on the year before. There were more than 37,750 incidents of self-harm, which was an increase of 61% compared to September 2016 and a national increase of 23% on the previous year. In the 12 months to December 2016, there were 354 deaths of prisoners in custody, 34% of which was self-inflicted. This government's decision to cut 7000 frontline prison officers no doubt contributed in large parts to the crisis, but that was allied with the disastrous decision departs privatise our probation service, meaning that the effective rehabilitation of offenders has become all the extinct under the successive Conservative Governments.

We will just have the bill on whether it will actually deliver. Prisons are its centrepiece, and we know of the problem of violence, overcrowding, drugs and the shortage of prison officers, which the government have to tackle. The Lord Chancellor, in her opening remarks, talked about turning the situation around, but I remind Conservative members that their party has been in power for seven years.

Some of this is reminiscent to previous chapters on datafication and dehumanising prisoners experiences, yet data is applied here to direct failure and blame. This is typical of oppositional politicians, using the problems as an opportunity for party politics and blaming ineffective government action. The examples show evidence of speakers playing party politics, referring to the Conservative decision to make reductions to staff, and that at this point they had seven years in Government and had not seen development or reductions in the three problems. The use of blame here is an example of the thread of blame, as it weaponised discussion on the three problems for political gaming, reducing the human qualities and causes of the issues to political mismanagement. Thus, atomising the wider reasons and causes for the problems and does not support any action towards reduction.

The final form of blame I identified was when blame was placed onto the issues of violence and the prisoners who were committing these acts. This was often framed by authors as being a blocker for policy change, where statements were made to suggest that violence stops opportunities to develop reform in prisons. These examples were found in the *Prison, Safety and Reform* (MoJ, 2016a: 6 and 3) White Paper.

To bring this vision will not happen overnight and reform can only take hold in a safe and disciplined prison environment. However, the prison system is currently under sustained and serious pressure from security threats and rising levels of violence that are blocks to reform.

I will never be able to address the issue of reoffending if we do not address the current level of violence and safety issues in our prisons. This is why I am determined to make prisons work.

Violence within these quotations is presented and framed as having the potential to reduce the opportunities for reform. Phrases such as ‘currently under sustained and serious pressure’ and the first sentence in the second quotation demonstrates how violence is used to justify limited progression. This places blame on violent prisoners for initiatives not being able to be implemented; indeed, the second quotation suggests that violence is a key factor to the level of reoffending. This framing seeks to neutralise the reform that the Government wishes to demonstrate within these reports, blaming violence rather than recognising the reform needed on violence in prison. Both quotations problematise violence in policy debates rather than problematising violence for other compassionate or care related issues. I also found it interesting that the quotations saw their aim to reduce reoffending and to bring in new reform rather than to reduce violence by reforming strategies – this is particularly important with the recognition of the growth in violence. I argue that this blame is used for politicking, to neutralise the consequences of limited reform and reoffending rates increasing. Such politicking blocks the view of action needed on violence, demonstrating the thread of blame.

The thread of blame can be seen to be an essential feature of the politicking that happens within the political stakeholder corpus. It has the tendency for redirection, neutralisation, and to atomise the humanity of violence, self-harm, and suicide into political language that services party politics. In doing so authors become more aware of how these issues can become useful at scoring points against opponents, using the problems as ammunition rather than as deeply complex nuanced realities that people experience.

8.4.3: The Thread of (In)Activity

A final thread is that of political inactivity, which I argue result from the same political practices that present action whilst demonstrating a lack of action. Throughout the corpus, political stakeholders often presented ‘political knowledge’ about the problems, framing this knowledge around talk of action. This knowledge was often

presented without directly naming, explaining or unpacking it, but instead was claimed to exist through analysis, strategy, and inquiries. The example below demonstrates this, where Harman MP provided a statement during the second reading of the Prisons and Courts Bill 2017 on the extent of political inactivity, suggesting that numerous reports have been produced and that the blame for not following the proposals is the failure of all politicians. Importantly, Harman (Labour MP) is addressing this claim as an oppositional member, but presents a shared ownership of the inactivity – this is likely due to her long career in parliament starting in 1982, which has also seen her party in the role of government (Hansard HC Deb., 20 March 2017).

The tragedy of suicide in prison is not new, but, as the Government acknowledge, it is worsening. Last year, the number of self-inflicted deaths rose by 32%. It is not a new problem or even one where no one knows what to do. Over the years, there have been numerous weighty reports to which Members of this House, Members of the House of Lords, judges and many others have contributed. They have analysed the problems and mapped out solutions, and successive Governments have welcomed their proposals, changed policy and issued new guidelines, but nothing changes, except the death toll, which rises. In 1991, we had the Woolf report; in 2007, the Corston report; in 2009, the Bradley report; and in 2015, the Harris report. It is not that we do not know what needs to be done; it is just that we have not done it.

The above quotation emphasises four individual reports commissioned by Parliament that have addressed the issues of suicide in prison, albeit with different contextual purposes; the Woolf Report (1991) focused on prison disturbances following the riots at HMP Manchester, the Corston Report (2007) focused on the challenges of female imprisonment, the Bradley Report (2009) on mental health and disability, and the Harris Report (2015) on self-inflicted death of young people in custody. Yet, an important part of this quotation is seen within the last sentence, where Harman claims that “it is not that we do not know what needs to be done; it is just that we have not done it”. This particular quotation draws attention to a lack of political action on addressing the issue of suicide, but does so by drawing attention to the lack of direct action following the publication of reports and political investigation. However, the quotation does not go onto explain why this lack of action has taken place. I argue that

this extract draws attention to the thread of political inaction, but that it does so by distinguishing that political activity is investigative rather than based on action.

Other politicians share Harman's concern over the location of political inactivity, detailing reports and recognising that suicide is still a raising concern for prisons in England and Wales. However, Solloway (Conservative MP) builds on this further by discussing her role within the Joint Committee on Human Rights who have further investigated suicide in prison (Hansard HC Deb., 20 March 2017).

I am pleased to sit on the Joint Committee on Human Rights under the excellent chairmanship of the right hon. and learned Member for Camberwell and Peckham (Ms Harman). I have been appointed within the Committee to the role of rapporteur on mental health, and our first inquiry has been into self-inflicted deaths in prisons, based on the Harris report of 2015. In common with others, I have been conscious of previous reports such as the Woolf report of 1991, the Corston report of 2007 on women in prison and, more recently, the Harris report of 2015 on suicide among young prisoners. There are merits in all those excellent reports, which have been welcomed, yet find more people are still taking their own lives in prison—12 women and 107 men in the last year alone.

The quotation is similar to Harman's in rhetoric and claim, suggesting that political action is often based on information gathering, rather than responding to the recommendations or interventions suggested by the investigations and inquiries. The similarity of claim from opposition and government politicians is crucial for this thread, as it demonstrates a consensus on where action is considered and where inaction occurs. This allows the thread of inactivity to be identified within the political and policy process, but yet there is still no discussion offered around why findings and recommendations from these reports are not being considered for practice and policy. Both examples frame that political action on suicide stops after the inquiry stage.

Political inactivity as a result of the knowledge generated through parliamentary reports is also highlighted by the House of Commons Health and Social Care Committee, who express that suicide in prison can be preventable due to the knowledge that is available around factors leading to suicide. The quotation below

demonstrates this in context to transfer of prisoners to particular settings (HSSC, 2018: 3).

Too many prisoners die in custody or shortly after release. Whilst deaths, including by suicide, in prisons have fallen slightly since their peak in 2016, so-called natural cause deaths, the highest cause of mortality in prison, too often reflect serious lapses in care. We are also concerned about the increase in deaths during post-release supervision and reports of people being found unresponsive in their cells. Every suicide should be regarded as preventable and it is unacceptable that those known to be at risk face unacceptable delays awaiting transfer to more appropriate settings.

The report highlights wider factors around suicide of prisoners, including those during post-release and issues with prisoners found dead in cells. However, the focus on preventability is important in this quotation, demonstrating a discursive position on suicide as a managerial issue within prisons, similarly to academic literature (Liebling, 1999; Liebling and Ludlow, 2016). I argue this shows a challenge to the thread of inactivity, as the focus on the sentence ‘every suicide should be regarded as preventable’ demonstrates that change is needed to make this a reality. This ‘should be’ claim likewise demonstrates that this is not the current practice, thus supporting that politicians are inactive in their response to prison suicides and that their current practices are obscuring possible action.

Further challenges offered within the corpus towards political inaction likewise demonstrate important features of this thread within the veil, this is mostly based on producing clear action based on the knowledge that politicians have at hand on the topic of suicide. Within the second reading of the Prisons and Courts Bill, Harman (Labour MP) demonstrates knowledge of the causes of suicide, presenting a clear binary decision towards the Government (Hansard HC Deb., 20 March 2017).

We can either cut the number of people going to prison or increase the number of prison officers, but the government have been cutting the number of prison officers while the number of prisoners has increased. We can see a clear correlation between the falling number of prison officers and the rising number of prison suicides – I put the graph, which shows this very clearly, on a tweet just now. Unless the prisoner to prison officer ratio changes, the death toll will

continue to rise. We have an opportunity to put into the bill and legal maximum prisoner – prison officer ratio.

Harman's representation of a strong correlation seen within the graph she discusses, points towards an unquestionable truth within her claims. Harman utilises this truth to challenge the Government's position on the prisoner-prison officer ratio and the opportunity to make this a legislative mechanism which would set a maximum ratio for the prison service. However, the opportunity that Harman presents, I argue, demonstrates the blurred vision around political action on suicide – more specifically that inaction can be identified between the production of knowledge (such as data analysis) and political motivation to action this data. Drawing back to earlier quotations based on a number of parliamentary reports, I argue this demonstrates a lack of foresight, due to this thread within the veil, from the Government to produce specific and clear action on suicide in prison.

Alongside the unspoken inactivity by political stakeholders comes inaction due to organisational and structural complexity that can often exist within political practices, including law making, committees, commissioning reviews, debating bills, and policy making. The Harris Review (2015: 1.7-1.8) presents examples of this, where a discussion is offered around the different political practices that were put in place to combat suicide in prison.

While the calls for a public enquiry were rejected by the government, pressure continued to grow to make changes to how deaths in custody were investigated. The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights (JCHR) (Third Report, 2004-2005 session) 7 called for a body to address its concerns about the national problem of deaths in custody. This led to the setting up of a Ministerial Roundtable on Suicide and the Forum for Preventing Deaths in Custody. However, the JCHR felt that these structures did not have the necessary powers or resources to intervene effectively, and called for a review of their functions. This Review, led by Robert Fulton, recommended in 2008 the creation of a new structure to replace both the Roundtable and the Forum.

The Government's response was to establish the Ministerial Council on Deaths in Custody (MCDC), which is jointly sponsored by the Home Office, the Department of Health and NOMS on behalf of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). The MCDC became operational on the 1st of April 2009. Beneath the MCDC, sits the Independent Advisory

Panel (IAP) on Deaths in Custody, which provides independent expert advice to the MCDC, guidance on policy and best practice across sectors, commissions' research and makes recommendations to Ministers and the heads of key agencies. Jointly, the IAP and the Ministerial Council are tasked to bring about a continuing and sustained reduction in the number and rates of deaths of people detained in all forms of state custody in England and Wales.

I argue that the above demonstrates a complex political interaction around building committees, councils, and panels to contend with the issue of deaths in custody. In doing so, the understanding of who is responsible, leading, or empowered to make adaptations and changes to prisons is unclear and obscured. This is evident within the last sentence, which states that "the IAP and the Ministerial Council are tasked to bring about a continuing and sustained reduction in the number and rates of deaths of people detained in all forms of state custody", yet the document continues to highlight raising numbers of incidents and thus suggests that these groups are not effective at reducing suicide in prison. The Harris Report (2015) does not detail why these groups have been unable to reduce suicides, but presents a failed attempt. I argue that the complexity of setting up bodies, groups and organisations to reduce suicide blurs the boundaries, ideas, and recommendations that are put forward for action. However, the overall responsibility for enforcing this action still sits within the hands of political ministers and HMPPS, thus the complexity surrounding the political organisation to reduce suicide can lead to further inaction.

Throughout the corpus there was only one quotation that drew attention to why there was political inaction on the three problems. The quotation directs attention to the challenge of policymaking on prisons, providing some realisation around the dominant organisational discourses seen within political stakeholders. Further, the quotation seeks to explain what the complex political organisation and structure leads to obscuring the action on problems in prisons. The quotation is taken from the second reading of the Prisons and Courts Bill 2016, where Harnier (Conservative MP) addresses the way that political stakeholders look at policy construction (Hansard HC Deb., 20 March 2017).

It is uncontroversial to say that prisons are violent, overcrowded and understaffed, but the question of what we do about that is difficult to answer, because the politics relating to the criminal justice system is about sentencing, not prisons. We take a reasonably consensual view—with one or two exceptions—about what we think ought to be done in prisons, for prisoners and to protect the public, but sentencing is acutely politically controversial. The right hon. and learned Member for Camberwell and Peckham (Ms Harman) asked Ministers why, if we can do it for education, we cannot create a regime to regulate prisons, but the answer is that while most of the British public—not all, but a great proportion—either have children of their own or know children, and therefore take a personal, direct interest in schools, few of us know people who go to prison or know what goes on in prison. It is a secret world. I have often said that the more prisons that are opened up to the public's gaze—not in a ridiculous way, but sensibly—the better the debate about prisons and that aspect of the criminal justice system would be.

Within the quotation the critique is made around the political practices on prisons, stating that sentencing takes the priority on political discussions and that, unlike schools or education, the public do not have an accurate view of imprisonment – thus it does not enter the political fields for debate in the same style. For example, political debates around education have seen ample discussion on a wide range of issues, such as class sizes, quality of education, resources, and key expectations around outcomes relating to grades, all of which has taken a political interest and gripped public attention (Ball, 2021). Harnier's comments therefore present an explanation to suggest that political activity is not fixed on practices and interactions within prisons directly, but that they instead look towards the sentences given to wrongdoing as opposed to how they are punished. This argument therefore demonstrates the extent of the thread of inactivity of the political discursive veil, as Harnier's statement represents a counter-discursive position on why political interaction leads to the inability to contend with issues like violence in prisons.

8.5: Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated how organisational discourses that form the discursive values, practices, and narratives offered by HMIP and political stakeholders obscures actions on violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons. The chapter has identified a

theoretical explanation to action, developing Hajer's (1995) idea of storylines to understand organisation discourses, explaining how these threads are constructed and how they work differently to obscure action. Indeed, the chapter recognised the significant differences that can be seen in the discourses of the two groups, leading me to conclude by reflecting on how the veils of these groups are constructed and work differently. HMIPs veil, I argue, is purposefully constructed, considered, and organised around idealisations on reporting. Hence the chapter demonstrated how threads of impartiality, methodological practices, and independence shape and control the claims offered around violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons. This was identified through HMIP offering vague recommendations that were limited in practical direction and specific actions, through Clarke's approach to produce 'true independence', and through seeking to increase their reporting legitimacy. The consequence of the veil for HMIP lead to a restriction and obscuring the suggested changes that they could offer to prisons, which I argue results in the lack of policy bite that is suggested by others (Padfield, 2017). Importantly, I argue that HMIPs veil is purposefully constructed as something that is conscious and intentional. However, the political stakeholders veil is constructed through different means, emerging through key practices and conflicts that exist at the core of political activity. The construction of these threads, instead of being purposefully constructed, are a result of politicking and of "politics-as-activity" (Palonen, 2003: 177). As a result, political actions and motivations obscure political stakeholders from offering action on violence, self-harm, and suicide more directly. Instead, they focus on structuring management techniques, the construction of political blame and gaming, and focus on knowledge generation rather than practically applying interventions. The differences in the construction of these veils is important to consider, yet there are some similarities that can be identified, such as the focus applied to risk, blame, and accountability. Also, I would argue that the previous chapters further demonstrate elements of veiling for both HMIP and political stakeholders – as the discourses of data, accountability, and discourses on causes likewise obscure potential action from both groups.

These threads are not definite, as many more could be analysed from the corpora, however they are the main threads that I identified in my analysis. Many more threads

could be identified with further research and more information on the groups. The significance of these findings demonstrates that violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons requires further transparency from HMIP and politicians. Without self-reflection and evaluation of their practices then action might not be proactive. The way that they value their own organisational discourses can sometimes make their reporting and claims superficial, limiting the action that others can take or that they direct. This chapter provides a tool to support the theoretical explanation behind the discourses seen within different groups of actors on the three topics, directing how their approach to the topics can be altered and changed.

Chapter Nine: Conclusion

This study was conducted to understand the endemic problems of violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons, focusing on why these issues are not actioned due to the discourses that emerge from HMIP and politicians. Indeed, a central question that this study has structured inquiry around is based on the quotation from Harman, when she claimed that “it is not that we do not know what needs to be done; it is just that we have not done it” (Hansard HC Deb., 20 March 2017). The quotation demonstrates that action was missing on the topic on problems in prisons, resulting in increasing incidents and growing political pressure for change due to the ever-expanding challenges that currently exist within prisons, such as overcrowding and capacity. Harman’s quotation demonstrated not only that political action was missing, but that knowledge around actions was available but not used. These issues from the quotation featured as an essential component of this study, requiring detailed analysis to consider why action is stagnant or ignored. The study followed CDA to draw out key findings around documents that are based on challenging the problems of violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons. I did this through analysing 16 documents from both HMIP and political stakeholders between the years of 2015 and 2019 to draw out the discourses seen within and to construct a theoretical explanation for why action was often missing around knowledge generation and policymaking.

9.1: Main Conclusions

Overall, this thesis has demonstrated that the discourses and discursive practices around the topics of violence, self-harm, and suicide by HMIP and political stakeholders can be characterised through the themes of risk-management, dehumanisation, and lacking comprehension in actions that can be done to reduce these problems. The analysis outlined that both groups overlook alternative discursive strategies and viewpoints in contending with the issues, claiming the dominant discursive positions. The dominance of these discourses can be seen to be enhanced, reproduced, and sustained within the analysis conducted, which is reflected through

the organisational make-up of the groups, alongside their epistemological outlook on the three problems. Chapter four address the aim of CDA to be based on identifying how documents “enact, confirm, legitimise, reproduce and challenge” (van Dijk, 2015: 467) discourses. The analysis has demonstrated this to be the case with my conclusions. The structure of analysis demonstrated that these discourses are enacted through discursive devices on a micro-linguistic level (chapter five), confirmed through actions of accountability (chapter six), legitimised through specific realities of causality (chapter seven), and reproduced through organisational discourses reinforcing, reproducing, and underpinning what groups see, overlook, and avoid (chapter eight). The missing piece to this puzzle is the challenge. Overall, I argue that greater self-reflection is needed by HMIP and politicians to address the limitations of the discourses that have emerged around these topics. However, to achieve this level of reflection there will need to be social and political pressure towards a focus on prisoner welfare to encourage progressive penal politics and policies. The political challenge can be seen as evidenced through the wider practices of penal lobbyist groups (such as the Howard League and the Prison Reform Trust), however there is little to no challenge of HMIPs practices – as highlighted no evaluation or critical research has been conducted on their practices.

By reflecting on Harman’s quotation alongside the analysis conducted for this study, I argue that there is a lack of action on violence, self-harm, and suicide in prison, for two reasons, which I frame as similar for both groups. The first is centred around the discourses I identified (datafication, accountability and causality) having qualities that problematise, overlook, and dehumanised the prisoners. The second is based around the organisational discourses that HMIP and political stakeholders, which construct specific idealisations around their practices and storylines which obscure their view of these problems and redirects discussion of violence, self-harm, and suicide for different means. This results in both groups talking past the problems, rather than directing discussions directly to reducing initial incidents of violence, self-harm, and suicide, the groups do acknowledge the trauma and victimhood of those who witness these but do not always use these positions to understand initial incidences.

9.1.1: Dehumanising, Problematising , and Overlooking Prisoners

Throughout the thesis the analysis frequently detailed how authors framed the prisoners who do acts of violence, self-harm or suicide. I identified that authors framed these prisoners similarly through both micro-linguistic devices and through intertextual discourses, demonstrating a dominance around values and views that each group have about prisoners. In chapter five I explored how language was dominated through data stories, recognising this as a key approach taken on discussing prisoners violence, self-harm, and suicide. Central within practices of datafication is the reduction of complex human life and social actions into quantitative forms of presentation, which produced problematising tropes towards prisoners with data being drawn to present a managerial and risk associated challenge for politicians and prison managers to contend with. The consequences of this problematisation results in the lack of presentation of humanising or compassionate introductions and discussions on the problems. This instead framed prisoners *as* the problems rather than individuals *with* problems. This approach reduces the complexity and nuance of the experiences for prisoners, thus overlooking potential action to reduce these problems. There was also dominance of the frame of prisoners, as no differences stood out between the two groups, presenting a shared means of communication and framing of prisoners.

Framing the prisoners who do acts of violence, self-harm, and suicide as being problematic continued in other chapters, such as chapter seven which highlighted the macro-linguistic discourse structures seen within the analysis the presented discourse on causes of the problems. Within the chapter I presented discourses on trauma, victimised experiences, and the association between drugs and violence, in doing so that chapter drew out how authors from both groups saw these prisoners as problematic. The chapter revealed that TIP was often referenced as opposed to that seen and identified within academic literature (see chapter two), but instead focused on the trauma of those who witness violence, self-harm, or suicide in prisons, suggesting that witnessing leads to causes of these issues, rather than preprison or in-prison trauma causing these issues. This approach therefore problematises the

population of prisoners, whilst recognising other prisoners are potential innocent bystanders. Victimised experiences was discussed not as a focus on the responses from victims, but instead as a population that requires management. In doing so, both groups overlooked the needs and complexity that emerges through recognising prisoners' preprison and in-prison victimisation – instead they drew victimised experiences as an area to apply managerial techniques. The final discourse was around an association between drugs and violence, this was often presented as an unquestionable truth within the corpus, where truth modalities were used throughout to identify drugs as a significant risk factor in the cause of violence, this was often utilised as a frame above any other factor or association, thus overlooking other holistic causes of violence. The discourses captured further examples of a risk management dominance in discussions on violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons. The discourses offered throughout the corpus overlook other narratives of causality that would seek to humanise drug-use, violence, self-harm, and suicide in prison as connected to the complex experiences of prisoners both preprison and during imprisonment. This results in limiting alternative actions due to the discursive dominance of both groups sharing assumptions on causes. Furthermore, these discourses seek to problematise prisoners through risk assessed narrative, highlighting that the three problems cause further challenges for those in prison and for the management of prisons.

It was evident during analysis that both groups shared common tropes on dehumanising, problematising and overlooking prisoners, as this produced a dominance in the micro-linguistic and macro-intertextual discourses that appeared. The differences that emerged between the two groups were minimal, further demonstrating the dominance identified, however variations between the groups was evident due to the contextual use of these dehumanising, problematising, and overlooking tropes. For example, HMIP often engaged with these tropes to locate blame on prison management, through strategies of audit and due to offering recommendations only. For the political stakeholders differences were seen around using these tropes for policy development, political argument, and to shift accountability between actors in the wider network of prison accountability. Drawing

these findings back to the Harman quote that this study is structured around, it could be argued that the knowledge she is referring to, if the documents for this study represent this, is constructed in a style that does not place the prisoner at the centre of these problems, instead it overlooks, talks past, and problematises prisoners.

9.1.2: Organisational Discourses Obscuring Action

A second conclusion drawn from analysis is based on how the organisational discourses constructed by both groups lead to obscuring actions on violence, self-harm, and suicide. As detailed in chapter eight, I developed Hajer's (1997) idea of storylines to explain organisational discourses – which I referred to as threads within discursive veils. Organisational discourses were thus the idealisations of the values and practices that all within an organisation are assumed to agree on – HMIP therefore form their organisational discourses through their independence, impartiality, and methodological objectivity and political stakeholders form organisation discourses through blame, risk, and claims on inaction as a strategy of displacing and neutralising blame, and political gaming. As a result, it was evident within the analysis that organisational discourses were given priority over focus on violence, self-harm, and suicide, where these threads obscured detail, focus, and action directly on these problems.

Organisational discourses were also identified elsewhere within this study, for example chapter six demonstrated how discourses of accountability limited direct social action on violence, self-harm, and suicide through engaging in practices of shifting accountability, utilisation of NPM techniques, a focus on blame allocation, and developing measurable outcomes for prisons. Whilst there is some claim that NPM techniques supports change for the problems in prison, the analysis did not see direct action appearing in language and discourse following this. Instead, violence, self-harm, and suicide were used as measurements for judgement making, where language centred around presenting these issues as indicators for poor practice and for creating intervention. This demonstrated how organisational discourses identified

practices of accountability as having a greater priority than developing strategies for reducing incidents.

The consequence of organisational discourses is therefore an important conclusion following this study, providing the necessary explanation to understand why action is not always presented. Importantly these organisational discourses have the tendency to make HMIP and political stakeholders limited in sight on the topics of violence, self-harm, and suicide – where the two groups can often overlook the significant challenges that exist around these problems, instead favouring debates around accountability, legitimacy, and political gaming. However, both groups did not practice organisational discourses in the same manner, albeit the result of them is similar in obscuring view. There are significant differences with the use and construction of organisational discourses. With HMIP discussing their organisational discourses directly, through considering their approach to be independent, impartial, and objective – evidenced through Clarke’s description of ‘true independence’ and their methodological practices which restrict recommendation. In comparison, the organisational discourses that were identified for political stakeholders were mostly evident as a result of politicking, formed through politics-as-activity, rather than clearly defined and documented ideals and values. For political stakeholders this resulted in political gaming, point scoring, and clear differential uses of the topics based on those who were members of the Government and those in the Opposition – with the Government seeking to justify and neutralise, and the opposition to attack and critique. However, the outcomes of these organisational difference can be seen to have similar consequences, that is the obscuring of violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons through restricting action, direction, and attention to these problems.

9.2.3: Limitations

There are, of course, limitations to this thesis which limit the draw of these conclusions. The most obvious is centred on both the choice to analyse documents and the amount of documents selected. This practice is imperfect, with the inability to capture the full extent of relationships due to the ever-expanding documents

published by these groups and due to the other forms of communication that exists within practice. Therefore, the conclusions above can only be made in relation to the specific documents selected for this study, only in this sense are my conclusions a true representation of what has been analysed. I also recognise the challenges that emerge around considering these groups as being constructed as homogenously valued individuals, as discursive conformity is often assumed when documents are constructed with many actors under one symbolic organisation as author (Annison, 2018). Another limitation comes with the style of analysis offered, as I am a new researcher to CDA and have not had extensive experience of this method until this project. Whilst there is no definitive and objective way of conducting qualitative research (Mason, 1998) there are differences that would likely emerge from a more seasoned CDA researcher.

9.2: Contribution and Originality

The conclusions to this study present areas of important contribution and originality, which I argue can be identified through theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions. These contributions demonstrate how the conclusions of this study can also be considered alongside contemporary literature, recognising how the findings, approach of analysis, and challenge offered during analysis can be seen to provide new arguments, ideas, and practices.

9.2.1: Theoretical Contributions and Originality

First, the metaphor of the veil offers a new way of explaining the consequences of organisational discourses, providing an account of why action can be missing. In this study I have applied this to violence, self-harm, and suicide for HMIP and political stakeholders, but this metaphor could be used to discuss other areas of inaction across criminal justice and public policy. By building on Hajer's (1993) conception of storylines, this metaphor can be used across literature to recognise the discursive obscuring that occurs due to institutional values and idealisations. This helps build the theoretical explanation that can emerge from CDA (Fairclough, 2001), allowing for

greater challenge to organisational practice and output, providing scrutiny for areas of public policy that are lacking evaluation – such as HMIP.

Second, this study has challenged the practicalities of risk-modelling traditions by recognising the limited compassion that this provides to the prison population and the reduction of complexity on nuanced experiences of imprisonment. The challenge provided to a risk dominated discussion on violence, self-harm, and suicide is seen as an additional to growing literature of a similar academic critique (see Liebling, 1999), as well as pressure applied for compassion building in policy and practice, such as TIP.

Third, the analysis conducted offers new perspectives on narratives seen by these authors, where content on trauma, victimhood and data in relation to violence, self-harm, and suicide. This is particularly the case when looking at trauma and victimhood, where the individual responsible for the acts are not seen as having traumatic reactions or victimhood – but rather that bystanders witnessing these three problems creates trauma and victimhood. This discursive position is often counter to that seen within literature; thus these findings can be located within the literature on these topics to demonstrate how difference language is between actors and academics. Also, the study discussed data as dehumanising and limiting the nuanced and complex lived-experiences of prisoners, thus demonstrating that narratives on data dehumanise prisons and promote only risk-based management strategies.

Finally, the study builds a sociology of prison reporting through detailing the complex systems of prison accountability and the dominant discourses that they construct on problems within prisons. This adds to current literature on prison accountability (Behan and Kirkham, 2016; Bennett, 2014; Padfield, 2016) by adding new discussions on the discursive similarities and differences between bodies of prison accountability and politicians. This is seen through the similarity in dominant discourses seen within the study, such as risk, data, practices of shifting accountability, and the drug-violence association.

9.2.2: Methodological Contributions and Originality

This study offers a key methodological contribution through being the first to use CDA on prison reporting. This methodological approach provides a unique and distinctive way of detailing how and why discourses are enacted, legitimised and reproduced through communication and language. Such analysis contributes discussion in literature that recognises the social action involved in language on the topics of violence, self-harm, and suicide, whilst also explaining why action is missing on topics and problems. Contributions of this nature open up opportunities for more discourse studies on the prison landscape, an area of study that is surrounded by documents, talk, and language which, due to the closed nature of prisons, is the means through which life in prison is shared, understood, and analysed.

9.2.3: Practical Contributions and Originality

Throughout the thesis challenges to different practices have been presented through a critical lens, detailing examples of overlooking, limited oversight, and a lack of critical consideration. Therefore, the practical contributions I offer following this research are for those researching violence, self-harm, and suicide alongside those who work in prison politics or accountability. Throughout this study challenge has been applied to dominant discourses that are evident throughout the analysis and literature on the problems, mostly the dominance of risk-modelling which leads to reductionist interventions on the three problems. The result of this approach to reducing the three problems often overstates the strength of specific risk factors, indicators, or variables that are connected to violence, self-harm, and suicide. Interventions constructed from individual indicators tend to reduce the wider holistic explanations to the problems, overlooking the nuance and complexity surrounding imprisonment and the lived-experiences of prisoners. This critique has been identified before in penological literature (Armour, 2012; Liebling, 1999), however I argue that this thesis demonstrates a practical contribution as this study has identified the same dominance within the language of prison reporting. Thus, this contributes to the wider literature that is critical of this reductionist tendency within penology through identifying how

this is reproduced within specific communications and discourses. Seeking practical changes to language to influence and alter discourses on violence, self-harm, and suicide in prisons.

A second practical contribution made through this thesis comes with the critique offered to HMIP through their practices of constructing methodological strategies, an outcome-focused, and impartial style of inspection on prisons. The critique offered calls into question the approach applied in the construction and application of these strategies – recognising the downfalls in these practices in producing the policy bite and confidence in their readers to support and influence change. Taking the critiques offered around these threads within HMIPs discursive veil would support in reflection, redesign and rethinking valued practices which have become commonplace. By engaging with these debates HMIP will be successful in strengthening their current values on practice – thus further legitimising their strategies as appropriate – or will begin the process of redesigning to increase legitimacy.

9.3: Implications for Policy and Practice

This research has implications for the future, as I argue that there are recommendations for policy, practice and research. Recommendations for policy following this study are multifaceted, insofar as the thesis details specific areas of inactivity and challenges the landscape of the organisation of prison accountability. My main recommendation in this area is to adapt and change the communication within the policy process on the topics of violence, self-harm, and suicide, which I argue can be achieved in three ways. First, is to recognise the risk-modelling dominance that emerges within language and communication, where I argue change needs to come to shift discussions to recognise the nuanced and complex realities surrounding these problems – suggesting that policy should not be considered only around risk-based-interventions, but by holistic change. Second, to consider that practices of organisations are often taken as a priority in reporting above the lived-experiences of prisoners who engage with these three problems. This comes as a consequence of political and organisational discourses, but there is evidence to

suggest that the focus on these organisational discourses (threads in a veil) are obscuring the view of violence, self-harm, and suicide, thus limiting suggested action and calls for changes to alleviate these problems. Without the recognition of these organisational discourses Harman's quotation will remain the case and thus the state demonstrate their lack of care for those in their custody. The final policy suggestion is to shift the penological discourses identified within the documents, as my analysis has identified how discourses on the causes of violence, self-harm, and suicide tend to problematise prisoners whilst disenfranchising their trauma and victimhood. For example, chapter seven highlighted the discursive shift on trauma and victimhood away from those doing acts of violence, self-harm, and suicide but only to those considered innocent-bystanders within prisons. I argue that this particular finding demonstrates that trauma-informed practices are not values held by HMIP and political stakeholders, thus prisoners are not holistically considered of deserved empathy through these actions. Policy construction therefore needs to respond to the academic pressures to include values of TIP within their interventions.

Practically, the thesis provides challenge to areas of prison accountability, through furthering the critique offered to the practices, strategies, and values seen within prison inspection (Padfield, 2017). For HMIP, this thesis has identified challenges within the organisational discourses that are constructed by HMIP to legitimise and validate their claims, this was particularly noticeable with their approach in reporting where recommendations were constructed in an outcome-focused strategy through impartial means. A supportive practical change would be for detail to be presented within recommendations, or at least provided for readers who are not privy to the detailed conversations that occur between HMIP and the prisons. This would not only be supportive in increased accountability for the public, but would likewise strengthen analysis offered by political stakeholders and in academic debates.

In terms of research, I recommend that criminological and penological studies take credit in the use of CDA within research. The vast array of documents, discussions, and communications that occur within the prison setting are important to identify and consider. The wider application of language will be vital to changing the prison

environment (which I assure can benefit both penal reformers and penal abolitionists). The second would be around further investigation of HMIP, considering their inspection practices and evaluating the effectiveness of their recommendations– this should be centred on generative collaboration between HMIP and prisons, identifying a synthesised understanding of the nature, outcomes, and process of prison inspection for all parties involved.

Appendix 1

An selection and example of analysis conducted – taken from the HMCIP Annual Report from 2018/2019.

No.	Quotation	Page	Lexis Analysis Choice and meaning of terms, referential strategies and Value	Action / Transivity	Intention of action	What is missing?	Modality Attitudes, belief and how truth is presented	How is power presented?	Where is power located?	Conflict with other discursive positions	Additional Thoughts
1	Many [prison staff] are new to their jobs and deserve as much support as possible as they gain experience and grow into their roles in an environment where, in too many establishments, drug-fuelled violence remains a daily reality	7	<p>'Many' - assuming they are deciding that most of the prison staff are new and that this is the majority of the staff. This makes it seem like there is a systemic problem with hiring of prison staff.</p> <p>'deserve' - hits that staff are not getting and should get - hinting a little dig at prison staff training (maybe a prolonged issues for HMCIP?).</p> <p>'Drug-fuelled violence' - suggesting violence and drugs in prison are connected - contextualising violence to drugs, but not other circumstances.</p> <p>'remains a daily reality' - commonplace but saying this with further gravity.</p>	Action here is around the prison staff growing into their roles and that this is needed for staff to be able to manage prisoners due to the drug-fuelled violence that takes place.	Claiming that action around dealing with the issues on violence required time and cannot be dealt with overnight.	They are not discussing what staff training is missing and how whether training is or is not addressing issues of violence. It also doesn't explain what support is needed, and what is lacking which is requiring supporting.	<p>That most prison staff are new, assumes that experience or ability to content with violence comes with experience and not training.</p> <p>Their attitude is around supporting staff and almost seeks to address greater issues with prison management, which impacts on violence.</p> <p>Suggesting that prison officers are not appropriately experienced or resourced for their role in tackling violence.</p>	Power of prison management to offer greater support, they are saying that this power of support is needed to help reduce violence.	With prison managers, not prison staff.	They are claiming that staff are not appropriately able to manage issues of violence.	
2	<p>that far too many of our jails have been plagued by drugs, violence, appalling living conditions and a lack of access to meaningful activity"</p> <p>Overall, levels of self-harm were disturbingly high and self-inflicted deaths tragically increased by nearly one-fifth on the previous year.</p>	7	<p>'far too many' - suggests that they are claiming this as a systemic problem and that most prisons experience these issues.</p> <p>'Plagued' - trouble or irritation: such language suggests that prisons are impacted by these, therefore they are not normal.</p> <p>'Appalling living conditions' - giving some sort of indication to what they believe about the standards of prisons. Also, that they could be better, but no indication on what the cause of this is.</p> <p>'disturbing' and 'tragically' - dramatic terminology to discuss death, but almost have an objective/political feel - like the feeling you get when you see politicians use this in formal speeches.</p>	Claiming something is high or disproportionate or disgusting. The claim is clear, but the presentation of this is lacking information. Meaning that HMCIP are clearly offering a value judgement here.	Very direct as 'reported' intention. They are also presenting this in a dramatic manner to show the dissatisfaction with the number of cases of the problems.	There is no statistical finding or explanation to explain what makes the numbers overly high. Evidence is lacking and therefore the reader has to believe that what they claim is accurate.	<p>The lack of statistics means that this is mostly presented in a truth modality, that we have to believe what HMCIP are claiming. The claim without evidence also means that there is a value judgement in place.</p> <p>Also, the attitudes here break the objective barrier they present and they offer terms like plagued and tragic as a way of demonstrating a value too.</p>	Almost as if there is a lack of power to control some of the issues, terms like 'plagued' highlight some sort of systemic problem in all prisons, but a problem that hasn't been considered thoroughly.	With prison management and political leaders to contend with the systemic and tragic issues that they problems produce.	The discussion on prisons being plagued could be contended by others. HMCIP present it as a problem of the prison, others might present this as a problem of prisoners.	

3	category B and C men's local and training prisons account for the numerical bulk of prisoners. With their high through-put of prisoners, their often worn-out fabric, their vulnerable populations and their levels of violence and illicit drug use, they were this year the prisons that, as in previous years, caused us most concern. Staff shortages had been so acute that risks to both prisoners and staff were often severe, and levels of all types of violence had soared. Meanwhile, the appalling impact of illicit drugs, particularly new psychoactive substances (NPS) had been underestimated and as a result many prisons are still suffering from the debt, bullying and violence they generated	8	<p>'Their often worn-out fabric' - purely descriptive and to add value to their claims about poor conditions in local and training prisons. Clearly an observation from another area, but added here for effect.</p> <p>'high through-put of prisoners' - too many people coming in and out of prison. Strange terminology used here.</p> <p>'their vulnerable population' - referring to vulnerable prisoners as being owned or controlled or in the charge of the prison.</p> <p>'they were this year the prisons that, as in previous years' - a little strenuous as a phrase, but there to show that there is a continuation of the same problem.</p> <p>'so acute that risks to both prisoners and staff were often severe' - interesting interplay that prisoners come</p>	Blame on the prison service (HMPPS and SoStJ) for the continuation and impact that NPS is having on the prison. They also blame the prison for the vulnerability of some prisoners, referring to the prison as almost failing these due to the conditions that have been experienced by those they inspected or spoke to.	To blame and to create gravitas in their report. There is an intention here to report problems and their origins. Again, problems in this capacity could be understood as personal but they are being represented as a institutional issue.	The cause of the issue. HMCIP are only stating an observation here and not showing where this has come from. Is this a prisoners viewpoint or is this something they have witnessed? This would impact the impact that this could have.	Many values offered over the quality of what prisoners should expect with the quality of their clothing etc. However, this is presented as a truth modality - naturally because of their reporting style.	In the form of blame that there is a continuous issue appearing.	There is an image here that there is powerlessness with the prisoners. With claims that their vulnerability is owned by the prison and that the prison has the potential and capacity to inflict such pains.	Clear here to see that the discourse offered by HMIP is prisoner led. Much of what is discussed here is outward looking and not considering that the prisoners are those who are actively seeking NPS and other forms of drugs. But instead blaming the other group about their management of it.
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