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BEREAVEMENT AND IMPRISONMENT:

A descriptive phenomenological exploration of prisoners' experiences of bereavement in carceral contexts

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‘This dissertation is the result of the author’s original research. It has been composed by the author and has not been previously submitted for examination which has led to the award of a degree.’

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ABSTRACT

This study explores prisoners' experiences of bereavement and the impact of carceral contexts on manifestations and processing of grief. Death can elicit strong emotional responses, which could result in higher irritability, tendency to act aggressively, and engagement in anti-social mechanisms of numbing the pain (e.g., substance abuse, violence, self-harm). It can also lead to social withdrawal, isolation, and emotional suppression, occasionally re-emerging, often in unexpected ways. Imprisonment, on the other hand, can detach people from their support systems and reduce opportunities to participate in the community. Despite prior research indicating a higher prevalence of bereavement among justice-involved individuals and its potential links with reoffending, both grieving in prisons and the impact of carceral contexts on bereavement remain under-studied.

To this end, the researcher conducted 33 semi-structured, voice-recorded interviews with male and female prisoners in two Scottish prisons to capture rich, nuanced narratives of prisoners' experiences of bereavement. Following Giorgi's (2000) Descriptive Phenomenological (DP) framework for analysis, the individual accounts of a phenomenon were eventually submerged, enabling its generalized structure to emerge. While the former relayed the subjective, emotional, social, relational, and corporeal aspects of bereavement, the latter implied policy and practice recommendations.

The findings discovered the existence of fragmented grief among this sample, in that the continuum of bereavement was interrupted in different ways, depending on the context. Fragmented grief is conceptualized as both an intentional coping mechanism and an outcome of the impact of prison on the processing of grief. Thus, bereavement in carceral contexts simultaneously embodied various, often competing levels of its temporal, spatial, and corporeal manifestations, leaving some prisoners trapped in this liminality, this ambiguity of being neither here nor there. Consequently, the findings from this study are relevant not just for the duration of individuals' imprisonment but have important implications for release and reintegration.

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I would further like to thank the Scottish Prison Service, and especially Dr. Jim Carnie, for providing me with support, advice, and guidance, particularly in the early stages of my study. Navigating the carceral contexts for research purposes was new to me, and knowing whom to turn to for assistance, as well as receiving that support in a timely manner, meant a lot. Similarly, my data-collection would not have been possible without the understanding and interest with which the two research sites welcomed this study. Unfortunately, I cannot name the specific individuals due to the confidential nature of the data gathered, but I hope you know that your contributions and commitment were invaluable.

The success of this PhD is not just mine, but my supervisors' as well. Thank you to Dr. Sally Paul and Professor Beth Weaver for supporting me and being patient while I tried to figure out the meaning of the words "epistemology" and "ontology", and subsequently, their relevance for my chosen methodology. It took me quite some time to get there, so thank you for always having the right words of encouragement at the right moments.

Overall, this dissertation was not just a mental exercise that took a lot of time and effort, but above all, for me, it was a period of personal and professional development. For this, I can only say thank you to my partner McP, for walking by my side even on the stormiest paths. Equally, thank you to my bestie Jelena, for always being there for me and listening to my endless complaints. Finally, but no less important, I would not be able to be here without my family, who encouraged and supported me through all my educational endeavors and life challenges. Thank you!

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1. INTRODUCTION

This study is a phenomenological, interdisciplinary study of prisoners' experiences of bereavement in carceral contexts. It advances criminological and grief research, by generating new knowledge on prisoners' experiences and manifestations of bereavement within prisons, as well as by providing a deeper insight into the role of prisons in processing death. As such, this research generated relevant policy and practice implications with regards to prisoners' funeral attendance, relationship between prisoners and staff, and the provision of bereavement support in carceral contexts, among others. Rethinking and addressing the issue of grief in prisons could make the time spent in an institution more meaningful, and reintegration prospects more successful.

Death is an inevitable, yet a unique, personal experience. Although it is universal in its power to end a life, it is widely recognized that the experiences of death and grief are influenced by individual, familial, social, and cultural factors (Neimeyer et al., 2002; Paul and Vaswani, 2020; Rothaupt and Becker, 2007; Stroebe and Schut, 2015; Walsh and McGoldrick, 2013). Despite the evolution of thought on theoretical approaches to grief, there is still limited diversity in empirical research on bereavement, either in relation to research participants or to bereavement contexts. There is also emerging evidence on the high prevalence of death and bereavement among current and former prisoners (e.g., Hunt and Read, 2018; Testa and Jackson, 2019; Vaswani, 2014; Wilson et al., 2020), but the impact that incarceration has on bereavement experiences, and vice versa, is less well understood. Notwithstanding the recent academic interest in this topic (e.g., Hunt and Read, 2018; Testa and Jackson, 2019; Vaswani et al., 2016; Wilson et al., 2020), the empirical examination of the intersection of bereavement and imprisonment remains under-developed. This chapter firstly summarizes the state of knowledge on these two aspects, bereavement and imprisonment. It then introduces the study aim and research questions, followed by the study rationale and its perceived benefits. Finally, it provides the outline of each chapter and the general structure of this dissertation.

1.1. Overview of Existing Grief Research

Current research on the experiences of bereavement allows for little variation in family structure or gender roles. For example, most scholarship examined this phenomenon from the perspective of those grieving a partner or a spouse (e.g., Jones et al., 2019; Schut et al., 1997; Stroebe and Stroebe, 1983), often focussing on elderly widow(er)s. There has been some research on bereft children, and even then, it was recognized that current knowledge predominantly concentrates on death of a close family member/relative (Paul and Vaswani, 2020). Indeed, there is a robust body of research on parental bereavement of a child (e.g., Christensen et al., 2017; Stinson, Lasker, Lohmann, and Toedter, 1992; Wijngaards-de Meij et al., 2008; see also Lewin and Farkas 2012 for prisoners' experiences of losing a child) and many studies examine the traditional family make-up with gendered stereotypes of emotional expression (some exceptions looking at LGBT and non-binary persons' bereavement are Cacciatore and Raffo, 2011; McNutt and Yakushko, 2013; Nolan, 2019). Thus, there is little diversity in family structure, gender roles, and identities, potentially marginalizing bereft men and young widows (Jones et al., 2019; Nolan, 2019). Namely, men are expected to follow the (c)overtly gendered grieving patterns, typically driving from heterosexual, even hypermasculine (e.g., Rothaupt and Becker, 2007), and often middle-class (Woodthorpe, 2017) experiences. This could suggest a gap in knowledge around experiences of grieving someone from a wider social circle or someone not blood-related to the bereft. Subsequently, there is a need to broaden the scope of bereavement research and shift the focus away from ascribing values to those relationships that follow an established social structure (e.g., mother, father, child, partner) toward understanding the dynamics, experiences, and effects of grieving a significant relationship more broadly.

Furthermore, as indicated, bereavement practices of marginalized and socially disadvantaged groups are under-studied too, and so is the impact of cultural and social contexts of bereavement on individual experiences. Given the intersectionality of the individual, social, and relational in bereavement, which will be discussed in more detail throughout the literature review chapter, the diversity of experiences is relevant for better understanding of manifestation and processing of grief. For example, Valentine (2013) discussed the general effect of culture on emotional expression and expected behavioral patterns, and Kofod (2017) argued that the relationship between the grieving individual and their culture is mutually constituting. Yet, there is room to further examine the mechanisms through which one affects another, above and beyond just socialization (Rothaupt and Becker, 2007). Woodthorpe (2017) highlighted the relevance of class in bereavement experiences, critiquing the academic interest in upper-and middle-class experiences, which might have led to a normalization of those ways of dying. Subsequently, such understandings shape the societal perception of tasteful and tasteless, or vulgar, when displaying grief (Woodthorpe, 2017). For example, clean, peaceful dying at home is becoming the equivalent of a "good death", often concluded with a decent funeral. But there is a need for research on bereavement experiences of lower social classes, whose realities of death might be violent, disruptive, and unexpected, as well as in diverse social settings, to grasp a nuanced insight into this topic.

Stinson et al. (1992) argued that one of the main limitations of prior bereavement studies is their cross-sectional nature with small samples. It is also suggested that there is a disconnect between examining the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and social aspects of bereavement (Stroebe and Schut, 2015), and a lack of a holistic, interdisciplinary approach to grief research (Hentz, 2002; Paul, 2019). As such, the existing scholarship can unintentionally disregard grievers, who are less likely to publicly express their grief or are disenfranchised in their grief, forming a gap in knowledge that focuses on non-conventional family structures, diverse demographic characteristics, and different spatial and cultural (sub)contexts, ideally over time. However, bereavement research is starting to expand by including disenfranchised populations, such as prisoners, and different modes of death, such as suicide. For example, Shields et al. (2017) provided a systematic review on bereavement of a suicide and Testa and Jackson (2019) called for more research on family mortality among (formerly) incarcerated adults. Umberson et al. (2017) added a racial component to the discussion, arguing that bereavement can become a disproportionate source of adversity for racial minorities. Their research was conducted in the United States, where Black and Latino communities tend to experience institutional racism and (racially-motivated) violence. This indicates that even within the same culture, individual characteristics, such as age, race, and class, could further shape relationships with others, as well as their experiences of bereavement.

Overall, the existing grief research focuses predominantly on death of the members of a nuclear family, heterosexual partners, or close relatives, leaving a wide range of potentially relevant relationships unexamined. It is driven by the experiences of middle and upper classes, further marginalizing those individuals, who are already more likely to face traumatic, sudden, and violent deaths, based on their socio-economic status. Finally, even though the intersectionality of individual, social, and cultural factors in bereavement has been recognized, there is a scarcity of research on death experiences in diverse socio-cultural, socio-legal, and socio-economic contexts, some of which this study will aim to address.

1.2. Existing Prison Research on Bereavement

Despite a growing research interest on both the prevalence of bereavement in prison and the challenges that grieving in prisons can present (Hendry, 2009; Hunt and Read, 2018; Schetky, 1998; Testa and Jackson, 2019; Vaswani, 2014; Vaswani et al., 2016; Wilson, 2011; Wilson et al., 2020), in-depth knowledge on prisoners’ experiences of death is still scarce. In

Scotland, the justice system tends to be portrayed as welfare oriented, rather than punitive, with a greater success in this orientation within the realms of juvenile justice (e.g., Armstrong, 2020; Barry and McIvor, 2010; McAra, 2008; McVie, 2011). However, Brangan (2019) has recently questioned the extent to which the Scottish system is, indeed, different to other Anglo-Saxon countries, arguing that a more civilized approach to punishment, under the guise of a more humane treatment, made way to denial and disregard of pains that imprisonment brings.

Nevertheless, the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) showed an increased interest in conversations around bereavement after Vaswani (2008) identified a high prevalence of multiple and traumatic deaths in a sample of persistent offenders in Glasgow. Vaswani indicated a potential link between persistent offending and grief experiences, which was confirmed in her subsequent (2014) study on young offenders in prison. This coincided with a wider push from practitioners, researchers, and the public to give more attention to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), trauma-informed practice, person-centred care, and overall mental well-being of justice-involved individuals, leading to the implementation of new bereavement programs and strategies to support (young) bereft offenders (see Bereavement Care Short Life Working Group, 2015; Vaswani et al., 2016). In addition, recent legal changes in Scotland, the introduction of the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009, led to an upsurge in convictions and incarceration of (historic) sex offenders in Scottish prisons, contributing to a growth in aging prison populations (Her Majesty Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland, 2017). Prior research has argued that older populations are more likely to have faced death in their lifetime and may experience or display an increased anxiety around their own mortality (Aday and Wahidin, 2016; Courtney and Maschi, 2012; Maschi, et al., 2015; Halsey, 2018). If bereavement indeed affects offending, prisoners’ unresolved personal issues might become wider social problems (Sparks and Bottoms, 1995). Thus, although marginalized and often forgotten about, prisoners’ voices should be acknowledged, especially on matters directly affecting them (Armstrong et al., 2020; Walker et al., 2018), which underscores the need to further research this topic.

1.3. Rationale and Significance of this Study

This study responds to a growing demand for research examining prisoners’ experiences of bereavement, as indicated by prior research (e.g., Hunt and Read, 2017; Testa and Jackson, 2019; Vaswani, 2014; Vaswani et al., 2016; Wilson et al., 2020). Bereavement is a common feature in prisoners’ lives (Vaswani 2014; Finlay and Jones 2000), underpinned by high levels of disadvantage and deprivation, potentially associated to risk-taking, (re-

)offending (Vaswani, 2014; Webster et al. 2006), and (re-)incarceration. The cumulative impact of those experiences could lead to unresolved and/or disenfranchised grief, which cannot be openly acknowledged, socially supported, or publicly mourned (Doka, 1999). Imprisonment could further compound grieving by detaching the individuals from their natural support systems and bereavement rituals (Olsen and McEwen, 2004). Thus, effectively supporting bereft prisoners may positively impact individuals, their families, and communities (Hendry, 2009). This has an added significance in the UK, given the aging population in Scottish prisons (e.g., Her Majesty Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland, 2017), as well as the sharp increase of deaths in custody in the previous 12 months in England and Wales (Ministry of Justice, 2021). Despite a burgeoning research interest in bereavement and loss among prisoners, little is known about prisoners' experiences, the effects of the institutional setting, and the efforts and impacts of institutional responses (Hendry, 2009; Wilson, 2011) on death.

This study aims to provide a deeper, more holistic examination of bereavement in carceral contexts, advancing prior knowledge on prisons as painful and highly emotional places (e.g., Aday and Wahidin, 2016; Choudhry et al., 2019; Cope, 2003; Crewe, 2015; Greer, 2002; Jewkes, 2005; Salina et al., 2011; Wooff, 2020; Wilson, 2011). By applying a phenomenological framework, this study seeks to enrich the epistemological and ontological understanding of bereavement, and examine its manifestations, effects, and overall experiences among imprisoned individuals. As such, it seeks to provide new insights into ways in which grief can be confined internally, within one's body, as well as externally, enclosed (with)in a prison space (see Lane, 2015). Finally, it seeks to develop policy implications to improve bereavement experiences of justice-involved individuals and contribute to creating an evidence-based practice.

1.4. Research Aims and Objectives

The aim of this study is to explore prisoners' experiences of bereavement in carceral contexts. Namely, examining bereavement as a personal and isolated experience might fail to acknowledge structural barriers to its full expression. Specifically, individual's social position might affect the extent of their agency to accept, reject, or negotiate their existing identity with their identity of the bereft (e.g., Matthews and Marwit, 2004; Paul and Vaswani, 2020; Stroebe and Schut, 2015; Walsh and McGoldrick, 2013). Hence, the unique positionality of prisoners within the wider social sphere might reveal those aspects of bereavement that stay "true" regardless of the social context. Revealing the generalizable characteristics of this phenomenon would bring new knowledge to the field through contextualizing individual experiences of bereavement within the existing social, cultural, temporal, and relational understanding of it. To this end, this study examines the following research questions:

1. What are prisoners' experiences of bereavement in carceral contexts?
    1.1. What is the effect of bereavement for this population?
2. What are the potential layers of bereavement?
    2.1. What is generalizable about bereavement experiences and what is individual and/or context-specific?
3. How do prisoners cope with bereavement prior to and/or during imprisonment?
    3.1. What is the role of the prison in prisoners' experiences of bereavement?

This was accomplished by conducting 33 semi-structured interviews with male and female prisoners in two Scottish prisons. The data was analyzed using Giorgi's (2000) Descriptive Phenomenology, addressing the identified gaps in research, and further developing a general understanding of the intersectionality of emotional expression, socio-cultural norms, cognition and corporeity, as well as relationality between bereavement and imprisonment. This was done through eight chapters, as summarized below.

1.5. Chapter Overview

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter identifies the gaps in current knowledge and provides the rationale for conducting this PhD study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The literature review section consists of two parts. Given the interdisciplinary approach to researching this topic, it first examines grief and prison research separately, recognizing the areas of overlap. Then, it scrutinizes the existing knowledge from a unified perspective. Hence, Chapter 2 begins by critically discussing current literature on bereavement, providing a discussion on physiological, physical, psychological, and emotional manifestations of grief. This is followed by an overview of a theoretical background on the development of thought around death and dying. Next, the chapter elucidates the impact of individual traits on mourning and expression of emotions, engaging in a critique of scholarship on gendered grieving styles. Finally, it examines the societal, cultural, and relational aspects of bereavement, which can further shape the grieving process. The second section of Chapter 2 focuses on prison sociology. It first discusses the conceptualization of prisons and some of the characteristics of the individuals they house. Next, it examines the ambivalence and instability of prison life, followed by the analysis of strategies employed to adapt to prison culture. Lastly, Chapter 2 examines the role of prison officers, before concluding with a unified discussion on the expression of emotions, grief, and bereavement while imprisoned.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter introduces the methodology used in this study. It presents the research aim and research questions, followed by a critical engagement with phenomenology. Next, it explains the use of Giorgi's (2000) adaptation of the Husserlian paradigm to reveal the essence of bereavement, while acknowledging each individual experience. It then delves into the study design and methods employed, describes the research sample, as well as the research sites. Finally, it discusses the recruitment and data collection strategies, before engaging with ethical issues when researching vulnerable populations and sensitive topics.

Chapter 4: Findings

The findings of this study are presented in four sections: (1) The Meaning of Death, (2) The Relational, the Social, the Corporeal, and the Visual in Bereavement, (3) Coping with Bereavement, and (4) The Impact of the Institution on Bereavement, and each discusses three to four subsections, for additional clarity.

Chapters 5-8: Discussion, Implications, Limitations, and Conclusion

The first of these four chapters discusses the study findings, contextualizing them within the wider knowledge and daily (prison) operations. Chapter six provides policy, practice, and research implications, followed by the examination of the limitations of this study, before concluding this dissertation in Chapter 8.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

As this section will demonstrate, research on bereavement has stipulated the importance of social context in mourning and death (Thompson et al., 2016), yet prisons' strict socio-cultural norms may (not) be permeable to grieving. As per Díaz de Rada (2011), culture can limit individual's agency, and several authors indicated that it can also shape prisoners' experiences and emotional expression through prison(ization) (Haney, 2002; Olson and McEwen, 2004). Prisoners' lived experiences of bereavement may therefore be affected by, as well as affecting, their subjective perspectives and situated positions of self. For example, prisoners might feel like they do not have the right to be bereft or have the agency to grieve in a way they need to. Bereft prisoners also lack welcoming social contexts to share their stories of loss (Bonanno and Kaltman, 1999; Carverhill, 2002), which might have implications on their mental health and well-being within the prison context, as well as for potential re-offending and resettlement. Thus, to better understand bereavement in prisons, this chapter critically engages with the existing knowledge from bereavement and prison research.

To this end, this chapter consists of two main sections. The first part provides a critical analysis of the published body of UK and international research on death, bereavement, grief, and mourning. It explains the slight differences between the terminology, even though they are often used interchangeably. Next, this chapter follows the development of critical thought on death and dying, as well as the identification of grief pathologies in postmodernity. It then reflects on the most researched bereft populations, which leads to the examination of disenfranchised grief. Finally, it discusses the role of culture and society in bereavement, before examining the research on carceral contexts.

The second section focuses on prison sociology. It discusses the punitive paradigm of imprisonment, which can be manifested explicitly and implicitly through its social and cultural norms. It then examines the characteristics and demographics of prisoners, the volatility of prison life, and strategies employed to make that "other" space more familiar. This is followed by bringing in the previous discussion on bereavement to examine the conceptualization of emotions, loss, and grief in prisons. Given the aim of this study, the exploration of prisoners' experiences of bereavement in carceral contexts, joining these two sections together will elucidate the gaps in the existing knowledge and indicate areas where bereavement and imprisonment might overlap, positioning this study within wider research.

2.1.0. The Methodology of Conducting the Literature Review

This literature review used a narrative approach to searching the literature, to supplement the qualitative, exploratory nature of this study. Cronin et al. (2008) argue that a narrative approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the background of the topics examined, highlighting gaps in research. This supports the simultaneous development of knowledge, refinement of research questions, and decisions on theoretical frameworks that a more systematic approach does not allow (Cronin et al., 2008) and, according to Creswell (2014), it creates a foundation of knowledge to build upon. Given the limited research in this area, and the researcher's initial unfamiliarity with the topic of bereavement, such an approach was deemed essential to ensure a strong, interdisciplinary base for this study.

The researcher was first provided with a preliminary reading list by her supervisors. Creswell (2014) argued that exploring some key texts in the field are a good way to initiate researcher's engagement with the topic. The literature review was then developed, building from the reference lists of those primary articles and conducting additional searches of online databases using a variety of search engines (e.g., SUPrimo, Scopus, JSTOR, EBSCO, ProQuest, HeinOnline, Google Scholar). However, the examination of these primary topics (death, bereavement, grief, mourning, coping strategies, prison, prison (sub)culture, prisoners and death) did not yield many results focusing specifically on bereavement and imprisonment. Thus, the researcher expanded her search terms to include a philosophical, complex view on imprisonment itself as death. For example, looking at social death through physical, communal, and emotional exclusion, disenfranchised grief, imprisonment as a symbolic loss, as well as the conceptual variety of the meaning of death itself. This was done by examining research that uses different theoretical and analytical perspectives, borrowing ideas from academic sub-disciplines, such as thanatology (death) studies, trauma-oriented research, and sensorial criminology. Using Boolean operators, the researcher included search terms that might yield results overlapping different bodies of research. For example, bereavement in prison, prisoners and grief, prisoners and death, loss, anticipatory grief, grief rituals, grief therapy, mourning in prison, prison and gender, gender and emotions, gender and mourning, masculinity, identity, coping strategies, mechanisms of punishment, punitiveness, times and space in prisons, and time and space in bereavement. This enriched the initial results, but it was still evident that an intersection of bereavement and imprisonment is under-researched.

Hence, this literature review encompasses empirical studies, conceptual and theoretical discussions, working group papers/reports, and clinical studies on bereavement and on imprisonment. These different types of literature were added to supplement the scarcity in academic scholarship. For the same reason, the literature search was not filtered by publication years or the location of study. However, apart from the seminal (theoretical) studies, a greater emphasis was put on more recent work.

2.2. Contemporary Understanding of Bereavement and Grief

Death is a universal human occurrence (Paul, 2019) that has raised philosophical and academic interest for centuries (Neimeyer et al., 2002). Although the time, the cause, and mode of death will differ for everyone, it will eventually happen to all individuals. Due to the aging population, Walter (2007) has argued that death and its consequences will soon become a global concern, especially deaths from long-term illness or frailty. The sheer prevalence of bereavement will affect not just individuals, families, and communities, but health and social policies too. For example, Seah and Wilson (2011) discussed the relationship between a grieving individual and their wider social context highlighting that grief is both a highly personal issue, as well as a public health problem. This adds a layer of reciprocity between the individual and the social around death, through prescribed norms and behavioral expectations when bereft, as well as through access to services, changing of family/social roles, and the provision of support. Death is also a shared and multigenerational occurrence, in that it simultaneously affects family members and friends of the dead, regardless of their own age (Walsh and McGoldrick, 2013). Despite its omnipresence, Christensen et al. (2017) and Paul (2019) argued that death is a partial taboo in Western cultures; something that is concurrently present and absent. For example, Christensen et al. (2017) introduced death as an oxymoron. They acknowledged society’s decreased first-hand experiences with death, due to improved healthcare and increased lifespan, yet an almost daily contact with it through media and/or fiction. Likewise, Paul (2019) researched bereavement in children and found that death was around them (in life, in the news, in video games), but rarely discussed and openly socially acknowledged. Such a disembodiment and detachment from death has led to its marginalization, despite it being a basic part of humanity (Christensen et al., 2017).

In a similar vein, Walter (2007) examined post-modern interpretations of traditional mourning, whereby media invokes national or worldwide solidarity in grieving among strangers (e.g., for victims of natural disasters or to commemorate deaths of prominent figures), while keeping individual experiences a silent event. As per Rothaupt and Becker (2007), Western cultures, especially Anglo-Saxon, tend to avoid facing death and bereavement, shying away from it, and Valentine (2013) argues that mourning might be a discreet and often secret identity. In a (post-)modern society, a culture of private grief prevails (Allen, 2007). Death should be dealt with quickly and in a single ceremony, funerals should be hidden from the eyes of the public, the dead are to be left behind, and mourners are to move on (Allen, 2007; Kofod, 2017; Walter, 2007; Woodthorpe, 2017). Unlike in some more cohesive, community-oriented societies, such as Japan, the response to death in British mourners lacks a shared tradition of mourning (Valentine, 2013). This general, middle-class, Westernized perception of death is slowly changing, and greater acknowledgment of different experiences might be relevant to better understand and support disadvantaged populations in their bereavement.

2.2.1. Bereavement, Grief, and Mourning

Bereavement is a state of having suffered a loss, a complex issue manifested through various aspects of grief and mourning (Buglass, 2010; Hall, 2014; Hopmeyer and Werk, 1994; Worden, 1991). It is commonly associated with losses resulting from death, but it can also be related to other losses, such as a divorce, a job loss, or losses due to an accident or violence, perhaps a loss of a limb (Worden, 1991). Apart from being physical, loss can be symbolical. One can be bereft due to a loss of hopes, dreams, and future expectations (Doka, 1999; Freud, 1917; Hopmeyer and Werk, 1994). Some situations can mimic bereavement experiences and create feelings of ambiguous loss too, for example for the population in care, who have, in a way, lost their family (Welch et al., 2018).

While bereavement is a state of having suffered a loss, grief is a lived experience of that loss (Seah and Wilson, 2011), an individual response to the pain and the suffering that death can bring (Hentz, 2002; Young Junior, 2003). It is a natural, subjective reaction to either separation or death of someone (or something) important in one’s life (Buglass, 2010; Jakoby, 2012; Young Junior, 2003). It can be manifested through behaviors, emotions, interpersonal relationship, thoughts, and spirituality (Young Junior, 2003). Grief experiences differ in their intensity and immediacy (Worden, 1991), and are shaped by numerous factors. For example, the nature of the relationship with the deceased, the circumstances of death, the bereft’s personality, health, and prior experiences, as well as the culture, religion, and the extent of a family support (Doka and Martin, 1998; Seah and Wilson, 2011; Thompson et al., 2016; Vaswani, 2014; Walsh and McGoldrick, 2013; Young Junior, 2003). Rothaupt and Becker (2007) argued that grief is a highly individualized experience, yet orchestrated, classified, and expressed through socialization and social positionality. When examining parental grief following the loss of pregnancy, Stinson et al. (1992) found that individual experiences and reactions were shaped by situational factors, social status, and cultural norms. While men in their sample (N=194) mostly denied the loss, which aligns with a social expectation of men to be stoic and unemotional, both genders displayed anger, which is often seen as a male emotion. This could imply that, despite the existence of a social script for working through grief, individual characteristics and mode of death could further shape bereavement experiences.

Finally, mourning is the outward expression of internal grief responses, an agent to resolve grief (Buglass, 2010; Jakoby, 2012). It can indicate the active process of coping with loss (Hentz, 2002), albeit not necessarily resulting in a resolution with it (Doka and Martin, 1998). According to Doka and Martin (1998), mourning is the most undefined term in every-day conversations, as well as in the literature, even though it is intimately related to grief and grief culture (Neimeyer et al., 2002). Valentine (2013) discussed mourning as emotional labour, situated and embodied through sociality (association and relatedness to one's social circle). As the emotional investment in this world creates a mutual dependency (Valentine, 2013), mourning can contribute to the development of identity, agency, and social positionality (one's position in their social world). Neimeyer et al. (2002) argued that engagement with mourning rituals affirms the mourner's bond with the dead, while recognizing the changed status of the relationship between the two. Thus, the bereft is encouraged to accept the loss, work through their emotions (Dosser, 2016; Leach et al., 2008), reach homeostasis, and move beyond the bereft stage (Worden, 1991). Alternatively, it is thought that unprocessed loss can elevate the risk of depression and complicated grief (Bowlby, 1980; Hall, 2014; Latham and Prigerson, 2004), which Matthews and Marwit (2004) defined as a depressive- or anxiety-based disorder triggered by the loss, engendering a different set of psychological and social issues. This will be further examined throughout this study and applied to the carceral contexts, which might impede the individual's opportunities to participate in mourning rituals how, when, and where they might wish to.

2.2.2. Bereavement in Scholarly Research

Bereavement, as a concept, gained scholarly recognition in the early 20th century (Dosser, 2016) with Freud's (1917) work on mourning and melancholia. He explained and understood grief as a psychological phenomenon, happening in the inner sphere of an individual, but caused by an external factor (i.e., the loss). Freud (1917) provided a framework for bereavement amidst the sufferings and losses of World War I, arguing that death was increasingly secluded from the public spectrum and confined to the private, emotional realm. Almost three decades later, Lindemann (1944) proposed new ideas around grief, stemming from his psychiatric observations of 100 bereaved individuals after the Cocoanut Grove fire in

Boston, Massachusetts, in 1942. He suggested classifying grief as normal or pathological, based on its duration and intensity. Lindemann (1944) also argued that people need to work through their loss to emotionally detach, let go of their hopes for future relationships with the dead, and invest that energy into rapport with others; ideas that have re-emerged in more recent research, such as Rothaupt and Becker's (2007) concept of grief work and Stroebe and Schut's (2015) Dual Process Model. Both Freud (1917) and Lindemann (1944) suggested severing the bonds with the dead to move on with one's life, which informed the prominent therapeutic approaches at the time. For example, Kübler-Ross (1969) and Parkes (1975) understood grief through a set of predetermined stages that needed to be sequentially resolved before advancing to the next level. Likewise, Bowlby (1980) identified four stages of grief (shock and numbness; yearning and searching; disorganization and despair; and reorganization and recovery), drawing from the attachment theory. He argued that in situations of a permanent separation, such as through death, any effort to regain proximity to the dead will be futile. Unlike previous theories, Bowlby's stages are more flexible and require active engagement in the process, "doing" grief.

In the late 1990s, however, Bonanno and Kaltman (1999) recognized an empirical and conceptual shift in grief and bereavement research, following the emergence of new ideas on stress and trauma reactions. This challenged the pre-arranged, stage-wise method of coping with death, which, as identified by Stroebe and Schut (2015), emphasized the active component of grappling with grief. Specific phases of grief were still recognized, but they became fluid; the tasks no longer needed to be completed in a particular order. For example, Walsh and McGoldrick (2013) stated that equilibrium can be reinstated not just by finishing certain tasks or stages, but by adapting to the new role, letting go of the old routines, maintaining family cohesion, and avoiding further disruptions, such as moving away. Similarly, Stroebe and Schut (1999) and Klass (2006) argued for non-linear approaches to grief and the continuation of healthy bonds with the deceased throughout the life of the bereft. This new idea highlighted that the bereft can remain emotionally connected to the dead, a concept that Klass et al. (1995) defined as continuing bonds. Thus, although physical absence will have changed the connection between the dead and the bereft, their relationship continues through memories, spiritual connections, and stories that are passed on to future generations (Rothaupt and Becker, 2007; Walsh and McGoldrick, 2013), enabling the mourners to repair their shattered identities (Valentine, 2013). Valentine (2013) advanced the concept of continuing bonds by arguing that death breaches the established boundaries between the self and the others, the inside and the outside of a lifeworld, the material and the immaterial. The bereft can experience an “affective transfer”, in that the affection toward the dead is now manifested in different ways. For example, one can hear their voice or sense their presence (Klass, 2014; see also Bennett and Bennett, 2000) or assign some supernatural occurrences in their lives to the dead, what others might identify as faith (Valentine, 2013). Other research has argued that significant losses might never be fully dealt with (Shields et al., 2017; Walsh and McGoldrick, 2013), as the passionate, emotional, and embodied relationship that used to be, needs to be (re-)negotiated with a disembodied dead (Valentine, 2013). Thus, despite some commonalities in grief related emotions and behaviors, not all losses are experienced the same. As such, a less strict approach to grief experiences can strengthen the individuality and autonomy of the bereft, enabling them to employ strategies beneficial for them and to grieve at their own pace (Doka and Martin, 1998; Stroebe and Schut, 1999).

More recent research still underscores a need to process grief and to feel the pain associated with loss, but recognizes a link between the personal, the social, and the relational in bereavement. Individuals are not islands and bereavement does not happen in isolation (Neimeyer et al., 2002; Stroebe and Schut, 2015; Thompson et al., 2016). Hence, examining a person or an event detached from the wider social, cultural, and contextual characteristics would be inherently flawed. For example, Stroebe and Schut (2015; 2016) acknowledged the external stressors in grief and the relevance of family dynamics, subsequently revising the Overload Theory (i.e., having more to cope with than what one perceives to be manageable), while Shields et al. (2017) discussed the impact of grieving a suicide on family members. Hareli and Parkinson (2008) argue that, since emotions are communicated to other people, it makes them relational to others and dependent on self-reflection. Thus, people might resort to hiding their emotions if the environment is not perceived as conducive to their presentation. As discussed in the second part of this chapter, a carceral environment may be considered hostile to the emotional expression (Aday and Wahidin, 2016; Laws and Crewe, 2016; Walker et al, 2018; Wilson et al., 2020) and could have an impact on processing a highly sensitive event, such as bereavement. When examining bereavement among populations in carceral contexts, death can also trigger memories of other losses, such as the loss of a previous lifestyle (Aday and Wahidin, 2016; Hendry, 2009; Rosenblatt, 1997). This suggests that specific life situations could mimic bereavement reactions through situational losses (e.g., lifestyle, freedom, safety), potentially inferring a cumulative effect of death-related grief and secondary losses. Grieving experiences can also be manifested in situations when death has not yet happened, but seems imminent, such as in terminal illness or old age, or likely, such as in the military, what Lindemann (1944) termed anticipatory grief.

Anticipatory grief is a set of behaviors where a person practices being bereft by working through some of the life-changes that may occur following the loss (Lane, 2015). This can be a response to a diagnosis of a terminal illness, geographical distance from someone whose death is increasingly likely due to old age or the nature of their job (Marnocha, 2012), or when sentenced to prolonged periods in prison (Lane, 2015), among others. For example, Marnocha (2012) interviewed 11 women whose husbands were deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan, and recognized reactions that are commonly associated with bereavement. This ranged from anxiety and disbelief, through disengagement from reality, numbness, and avoidance of thinking about the situation, to being overwhelmed with emotions, panicking about their new roles, and reaching out for help (Marnocha, 2012). Although their husbands were still alive, those women were experiencing anticipatory grief, prompted by the uncertainty of their husband’s return. Lane (2015) discussed anticipatory grief among prisoners as a researcher-practitioner, arguing that this aspect of bereavement can remain unaddressed for prisoner populations, due to its discreet and personalized nature. However, changes in sentence length throughout imprisonment, for example adding additional time, can exacerbate experiences of anticipatory grief (Lane, 2015). Thus, people in prisons do not need to be bereft to start feeling the symptoms of grief, as those feelings can emerge in anticipation of death, regardless of whether they are warranted or not. Given the potential intensity of anticipatory grief experiences, this might necessitate further academic engagement.

2.2.3. Grief as a Postmodern Pathology

It is widely acknowledged that cultural and social contexts regulate the appropriateness and intensity of emotions (e.g., Benita et al., 2019; Markus and Kitayama, 1991), but most individuals usually find healthy strategies to manage situations of elevated stress (Negy et al., 1997; Stroebe and Schut, 2010). While some authors maintain that unresolved grief can result in a variety of pathologies, such as depression, suicidal thoughts, and antisocial behavior (Doka, 1999; Latham and Prigerson, 2004; Leach et al., 2008; Vaswani, 2014; Worden, 1991), others argue that (post-)modernity has led to a medicalization of grief, alienating it from a natural human experience or a social phenomenon (Fuchs, 2017; Kofod, 2017; Walter, 1996; 2007). Kofod’s (2017) chronological overview of human understanding of grief demonstrates a shift in focus from the dead, as it was in early Greece and Medieval times, to the bereft in Romanticism. It was only then that grief came to the fore and created an opportunity for the bereft to express what the dead meant to *them*, displaying *their* creativity, self-worth, and spirit. This enabled the change in Western understanding of death from the fate of the dead to the survival of the bereft (Kofod, 2017), culminating in late modernity with an identification of grief pathologies. As Fuchs (2017) argued, postmodern, capitalist societies are rushing the process of bereavement, ensuring the individual is "cured" quickly, which is in contrast with prior theories of working through grief and processing it over a certain period of time.

The development of diagnostic criteria proscribing the duration and intensity of normal grief and identifying the point at which it exceeds the expected norms (Kofod, 2017) coincided with the rise in specialist, bereavement services. In 2013, complicated grief was included in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fifth edition (DSM-5), under Persistent Complex Bereavement Disorder. Fuchs (2017) argued that the medicalization of individual reactions to death and dying emphasized detachment from the dead, bond-breaking, and moving on as soon as possible. However, Hentz (2002) found, in her study with bereft women in prisons, that similar physiological grieving patterns can (re-)emerge years after the socially acceptable timeframe for grief. Such cyclical upsurges can occur with unexpected intensity, typically around anniversaries, holidays, or be ritual prompted (Hentz, 2002; Walsh and McGoldrick, 2013), indicating that full emotional detachment from the dead might not be possible or necessary, which aligns with previously discussed ideas of continuing bonds. This could imply that awareness of the death experience can sometimes be non-rational and non-cognitive, manifested through the body. For example, Hentz (2002) discussed disrupted sleep patterns, depression-like symptoms, and interruption in the individual's daily routine, when triggered by a significant event related to the dead. This brings into question the necessity and legitimacy of pathologizing prolonged and/or reoccurring grief. Engel (1961) provided a socio-medical understanding of the extent to which grief may be considered a disease (see also Stroebe, 2015; Stroebe et al., 2017), based on its symptoms and treatment, and Paul and Vaswani (2020) argued for more research on bereavement that will go beyond problematizing it, into promoting community care and resilience. Although post-modernity acknowledges the issues that might arise from unprocessed grief, Walter (1996; 2007) and Kofod (2017) discussed the socio-cultural inseparability from any psychological experiences. Namely, engagement in constant (re-)creation of one's identity, which modernism seems to require of the individual, is impeded by growing individualization and detachment from tradition, place, and kin. According to Walter (1996; 2007), the bereft are now more likely to turn to medical professionals for help, rather than to a priest, a person of trust, or another individual of a neutral profession, suggesting a professionalization of bereavement.

Overall, although death is universal in its power to end unresolved businesses, relationships, and dreams (e.g., Hopmeyer and Werk, 1994; Thompson et al., 2016; Young Junior, 2003; Walsh and McGoldrick, 2013; Walter, 2007), every death is felt differently. Research has indicated that grief and bereavement are individualized experiences yet shaped through a dominant cultural and social paradigm of the time (Kofod, 2017; Neimeyer et al., 2002; Paul, 2019; Rothaupt and Becker, 2007; Walter, 2007), and experienced through norms, expectations, and levels of social support (Neimeyer et al., 2002). As such, bereavement can be an isolating experience (Rothaupt and Becker, 2007), albeit one that is invariably intertwined with the wider familial (e.g., Stroebe and Schut, 2015; Walsh and McGoldrick, 2013) and communal contexts (e.g., Rowling, 2008; Thompson et al., 2016). Each loss is manifested through micro-level impacts on bereavement (e.g., prior life experiences), meso- (e.g., gender, social class), and macro-level ones (e.g., social and cultural norms), reflecting a complex interplay of various factors on individual experiences of death. Due to their overlap, it is impossible to completely isolate one from the other, but the next section puts more emphasis on the impact of, what could be perceived as, demographic factors on bereavement.

2.3. The Effect of Individual Traits on Bereavement

The death of a significant individual can be a devastating event (Young Junior, 2003) that can transcend the physical, emotional, and cognitive functioning of the individuals, disrupting their social relationships as well (Paul and Vaswani, 2020; Walsh and McGoldrick, 2013). For example, individuals’ roles in the family might become different, they might have a new position in a society, or they may need to renegotiate their social status based on their changed financial circumstances (Thompson et al., 2016; Walsh and McGoldrick, 2013). The bereft might also need to re-establish their identity and understanding of the world around them (Matthews and Marwit, 2004; Stroebe and Schut, 2015; Walter, 2007), which can be especially difficult for children who have suddenly lost a parent and might feel the need to become the source of support for the other parent (Welsh and McGoldrick, 2013). Although this shift is often perceived as negative, bereavement can be associated with a positive change too. For example, Field and Filanosky (2009) described how a widow dependent on her husband’s income may develop a sense of independence after his death. Hence, prior research calls for a broader understanding of the relevance of situating the bereft within the wider emotional, relational, and social context (Paul and Vaswani, 2020; Stroebe and Schut, 2015), and understanding a family unit as a complex and evolving system (Neimeyer et al., 2006; Stroebe and Schut, 2015; Walsh and McGoldrick, 2013). This indicates a need for bereavement research that avoids pre-classifying it as a negative event, as well as for studies that would inquire about the wider circumstances of an individual’s life to gain a fuller understanding of their potential impact on bereavement.

Grief often consists of psychological, sociological, and psychiatric aspects (Neimeyer et al., 2002) that can be displayed through a plethora of reactions, including physiological (e.g., eating disorders, insomnia, heart palpitations), psychological (e.g., anxiety, anger, relief), physical (e.g., restlessness, fatigue, tightness in the chest), spiritual (e.g., re-evaluating beliefs, finding meaning in the loss), and social/behavioral (e.g., lacklustre, inertia, helplessness, social withdrawal, strengthening of relations, concentration issues, hyperactivity) (Ferszt, 2002; Hall, 2014; Hopmeyer and Werk, 1994; Lindemann, 1944; Neimeyer et al., 2002; Stroebe et al., 2017; Thompson et al., 2016; Worden, 1991). For example, Fuchs (2017) discussed sudden physical weakness, losing the ground under one’s feet, feeling paralyzed and speechless. Decades ago, Saunders (1964) coined the term *total pain* to relay the idea of a physical manifestation of emotional pain, when examining dying and the bereft. This would indicate that bereavement might be an overwhelming experience, difficult to understand, work through, or suppress. Apart from individual differences in feeling and experiencing grief, bereavement might be exacerbated by type of death.

2.3.1. Cause of Death and Bereavement

Evidence suggests that type of death could intensify or prolong grief (Shields et al., 2017; Vaswani, 2014; Walsh and McGoldrick, 2013), as some deaths might be more difficult to mourn, due to the socio-cultural implications they carry. For example, suicide, overdose, traumatic or sudden death, or parental bereavement of a child violate life-course assumptions (Murphy et al., 2003; Romanoff and Terenzio, 1998; Shields et al., 2017; Walsh and McGoldrick, 2013). They can elicit societal accusations, stigma, feelings of guilt among the bereft, anger at the dead for dying, or at oneself for not preventing the death (e.g., Field and Filanosky, 2009; Melhem et al., 2004; Shields et al., 2017; Walsh and McGoldrick, 2013; Young et al., 2012). These deaths can further terminate the possibility of resolving any outstanding issues with the dead (Young Junior, 2003), which is often the case with prisoner populations, given their complex relationships with others (see section 2.5.).

Sudden and traumatic deaths can increase the likelihood of experiencing complicated grief too (Field and Filanosky, 2009; Hall, 2014; Lobb et al., 2010; Neimeyer et al., 2006;

Shields et al., 2017; Umberson et al., 2017). For example, the bereft might fail to return to previous levels of functioning within the expected time frame (Matthews and Marwit, 2004; Shields et al., 2017), which could result in loneliness, preoccupation with the deceased, disbelief, detachment, and anger (Lobb et al., 2010). Complicated grief can also lead to drug-abuse or violence, inability to complete grieving, and a fragmented sense of trust and security (Allen et al., 2010; Finlay and Jones, 2000; Halsey, 2018; Jakoby, 2012; Latham and Prigerson, 2004; Lewin and Farkas, 2012; Lobb et al., 2010; Matthews and Marwit, 2004; Stroebe and Schut, 1999; Vaswani, 2014; Young et al, 2012). Although only about 10-20% of the bereft population experience complicated grief (Hall, 2014; Lobb et al. 2010), this population is more likely to have a history of childhood abuse, separation anxiety, or parental death (Lobb et al., 2010), indicating the potential cumulative effects of personal trauma retriggered by death (see also Walsh and McGoldrick, 2013). Despite the external factors that could affect experiences of death, certain individual characteristics might act as further mediators to expressing and living through bereavement.

2.3.2. Gendered Grieving Styles

According to Doka and Martin (1998), men and women choose different strategies to cope with death, which does not necessarily indicate that either gender or strategy is better or more effective in bereavement. Grieving styles can range from instrumental to intuitive, from problem-solving to emotion-oriented (Seah and Wilson, 2011; Stroebe and Schut, 1999), and be separated into (1) masculine or instrumental (cognitive), or (2) feminine or intuitive (emotional). The characteristic of the former is to avoid openly expressing or sharing one's pain, whereas the latter proposes that bereavement centres exactly around the display of emotions (Doka and Martin, 1998; Seah and Wilson, 2011; Zinner, 2000). Subsequently, it is argued that women are, in general, more likely to show their negative emotions than men (Stroebe et al., 2003). Namely, research suggests that men tend to be action-directed and problem-oriented (Rothaupt and Becker, 2007; Rowling, 2008; Schut et al., 1997; Seah and Wilson, 2011), (re-)solving immediate tasks around loss. They are raised to be stoic, suffer in silence, control and shelve their emotions, and conceal weakness (Hendry, 2009; Stinson et al., 1992; Walter, 1997; Zinner, 2000), which enables them to fulfil other obligations. Even though men might not verbalize their sentiments, they could still think about and feel their grief (Rowling, 2008). As Zinner (2000) identified, bereft men might search for companionship, but through activities and/or work, rather than general socialization and conversation. Such a view would support the upcoming discussion on emotions and class, in that showing certain emotions is often equated with being weak (Shields et al., 2005). For example, Shields et al. (2005) discussed masculinity in relation to emotional expression stating that certain sentiments indicate status, dominance, and power, while other indicate vulnerability and powerlessness. Thus, there is a wider societal belief that men express power*ful* emotions (i.e., anger, pride), whereas women are expected to express power*less* emotions (i.e., sadness or fear), although these are rather fluid in practice.

Regardless, Zinner (2000) argued that social constructions of grief in Western cultures support feminine-assigned qualities, such as quietness, composure, and absentmindedness. A lack of academic engagement with grieving styles that depart from these established norms, especially in the West, inadvertently perpetuates the perception of adequate manifestation of bereavement, potentially disenfranchising the others. However, reluctance or unwillingness to express pain does not always, or necessarily, indicate lesser pain (Rothaupt and Becker, 2007) and cultural norms of expressing gender and masculinity go beyond grief research. For example, Fields et al. (2005) argued that male locker-rooms constantly display toughness, competition, and solidarity of a dominant group, often through objectifying women or overt hostility against homosexuals. When examining prisoner populations, Messerschmidt (1993) identified such demeanour as hegemonic masculinity; a culturally and socially constructed ideal of men at a specific time, with dominance, aggression, and heterosexuality as a norm (Ricciardelli and Spencer, 2014). Hegemonic masculinity is viewed in binary opposition to femininity and/or alternative masculinities, and characterized by physical prowess, lack of vanity, predatory sexuality, and alcohol abuse (DeVisser et al., 2009). Yet, some authors argued that this ability to stifle feelings equipped men with emotional capital they could use for authority purposes (Fields et al., 2005) and achieving social success (DeVisser et al., 2009). For example, they could be rational agents at a workplace or in public, but sensitive, seductive, and vulnerable in private spheres (Fields et al., 2005). This indicates that men might control their social presentation and perform their masculinity differently in different contexts, which coheres with other research suggesting that hegemonic masculinity is practical and performed (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005; Messerschmidt, 1993). Therefore, even when examining individual characteristics that contribute to differences in grieving styles, such as gender, the underlying role of culture and society cannot be ignored.

Likewise, Crawley (2004) suggested that emotions can be viewed as a language. They are a way to convey meaning and their expression is expected to conform to social conventions of appropriateness. Since emotion-related beliefs and behavior are context dependent, they are actively created through relationships with others (Kaplan, 2006; Shields et al., 2005). As such, gender has a distinct relation to emotions within and between social groups, so environments that are not conducive to emotions might exacerbate the need for gender self-presentation, such as the idea that boys do not cry (Shields et al., 2005). Yet, in Western cultures, strictly prescribed gender-roles shape socially acceptable behaviors and emotional expression (Kaplan, 2006; Messerschmidt, 1993; Hendry, 2009; Shields et al., 2005; Stinson et al., 1992; Stroebe and Schut, 1999; Thompson et al., 2016; Zinner, 2000). Doing gender validates emotions in the same way that doing emotions gives authenticity to the gender. For example, there seems to be a link between anger and power, masculinity, dominance, and status (DeVisser et al., 2009; Schieman, 2005; Zinner, 2000), whereby aggression could be viewed as means for, and mechanisms of, social recognition (Shields et al., 2005). DeVisser et al. (2009) examined the perceptions of masculinity among British young adults through group discussions with 27 young men (18-21 year old) residing in London. They found males of higher socioeconomic status to be much more tolerant of metrosexual images of men, while ethnic minorities and un(der)employed White men reacted better to images of muscular men in aggressive stances. When examining anger among prisoners, Suter et al. (2002) found that women tend to display a higher prevalence of anger than men, which could indicate the intersectionality of class, culture, gender, and institutionalization in normalization of emotional expression. However, openly expressing emotions that convey vulnerability can be dangerous in prisons (Laws and Crewe, 2016), since disclosing weaknesses does not align with the position of dominance or hegemonic masculinity (Laws and Crewe, 2016; Shields et al., 2005). The more threatened the individual's autonomy feels, the more likely they are to resort to extreme forms of masculinity (Cope, 2003). This could affect the construction and expression of gender in carceral contexts (Cope, 2003) and subsequently influence prisoners' experiences and manifestations of bereavement, indicating a need to further examine the extent to which feminine grieving styles are, and can be, present in (hyper-)masculine settings.

Overall, dominant gender stereotypes might lead to self-censorship of emotional expression in bereavement (Rowling, 2008; Shields et al., 2005). It could also cloud professionals' judgement of "normal" behavior, in situations where individual coping mechanisms do not fit these norms (Rothaupt and Becker, 2007). Rothaupt and Becker (2007) argued that men might be in a double bind when it comes to bereavement, as they are expected to be strong and stoic but are criticized for not showing that they care. This could indicate that cultural norms impose stronger behavioral expectations than gender alone, despite the two being intrinsically related. Widening the norms of socially acceptable manifestations of bereavement would allow the bereft to find their own place on a grief continuum (suggested by Seah and Wilson, 2011), instead of making their symptoms fit societal and gendered frameworks of grieving. Despite the recent shift toward gender neutrality and fluidity, (stereo-)typical gender roles are still present across all socioeconomic strata, yet more pronounced among the lower working class (Jewkes, 2005).

2.3.3. Class and Emotions

Woodthorpe (2017) argued that class can be a mediator in achieving good death, the one that is clean and peaceful, finalized by an adequate funeral. Class is, to an extent, related to opportunities and capacities to establish selfhood, family, associations with peers, and community (Allen, 2007; Halsey, 2018; Walsh and McGoldrick, 2013; Woodthorpe, 2017). However, most knowledge around death and bereavement stems from middle- and upper-classes, while experiences of a working class are lacking academic attention (Allen, 2007; Woodthorpe, 2017). Poverty and disadvantage might equip families with lesser support in times of need (Allen, 2007; Walsh and McGoldrick, 2013), lesser access to services, and higher levels of daily stress. The earlier mentioned culture of private grief, sequestrations of death from a daily life to hospitals, morgues, and third party organizations, resulted in a less direct contact with death, dying, and bereavement (Allen, 2007). As such, individuals are often unaware of the emotions and reactions that bereavement might incur, leaving room for the emergence of counselling or self-help groups, guiding the person through their experiences. Yet, working-class people do not tend to use these services and often embrace the “getting on with it” approach to grief (Allen, 2007). Allen (2007) also highlighted that most bereavement services focus on the provision of psychological support, whereas economic hardship has been a long-lasting issue for working-class and could be exacerbated by the death of a family member. As was discussed with gender, class-related bereavement strategies might numb one’s *expression* of grief, but not necessarily the *intensity* of their grief. Due to a potential lack of socially appropriate tools to cope with death, lower social classes might resort to hostile reactions to negative life-events (Jakoby, 2012) and/or substance use (Allen, 2007). For example, Allen (2007) interviewed 26 heroin users from deprived areas of Greater Manchester and found that 10 individuals (38%) started using heroin to help them cope with bereavement.

The relationship between deprivation and death can start at a young age. Looking at the intersectionality of class, age, and exposure to death, Paul and Vaswani (2020) found a much higher prevalence of death among children growing up in environments of multiple, complex disadvantages. They examined early childhood bereavement with regards to the child's socioeconomic status using *Growing Up in Scotland* cohort data, comprising 2,815 children from the age of 10 months to 10 years. They found that 51% of children were bereft by the age of eight, with a higher risk of experiencing death of a parent or sibling for those from a lower socio-economic status (SES). Wilson et al. (2020) further argued that individuals from lower income households more often encounter symptoms of complicated grief than middle- and higher-classes. Thus, unequal distribution of social, emotional, and financial resources might affect exposure to death and shape bereavement experiences, inciting discrete expression of negative emotions in difficult situations (Allen, 2007; Jakoby, 2012; Schieman, 2005).

Research has also shown that early experiences of loss and trauma can have lingering psychological and social ramifications, such as low impulse control, aggression, feelings of shame, guilt, and anger (Leach et al., 2008; Shmotkin and Litwin, 2009). Unresolved trauma and suppression of trauma-related emotions can lead to morbidity, depression, and anxiety (Blanchette, 1996; Woodward et al., 2020), drug abuse, violence, self-harm, risky sexual behavior, reduced danger awareness, as well as (re-)offending (Jakoby, 2012; Halsey, 2018; Harner et al., 2011; Hunt and Read, 2018; Leach et al., 2008; Lewin and Farkas, 2012; Rodger, 2004; Taylor, 2002; Vaswani, 2015). As per Halsey (2018), offending could be a device to diminish one's own victimization and sense of vulnerability, and Hendry (2009) argued that aggression can also be used to mask vulnerability. Some studies proposed that women engage in drug use and sex crimes to escape the domestic violence (Abrahamson, 2009), making them spiral into the cycle of violence, drug abuse, and crime. This emphasizes anew the interrelatedness of social and cultural norms with individual emotions and behaviors. Even though Jacoby (2012) found anger and anxiety to be common in bereavement, discussions on aggressive behaviors tend to be ignored and discouraged from grief scholarship (Hendry, 2009; Jakoby, 2012), potentially because of the normalization of middle- and upper-class experiences of bereavement in the mainstream culture.

2.4. The Role of Society and Culture in Bereavement

Culture is a mediator for thinking, feeling, and doing (Crawley, 2004; Kofod, 2017), and the expression of emotions is learned through socialization (Rowling, 2008). For example, boys are taught from a young age that men should not show weakness (Laws and Crewe, 2016; Shields et al., 2005). This could have implications for expressing and experiencing bereavement, as culture shapes the processes of acknowledging the changed reality that death can bring (Fuchs, 2017). However, expressing bereavement cannot be viewed as ethnocentric, as there is no singular way to mourn (Rosenblatt, 1997). What might be considered normative and positive in one culture, could be regarded as negative in another (Markus and Kitayama, 1991), or even in the same one depending on age, gender, class, and wider context (see section 2.3.). Valentine (2013) argued that the diversity and idiosyncratic nature of bereavement in some societies, such as British, can be due to their lack of grounding in traditional religious and cultural structures; a culture of individualism is allowing for self-expression. Hence, bereavement cannot be understood outside of the context it is experienced in (Crawley, 2004). Because society, and its socio-cultural norms, constantly interact with the individual by shaping, framing, and influencing their behavior (Thompson et al., 2016), societal reactions to one's actions can further drive, enable, or constrain those (Greer, 2002).

2.4.1. The Relational Aspect of Bereavement and Disenfranchised Grief

Apart from the role of cultural and social norms, the impact of loss can be mediated by the role the individual had in the family, the attachment of others to the dead, as well as the overall family dynamics (Stroebe and Schut, 2015). For example, if the person was a primary breadwinner, a matriarch, or a caregiver, the impact of death could be stronger, due to the additional losses it brings (Walsh and McGoldrick, 2013). This could be demonstrated through a loss of income, a loss of support and guidance to the family, a loss of a decision-maker, or a loss of a carer. Relational aspect of bereavement can also bring difficulties when grieving a relationship that is perceived as departing from the dominant norms, potentially excluding the bereft and limiting their opportunities to access required services. Cacciatore and Raffo (2011) presented the first-ever study on lesbian maternal bereavement of a child. They found that social (dis)approval of their sexual status shaped their bereavement experiences by challenging and rethinking the concept of parenthood, motherhood, and a normative family. McNutt and Yakushko (2013) examined experiences of partner bereavement among the LGBTQ community, also reflecting on prejudice, stigma, and socially constructed "good" partnership/marriage. Likewise, as per Young Junior (2003), prisoners can face additional internal conflict around loss, if their relationship with the dead was strained and ambivalent, such as through a history of abuse. They might feel the need to grieve the dead, given the social expectations of the expression of bereft behavior, but they might also feel relieved about the death, if the dead used to be their abuser. By prescribing the ideal mourner and establishing a hierarchy of acceptable relationships, society determines the appropriateness of bereavement and regulates the level of support for the bereft. As Lane (2015) indicated, the stigma of being a prisoner could steer institutional responses to bereavement, while the overall invisibility of prison life in public could further marginalize bereft prisoners.

Current bereavement research also prioritizes kin relationships and traditional family structures, but scarce prison research suggests that losing a neighbour, a friend, or a cell-mate can have equally strong effects on the mourner (Aday and Wahidin, 2016; Hendry, 2009; Masterton, 2014; Wilson et al., 2020). Wilson et al. (2020) argued that prisoners can be disenfranchised in their grief not just because of their status in the society, but because of their complex relationships with others. For example, in their interviews with bereft prisoners, they found that many individuals felt closer to their dead best friend than they did to their biological family members (Wilson et al., 2020). This could imply the relevance of the relationship between the dead and the bereft, the appropriateness of which is often dictated by social norms. In instances where loss is not socially recognized and therefore cannot be publicly mourned or socially supported, individuals might experience disenfranchised grief (Doka, 1999).

The concept of disenfranchised grief was first used by Doka (1999), but has since been explored by other academics, due to its relevance for bereavement research (e.g., Ferszt, 2002; Hall, 2014; Lane, 2015; Leach et al., 2008; Masterton, 2014; Olson and McEwen, 2004). It is often related to losses that do not fit social norms. For example, a loss of a partner from an unrecognized and socially contested relationship (e.g., an affair, homosexual relationship, ex-partner) (Doka, 1999; Ferszt, 2002; McNutt and Yakushko, 2013) or a morally debatable loss of a child (i.e., through abortion or adoption) (Cacciatore and Raffo, 2011; Doka, 1999; Hall, 2014; Romanoff and Terenzio, 1998). Walsh and McGoldrick (2013) identified pet bereavement as a type of a disenfranchised loss too. Furthermore, people often mourn a loss that symbolizes a definitive end of something that used to be (e.g., ex-spouse) or of something that can no longer happen (e.g., the chance of meeting one’s biological parent), which might not be perceived as socially valid (Doka, 1999; Hopmeyer and Werk, 1994). This can leave grievers alone and excluded in their physical and emotional pain. Hentz (2002) interviewed ten mothers on their experiences of losing their child at least one year before the interview. Although she did not use the term disenfranchised grief, the mothers in her sample decided to hide their grief from the world, after the initial bereavement. Their grief was no longer “just” about the child, but also about the loss of their identity as mothers to that child (Hentz, 2002), the ambivalence of which, they felt, was not socially recognized. Women were met with forces aiming to minimize and negate the loss, prompting them to suffer in silence (Hentz, 2002). Shields et al. (2017) discussed a similar idea of grieving in isolation for mothers bereft by their child's suicide. Given the stigma around suicide, those mothers felt social awkwardness and internal conflict by wanting to share their experiences, yet never getting the societal permission to do so (Shields et al., 2017).

Certain individual characteristics, such as age, migration status, or the nature of one's job (e.g., military) could enhance experiences of disenfranchised grief. This could be due to the individuals' inability to show emotions or their position within the socio-cultural context that prevents them to do so. For example, young children might lack the tools to understand death and express their bereavement or the structures they are in might not promote such sharing (e.g., Paul, 2019; Paul and Vaswani, 2020; Rowling, 2008). Older people could feel like they are a burden to others, due to a sheer number of bereavement they might be facing because of old age, which could also enhance their anxiety about their own mortality (Doka, 1999; Maschi et al., 2011; Walsh and McGoldrick, 2013). Traditionally, many counsellors viewed men as disenfranchised, given their culturally prescribed emotional inexpressiveness (Stinson et al., 1992) and discouragement to seek support (Doka and Martin, 1998). As discussed, the perceived socially normative expectation of men to be providers, protectors, and problem-solvers for the rest of the family (Doka and Martin, 1998), to be strong and conceal their sadness, might prevent them from reaching out for assistance. Zinner (2000) further argued that rejection of help might display a strength of character in men, yet Stroebe and Schut (2015) found that hiding emotions could harm the bereft individual, as well as those around them (e.g., during a joint bereavement of a child). Such an ambivalence could lead to disenfranchisement and marginalization of the bereft men, depriving them of the same rights that other bereft populations are granted; their loss might not be acknowledged, they might be denied temporary exemption from daily activities, and their fragility and emotionality might be overseen. These discussions elevate the relevance of including social context in bereavement research and of positioning the individual within their wider circumstances.

2.4.2. Other Perspectives on Bereavement and Spirituality

A cultural ethos of social contexts in which death has been experienced or processed could lead to competing bereavement forces within the same individual. Some authors argue that internalizing experiences of grief might be ineffective, leading to depression and PTSD-like symptoms (Doka and Martin, 1998; Zinner, 2000). Likewise, Hentz (2002) discussed the need to honour and acknowledge the emotional, behavioral, and bodily manifestations of loss, as ignoring them or pushing them away can exacerbate the pain. More recent studies further support this view (e.g., Hall, 2014; Lobb et al., 2010; Valentine, 2013), especially following the development of thought around death and focussing on a more holistic understanding of factors that contribute to the processing of bereavement. Similarly, Valentine (2013) argued for examining the role of body and emotions in grief, suggesting that intersubjective and dynamic experiences of embodiment and identity might be repressed by cultural scripts.

Apart from the social and cultural components of bereavement, some research has argued for its political aspect. For example, Lebel (2011) analysed the parental bereavement of Israeli soldiers who died in the late 1940s wars. He introduced the *hegemonic bereavement model* to describe a hierarchy of military bereavement constructed through cultural militarism. According to this model, those dying in war were honoured and celebrated. They were considered to have known how to die (i.e., for their country), so their families became heroes, receiving social esteem and support (Lebel, 2011). On the other hand, those killed in a non-military setting, terrorist victims, or even war casualties, were not invited to join military celebrities. In the post-national era, however, military bereavement has become a social problem with increased criticism from the families of fallen soldiers. Using their elevated status, they collectivised anger, demonstrating against governmental exploitation of their pain for the country's militaristic agenda and affecting social security policies (Lebel, 2011). This further demonstrates the interaction between the individual and their wider social context when it comes to bereavement. In other words, culture and society provide tools and frameworks to mourn and address bereavement, but whether, when, how, and to what extent an individual will use those tools, depends on their individual characteristics, their immediate connections with others, and their position in society.

When searching for the meaning of death by the bereft, Murphy et al. (2003) discussed cognitive, existential, and spiritual perspectives. The cognitive refers to mentally trying to undo the event and intellectually accept it, while the existential focuses on finding one's position in the situation through asking questions such as "why this is happening to me" or "what do I live for" (Murphy et al., 2003). The spiritual aspect, however, is more difficult to define. It is often perceived as primarily related to religious practice (de Souza and Hyde, 2007), but a lack of religious components in some Westerns communities does not necessarily indicate a lack of spirituality. Murphy et al. (2003) discussed spirituality as equal to religion, in which the randomness of death can be explained through God's plan, but Hunt and Read (2018) argued that the line between the two is far from clear. For example, meaning-making, finding a purpose in life, and being linked to people and places can fit into both (Rowling, 2008). Thus, spirituality relates to a range of areas regarding the connection of individuals to self, community, and something beyond that (de Souza and Hyde, 2007), affecting the individual’s overall well-being (Rowling, 2008), morality, and psyche (Hunt and Read, 2018). In addition, spirituality can be understood as resilience emerging from a trauma, identity change(s) through rites of passage, and the development of values and making meaning (De Souza and Hyde, 2007) by connecting with someone or something greater than oneself (Murphy et al., 2003). As per Rowling (2008), spirituality is a force that connects physical, emotional, and social health, thereby enhancing a sense of control over one’s world.

Overall, the existing research has shown a pattern of gender differences in mourning and bereavement (e.g., Doka and Martin, 1998; Schut et al., 1997; Stroebe et al., 2001), both cross-culturally and within the same culture (e.g., Valentine, 2013). At the same time, while women are reported to grieve differently, there is no support for the idea that they do so more successfully and/or more competently than men (e.g., Doka and Martin, 1998; Schut et al., 1997; Seah and Wilson, 2011; Zinner, 2000). Women seem more likely to discuss their problems and emotions, while men bottle them up, mostly due to cultural responses to gendered norms in relation to emotionality (Zinner, 2000). However, gender differences seem to disappear as individuals age and might only be pertinent to a younger sample and at certain stages of grief (Doka and Martin, 1998; Shields et al., 2017). This might indicate human adaptability to death or acquisition of learned behavior to cope with it, despite the potential cumulative effects that trauma and loss can have on the individual, as will be discussed. Since this is an interdisciplinary study examining bereavement and imprisonment, the next section discusses prison life and prisons as social places. It looks at the culture and values in carceral contexts, examining ways of adapting to those norms. Finally, it explores current literature on prisoners and loss, identifying areas that require further research.

2.5. The Sociology of Prison(er)s

Following the literature review on bereavement and the potential effects of individual, relational, cultural, and social characteristics on manifestations and experiences of grief, this section focuses on carceral settings, wherein the dynamics between these factors might be additionally strained due to prison cultures. It starts by discussing the dominant understandings of prisons and their pervasive use of power. It then examines strategies that prisoners use to adapt to prison culture and cope with its everyday (c)overt violence (e.g., Armstrong, 2020; Rylko-Bauer and Farmer, 2017), along with an analysis of the role of prison officers in the mundanity of prison life. Finally, it applies specific bereavement theories onto carceral contexts and presents findings from scarce criminological research on death and bereavement in prisons.

In so doing, it interrelates the cultural, social, and behavioral norms of prisons with those of bereavement, to identify gaps in knowledge and provide justification for this study.

2.5.1. The Conceptualization of Prisons

Research suggests that prisons are coercive institutions (Brown, 1998), often characterized by enclosed, small living spaces, overcrowding, and an absence of sensory stimuli (Crewe, 2007, 2011, 2014; Jewkes, 2005; Laws and Crewe, 2016; Liebling, 1999, 2014; Philippe-Beauchamp, 2019; Wacquant, 2002). Despite regional and cross-country differences in the size of prisoner populations and prison conditions, research paints a similar picture of prison realities (Crewe, 2007; Philippe-Beauchamp, 2019). Their walls are cold and grim (Moran, 2012; Philippe-Beauchamp, 2019), the interior is plain (Switzer, 2015) and often windowless (Wooff, 2020), there is little exposure to natural light (Wacquant, 2002), and lighting and ventilation are controlled by prison officers (Philippe-Beauchamp, 2019; Switzer, 2015). Rhodes (2001) presented prisons as featureless and Switzer (2015) argued that they are stripped of any defining characteristics. At the same time, they are quasi-domestic settings, in that prisoners eat, sleep, and live there, albeit lacking traits and characteristics that would typically define a home (Crawley, 2004; Crawley and Crawley, 2013; Halsey and Deegan, 2017). Due to constant isolation, prisoners often report a loss of self, feelings of invisibility, as well as anonymity (Philippe-Beauchamp, 2019). Simultaneously, they are constantly monitored and Wacquant (2002) argued that prisons tend to offer very little privacy. Even the space and time spent alone in the cell is never fully independent from the reality shared with others, if nothing else, through the mere fact of doing time together (Philippe-Beauchamp, 2019). Hence, as discussed in section 2.6.2., any effort to make one’s cell personal will be counteracted by otherness of this shared reality and dwarfed info insignificance by the wider prison space within which an individual lives (Switzer, 2015). This could pose physical and psychological threats to prisoners, especially to their mental health. Given that bereavement can bring an additional set of challenges to the mourner, as examined in previous sections, experiences of grief in carceral settings can thus be exacerbated.

As social contexts, prison cultures are determined by a specific set of norms and values with a different hierarchy from those operating in the community (Crewe, 2009; Crewe and Laws, 2018; Haney, 2002; Schmid and Jones, 1991; Sykes, 1958; Wacquant, 2002). Classic works of Sykes (1958) and Clemmer (1940) referred to prisoners as small societies with roles and orders reinforced by a relatively homogenous prisoner populations at the time. McCleery (1960) argued that social patterns and power relationships in prisons are isolated from external influences. Prisons manage(d) the “others” and are abstract sites to public imagination (Rhodes, 2001). However, Wacquant (2002) refers to prison as a microcosm, whose social, political, and cultural determinants go beyond prison walls. Particularly in the 1970s, prisons moved away from an authoritarian regime and became permeated by legal, welfare, and gang influences with increasing links to the outside (Rhodes, 2001). This is still partly evidenced in interaction with organizations in the community: families, labour market, health-care institutions (Crewe, 2015; Wacquant, 2002), as well as by the presence of media and technology within prison walls (Crewe, 2015). Some theorists, such as Irwin and Cressey (1962), suggest that parts of the outside are brought into prison through individual’s traits, like social class, prior prison experiences, and family and work-life. Although prisons have their own cultures, they are intertwined with those of a broader society (Baer, 2005; Halsey and Deegan, 2017) and embedded within the wider context of late modernity (Crewe, 2005). After all, prisoners are members of our communities, even though they are temporarily excluded from it (Liebling, 2014). Indeed, as Baer (2005) acknowledged, most prisoners will eventually be released, but the social stigma and legal restrictions of being a prisoner will linger and impede their life chances long after, especially when looking for accommodation, work, or education (Crewe, 2015; Henley, 2018; Mageehon, 2008; Testa and Jackson, 2019). As Henley (2018) highlighted, imprisonment and bereavement are both related to death, either social and/or civil. Prior research also discussed the emotional aftershock of imprisonment (Cochran et al., 2014; Wooff, 2020), which can act as a catalyst to reoffending. As prisons rarely provide opportunities to process and treat the underlying (psychological) issues many individuals have, reintegration might be additionally strained (Young Junior, 2003). Thus, prison experiences could present a wider public health issue (Courtney and Maschi, 2012; Testa and Jackson, 2019), a challenge to prisoners’ well-being, as well as to public safety (Halsey, 2018; Hunt and Read, 2018; Vaswani, 2014; Young Junior, 2003).

Furthermore, prisons have been conceptualized as living organisms (Hacin and Mesko, 2018), constantly reacting to internal and external pressures (Liebling, 1999). They present a paradox of a rigid and tightly controlled structure that can erupt into chaos and violence in a split second, as those creating violence have little to lose (Byrne, 2005; Halsey, 2018; Halsey and Deegan, 2017; Liebling, 1999; Sparks and Bottoms, 1995). As Crewe (2011) pointed out, behind the rehabilitative rhetoric, UK prisons are still brutal, degrading, and squalid. This does not necessarily refer only to interpersonal violence, by the hand of another individual, but to structural and institutional violence suffered through the involuntary confinement by the state, its administrative decisions, and bureaucratic processes (Armstrong, 2020). Such an unpredictable environment creates a tense, enervating, and fearful atmosphere, debilitating to any type of mental health recovery (Halsey, 2018). At the same time, however, prisons are still highly predictable and routinised (Choudhry et al., 2019; Cope, 2003; Greer, 2002; Liebling, 1999). Every individual has a strictly defined role in the system (Apa et al., 2012) and every day is the same; there are no challenges to daily life and diminished perceptions of future (Byrne, 2005; Cope, 2003). Hence, prisons can be seen as places of ambivalence, physically visible and present, yet secluded from the public (Rhodes, 2001). This resonates with Wooff's (2020) observations of liminality when being in police custody, described as being in-between the two identities. Namely, prisoners are guests in this spatial context designed *for* them, but with little to no voice in any decisions that regard them (Wooff, 2020). They inhabit space that is not theirs, albeit occasionally personalized (Baer, 2005; Laws and Crewe, 2016; Marti, 2020; Philippe-Beauchamp, 2019; Wacquant, 2002), follow the rules constructed for them (Mageehon, 2008), for the duration of time regime imposed onto them (Cope, 2003; Herrity, 2019; Philippe-Beauchamp, 2019; Wahidin, 2006). Individuals' temporal agency is removed, there is no individuality (Brown, 1998), just an external regulation of self (Herrity, 2019). Prisoners are physically and metaphorically separated from the outside and time is reconceptualized as a currency to govern and discipline them (Wahidin, 2006).

2.5.2. Governance and Power in Prison

Wacquant (2002) discussed prisons as instruments for oversight of social space. They are increasingly focused on surveillance, management, and control of people, places, and information (Rhodes, 2001). Although they are organizations with their own rules (Crawley, 2004), most prisons are regulated through bureaucracy and the politics of each state (Wacquant, 2002) and its respective government. Drawing from Foucault's concept of governmentality, Armstrong (2020) argued that governance in prisons is framed as salvation, measuring a person's progress through the economy of merits and worthiness. Thus, there is a constant need for prison to manage prisoners and ensure the preservation of the system, disguised in rhetoric of being in the individuals' best interests (Armstrong, 2020). Sparks and Bottoms (1995) questioned the legitimacy of state oversight by inquiring about the government's neutrality, honesty, and quality of decision making. They used the concept of legitimacy to discuss prisons' propensity for disorder, arguing that even a momentary and short-lasting force used in prisons could indicate a greater issue of, and have repercussions for, prison's authority, prisoners' rights, and staff misconduct. For example, Hacin and Mesko (2018) argued that prisoners' perceptions of prison legitimacy often rely on staff actions, because staff can be an embodiment of distributive justice of goods and services, as well as of procedural justice through a perceived fairness of their decisions. Jackson et al. (2010) discussed procedural justice as reflected in the whole process, how one is being treated overall, regardless of the outcome, and Drake (2014) has found that relationships need to be at the core of each prison. While bad relationships between prisoners and staff can impact the quality of prison life, the safety of prisoners and staff, as well as the legitimacy of prisons and their rehabilitative prospects (Drake, 2014), positive relationships can mitigate the effect of a negative outcome for prisoners (see section 2.6.3.).

When examining the development of thought around establishing control in prisons, DiIulio (1987) argued that the only way to maintain power is through external incentives of counter-force and sanctions. Sykes (1958), on the other hand, stated that staff create compliance through a routinized internal order, making prisoners eventually conform to prison norms for their own benefit (Crewe, 2009; Schlosser, 2008). As Crewe (2015) found, lack of staff power and oversight can generate a chaotic environment, creating fertile grounds for bullying, exploitation, and informal prison economies. In research on prison officers' culture, Crewe et al. (2011) found that prisoners want staff to employ power to protect them from themselves and others, describing permissive institutions as places to get in trouble. Hacin and Mesko (2018) classed this as instrumental compliance and normative compliance. While the former was prompted by fear of sanctions (external agents), the latter was due to the positive perceptions of prison staff legitimacy (intrinsic driver). Crewe (2007; 2011; 2015) also noted that the form of the expression of power in UK prisons changed from physical and direct force exercised by the officers to intangible, hidden power of remote bureaucracy, regulating sanctions and benefits. Such power is slow in processing matters and controls the flow of information to and from the institutions (Armstrong et al., 2020; Crewe, 2015; Rhodes, 2001). It is psychological (Crewe, 2015), incentivizing prisoners to behave in a certain way through mind games (Crewe, 2011), without physical coercion (Crewe, 2015). This type of power shifts responsibility and accountability from the institution to the individual, enforcing control through neo-liberal emphasis on self-governance. For example, since the repercussions of a confrontation with others or of overt expression of dissatisfaction can be damaging to the individual in prison (e.g., loss of incentives and earned privileges, extension of time to serve) (Wilson et al., 2020), prisoners often decide to actively retreat from a potentially conflicting situation and isolate themselves in their cells (Laws and Crewe, 2016). This way prisons implicitly maintain order and provide individuals with a sense of partial control over their lives (Laws and Crewe, 2016). However, a lack of overt resistance from prisoners does not necessarily equal compliance (Crewe, 2007) and, as Sparks and Bottoms (1995) argued, power differentials between prisoners and staff inherently impede creation of any real compromise.

As mentioned already, prisons tend to impose a set of conditions on prisoners, ostensibly tailored to the individuals' needs, often through a treatment or reintegration plan. Despite the claims of being person-centred, such strategies rarely include prisoners' input (Armstrong et al., 2020; Crewe, 2015; Kilty, 2006). Armstrong (2020) indicated that they often become a tool to assess prisoners' deservingness of release, rather than a service that the state is due to provide. However, some research has found that long-term prisoners get to the stage in their sentence, where they adapt to prison life and consider it a new reality (Crewe et al., 2016; Marti, 2020). This can enable prisoners to free up their mental space and cease living in liminality between the inside and the outside world (Marti, 2020). As Halsey (2018) suggested, prisons have a toxic social ecology and to cope with such systems, prisoners often create their own meta-society within the prison culture.

2.6. Adaptation to Prison Culture

Prisons are emotional and distressing places (Laws and Crewe, 2016), melting pots of anger, disgust, and confusion, as well as places of pain, hopelessness, and frustration (Crawley, 2004; Crewe, 2011). Crawley (2004) argued that emotional regulation, among others, is pivotal in achieving organizational order or, as Laws and Crewe (2016) posit, successful adaptation to prisons. Research agrees that being disembodied from one's environment and support systems, inevitably makes prisons places of secondary losses, those that are unrelated to death (Haney, 2002; Leach et al., 2008; Olson and McEwen, 2004; Vaswani, 2015; Vaswani et al., 2016; Wilson et al., 2020). For example, upon entering prisons, prisoners are faced with loss of freedom, loss or restriction of family contacts, loss of autonomy, loss of identity, and overall human struggle (Brown, 1998; Hendry, 2008; Johnson and Toch, 2000; Laws and Crewe, 2016; Liebling, 1999; Philippe-Beauchamp, 2019; Sykes, 1958; Walker et al., 2018). On the other hand, for some individuals, imprisonment can bring about a positive change in life. It can symbolize a removal of a perpetrator (or a victim) of domestic violence from a home, it can be comprehended as a wake-up call, and as an opportunity to receive substance abuse treatment, in lieu of accessing services in the community (Crewe, 2005; Crewe and Ievins, 2020; Halsey, 2018; Wacquant, 2002). Indeed, Tweed et al. (2021) found that 78% of Scottish prisoners tested positive for illicit substances at intake and Crewe and Ievins (2020) identified prisons as places of reinvention, a turning point in the individuals', hitherto, destructive pathway. Yet, apart from these potentially ameliorating effects of imprisonment, research suggests that many prisoners are still unable to have control over their live and fear about showing their vulnerability to others (Harner et al., 2011; Hendry, 2009; Wahidin, 2006). They are left in a space where they need to negotiate a multiplicity of realities, many of which tend to operate through competing forces, and create ways to mitigate the adverse impact of a prison context through prisonization.

2.6.1. Prisonization

The idea of adaptation to prison culture and assimilation to the inmate code of behavior is not new in theory or research. Over half a century ago, McCleery (1960) examined communication patterns and structures of power in prisons on a small prison in Hawaii. He found that prisoners form their own society to achieve independence and partial autonomy from the official authority (McCleery, 1960). Thomas (1977) classified prisonisation as the extent of prisoners' responsiveness to a code of beliefs and behaviors associated with prisoner subcultures. More recent research has defined it as a social process of acclimatisation, adaptation, and internalization of prison norms into one's thinking and acting patterns, as a response to extraordinary institutional demands (Haney, 2002; Schlosser, 2008; Schmid and Jones, 1991). Some have argued that adjustment to prison culture is neither a single nor a fixed concept. It can vary by gender, criminal career, or the course of a sentence (Crewe, 2009; Collica, 2013). For example, juvenile offenders or those familiar with the system can adapt quicker, which puts them at a greater risk for institutionalization, as they are less likely to have had the opportunity to form their own ideas and identities outside of prison (Haney, 2002). However, the (higher) level of adaptation can directly affect prisoners' behavior, threatening the safety of staff and other prisoners, and creating problems in reintegration (Collica, 2013).

Prisonization indicates adherence to prison hierarchy. The human need for power and toughmindedness is likely to enhance social dominance in oppressive systems, where status is valued as a commodity and individuals might attempt to maximize their prospects (Graham-Kevan, 2011; Schieman, 2005; Zinner, 2000). Namely, when resources are scarce and rewards unequally distributed, competition tends to be high and dominated by violence, power, and status (Daly et al., 2001; Graham-Kevan, 2011). If there is a perceived potential for personal mobility within a group, individuals will act upon the opportunity (Haslam and Reicher, 2012). This can sometimes be done at the expense of others, yet such tactics lose their appeal when everyone has something to lose (Daly et al., 2001). Among carceral populations, the tendency to create prison hierarchy is visible in prison jargon (Crewe, 2009; Irwin and Cressey, 1962;

McCleery, 1960; Sykes, 1958), prisoner roles and status (Crewe, 2009; Ricciardelli and Spencer, 2014; Sykes, 1958), as well as loyalty and/or respect to other prisoners (Crewe, 2009; Greer, 2002), which are inscribed into the inmate code (Graham-Kevan, 2011).

This macho culture of prisons aims to establish a context that condemns emotional expression (Aday and Wahidin, 2016; Choudhry et al., 2019; Cope, 2003; Greer, 2002; Haney, 2002; Hendry, 2009; Jewkes, 2005; Schetky, 1998; Wilson, 2011; Wilson et al., 2020). It is not flexible and does not respond to the changing perceptions of manhood (DeVisser et al., 2009; Ricciardelli and Spencer, 2014), but rewards stoicism, strength, and prowess (Jewkes, 2005; Wilson et al., 2020). For example, Graham-Kevan (2011) found significantly higher expressions of male dominance amongst prisoners than in other samples characterized by power, masculinity, and status, such as the military. They suggested that such results might be either because a higher social dominance could steer people into criminal lifestyle or because prison enforces social dominance through its emphasis on chain of command and reputation. Given the absence of other avenues to achieve status in prison, the requirement for toughness can be overamplified and revealing weakness can be over-punished (Laws and Crewe, 2016). Choudhry et al. (2019) argued that hegemonic masculinity in prison can function as a barrier to emotionality, and Hunt and Read (2018) considered display of certain emotions a vulnerability, whereby openly expressive prisoners can become an easy prey. At the same time, however, prisons are described as emasculating, controlling prisoners' freedom, autonomy, and independence (Cope, 2003; Herrity, 2019; Ricciardelli and Spencer, 2014). Hence, prisonization and prisoner subculture could contribute to the artificial context of competition and power, bringing further ambivalence to individual needs and social norms, especially regarding emotional expression.

2.6.2. Strategies to Cope with Imprisonment

Carceral geography has argued that prisons' punitive power is protruding through their cold and utilitarian architecture (Moran, 2012), despite the resistance of some prisoners and altruism of some staff (Carlen, 1994). Thus, prisoners can devise mechanisms to make the time pass faster. For example, they react to the pervasiveness of bare space and make it aesthetically appealing (Switzer, 2015). Baer (2005) discussed that prisoners rearrange objects, display items from commissary, or magazine cut-outs to make it feel more homely. However, research on the effectiveness of these methods is conflicting. Some argued that decorating even the smallest part of one's space can provide a means of escapism from prison reality, creating an area that is, mentally, their own place (Laws and Crewe, 2016). From a phenomenological perspective on space, using decorations enables prisoners to give shape and meaning to the unfamiliarity that they must inhabit, attaching to it their own values, reinforcing their perception of self, and accomplishing a sense of purpose (Switzer, 2015). On the other hand, Switzer (2015) also discussed prisoners' avoidance to make this "other" space their own and Laws and Crewe (2016) found that having evocative triggers to personal life, such as a display of pictures of family members, can be too difficult and depressing at times.

Negy et al. (1997) conducted surveys with 153 female prisoners in one federal prison in Texas on six indicators that could affect their coping mechanisms while imprisoned (demographics, institutional infractions, anxiety levels, coping mechanisms, self-esteem scale, and depression). They found that some strategies might transcend the boundaries of a topic and place, assisting in adaptation to general prison life. For example, prisoners who were proactive, accepted unpleasant events, and found a positive outlook in life demonstrated lower levels of depression and anxiety, as well as greater self-satisfaction, compared to those who became isolated, withdrawn, and in denial (Negy et al., 1997). This might indicate that coping mechanisms learnt before coming to prison might assist, or impede, processing of bereavement in carceral contexts. Likewise, Kilty (2006) discovered that when faced with anger, sadness, and frustration, many prisoners engage in covert use of self-harm, and Tweed et al. (2021) found that 7.3% of Scottish prisoners have a history of self-harm. According to the Freedom of Information document from the SPS (2019), there were 762 incidents of self-harm across SPS estate in 2018. By far the largest section of those were cuts (68%), followed by ligature use (11.3%), and swallowing items (9%), albeit with slight variation among institutions. Kilty (2006) analysed prisons' policy response to suicide and self-injuries in Canada and argued that women who self-harmed were often accused of using it as a manipulation and attention-seeking technique. Other research supports her findings that prisons respond to self-harm through a risk management framework (Armstrong, 2020; Kilty, 2006; Philippe-Beauchamp, 2019). They tighten the oversight, remove prisoners' agency, and (inadvertently) encourage further self-harm, often through use of segregation (Armstrong, 2020; Kilty, 2006); what Armstrong (2020) refers to as structural violence. Yet, some authors argue that self-mutilating practices can be understood as resistance and a way to re-establish control over self (Liebling, 1999; Philippe-Beauchamp, 2019). By inflicting pain onto oneself, the individuals validate their existential interaction between their body and the world (Kilty, 2006; Philippe-Beauchamp, 2019), they feel alive. Thus, as Kilty (2006) argued, penal responses to self-harm should be a careful balance between oppression and acknowledgment of a person's behavior.

Prior research has indicated that experiences of emotional and physical trauma can also be dealt with by engaging in substance misuse. These strategies can be employed to numb the pain, blur feelings, and divert negative thoughts, yet can become a habit and push individuals further into the criminal justice system (Allen et al., 2010; Greer, 2002; Harner et al., 2011; Salina et al., 2011). The prevalence of drug abuse in prisons varies by institution (Crewe, 2005), but tends to be high (Centre for Social Justice (CSJ), 2015; Cope, 2003; Crewe, 2005; Gashi et al., 2019; Wacquant, 2002; Walker et al., 2018). Research agrees that it can increase during night-time, when individuals are left alone with their thoughts, worries, and fears (Baer, 2005; Cope, 2003; Gashi et al., 2019; Herrity, 2020). Drug abuse in prisons can provide an escape from structural inequality and physical space (Cope, 2003), assist with managing time (Gashi et al., 2019) or numbing the pain (Crewe and Laws, 2018; Greer, 2002; Harner et al., 2011; Salina et al., 2011). It dulls the sensorial overwhelmedness of a prison environment and enables a temporary liberation from noise and over-crowdedness. Drugs can also be employed to cope with grief symptoms (Finlay and Jones, 2000), implying a potential relationship between bereavement, imprisonment, and substance abuse. As per CSJ (2015), prison management sometimes condones such behavior, as it keeps prisoners docile and compliant. Hence, the presence of drugs in prison, or lack thereof, can be reflected in prison ethos (Crewe, 2005), which can be more conducive to certain behaviors at a certain point in time.

Despite, or due to, a cultural ethos of prisons, research argues that expressing grief in carceral contexts could turn prisoners into potential targets (Halsey, 2018; Harner et al., 2011; Rodger, 2004; Taylor, 2002) and engaging in violent or angry outbursts toward other prisoners and/or staff could lead to a loss of privileges and disciplinary action (Ferszt, 2002; Potter, 1999; Rodger, 2004; Wilson et al., 2020). Hence, emphasis on self-control in prisons can result in isolation and self-withdrawal of individuals (Young Junior, 2003). Namely, grieving individuals might be perceived as dangerous, frantic, suicidal, and mentally unstable (Collica, 2013; Ferszt et al., 2009; Greer, 2002; Harner et al., 2011; Liebling, 1995; Olson and McEwen, 2004; Potter, 1999; Schetky, 1998), posing a risk to institutional security (Kilty, 2006). This elevates the threat of being put under suicide watch or in administrative segregation (Harner et al., 2011; Kilty, 2006; Philippe-Beauchamp, 2019), as well as of receiving a longer parole (Young Junior, 2003). For example, angry confrontations or damage to property might be seen as a lack of readiness to be released into the community (Armstrong, 2020; Greer, 2002; Young Junior, 2003), as an indication that a rehabilitative process is not complete. Yet, some authors have argued that prisoners, especially young offenders, do not have the skills to express and verbalize their emotions (Finlay and Jones, 2000; Vaswani, 2014), so they might resort to physical manifestation of their internal frustrations. Regardless of the reason for such behavior, prisoners are implicitly and explicitly discouraged from showing emotions, which can create additional difficulties to processing grief while in the institution. Even though the strategies discussed might temporarily assist with managing emotional, physical, and psychological pain, they might have implications for throughcare and reintegration, and, more immediately, for institutional management.

2.6.3. The Role of Prison Officers

Prison officers enable the daily operation of the facility and are an invaluable and intrinsic part of the prison culture. As such, they have a unique impact on prisoners' lives (Hacin and Mesko, 2018; Halsey and Deegan, 2017; Liebling et al., 2011). The historical perception of prison officers was as an obstacle to anything good in prison (e.g., DiIulio, 1987, Sykes, 1958). Nowadays, they are expected to combine a social work approach with safety management in an environment overrepresented by the mentally ill, old, or otherwise vulnerable individuals (Halsey and Deegan, 2017), whom staff need to monitor and manage to reduce their risk of harm to self and others (Wooff, 2020). Depending on prison conditions, prison officers can feel overwhelmed by the number of prisoners, under-supported by administration, and challenged by their colleagues (Crawley, 2004; Crewe et al., 2011; Halsey and Deegan, 2017; Liebling et al., 2011). Evidence suggests that many aspects of their job are learned as practical experiences, through strong pressure for enculturation and internalization of prison norms and values, often presented as tips from senior staff (Crawley, 2004; Crawley and Crawley, 2013). Thus, some officers lack knowledge in meeting prisoners' needs, as well as confidence in exercising authority (Crawley, 2004; Crewe et al., 2011). According to Crewe et al. (2011) and Halsey and Deegan (2017), prisoners often search for officers' guidance in important life-decisions but feel that (young) staff are unable to assist them. Lack of support from prison staff, especially in challenging times, can strain prisoners' ability to process negative experiences (Young Junior, 2003). In her reflection on being a bereavement counsellor in prisons, Potter (1999) argued that prison officers require counselling skills and time to understand prisoners as people, and Drake (2014) further emphasized that prisoners are not just numbers in need of management and control.

Yet, prisons are environments of low trust, both among prisoners (Haney, 2002; Jewkes, 2005; Liebling, 2014) and between prisoners and prison officers (Crewe et al., 2017; Halsey and Deegan, 2017). As prison officers are in daily contact with prisoners (Hacin and Mesko, 2018), they can positively impact their bereavement experiences by providing support and reassurance, or aggravate their situation by being cold, insensitive, and without empathy. Harner et al. (2011) noted, from their phenomenological study on 15 incarcerated and bereft women in one US prison, that a few opportunities to show kindness and compassion in prisons will often be omitted. As prison officers are now required to negotiate individual- and organization-level characteristics, this often results in institutional safety and smooth daily operation trumping individual care (Aday and Wahidin, 2016; Byrne, 2005; Clear and Latessa, 1993; Crawley and Crawley, 2013; Drake, 2014; Ferdik and Smith, 2016; Halsey and Deegan, 2017; Hepburn and Knepper, 1993; Jurik, 1985; Liebling et al., 2011; Marquart, 1986). Increased professionalization and the introduction of social work ideals in custodial environments can create internal conflict in prison officers when providing support, maintaining order, and fulfilling institutional responsibilities (Crawley and Crawley, 2013; Halsey and Deegan, 2017; Harner et al., 2011). This internal divide within the environment of low trust, low support, and over-crowdedness leads to high staff turnover and burnout, elevated anxiety, heightened vulnerability, and decreased job satisfaction (Halsey and Deegan, 2017). It can also prevent prisoners from confiding in those officers who are willing to listen (Halsey and Deegan, 2017; Potter, 1999). In addition, a strong organizational culture might discourage officers from befriending prisoners (Drake, 2014), while intimacy and proximity of human relationships can encourage development of depersonalization strategies and detachment rhetoric (Crawley, 2004; Crawley and Crawley, 2013). Hence, the overall lack of support, comfort, and human touch for bereft prisoners (Ferszt, 2002; Harner et al., 2011; Liebling et al., 2011; Potter, 1999) could exacerbate their grief experiences (Young Junior, 2003).

2.7. Bereavement in Prisons

As discussed in the bereavement section of this literature review, bereavement can often be accompanied by a variety of mental, somatic, physical, emotional, and behavioral responses. Yet, according to Potter (1999), many prisoners are unaware of the extent of these experiences, which can be scary. Like people in the community, prisoners too might doubt their sanity, be afraid of heightened sensory experiences (e.g., high sensitivity to smell, hallucinations), experience insomnia, loneliness, heavy feelings in their chest, loss of appetite or interest in everyday activities (e.g., Ferszt, 2002; Taylor, 2002; Vaswani, 2014). On the other hand, as per Philippe-Beauchamp (2019) and Earle (2014), imprisonment can act as a mechanism of sensory deprivation, in that close confinement can hamper emotional regulation (Laws and Crewe, 2016). For example, Philippe-Beauchamp (2019) described prisons as places of restricted living space and confined liberty of movement. Prisoners are surrounded by cold walls with no visual cues or significant structures in sight (Switzer, 2015). There is no sunlight to cast a shadow on the defining features of space (Philippe-Beauchamp, 2019; Switzer, 2015) and no sound of a breeze or rain coming from the outside (Switzer, 2015). Just the clanking metal exacerbated by its own echo (Philippe-Beauchamp, 2019), immersed in a distinct, prison scent (Baer, 2005). Happiness, for example, is experienced as a lack of hate or cold (Earle, 2014). Hence, if a culture is not conducive to sensory awareness, communication with self, and a dialogue with the environment, it might alter the meaning of an experience. In situations of bereavement, prisoners might not be in denial of death, but they could deny themselves the expression of grief (Harner et al., 2011). Crewe (2015) explained a prison sentence as a perceived remoteness from individual's existence and Philippe-Beauchamp (2019) argued that prison space disconnects the existential bindings between the subject and their world. As such, prisons are rich with bodies, but lack a soul. Or, as per Earle (2014), could it be that the psychic impact of imprisonment on one's soul has, thus far, escaped academic scrutiny? Halsey (2018) stated that prisons are designed to prevent the emergence of humanity and Harner et al. (2011) discussed prisons' inherent structure as limiting to the development of human connections.

Prison is an artificial construct (Schmid and Jones, 1991), where time and space are significant features of its cultural scene (Spradley, 2003). As such, they incorporate a different dimension to what they have on the outside (Brown, 1998; Cope, 2003; Moran, 2012; Philippe-Beauchamp, 2019; Wahidin, 2006; Wooff, 2020). For example, the perception of time and space in prison does not only depend on its absolute length, but on its nature and intensity (Brown, 1998). Prisons can elevate the individual's anxiety and create uncertainty about the future (Cope, 2003; Gashi et al., 2019). In this vein, prior research has identified a prolonged sense of present among prisoners and distorted, or disoriented, ideas on past and future (Aday and Wahidin, 2006; Brown, 1998; Earle, 2014; Moran, 2012; Philippe-Beauchamp, 2019). According to Cope (2003), some prisoners perceive their sentence as a vacuum, as something that is not a part of their life, and Philippe-Beauchamp (2019) discussed it as a break or a disruption in timeline. Some research argued that prison sentence is not a time spent, but a time passed (Brown, 1998; Wahidin, 2006), with nothing between the going in and getting out (Earle, 2014). While in society, time is a part of life that is often taken for granted, yet in prison it is a consciously experienced variable (Cope, 2013) and prisoners come up with strategies to deal with time. Brown (1998) argued that isolation contributes to the sense of meaningless repetitiveness that can lead to a perception of a prison sentence as lost, or as Moran (2012) and

Wahidin (2006) would say, wasted and dead time. Its passing brings no immediate internal satisfaction, it is cyclical rather than linear (Wilson et al., 2020), and used as a disciplinary measure (Wahidin, 2006). The freedom of space, on the other hand, is taken away from the individual through a forced proximity of others (Laws and Crewe, 2016), as well as an imposed restriction of movement. Thus, both time and space are shared concepts, yet with different meaning for every individual; they are similar in a transcendental domain, although with a discernible intrapersonal dimension.

Section 2.2. discussed that grieving requires a certain amount of time to process death and time is invoked as a measure to differentiate normal from pathological grief (e.g., Fuchs, 2017; Kofod, 2017; Walter, 2007). Prisons, on the other hand, use time as a unit of punishment, a quantification of treatment, and a length of penitence before one is deemed ready for resocialization (e.g., Armstrong, 2020; Cope, 2003; Philippe-Beauchamp, 2019; Wilson et al., 2020). In prison time stands still and bereavement can be perceived as an issue only when it becomes openly disruptive to the institution (Wilson et al., 2020). While bereavement research suggests the need for active involvement and working through grief, imprisonment can breed inertia and acquiescence, capturing people in its static timelessness (Gashi et al., 2019; Philippe-Beauchamp, 2019). As such, it could interrupt the bereavement process, preventing it to unfold. Some research has discussed the idea of suspended grief during imprisonment (Aday and Wahidin, 2016; Ferszt, 2002; Harner et al., 2011; Walker et al., 2018); grief that is not resolved until the bereft gets closure. On the other hand, prisoners tend to focus on the here and now (Crewe et al., 2017; Gashi et al., 2019), bringing into question their capacity to grieve over someone, whom they might not see or communicate with while imprisoned anyway. Alternatively, Young Junior (2003) argued that prisoners might be forced to adjust to physical absence of the dead even before being released. For example, a break in receiving letters, phone calls, or pictures from and/or of the dead can be considered as a (forced) first step toward acknowledging loss in prisons. In any way, some prisoners also fear that someone might die before their release, demonstrating anticipatory grief (e.g., Aday and Wahidin, 2016; Crewe et al., 2017; Lane, 2015). Thus, there seem to be mixed results on the nature and form that bereavement in prisons might take. Some argue that it is partially possible to grieve while imprisoned (e.g., Wilson, 2011), others that it is not (e.g., Halsey, 2018), some underscore the elevated risk of complicated grief among prisoners (e.g., Leach et al., 2008), yet others suggest that any bereavement that is not disruptive to prison operations tends to be classified as normal by the institution (e.g., Wilson et al., 2020).

In a similar vein, bereavement scholarship underscores the relevance of acknowledging and processing emotions that might arise as a response to death (e.g., Doka, 1999; Hall, 2014; Thompson et al., 2016), but prison research has consistently highlighted the disincentive to display emotions in prisons (Byrne, 2005; Greer, 2002; Haney, 2002; Lane, 2015; Liebling, 1999; 2014; Mahoney and Daniel, 2006; Masterton, 2014; Wacquant, 2002). However, Crewe et al. (2014) identified the difference between putting a front on and masking the emotions, drawing from Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical framework. They argued that the former would include developing an inauthentic version of the emotional self that corresponds to the socio-cultural norms of the context, while the latter would present a defensive strategy, wherein the individual would stifle their pain, weakness, and vulnerability. Hence, the expression of mourning in prison, or lack thereof, might be examined as a performance (Goffman, 1959). A constant exposure to people demands of an individual to amend their actions mirroring other people's views on themselves (Baert, 2004). Laws and Crewe (2016) built on their prior (2016) critique of Goffman's frontstage and backstage domains, arguing that it is too reductive and limits the discussion on emotional expression in prisons. At times, prisoners can be forced to embody the frontstage, wherein private might become public (Crewe et al., 2013; Jewkes, 2005; Laws and Crewe, 2016), which would blur the boundaries between the two. Yet, emotional control and suppression do not symbolize the disappearance of pain and anguish (Harner et al., 2011), in the same fashion as being less expressive in grief does not necessarily indicate lesser grief (Allen, 2007; Stinson et al., 1992). With that in mind, the internal ambivalence around grief could be viewed as an incompatibility between the performance, which reflects normative values of a society, and the true state of the actor (Baert, 2004). Subsequently, incarceration can lead to attempts at internalisation and suppression of emotions related to earlier or current trauma(s) resulting in complicated, and/or unrecognized grief (Leach et al., 2008). Given some evidence that buried emotions can result in violent outbursts toward someone or something unrelated to the actual cause of suffering (Halsey, 2018; Harner et al., 2011), unresolved bereavement might provide another nuance to understanding seemingly unprovoked, behavioral outbursts. Thus, examining prisoners' experiences of bereavement could inform and develop policy and practice for working with bereft prisoners.

2.7.1. Conceptualizing Bereavement within Carceral Contexts

Doka's (1999) concept of disenfranchised grief might suggest that bereft prisoners are often deprived of an active role in dying, as well as in participating in socially validated rituals of life to death transition (Aday and Wahidin, 2016; Ferszt, 2002; Harner et al., 2011;

Romanoff, 1998; Valentine, 2013; Wilson et al., 2020). This could lead to disenfranchised grief, potentially conceptualizing prison as a barrier to physical immersion in bereavement processes. In addition, prisoners' social support and relationships with people outside of prisons could be strained, given their physical and symbolical removal from society; their social death (Aday and Wahidin, 2016; Bosworth et al., 2005; Collica, 2013; Ferrera-Pena, 2010; Ferszt, 2002; Olson and McEwen, 2004; Potter, 1999; Vaswani, 2014). Prisoners might be unable to visit significant places (e.g., graves or the room of the deceased), look at or keep certain belonging(s) from the dead (e.g., pictures, jewellery), or engage in some behaviors (e.g., talking to the dead) that, as the Continuing Bonds perspective (Klass, 2006; 2014) illuminates, are relevant for processing grief. Again, this underscores the interplay of cultural norms, individual expectations, and social contexts in which death has been experienced. Subsequently, it indicates that prisoners might need to devise their own strategies to maintain bonds with the dead, despite, or even because of, the structural, social, and spatial challenges they might face in prisons.

Commenting on Stroebe and Schut's (1999) Dual Process Model of Coping with Bereavement, Wilson (2011) raised concerns about the ability of prisoners to oscillate between emotional and practical tasks of grieving. Due to institutional restraints, they cannot freely choose what coping mechanisms they wish to employ while in prison. In addition, they are neither always offered to, nor do continuously want to, participate in available support groups, not to mention the potential inadequacy of such programs (see Hannah-Moffat's 1995 discussion on women-centred prisons). Zinner (2000) argued that some grieving styles demand activities and constant occupation of mind to process grief. Greer (2002) found that just under a half (49%) of her 35 female interviewees from a Midwestern correctional institution chose to watch TV, listen to music, read, or find a hobby to keep their minds busy, and Laws and Crewe (2016) presented similar findings when discussing activities that could enable prisoners to mentally escape from the physical constraints of prisons. Although prisoners have the legal right to purposeful activities, those opportunities can be executed less frequently, or not at all, possibly due to understaffing (Armstrong, 2020; Wacquant, 2002). Prisoners are further limited in space, time, and people who can participate in those activities with them, and research indicates that even the most diversionary techniques offer only temporary satisfaction (Greer, 2002; Laws and Crewe, 2016). However, as per Laws and Crewe (2016), certain strategies can provide prisoners with a sense of agency. For example, if a thought that suddenly emerges in one's head is depressing or stressful, prisoners may attempt to put it in the back of their head, divert it, and (re-)gain control over their mind. Thus, even though bereavement predominantly brings negative emotions and feelings of powerlessness, the tactics employed by people in prisons might provide an opportunity to exert control over one's body and mind.

Drawing from sensory criminology (e.g., Choudhry et al., 2019; Herrity, 2019), human behavior can be understood through its embodiment to things, situations, events, and people (Harner et al., 2011; Hentz, 2002; Valentine, 2013). Body carries one's past and can burden one's present (Hentz, 2002). Yet, this body-world relationship can be troublesome in prisons, where the articulation of oneself and the world is fragile (see Philippe-Beauchamp's (2019) discussion on phenomenological corporeity in prison). Namely, the tactile, the olfactory, the auditory, and the visual of an experience might enhance the richness of the meaning of an experience to the individual, but lack of it can strip an individual's perception of a phenomenon of any significance. Although prisons are highly emotional places (e.g., Aday and Wahidin, 2016; Choudhry et al., 2019; Cope, 2003; Crewe, 2015; Greer, 2002; Jewkes, 2005; Salina et al., 2011; Wooff, 2020; Wilson, 2011), they are not safe to express suffering, be emotional, or lose control (Halsey, 2018; Harner et al., 2011). Displaying weakness or helplessness in prisons might result in verbal, physical, psychological, or sexual abuse, theft, exploitation, or taxing by other prisoners (e.g., Greer, 2002; Laws and Crewe, 2016; Liebling, 1995). Thus, prisons can be perceived as cold and distanced from human needs of kindness, warmness, and support. Given that research consistently indicates higher prevalence of bereavement and higher mortality among justice-involved population (Harner et al., 2011; Hunt and Read, 2018; Testa and Jackson, 2019; Vaswani, 2018; Wilson et al., 2020), there is a need to better understand the interplay of individual experiences, cultural norms, and social responses to death.

2.7.2. Prisoners and Loss

Prior research continuously argues that prisoners are more likely to come from disadvantaged communities, often with histories of drug abuse and homelessness, as well as scarce job and overall life opportunities (Cochran et al., 2014; CSJ, 2015; Crewe, 2005; Crewe and Ievins, 2020; Ferszt et al., 2009; Jewkes, 2005; Halsey, 2018; Makarios et al., 2010; Testa and Jackson, 2019; Webster et al., 2006; Wilson et al., 2020). They display a high prevalence of victimisation, physical and/or sexual abuse, trauma, and death experiences (Courtney and Maschi, 2012; Crewe et al., 2017; Ferszt ete al., 2009; Finlay and Jones, 2000; Halsey, 2018; Hunt and Read, 2018; Johnson and Toch, 2000; Maschi et al., 2011; Olson and McEwen, 2004; Potter, 1999; Sykes, 1958, Taylor, 2002; Testa and Jackson, 2019; Vaswani, 2014; Young Junior, 2003), but often lack the resources or structure to cope with those events (Testa and

Jackson, 2019; Webster et al., 2006). For example, Lewin and Farkas (2012) found the frequency of self-reported deaths of a child among incarcerated women in the US to be ten times higher than the national incidence records report (with slight variations by race). According to Wacquant (2002), prison has been interwoven in the life course of lower social classes for generations, with violence and trauma suffered by many prisoners being partly generational and externalized (Halsey, 2018). Yet, research tends to ignore the subjective interpretations of traumatic and stressful events that occurred to incarcerated adults before they were imprisoned (Aday and Wahidin, 2014; Halsey, 2018; Courtney and Maschi, 2012; Maschi, et al., 2015). Given the cumulative effects of trauma and loss, those incidents might influence the ways of processing each new experience and the level of distress it might develop (Young Junior, 2003). As per Corcoran (2017), bereavement might be seen as victimization, especially when stemming from a violent death (e.g., homicide). Thus, Halsey (2018) and Corcoran (2017) called for recognition of those events, as well as custodial reactions to them.

In a similar vein, some research has found a link between care-experienced individuals, trauma, and criminality. Based on the statistics from Her Majesty Prison and Probation Service (2019), about a quarter of adult prison population are care leavers, despite only 1% of under 18 year olds entering care each year. Scottish prisoner survey, administered biennially by the Scottish Prison Service (2019), mirrored these results by reporting that one quarter of prisoner population had been in care during their upbringing. Research on care leavers highlights the complexity of building and maintaining strong and supportive relationships with adults, especially for those individuals who have experienced childhood abuse and neglect (Welch et al., 2018). Thus, early childhood experiences of institutionalization could lead to difficulties in forming (trusting) relationships in later life (Welch et al., 2018). Given the relevance of the social and relational aspects of bereavement, this could have important implications for working with bereft prisoners, especially juvenile populations. As Halsey (2018) and Vaswani (2014) observe, young justice-involved individuals have often lost a parental figure due to imprisonment or death, which could have created opportunities for other adults to enter that child’s life (e.g., a stepfather). Hence, their pre-prison experiences can be characterized by fragmented and unstable relationships, lack of control over their life, and multiple experiences of trauma and abuse. This might need to be considered when examining the overall culture of prisons, as well as the consequences of facing a life-changing phenomenon, such as bereavement, while imprisoned. Given the high prevalence of mental health issues (e.g., Allen et al., 2010; Liebling, 1999; Rhodes, 2001), accelerated early signs of aging (e.g., Courtney and Maschi, 2012; Her Majesty Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland, 2017), and increased suicide and (self-inflicted) violence in prisons (e.g., Kilty, 2006; Liebling, 1995; 1999; Walker et al., 2018), attention to bereavement might be that much more important.

Likewise, prisons house and employ a heterogeneous group of people with different needs and vulnerabilities. For example, women are generally perceived as more economically vulnerable and reliant on males, yet simultaneously, they tend to be the primary caregivers of children (Abrahamson, 2009; Byrne, 2005; Kruttschnitt, 2010; Young Junior 2003). They also tend to have more social ties and increasingly rely on their social connections (Collica, 2013; Kruttschnitt, 2010), which could imply a discrete impact of imprisonment on the individual, as well as their family unit. Coupled with the knowledge on the relevance of social support in grieving, there might be a gendered effect of experiencing bereavement in carceral settings. There is extensive research to suggest that imprisoned women, even more often than men, have experiences of parental substance abuse, sexual abuse, physical and emotional neglect (Abrahamson, 2009; Bosworth et al., 2005; Crewe et al., 2017; Greer, 2002; Mahoney and Daniel, 2006; Palmer, et al., 2015; Suter et al., 2002; Young Junior, 2003; Wyse, 2013). Crewe et al. (2017) interviewed 310 men and 23 women serving life sentences in England and Wales and found women’s stories to be qualitatively different to those of males, multiple and cumulative, abundant with violence and intimate bereavement. Women were often involved in substance abuse and prostitution (Lewin and Farkas, 2012; Mahoney and Daniel, 2006; Salina et al., 2011), which might have led to poor mental health and coping skills (Abrahamson, 2009; Allen et al., 2010; Byrne, 2005; Halsey, 2018; Palmer et al., 2015; Wyse, 2013). Women’s pathways into crime differ too, as they are predominantly convicted of non-violent drug offences (Young Junior, 2003). Thus, their backgrounds can make them more hyper-vigilant, irritable, or prone to emotional numbness (Mahoney and Daniel, 2006), which could affect their bereavement experiences. Women often face a multiplicity of losses precipitated by imprisonment, such as a separation from their children and a loss of custody, loss of material goods, and of supportive relationships (Young Junior, 2003). For example, Lewin and Farkas (2012) found strong maladaptive responses to child bereavement among their sample of ten currently or formerly imprisoned women. From the open-ended interviews, they found that all participants engaged in alcohol and drug abuse and demonstrated restricted family support. According to Mahoney and Daniels (2006), these traumas can manifest themselves as guilt, depression, self-condemnation, shame, and doubt, which, as Mageehon (2008) argued, could shape women’s prison experiences.

However, feelings of anger, disbelief, powerlessness, and guilt, mostly for not preventing the death or for losing time with the (now) deceased because of imprisonment, tend to be common regardless of the gender (Young Junior, 2003). According to Young Junior (2003), some prisoners believe that their imprisonment caused deterioration in, and death of, the individual. Thus, prisoners can exhibit self-blame for not being there to support other family members during bereavement, as well as hollowness and embarrassment for being unable to follow appropriate rituals and honour the deceased (Aday and Wahidin, 2016; Harner et al., 2011; Klass, 2006; 2014; Potter, 1999; Rodger, 2004; Taylor, 2002; Vaswani, 2014; Young Junior, 2003). The inability to follow the unwritten social guidelines for grieving could lead to complications and disenfranchisement of the grievers.

2.7.2.1. Complicated Grief among Prisoners

Prior research consistently supports the argument that prisoners are at a higher risk of complicated and disenfranchised grief (Harner et al., 2011; Hendry, 2009; Leach et al., 2008; Schetky, 1998; Vaswani, 2015; Wilson et al., 2020). This could be due to prisoners' stifled emotional expression, which is often learnt through (class) socialization and prison culture (Laws and Crewe, 2016; Schmid and Jones, 1991). Yet, some authors trace this engendered toughness back to individuals' childhood. For example, Halsey (2018) attributes it to growing up in an environment of domestic violence and abuse, while Laws and Crewe (2016) suggest that some prisoners were socialized into gendered norms of emotional expression. Greer (2002) examined emotions in female prisons through a symbolic interactionism lens and found that around half of her sample opted for emotional repression or were unable to express affection, either due to prior life experiences or for fear of being perceived as vulnerable and helpless; they had to put a mask on. Prisons are also limited in their provision of safe spaces and support to process accumulated and newly emerging trauma (Halsey, 2018). This is partly due to a shortage of supporting staff in prisons, such as psychologists, and partly due to the lack of privacy and alone-time, overcrowding, and feelings of powerlessness that would impede progress before and after each therapy session (Halsey, 2018; Harner et al., 2011; Hunt and Read, 2018; Laws and Crewe, 2016).

Lack of social support or recognition of loss while imprisoned can further aggravate bereavement experiences of this population. Yet, their emotional pain is likely to be concealed by their disruptive behaviors (Shetky, 1998; Wilson et al., 2020), thereby receiving limited attention from the institution. For example, (unresolved) bereavement is often seen as one of the precipitating factors for elevated risk of suicide (attempts) and (re-)offending (Ferrera-

Pena, 2010; Finlay and Jones, 2000; Liebling, 1995; Rodger, 2004; Testa and Jackson, 2019; Vaswani, 2014; Wilson, 2011). In their study on Australian prisoners, Butler and Allnut (2003) found suicidal thoughts and behaviors to be four times higher among prisoners than among the general population. Some of the risk factors in their study included young age, history of violence, and experiences of multiple losses. Due to prisons' emphasis on control and surveillance, prisoners rarely have a chance to develop strategies to manage stress and emotions (Young Junior, 2003). When exploring the potential detrimental effects of prison life for those dealing with bereavement, Wilson et al. (2020) discussed the concept of institutional thoughtlessness. Institutional thoughtlessness is a cause of unintentional harm produced by prison protocols and emerging through reflection. Namely, asking the question of whether prison management did the right thing, could they have processed the paperwork required for day release sooner, and/or could the prisoners have been given a timely information and a more holistic opportunity to participate in funeral rituals, can elucidate such (un)intentional harms. Armstrong (2020) discussed a similar concept of quiet, institutional violence, where people are systemically deprived of choices without necessarily imposing force on them. Thus, dealing with psychological trauma while being exposed to the continuous pains of imprisonment can be challenging (Crewe, 2009; Halsey, 2018; Sykes, 1958; Young Junior, 2003). Noise, monotony, absence of personal goods, fear for one's safety, and feelings of powerlessness are prisoners' realities (Cope, 2003; Ferszt et al., 2009; Greer, 2002; Laws and Crewe, 2016; Mahoney and Daniel, 2006; Negy et al., 1997), whose debilitating consequences can extend beyond their prison stay (Kruttschnitt, 2010; Young Junior, 2003) and affect reintegration.

2.7.2.2. (Partial) Exclusion from the Rituals

Prisoners are often isolated and alone in their grief (Young Junior, 2003). They can rarely spend time with the deceased and are often prohibited from attending their funeral (Ferszt, 2002; Young Junior, 2003). Wilson et al. (2020) discussed that funeral attendance can only be granted for members of an immediate family, and even then, it depends on the discretion (and expediency) of prison management. Scottish Prison Rules (Escorted Day Absence) Direction (2011) direct that prisoners might be approved an Escorted Day Absence for the purpose of a funeral of a near relative or when visiting a “dangerously ill” near relative, if such an escort would not be inappropriate to the victim and/or against the will of somebody from the community. Near relatives are classified as grandparents, parents, and children of a prisoner, through blood, marriage, or adoption, as well as spouses, civil partners, or anyone with whom a prisoner cohabitated before imprisonment (SPS, 2011). However, section 5 specifically states that a prisoner may be allowed to participate at any service or proceeding that is a part of the funeral, but no other family gatherings connected to the funeral. This was discussed in Hendry’s (2009) narrative review of research on bereavement in prisons. He argued that while some prisons offer the possibility of attending a wake or funeral, these options tend to be limited, due to the cost or security risk. Prisoners who go to a funeral must be hand-cuffed or chained, which can increase their feelings of humiliation and embarrassment (Young Junior, 2003). Subsequently, the extent of their participation in the mourning rituals can be limited (Hunt and Read, 2018; Wilson et al., 2020), and without family or professional support, it brings into question the beneficence of such approaches. While Fuchs (2017) highlighted the relevance of social rituals in conforming to the new now, prisoners often lack closure (Harner et al., 2011) and are left feeling powerless and cheated by the system (Young Junior, 2003).

When it comes to receiving death notice in carceral settings, prisoners often receive only bits of information from their friends and family on the outside, wondering about what really happened to the deceased (Harner et al., 2011). Halsey (2018) argued for the inappropriateness of prison contexts to deal with trauma and loss, given the reduced times out of a cell, limited visitation hours and opportunities, and perhaps inappropriate ways of receiving bad news. Prisons also discourage even small, platonic gestures (Aday and Wahidin, 2016) and deprive individuals of human contact (Walker et al., 2018). For example, Walker et al. (2018) studied young offenders in Australia, who lost their visitation privileges due to the presence of drugs in their urine. Yet, they opted against visitations through a glass panel, since the inability to touch and hug their visitors was more painful, than not seeing their family at all, especially their children (Walker et al., 2018). Similar findings were demonstrated by Cope (2003) in the UK context. The importance of human touch for the provision of emotional safety and comfort in recovery from an adversity was supported in other disciplines too, such as nursing studies (e.g., Cutler et al., 2013; Russell, 1999). This could have further implications for managing bereavement in carceral contexts.

As discussed, prisons can be places of inner struggles, for those inhabiting them and those employed to run them. Prisoners strive toward isolation and private time, simultaneously wanting to communicate with others (Schmid and Jones, 1991). They are constantly surrounded by individuals (Crawley, 2004), but none of those people necessarily care about them (Halsey, 2018; Harner et al., 2011). Their opportunities for social sharing are limited and their relationships with people outside are strained (Laws and Crewe, 2016). Prisoners are monitored and exposed, but at the same time alone and invisible (Philippe-Beauchamp, 2019; Wooff, 2020). Officers, on the other hand, are torn between caring for prisoners and controlling them. Thus, loneliness, need for support, and safety might prompt formation of societies on both ends. Yet, mistrust, risk of intimacy, and transiency might limit the genuineness or authenticity of prisoners, officers, and prisoner-officer relationships (Crawley, 2004; Crewe, 2009; Crewe and Laws, 2018; Crewe et al., 2014; Halsey and Deegan, 2017).

2.8. Conclusion

Overall, this chapter offered a critical analysis of contemporary knowledge around bereavement and grief, emotions, gender and class, and relationships with the dead. The first section examined bereavement research, followed by a discussion on the sociology of prisons and the characteristics of prisoners, their traumatic backgrounds, and prison culture. It then aimed to synthesise the two, looking at prisoners' experiences of loss, the potential for grieving in prisons, and the role of prison officers in maintaining safety while ensuring individuals' well-being. Research has indicated a higher incidence of death among prisoner populations, lower levels of social support, and frequent histories of drug abuse, homelessness, trauma, and interpersonal violence. However, not many studies have intertwined or integrated these concepts and those that did, seem to have found detrimental cumulative effects of bereavement on health, well-being, life-expectancy, and reintegration of prisoners (e.g., Halsey, 2018; Hunt and Read, 2018; Testa and Jackson, 2019; Vaswani, 2014). While some research argues that prisons tend to decivilize prisoners, *other* them, and strip them of any moral or aesthetic sense (Drake, 2014; Mageehon, 2008; Wacquant, 2002), whether they can, therefore, absent prisoners' bereavement remains to be examined. It is not possible to simply apply findings from bereavement research onto prisons, as grieving experiences are highly influenced by culture, society, and individual circumstances. Similarly, researchers should be wary not to interpret population effects of being imprisoned as bereavement-related (Stroebe et al., 2003), but to recognize what is bereavement-specific and what is common for that context, regardless of the bereavement status.

According to Thompson et al. (2016), research on dying, death, and bereavement largely focuses on the psychological state of the individual with little attention given to wider sociological constructs to supplement the one-sided view on this issue. Yet, this literature review has indicated that both bereavement and imprisonment are culture specific. Given the importance of social support in bereavement, (mis)trust among prisoners might be a significant factor when studying prisoners and death. In addition, prior research indicated different conceptualization of time and space in grief and in prison research (e.g., Cope, 2003; Moran, 2012; Philippe-Beauchamp, 2019; Wahidin, 2006; Wilson et al., 2020; Worden, 1991), as well as limited opportunities for social mourning while imprisoned (e.g., Hendry, 2009; Lewin and Farkas, 2012). Thus, the use of phenomenology in this study will enable separating bereavement into its temporal, spatial, and relational aspects, to further examine what is a constituting part of the phenomenon and what is a part of its layered texture.

Ultimately, this chapter has identified gaps in knowledge on bereavement experiences of disenfranchised populations, such as prisoners (e.g., Aday and Wahidin, 2016; Corcoran, 2017; Courtney and Maschi, 2012; Hunt and Read, 2018; Maschi, et al., 2015; Testa and Jackson, 2019; Vaswani, 2014) and those grieving a non-traditional family member (e.g., Paul, 2019; Wilson et al., 2020). Olson and McEwen (2004) raised concerns that the public might perceive prisoners as a population that is not entitled to grieve, because they broke the law. Yet, it could be argued that this population needs the most support, given the peculiarity and uniqueness of their situation and often lengthy histories of loss. This study will bridge the gap between bereavement and imprisonment research, and provide a multidimensional, interdisciplinary view of the phenomenon examined. It will analyse death and bereavement from various angles, to further elucidate the intersectionalities of individual biographies, social and cultural relationships, body, and space when grieving in carceral contexts. To this end, the next chapter discusses this study's methodological approach to researching prisoners' experiences of bereavement, followed by the presentation and discussion of its findings.

3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the research design and methods used in this study. It first provides a summary of the knowledge gaps identified in the literature review, going on to present the aim of this study and the specific research questions this study sought to address. Next, it discusses the underlying ontological and epistemological frameworks that informed the examination of bereavement in carceral contexts. It then explores the research design and research methods used, concluding with a discussion on ethical issues that were considered when studying vulnerable populations (i.e., prisoners) on sensitive topics (i.e., bereavement), as well as the specific steps that the researcher undertook to mitigate those.

As identified by the literature review, bereavement research and prison research display different, to an extent contradictory, gaps in knowledge. Grief scholarship underscores the need to include a gender component in death and bereavement studies, with an emphasis on the current lack of understanding of bereavement experiences of men (e.g., Jones et al., 2019; Stroebe and Stroebe, 1983; Zinner, 2000). It also encourages further examination of complex family models and non-traditional family units (e.g., Cacciatore and Raffo, 2011; McNutt and Yakushko, 2013; Nolan, 2019), as well as widening the scope of social relationships discussed by the bereft, beyond spousal and parental (e.g., Bonanno and Kaltman, 1999; Souza, 2017). Ultimately, bereavement studies mostly focus on the psychological aspects of grief, whereas the growing body of research calls for a more holistic, interdisciplinary approach that would acknowledge a person with all its social, physiological, emotional, and corporeal components (e.g., Harner et al., 2011; Hentz, 2002; Paul, 2019; Rowling, 2008; Walsh and McGoldrick, 2013). Prison scholarship, on the other hand, is criticized for a high number of men-centred studies, leaving female prisoners peripheral in analysis of offending behavior, prison life, and the effects of imprisonment (e.g., Bosworth et al., 2005; Covington, 1998; Crewe et al., 2017; Her Majesty Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland, 2017; Rhodes, 2001). There is a further need for research conveying prisoners’ insights (Earle, 2014; Rhodes, 2001; Philippe-Beauchamp, 2019) and for an emotion-based approach to prison research (e.g., Bosworth et al., 2005, Crewe, 2014; Earle, 2014; Jewkes, 2011; 2014), which goes beyond a positivistic lens. Finally, despite a higher prevalence of death and bereavement among the offender population (Testa and Jackson, 2019; Vaswani, 2014), research on this topic is scarce (a notable exception is a recent PhD study by Wilson, 2019).

3.1. Research Aim and Research Questions

Thus, the aim of this study is to explore prisoners' experiences of bereavement in carceral contexts. To do so, it addressed the following research questions:

1. What are prisoners' experiences of bereavement in carceral contexts?
    - 1.1. What is the effect of bereavement for this population?
2. What are the potential layers of bereavement?
    - 2.1. What is generalizable about bereavement experiences and what is individual and/or context-specific?
3. How do prisoners cope with bereavement prior to and/or during imprisonment?
    - 3.1. What is the role of the prison in prisoners' experiences of bereavement?

Given the exploratory aim of this study, it embraced a descriptive phenomenological framework to gather and understand rich descriptions of the *what* and the *how* (Neubauer et al., 2019) of prisoners' experiences of bereavement in carceral contexts. As discussed in section 3.2., this framework argues against one objective reality and acknowledges that everyone comprehends the world based on their prior and current experiences, which was crucial in capturing the intersectionality of different factors that could affect bereavement (see Literature review) and in grasping the complexity of grieving while imprisoned.

The next section begins by discussing different types of phenomenological inquiry, arguing for its relevance in understanding bereavement. It then examines the philosophy of descriptive phenomenology, as well as the research methods it relies on, while engaging with a contemporary critique of phenomenological ideas. Finally, it examines the design employed in this study, demonstrating the applicability and appropriateness of descriptive phenomenological framework to analyse the data and address the research aim.

3.2. Phenomenology

Phenomenology stems from psychology but is increasingly used in other social and health sciences (Jackson et al., 2018; Pringle et al., 2011; Sundler et al., 2019; Tuffour, 2017; van Manen, 2019), organizational research (Gill, 2014), and education (Cordes, 2014). As such, it can cover a wide area of topics (Giorgi, 2012; Zahavi, 2019), even though Fuchs (2017) argued that grief was rarely of interest to phenomenology. The goal of phenomenology is to gain rich descriptions of a phenomenon through individuals' lived experiences (Finlay, 2009; Holloway and Todres, 2003; Laverty, 2003; Neubauer et al., 2019; Pringle et al., 2011; Wertz, 2005; Wojnar and Swanson, 2007). It reveals that what is true to each participant, as well as the larger, more general themes (Harner et al., 2011), aiming to capture the structures of a phenomenon examined (Fuchs, 2017). Thus, the use of phenomenology in this study enables discerning individual-specific characteristics of bereavement from the context-driven ones, highlighting the role of social and cultural norms that are subtly ingrained in grieving.

Prior research indicated some methodological, epistemological, and practical similarities of phenomenology with other theoretical approaches that employ qualitative design and analysis (e.g., Creswell, 2014; Holloway and Todres, 2003). Similarly, Holloway and Todres (2003) discussed the general tendency of blurring the lines of epistemology and methodology in qualitative approaches due to its interest in lived experiences. Although appreciative inquiry, ethnography, grounded theory, and narrative research all focus on the lived experiences of individuals (Dowling and Cooney, 2012), Fuchs (2017) argued that phenomenological approach is not normative and does not prescribe the *proper* regarding the topic in question; it is exploratory, which suited the aim of this study. However, given the lack of strict guidelines on conducting true, phenomenological research (Giorgi, 2000; Giorgi, 2008; Giorgi and Giorgi, 2003), followed by the lack of consensus on ways of conducting it, such an approach can be challenging and unappealing for novice researchers (Finlay, 2009; Giorgi, 2000; Giorgi and Giorgi, 2003). Thus, its impact on social sciences is lagging and its claims become diluted, when researchers try to fit them into specific theories (Teira, 2011). Even though the onus is on a researcher to grasp the roots of phenomenological framework and play with the data through imaginative variation (see section 3.4.1), the multi-level analysis that it enables was crucial for this study, given the interrelatedness of individual, social, and cultural factors in bereavement, as well as in imprisonment.

3.2.1. Types of Phenomenology

Phenomenology requires critical thinking, reflexivity, and creativity. This led to a proliferation of methodologies (Giorgi, 2000; Sousa, 2014), so its practical application is not unified (Dowling and Cooney, 2012; Finlay, 2009; LeVasseur, 2003; Neubauer et al., 2019; Wertz, 2005). Although the available literature reflects the diversity in use and interpretation of phenomenology among researchers, the two most prominent types of phenomenology are descriptive (Husserlian) phenomenology and interpretative (Heideggerian) phenomenology.

3.2.1.1. Descriptive Phenomenology (DP)

Descriptive phenomenology will be examined in more depth in section 3.3., but generally, it refers to the phenomenon as it appears in one’s consciousness (Dowling and

Cooney, 2012; Giorgi, 2012; Laverty, 2003; Tuffour, 2017; van Manen, 2019; Wertz, 2005). It uses participants' description and reflection to understand an experience, while accounting for individual's actions. It recognizes the core impact of intentionality, of directedness toward someone or something (Giorgi, 2012; LeVasseur, 2003; Sundler et al., 2019; Wertz, 2005), by arguing that a phenomenon cannot exist unless it is present in one's consciousness. Likewise, it enquires about the ways of shaping meaning through involvement in an action (LeVasseur, 2003) and is well suited for exploration of challenging, extraordinary, and complex issues (LeVasseur, 2003; Neubauer et al., 2019), but also the mundane, omnipresent ones (Jackson et al., 2018; LeVasseur, 2003; Wertz, 2005).

Originally, Husserl, its creator, phrased DP as an opposition to established paradigms in psychology and history. He called those ideas naturalism (LeVasseur, 2003), as they base their epistemic relativism on psychological or social facts established by positive research (Teira, 2011). Husserl rejected positivistic focus on objective observations of reality and strived toward placing equal value on objectivity and subjectivity of experiences (Neubauer et al., 2019), as well as on understanding ways in which objectivity is constituted by consciousness (Zahavi, 2019). Although DP starts from a personal account, it is not about biographical, distinct life circumstances, but about the human and the existential of a phenomenon (van Manen, 2019). Its main quest is to find concreteness of data and details of lived situations (Finlay, 2009; Starks and Brown Trinidad, 2007; Wertz, 2005), rather than opinions, explanations, or interpretations of the topic examined (Wertz, 2005). As such, it allows for generalisation (Giorgi, 2012) by eventually submerging the individual accounts and the particularities of an experience to allow for the structure of a phenomenon to emerge (Finlay, 2009; Giorgi, 2008). As Finlay (2009) suggested, the focus of DP is on understanding the general structure of an experience using phenomenological attitude and seeing the world afresh.

Although phenomenology emphasizes the interrelatedness of an individual and their wider context, the knowledge claims of DP provide an insight only into experiences of those individuals in those contexts, offering no causal or explanatory claims (Holloway and Todres, 2003). They might retain some forms of interpretation, to contextualize the parts within the whole (Wertz, 2005) and suggest plausible explanations (Holloway and Todres, 2003), but they should remain in the form of descriptive presentation and holistic intuition of what was told. There should be no additions, subtractions, or interpretations that would create a meaning beyond the expressed experiences (Dowling and Cooney, 2012; Giorgi, 2012; Holloway and Todres 2003; Neubauer et al., 2019; Sousa, 2014; Sundler et al., 2019; Wertz, 2005). As per van Manen (2019), phenomenology is the acknowledgement of a structural existence of the event. It is neither inductive nor deductive, but a description of the non-changing, static characteristics of a phenomenon (Wertz, 2005). Husserl's followers, Heidegger and Gadamer, further developed his concept of understanding human experiences, creating the interpretative, hermeneutic approach (Laverty, 2003; Neubauer et al., 2019; Pringle et al., 2011).

3.2.1.2. Interpretative (Hermeneutic) Phenomenology

The focus of hermeneutic phenomenology shifted from an understanding of a relationship between the knower and the known to an understanding of the *Dasein*, of being a human situated and involved in the world (Dowling and Cooney, 2012; Jackson et al., 2018; Laverty, 2003; LeVasseur, 2003). In contrast to the descriptive approach, interpretative phenomenology seeks for peculiarities of individual experiences, which might not offer a general insight into the phenomenon examined (Finlay, 2009). It is still concerned with the individual, but it recognizes the central role of a researcher. As Sartre argued, one's perception of the world is largely shaped by the presence of others; one is not alone in the world and the world does not belong to an individual (Smith et al., 2013). Individual's existence is perspectival, temporal, and relational to something or somebody else (Smith et al., 2013), thus the nature of one's reality is inevitably influenced by their lifeworld (Neubauer et al., 2019).

Unlike DP, which emphasizes the importance of individuals' acts (Giorgi, 2012), interpretative phenomenology understands an experience as an intersection of one's personal history and social climate in which the phenomenon happened (Laverty, 2003; Neubauer et al., 2019; Smith et al., 2013). It puts the focus on human existence, rather than the understanding of the world (Tuffour, 2017), and moves beyond description to interpretation (Dowling and Cooney, 2012). It requires examination through a specific philosophical, theoretical, and interpretative lens (Laverty, 2003; Tuffour, 2017), using reflexivity to enable projection of participants' and researcher's inward perceptions. Interpretative phenomenology is not about the nature of knowledge (i.e., epistemology), but about the nature of being (i.e., ontology) (Dowling and Cooney, 2012; Neubauer et al., 2019). As such, it would limit the exploratory aim of this study by applying a deductive approach through a set of pre-existing beliefs, knowledge, and assumptions.

Overall, DP provides a holistic understanding of the issue, while respecting individual accounts. It discourages researcher's personal engagement with the topic examined and thrives from a multitude of perspectives (Jackson et al., 2018; Wertz, 2005). As such, it can discern the general truth from the one dependent on social and cultural factors. Thus, DP provides the most comprehensive framework to address the aim of this study, as it requires understanding of individuals' responses to a common, natural issue, such as death, within a challenging and extraordinary, albeit ubiquitous (Rhodes, 2001), context of imprisonment. This chapter will now discuss the epistemology and ontology of DP to examine the nature of knowledge it produces. According to Seah and Wilson (2011), ontology aims to elucidate how humans understand their existence and their place in the wider world. Epistemology, however, questions what one can know about the world (Raadschelders, 2011), how that knowledge can be gained (Maxwell, 2013), and the relationship between the knower and the known (Laverty, 2003). Together, ontology and epistemology create the philosophy of science (Sousa, 2014).

3.3. Philosophy of Descriptive Phenomenology

Phenomenology has a complex philosophical tradition in human science (Neubauer et al., 2019; Sundler et al., 2019). DP is critical and systematic (Giorgi, 2000; Holloway and Todres, 2003; Wertz, 2005), yet open and flexible (Holloway and Todres, 2003; Sundler et al., 2019). It argues for epistemological eclecticism and absence of any strict ontological, theoretical, or philosophical perspectives, as it believes that theory might interfere with one's comprehension of an experience (Finlay, 2009; LeVasseur, 2003; Staiti, 2012). As such, it unites philosophy and science (Neubauer et al., 2019), reconciling the scientificity, exactness, and forward-planning of natural research with uncertainty and immeasurability of practical, individual experiences (Giorgi, 2012; LeVasseur, 2003).

3.3.1. Epistemology of Descriptive Phenomenology

Finlay (2009) discussed positioning phenomenology on an epistemological spectrum of modernism and postmodernism. If understanding phenomenology as an inductive methodology to systematically examine subjectivity of feelings and experiences, it could be argued that phenomenology is modernist. Essences of a phenomenon can be studied rigorously and carefully, and reality is seen as a knowable world with universal properties (Finlay, 2009). Yet, if looking at modernism as an ordered universe subjugated to mathematical laws waiting to be revealed, phenomenology might better fit the postmodernist agenda of relativism and no fixed meanings (Finlay, 2009). From a postmodernist perspective, however, the truth cannot be one dimensional, as it is constantly (re-)constructing and shifting (Dowling and Cooney, 2012). Subsequently, there will be no objective reality, only its interpretations (Mahoney and Daniel, 2006), deeming Husserl's aim to get to the essence of things contradictory to postmodernist understanding of the world. From a human aspect, though, phenomenology argues against reducing a person to their actuality or facticity, believing that everyone holds a potential to create meaningful relationships and do activities with the world (Wertz, 2005); future is an endless possibility for becoming (Wertz, 2005). Therefore, DP is somewhere in-between the groundedness of essential structures with a reality independent of consciousness and a multiplicity of truths with relativity of appearances (Finlay, 2009). Hence, the interaction of this framework with a rather grim conceptualization of the future and potential of being for prisoners, as discussed in the literature review, could provide a nuanced, context-dependent understanding of bereavement experiences and advance current knowledge.

3.3.2. Ontology of Descriptive Phenomenology

Ontologically, Husserlian phenomenology perceives reality as internal to the knower. Humans are experts of their own world (Laverty, 2003), and their consciousness is a medium between the individual and the world (Giorgi, 2012), the inner evidence (Neubauer et al., 2019). Although consciousness is always conscious of something (Dowling and Cooney, 2012; Sousa, 2014), a phenomenon emerges when there is a subject to experience it—when a subject projects meaning to an object (Dowling and Cooney, 2012). Drawing from the knowledge discussed in the literature review, this is a crucial advantage of using DP for this study. Given the interaction between the individual, the social, and the cultural components of bereavement, as well as the often oppressive and isolating carceral contexts, DP can elucidate the context-specific manifestations of bereavement and the more generalizable ones.

DP allows for a discovery of the irreal aspects of the phenomenon, such as the atmosphere, the sense of something, the experiential component of the real (Jackson et al., 2018). Irreal objects arise through the intersubjective and create new bonds (new knowledge) between the real and the irreal (Sousa, 2014). When applied to this study, the irreal could be a sense of alienation from those bereft on the outside and/or from other prisoners. It could be feelings of exposure and self-awareness attending a funeral in handcuffs and chains (e.g., Lane, 2015) and/or a potential chasm of a double identity, the one of pain and secrecy, and the one of stoic presentation to others (e.g., Laws and Crewe, 2016). It could also be the idea of a suspended reality while in prison and of a reality that will continue upon release (e.g., Wahidin, 2006). This aligns with the notion of *inter*corporeality in bereavement, a sense of attachment to the loved one that can be felt not just in the body and mind of the bereft, but demonstrated through the need for proximity of others, even if just by knowing that someone is there (Fuchs, 2017). Hence, phenomenology is not just about feelings and manifestations of an event on a subjective, emotional level (van Manen, 2019). It is about wondering and exploring a new realm of it (Neubauer et al., 2019; van Manen, 2019; Wertz, 2005), the structures that it has, and the mechanisms according to which it functions. Descriptive phenomenology rejects the Cartesian dualist perspective and embraces a holistic approach to the mind and the body (Jackson et al., 2018). Body should not be understood simply as an object in this world, a psychological and biological being, as it exists and interacts in and with the world (Philippe-Beauchamp, 2019; Sundler et al., 2019). It is a means of communicating through sensory-perspectival openness, making meaning through behavioral explorations (Hentz, 2002; Rowe, 2014; Wertz, 2005) and understanding one's own experiences by acknowledging the role of the body (Laverty, 2003; Shinebourne, 2011). As such, DP is uniquely positioned to harmonize the general and the specific of the topic examined. It reconciles the real of the objects, their space and time, with its irreal aspects, their sensory, corporeal, and perspectival dimensions that cannot exist independently of the real (Jackson et al., 2018).

However, Salsberry (1989) noticed that phenomenologists often attempt to equate knowledge on the experience of the phenomenon to knowledge on the phenomenon. As per Sousa (2014), the subjective account of an experience differs from an account of subjective experience, which brings into question the type of knowledge phenomenology can produce. For example, should it focus on the particular or collective, examine the uniqueness or the general essence? Thus, some research criticized phenomenology for its questionable generalizability (Sundler et al., 2019), for ways of combining the actual and the ideal, the essential of a phenomenon with the subjective and felt (Neubauer et al., 2019), and/or the empirical with the perceived (Sousa, 2014). Smith et al. (2013) argued, however, that phenomenological findings could be generalized through theoretical generalizability, as DP aims to present the essence of a phenomenon, the invariant themes and commonalities that are intrinsically general (Giorgi, 2008). Those could then be transferred from one individual and/or situation to another (Holloway and Todres, 2003; Neubauer et al., 2019; Sousa, 2014; Teira, 2011; Wertz, 2005) using imaginative variation (Giorgi, 2008); a crucial, yet most challenging step in descriptive phenomenological analysis (Teira, 2011) (see section 3.4.1.1.).

3.4. Methodology of Descriptive Phenomenology

Methodology focuses on the methods used to clarify the *how* of knowledge (Raadschelders, 2011). As discussed, phenomenology is a philosophical discipline, as well as a research method (Creswell, 2014; Dowling and Cooney, 2012; Wojnar and Swanson, 2007). Holloway and Todres (2003) argued that DP does not only look for the structure of a phenomenon, but its texture too; the evocation of unique observations that can convey what that experience was like. The individual experiences might be lost during this process, but the texture provides an aesthetical richness through which the reader understands the phenomenon and applies it to their own experiences (Fry, 2016).

However, studies using phenomenology have been criticized for the absence of clarity in their philosophical (Dowling and Cooney, 2012; Giorgi, 2000; Sundler et al., 2019) and/or methodological underpinnings (Finlay, 2009; LeVasseur, 2003; Sundler et al., 2019). Lack of methodological rigour could affect their interdisciplinarity, social, and practical value (Sousa, 2014). Some research argued that, to increase research validity, DP requires openness and transparency in every step of the process (Holloway and Todres, 2003; Neubauer et al., 2019; Sousa, 2014; Sundler et al., 2019). For example, Sundler et al. (2019) suggested researchers discuss their approach to research, question common knowledge, and engage in (self-)reflection throughout the study, and Laverty (2003) argued that a level of reflexivity is needed for researchers to become, and remain, independent of their biographical, social, and historical position throughout the study. Only then can they truly grasp the essence a participant is describing and shed new light on institutions, social practices, and the structure of a social world, making specific problems potentially solvable (Staiti, 2012).

To empirically account for researcher's pre-existing framework, DP employs bracketing—a hallmark of Husserlian approach to phenomenology (Dowling and Cooney, 2012; Georgi, 2012; LeVasseur, 2003; Neubauer et al., 2019; Rolls and Relf, 2006; Staiti, 2012; Wertz, 2005). This section discusses descriptive phenomenological methodology in more depth, examining the specific components that must be used to adequately employ it and achieve methodological rigour, such as bracketing and imaginative variation. It presents the steps toward accomplishing those, as well as their methodological and philosophical critique.

3.4.1. Epoché (bracketing) in Phenomenology

Bracketing is a method that allows researchers to suspend their natural, pre-conceived attitude and naïve understanding of a human mind, thereby initiating a new inquiry (Dowling and Cooney, 2012; LeVasseur, 2003; Neubauer et al., 2019). This includes turning away from the immersion in an experience, toward the awareness of a natural attitude (Sundler et al., 2019), of the way in which the world manifests itself to the individual (Finlay, 2009; Neubauer et al., 2019; Shinebourne, 2011; Wertz, 2005). Familiarity with an issue might impede opening of the new horizons (Giorgi, 2008; LeVasseur, 2003; Staiti, 2012), bring bias, and influence the study (Giorgi, 2012; Mihalache, 2019; Rolls and Relf, 2006), albeit implicitly (Maxwell, 2013). Finlay (2009) argued that DP requires setting aside (1) scientific theories and explanations; (2) personal views and experiences that could cloud participants' descriptions of a phenomenon; as well as (3) the urge to render participants' claims as true or false. Although bracketing assumes researcher's distancing, separation from the world to reach transcendental self (LeVasseur, 2003; Neubauer et al., 2019), phenomenology does not negate nor doubt the existence of a perceived reality with common features, those taken-for-granted aspects of life (Giorgi, 2000; LeVasseur, 2003; Staiti, 2012; Zahavi, 2019). It simply suspends prior beliefs to freely and non-judgmentally focus on the core of the issue examined, instead of fitting experiences into predefined concepts and categories (Giorgi, 2000, 2012; Laverty, 2003; Smith et al., 2013; Wertz, 2005).

As per Finlay (2009), researchers should avoid being preoccupied with their own emotions and practices that would steer the research to privilege the interviewer instead of the interviewee. Yet, Giorgi (2008) questioned the benefit of making a list of one's assumptions prior to data analysis, as reflecting upon them beforehand is not a guarantee of being bias-free; it is crucial to recognize them during the process (Finlay, 2009; Giorgi, 2008). Coming from a quantitative background, the researcher approached her fieldwork as a task that must be done, without being too emotionally invested and with genuine interest to learn about bereavement, which was a new field of study to her. Some prior knowledge might have been brought into the study from a criminological perspective, but the researcher believes it to be low, and listening to the transcripts demonstrated little to no obvious researcher's interference. To achieve this reductionist mindset, free from the researcher's background and/or external factors, she had to follow certain steps, as described below.

3.4.1.1. The Steps toward Bracketing (reduction)

There are a few different ways to reach reduction, openness, and non-bias required in a phenomenological study, which mostly depend on researchers' field (e.g., Moustakas' approach used in education and health and summarized in Mihalache (2019); Colaizzi and Giorgi's approach popular in psychology, nursing, and health related research, discussed in Dowling and Cooney (2012) and Neubauer et al. (2019); van Manen's in pedagogy and health care; see also Finlay (2009) for a general methodological discussion). This study applied Giorgi's (2000) approach. Giorgi was the first to describe the use of Husserlian phenomenology in social sciences and the one who provided a relatively detailed guide to use this method, which is, as per Gill (2014), one of the most developed phenomenological ones.

The initial step in bracketing, the transcendental stage, comprises of setting aside all prior knowledge, including theories, assumptions, and researcher's personal experiences of a phenomenon. It is a removal of scientific and natural attitudes, which could constrain the philosophical one (Giorgi, 2008; LeVasseur, 2003; Neubauer et al., 2019; Salsberry, 1989; Sousa, 2014). In this study, the researcher approached bracketing by keeping the interview schedule broad and open, and allowing the participants to relay their experiences without judgement or bias. She did not guide the interview but enabled the individuals to decide what to discuss. In situations where the researcher caught herself making causal inferences, she would stop herself and ask the participants for clarification. For example, if they stated they were ashamed to go to the funeral cuffed, even though this theme was discussed in prior research (e.g., Lane, 2015), the researcher inquired further about these feeling of shame and the root cause of it, from the participants' perspective.

The following step, transcendental-phenomenological reduction, focuses on bracketing each individual participant's experience, a case-by-case epoché, to progressively reach the phenomenon's essentiality (Neubauer et al., 2019; Staiti, 2012). The researcher achieved this by immersing herself in one transcript at the time and analyzing the dataset on a case-by-case basis first. In a way, this meant that once an individual's account of their experience was analyzed, everything learnt about the topic was forgotten, approaching another transcript with an empty mind. Only after all the individual analyses were completed, the whole dataset was (re-)examined together, as a unity.

The final step is imaginative variation, which synthesizes essences into a consistent statement on the experience of a phenomenon (Sousa, 2014). This is achieved through a cross-case analysis based on intuition and imagination (Laverty, 2003; Neubauer et al., 2019). It requires examining a phenomenon from many angles and discerning its invariant structures from incidental or accidental ones (Neubauer et al., 2019; Salsberry, 1989; Wertz, 2005). However, blind adherence to these three steps would lead to a philosophical analysis of a phenomenon, not a scientific one (Giorgi, 2000; 2012; Giorgi and Giorgi, 2003). Consequently, some degree of the disciplinary attitude should be adopted to bring sensitivity to data analysis and manage the richness of data through a specific perspective (Giorgi, 2000; 2008). As per Rolls and Relf (2006), bracketing has more to do with researcher's reflexivity, than with general objectivity, because it is impossible to set aside what one is not aware of.

3.4.1.2. Critiques of Bracketing

Some authors questioned whether bracketing can ever be fully achieved. Namely, even if the researcher does so, the participant might not (LeVasseur, 2003; Salsberry, 1989). Salsberry (1989) critiqued phenomenologists for failing to account for participant's preconceived ideas through which their knowledge might be mediated. She argued that the knower’s knowledge cannot be infallible, as one’s expectations can influence their experiences (Salsberry, 1989). This questions whether participants’ stories are skewed from the things themselves. Giorgi and Giorgi (2003) would argue that the chances for this would be low, as participants neither know the specific aim of each study, nor the method of analysis. Since there is no way to know, the onus might be on the researcher to recognize potentially value-ridden claims during data collection and analysis, and attempt to unpick them. The researcher might encourage participants to examine the topic from different angles and ask follow-up questions, aiming to question common sense.

Following the argument that a researcher can never be bias-free, existentialists and interpretative phenomenologists view descriptive approach as idealistic (LeVasseur, 2003). Similarly to participant’s inherent bias, some argue that researchers also selectively choose information they deem important, based on their familiarity and understanding of the phenomenon (Salsberry, 1989). Subsequently, interpretative (Dowling and Cooney, 2012; Laverty, 2003; LeVasseur, 2003; Tuffour, 2017) and heuristic phenomenologists (Mihalache, 2019) disagree with bracketing and opt for researcher’s involvement in the process (Neubauer et al., 2019; Pringle et al., 2011). From their perspective, an individual and their experiences are one, co-existing entity. Humans constantly understand themselves in the world, although they might not be consciously aware of that understanding (Neubauer et al., 2019). Thus, they cannot step outside of their pre-understanding and prior experiences (Laverty, 2003; LeVasseur, 2003; Sundler et al., 2019; Tuffour, 2017). As description cannot be separated from interpretation (Dowling and Cooney, 2012), pure reflection cannot exist. Subsequently, bracketing could lead to distancing from the phenomenon and the participants, instead of enabling connectedness and relationship between their experiences (Mihalache, 2019).

However, some research argues that the aim of bracketing is not a scientific detachment, but the attitude of non-interference, open-mindedness, and constant curiosity beyond ordinary assumptions (Finlay, 2012; LeVasseur, 2003; Rolls and Relf, 2006; Sundler et al., 2019), which would lead to intersubjectivity (Finlay, 2012). As per Zahavi (2019), the reality is not forgotten or disregarded; the *added value* to the reality is bracketed to transform and refocus universal objectiveness, contributing to reliability and validity of descriptive phenomenology (Laverty, 2003). The researcher simply renders themselves neutral and non-influential, looking at the data with relative openness (Finlay, 2009). As LeVasseur (2003) describes it, bracketing resembles putting a bag over the phenomenon and having participants describe its content, before attaching established meanings or descriptions to its essence.

Another critique of this Husserlian approach to research is in its resemblance with positivism. By bracketing parts of reality, there is an underlying quest for certainty and unified ideal, scientific exactness, and objectiveness of data (Dowling and Cooney, 2012; Laverty, 2003; LeVasseur, 2003), but Tuffour (2017) considered this too simplistic. Namely, phenomenology argues that descriptions of a phenomenon can be provided in retrospect or simultaneously as they are being lived (Wertz, 2005), yet Sartre claimed that the "I" of an experience emerges only in the reflection of that experience. Therefore, the experience is inherently influenced by prior knowledge (Tuffour, 2017). In other words, as soon as the individual becomes self-aware and the "I" comes into play, the experience already became a reflection of the event (Tuffour, 2017; van Manen, 2019), a memory (Salsberry, 1989). As such, it cannot be objective. Regardless, phenomenology does not seek for positivistic truth, but aims to reveal the invariant essence of a phenomenon, through examining subjective experiences (Pringle et al., 2011).

Finally, the goal of phenomenology is not generalization, but a narrative expression of something experientially known, although potentially impossible to put in words. Yet, what is general and omni verum is often trivial, and the value of phenomenology is in elucidating those variations (Wertz, 2005). As per Polkinghorne (2007), each narrative has a degree of accuracy and a degree of imagination, even within the same story of the same individual. Subsequently, Laverty (2003) claims that the strength of a phenomenological approach is in the perception of reality not as something out there, but as something within the individual, without judging the realness of the examined (Finlay, 2009; Giorgi, 2008). As Giorgi (2008; 2012) discussed, DP should not acknowledge the existence of something, but keep it in the experiential realm of the participants through bracketing. This discussion emphasizes the importance of researchers' transparency regarding their conceptual framework and its limitations. Salsberry (1989) argued that these issues do not devalue phenomenology, but underscore what can and cannot be achieved by it. It enables partial generalization yet remains true to each individual experience. The next section discusses the design of this study and research methods employed to examine prisoners' experiences of bereavement in carceral contexts.

3.5. Research Design

As discussed, descriptive phenomenology, in a way, offers a middle ground between the subjectivity provided by qualitative research and finding the general truth sought by the quantitative. For example, Shields et al. (2017) argued that one of the reasons for the lack of understanding of suicide bereavement is the use of quantitative methods, which are insensitive to this topic. Instead of narrowing experiences to numbers and focusing on the size of the sample, qualitative research amplifies participants voices (Cacciore and Raffo, 2011; Gilbert, 2002). Given the aim of this research, the exploration of prisoners' experiences of bereavement, this study employed qualitative research methods to gather personal and individualized data that can still be generalized through imaginative variation; a phenomenological method to discern the whole from the part. In so doing, it seeks to address the divide between objective and subjective accounts through its transcendental character (Switzer, 2015), elucidating the invariant aspect of a phenomenon.

Initially, this study was envisioned as a mixed methods study, given the plethora of research advocating that mixed methods could give the most complete picture of a certain issue at a given time (e.g., Akers et al., 1977; Creswell, 2014; Liebling, 1999; Maxwell, 2013; Reiter, 2014; Russell, 1999; Thomas, 1977). Mixed methods combine philosophical assumptions with theoretical testing (Creswell, 2014) and, in this study, this would allow for a more specific sampling of interview participants based on survey results (Abbott et al., 2018). For example, the surveys could identify the prevalence of the bereft population in prisons and the most common themes around it, and the in-depth interviews would further inquire about those ideas. Finally, mixed methods would create different types of knowledge (Polkinghorne, 2007). While surveys produce rigid, number-driven results based on a large sample of participants, follow-up interviews would add a subjective, nuanced layer to the understanding of this phenomenon, using a small, purposive sample.

However, the restrictiveness of prisons' social context, multiple layers of gatekeepers, sensitivity of the research topic, and vulnerability of research population required some modifications of the initial design of this study. Namely, the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) requested this study to be downscaled in sample size and adapted to a qualitative only design, as opting for mixed methods would increase the strain on prisons and prison administration regarding time, cost, and safety concerns. As Wakai et al. (2009) indicated, prison research does not only burden the researcher, but the institution too. Prisons need to ensure availability of prison staff to escort researchers around the institution and to maintain everyone's safety for the duration of research (Wakai et al., 2009). Administering surveys, in addition to interviews, would increase the demand for resources and was discouraged by the SPS.

3.5.1. Prison Research

For decades, studies have repeatedly demonstrated difficulty gaining access to prisons for research purposes (Abbott et al., 2018; Bosworth et al., 2005; Fox et al., 2011;

Giallombardo, 1966; Liebling, 1999; Newman, 1958; Patenaude, 2004; Reiter, 2014; Ross and Tewksbury, 2018; Sorensen, 1950; Trulson et al., 2004; Vaswani, 2018). Some of the barriers include the vulnerability of the population studied, reluctance to allow outsiders into prisons, and numerous bureaucratic procedures that take time and energy to overcome, dissuading researchers from pursuing this path. As the literature review indicated, prisons are hierarchical, routinized, and risk-averse institutions, and can be resistant to research-related change (Rowe, 2014; Trulson et al., 2004; Wakai et al., 2009). They are punitive apparatuses of power, physically extracting offenders from the society and limiting their contacts with the outside world, while ensuring safety and security within the institution (Reiter, 2014). Their strict daily schedule and elevated control can limit researchers' opportunities for data collection and access to participants, increasing time requirements and research-related costs (Abbott et al., 2018; Liebling, 1999; Ross and Tewksbury, 2018). Furthermore, researchers cannot enter the facility without an appointment, they need to go through security screening upon entry, and leave their valuables in the lockers outside (including cell-phones and electronic devices), which could limit data collection to a paper-based one (Apa et al., 2012; Fox et al., 2011; Liebling, 1999; Reiter, 2014; Schlosser, 2008). For this study, a pre-approval for the voice-recorder was negotiated with the SPS and each participating institution. Even then, every time the researcher went in for the interview, the staff had to check the make and model of the recorder and match it to the pre-approval sheet on their files, which sometimes took a substantial amount of time.

Once a researcher entered the institution, they have to abide by institutional norms and safety rules (Fox et al., 2011), which limits the number and duration of visitation times available for research. Depending on the security level of the prison, researchers sometimes need to carry a personal alarm on them (as was the case in one prison in this study) and visibly display their identification issued by each institution (Apa et al., 2012). Once in prison, an officer escorts them to the interview site (Apa et al., 2012; Wakai et al., 2009) and brings prisoners in, what Abbott et al. (2018) operationalized as a method of custodial involvement. According to Wakai et al. (2009) and Tubex (2015), prison research takes months, even years longer to prepare and conduct than research in the community. This is partly due to managerialism and the bureaucratization of prisons (Tubex, 2015), and partly due to staff turnover, lack of private areas to do research, and high attrition of research participants (Wakai et al., 2009). As safety is each institution's top priority, participants might be unpredictably unavailable to attend a scheduled interview (Abbott et al., 2018) or the whole institution might be under lock-down following an incident. These circumstantial factors in prison research might increase the stress and burnout of researchers (Liebling, 1999; Wakai et al., 2009). Yet, data collection in participants' natural setting is one of the key aspects of qualitative research (Creswell, 2014), providing a strong incentive to overcome these challenges, in addition to a lack of viable alternatives.

3.5.2. Qualitative Study Design

Qualitative research is suited for research questions that inquire about the meaning of a situation-specific event to individuals, and about the influence of physical and social contexts on their understanding of these situations (Creswell, 2014; Holloway and Todres, 2003; Maxwell, 2013). It aims to narratively describe and explore people's actions and their perception of the meaning of those actions, both in everyday lives, as well as on a special social or human matter (Creswell, 2013; Erickson, 2018; Holloway and Todres, 2003). It is inductive, exploratory, and descriptive, seeking to understand the process, rather than to predict an outcome (Maxwell, 2013; Sousa, 2014). Qualitative research is often used to explore topics that do not yet have specific variables to examine, either because the issue is new or because it has not yet been researched with a specific population (Creswell, 2014). According to Maxwell (2013), qualitative research is a process theory, which tends to understand the world through analysis of relations between people, situations, and events, as well as processes that connect the three. As such, it significantly overlaps in its underpinnings with main tenets of phenomenology and is well suited to the aim of this study.

Qualitative methods capture a new layer of each story, the sociological and narrative truths (Bosworth et al., 2005; Liebling, 1999; Polkinghorne, 2007). They open a dialogue with the population examined (Sparks and Bottoms, 1995), responding to participants' hopes and expectations regarding the research project they are participating in (Bosworth et al., 2005; Creswell, 2014). These characteristics are particularly relevant for this study, which is inquiring about highly personal experiences of bereavement within the state apparatus of punishment. As the literature review highlighted, prisoners are often not being heard and have been systematically silenced, due to the lack of space or desire to hear their stories, non-cooperativeness of institutional authorities, and/or structural, methodological, and emotional burden this type of research might bring to the researcher (e.g., Liebling, 1999; Ross and Tewksbury, 2018; Schlosser, 2008). As a result, prisoners can be dehumanised (Goffman, 1959) and over-stigmatised, dependent on the societal, cultural, and temporal perceptions of deviance and crime (Schlosser, 2008). Yet, qualitative research on this population can relay their thoughts and ideas. It can bring them back a notion of humanity (Bosworth et al., 2005;

Halsey, 2018; Liebling, 1999), within the environment of inherent power imbalance and control (Abbott et al., 2018). As per Bosworth et al. (2005), qualitative research does not objectify participants and researchers' responsibility toward their participants does not end with signing the informed consent, it goes on to hearing and understanding the human side of it (Liebling, 1999). As Mahoney and Daniel (2006) suggested, in their work on social work interventions through narrative therapy with imprisoned women, prisoners' views and explanations of a topic are crucial to successful interventions in settings driven by stereotypical perceptions. Hence, using qualitative methods might increase the potential for policy and practice implications arising from this study.

3.5.2.1. Critiques of Qualitative Research

However, some argue that qualitative research is affective in nature, with emotions emerging from both sides (Bosworth et al., 2005; Rager, 2005; Rolls and Relf, 2006). Holloway and Todres (2003) claimed that exploring human experiences from a qualitative perspective can never be situation-free and must be applied contextually, rather than universally. Similarly, a prominent criticism of qualitative research on sensitive topics is its focus on participants' emotions, neglecting researchers' experiences (Carmack and DeGroot, 2014; Crewe, 2014; Jewkes, 2014; Johnson and Clarke, 2003; Rager, 2005; Rowe, 2014). According to Carmack and DeGroot (2014), this is a positivist approach that contradicts the aim of qualitative research, which should acknowledge the researchers' existence and understand the extent and mechanisms through which they shape data collection and data analyses (Maxwell, 2013; Rolls and Relf, 2006). Using DP, this was accounted for by bracketing and self-reflection (see section 3.4.1.), staying attuned to the disciplinary explanations of the phenomenon when searching for meanings (Giorgi, 2009).

Qualitative research is further critiqued for its potential to lose objectivity, especially when presented with difficult topics of universal human experience, such as death (Borgstrom and Ellis, 2017; Johnson and Clarke, 2003; Rolls and Relf, 2006; Souza, 2017; Vaswani, 2018). However, by virtue of qualitative research, there will be no single, correct, or ultimate interpretation of findings (Carverhill, 2002). Every individual has their own set of truths, all of which are equally valid (Seah and Wilson, 2011; Sundler et al., 2019). For example, Ratnam (2019) examined the narratives of refugees and asylum seekers, and supported the idea that multiplicity of experiences of a same phenomenon result in different ways of the story being told. As per Earle (2014), it might be a mistake to search for single, authentic truth, by seeking to present something as it is not. Subsequently, he encourages more knowledge on presenting reality as it is for each individual (Earle, 2014). Madzia (2013), on the other hand, argued that perspectives, however subjective, are still objectively related to the environment, therefore not that different after all, and Wertz (2005) argued that anything that is true for more than one participant is, in a way, empirically general for that context. Therefore, by using DP, this study aims to methodologically overcome some of the prominent critiques of qualitative research by encompassing and acknowledging the multiplicity of truths, yet still being in quest for the smallest component that remains the same for all – the essence of bereavement. To this end, the next section starts by briefly discussing the research methods commonly used in DP, followed by the justification for conducting interviews in prison settings. In so doing, it demonstrates the relevance of rapport and non-verbal communication in obtaining meaningful data, before examining the limitations and validity threats of this research approach.

3.6. Research Methods

Descriptions in phenomenology use ordinary language, can be verbal or written, from an interview or a group discussion (Wertz, 2005). Some authors argue that phenomenological approach requires in-depth, semi-structured interviews to elicit participants' stories (Smith et al., 2013; Starks and Brown Trinidad, 2007), while others use expressive forms of data collection, such as creative and/or arts-based methods (Wertz, 2005). To capture the subjective manifestations of bereavement in prison, and following a phenomenological approach, this study employed in-depth, semi-structured interviews, as elaborated below.

3.6.1. Interviews

Although interviews are the generic procedure used in qualitative design (Abbott et al., 2018; Kristensen and Ravn, 2015; Patenaude, 2004; Wertz, 2005), their use in this study can be justified by the nature of the topic, theoretical framework used, and approach to analysis. Wertz (2005) argued that interviews are convenient for phenomena that are complex, extensive, and include features unlikely to be spontaneously offered as a response, those that might need more probing. This method also captures the tone of the answer and enables research participants to direct the conversation, which is an important aspect of both the theoretical framework and design of this study. Although such an approach could result in the lack of consistency on the topics covered across the sample (Wilson et al., 2020), it could also bring a greater variety of information. Interviews further enable researchers to ask follow-up questions and carry a social component of interaction (Bosworth et al., 2005; Creswell, 2014; Spradley, 2003). However, Bahn and Barratt-Pugh (2011) argued that interviews resemble a forced conversation where each agent has different incentives. While the participants aim to balance the extent of information that they are comfortable sharing, researchers aim to extract as much data as possible (Bahn and Barratt-Pugh, 2011). From a trauma-informed research perspective, discussing one's thoughts and ideas can promote cognitive restructuring and foster self-regulation of emotions and reactions (Bonanno and Kaltman, 1999), shaping and reshaping meanings (Jakoby, 2012). Prior bereavement research also indicated that a provision of safe space and time dedicated to individual's personal experiences of death and grief might have a direct value to research participants (e.g., Harner et al., 2011; Hentz, 2002; Rodger, 2004; Vaswani, 2014). It might offer a relief, knowing that others have had similar experiences, as well as assist those, who might be in similar situations (Hentz, 2002). As per Lee and Renzetti (1990), the sensitivity of the topic is proportional to the incentive for study participants to either engage or disengage with research. Hence, such an approach might have an additional benefit to the participants, especially the marginalized population involved in this study.

On the other hand, as will be discussed in more detail in section 3.6.2., interviews have some limitations in obtaining the data. For example, the interviewees might (un-)intentionally leave some parts out, forget, or obscure certain aspects of their experience (Polkinghorne, 2007). They might also strive to not expose themselves or be perceived as foolish (Bahn and Barratt-Pugh, 2011). Likewise, there might be issues with articulacy and emotional literacy, which could be class and gender related (see section 2.3.). Yet, the purpose of gathering narratives is not to establish the factual accuracy of the event or its description, but the role and meaning it has for each participant (Giorgi and Giorgi, 2003; Polkinghorne, 2007). According to Sundler et al. (2019), when something is experienced, it is experienced as something that has a meaning for the individual. Thus, the main phenomenological question of "What is it like?" evokes awareness of an experience through acknowledgement of the existence of that "something" that it is like (van Manen, 2019), which is typically relayed through language.

3.6.1.1. The Role of Language

Prior research discussed the role of language in qualitative research (e.g., Polkinghorne, 2007) and Nicholson and Barnes (2013) considered language a powerful tool in determination of what one knows and how they know it. Van Manen (2019) argued that words are called to consciousness through scientific inquiry, rather than ascribed to living of an experience, but Zahavi (2019), following Husserl, believed that consciousness is present pre-reflective, during the experience. That would indicate that the experience is dumb before an individual articulates its sense. However, Ashworth (2003) described language as restrictive, in that the individual conforms to its established meanings, which may outstrip and modify their original intention to the one translated through the word used. Similarly, Laws and Crewe (2016) and Polkinghorne (2007) discussed the limitations of language in relaying complex and layered experiences, as well as the issue of emotional illiteracy (Laws and Crewe, 2016). Polkinghorne (2007) argued that worded descriptions may not always accurately depict the experience and its meaning, presenting a potential threat to validity, while Laws and Crewe (2016) claimed that men might lack emotional fluency, yielding rational responses. However, in DP, language and the accuracy of its usage play a minor role, as it aims to reach the transpersonal truth and the essence of things; narratives are only tools to reach the goal. Yet, Polkinghorne (2007) discussed the potential role of the interviewer, which could skew the narratives to reflect the interviewer's agenda. For example, the tone of a conversation set by a researcher could enable participants to read researcher's expectations and gauge the appropriateness of their answers (Polkinghorne, 2007). Therefore, the interviewer should be aware of their position and engage in self-reflective processes throughout the duration of the study (e.g., Phillips and Earle, 2010).

3.6.1.2. Prison Interviews

Apart from the general discussion on interviews in qualitative research and on the specific, phenomenological position assumed by the researcher when conducting them, prison interviews face additional challenges. The omnipresence of staff, and reinforcement of structure and obedience (Giallombardo, 1966) could affect prisoners' identities in the institution, as well as their view of themselves and their surrounding before being imprisoned (Schlosser, 2008; Wilson et al., 2020). Furthermore, prior research acknowledged that interviewees' motivation for participation might determine the level and nature of their involvement (Bosworth et al., 2005), but Schlosser (2008) and Abbot et al. (2018) suggested that those motives might be insincere for prisoner population. Prisoners might participate in research because the prison authority ordered them to do so or because of the (in)direct benefits they could gain, such as changing their routine, all of which could affect data integrity. Prisons might also shape the way in which prisoners discuss their experiences, as their reflection on the event might be additionally influenced by their self-awareness and position within the context of imprisonment (Liebling, 1999; Sorensen, 1950). For example, they might resist revealing situations that depict them in a negative way, given the general social desirability to project oneself in a positive light (Polkinghorne, 2007).

According to Newman (1958), face-to-face data sources might enhance researchers' understanding of a hidden meaning behind what was said (Spradley, 2003), but their success is subject to a variety of factors. Firstly, the richness and intimacy of data could depend on the rapport established between a researcher and research participants (Bosworth et al., 2005; Giallombardo, 1966; Laverty, 2003; Patenaude, 2004; Spradley, 2003). Rapport encourages sharing of information and cooperation, reflects trust, respect, and active engagement (Patenaude, 2004; Polkinghorne, 2007; Spradley, 2003). It can increase participants' confidence that a researcher will not judge them, regardless of what they have said (Polkinghorne, 2007). This was important in this study, due to the nature of its topic, prisoners' marginalized position in a society, and the potential complexity of bereavement and grief experiences, the expression of which might be shaped by the immediate socio-cultural context. To minimise the "otherness" of the researcher in this study and to build rapport swiftly, the author had to be transparent. She had to clearly state the purpose of research, emphasise her non-affiliation with the institution and her purely academic role in prison, and reassure participants of the confidentiality of the information shared (apart from the potential disclosure of harm, as will be explained in Ethical Considerations) (Apa et al., 2012; Liebling, 1999; Patenaude, 2004).

Secondly, the relationship between a researcher and research participants in qualitative research is volatile, unpredictable, and complex (Kincheloe, 2018). In this study, challenges in building rapport were further amplified given the nature of a prison context. As per the literature review, genuine rapport can be difficult to establish with a population that has been systematically stigmatized and trained to be compliant (Schlosser, 2008). It can also be burdened by research settings that are restricted in access (Bosworth et al., 2005, Patenaude, 2004) and that provide limited time to break down pre-set barriers and build trust (Liebling, 1999). Some research suggests a minimum of three interviews to overcome the distance between a researcher and a participant, underscoring the adversity of establishing trust in one, single meeting (Polkinghorne, 2007). For example, Bonanno and Kaltman (1999) argued that longitudinal research allows researchers to address more questions and gain a broader idea of the topic, albeit with the risk of overreporting similar results and burdening the participants. However, the researcher opted for a cross-sectional approach, given the restrictions and unpredictability of prisons, as well as the philosophical framework used, according to which a change in manifestation of bereavement over time should not modify the essence of things.

Apart from building rapport, another important part of interviews is the attainment of meaningful information (Spradley, 2003). Interviews can capture not only what was said, but non-spoken cues as well. For example, body-language, facial expressions, and silences (Bahn and Barratt-Pugh, 2011; Ratnam, 2019) can all be meaningful for the topic examined. Since an experience often permeates the body and the mind, a reflective gaze, accompanied by silence, might indicate engagement with the topic on a deeper level (Polkinghorne, 2007); as one becomes aware of the multiple dimensions of their experience, more might become reportable (Polkinghorne, 2007). Therefore, a good interviewer will allow for those silences. Ratnam (2019) proposed listening as a methodology in and of itself. According to this view, an engaged listener is an individual, who responds to participants' verbal and non-verbal cues in a verbal and non-verbal manner (Ratnam, 2019). For example, shrugging shoulders, tapping the table, or fidgeting can all be a part of the conversation, and the researcher in this study was aware that she had to acknowledge them, albeit not vocally. She used her own gestures, body-language, and cues, such as frowning or opening her eyes wide, to indicate that she was listening and to share her participants' concerns, anger, and frustration. This was somewhat easier to relay with participants' emotional responses to questions, where the researcher would mirror their smiling reactions and/or respect their tears by allowing for a moment of silence. As per Ratnam (2019), narratives are more than just means to data collection, they are felt and lived experiences of research participants. Given that interviews rely on the information filtered through interviewees' views and understandings (Creswell, 2014; Gilbert, 2002; Polkinghorne, 2007; Seah and Wilson, 2011; Walker et al., 2018), and might be additionally affected by researcher's presence (Creswell, 2014), interpretation of data (Gilbert, 2002; Polkinghorne, 2007), and prior experiences (Giorgi, 2012; Mihalache, 2019), the validity of the interviews is often questioned. The next section engages with the validity threats of the discussed research design and methods, even though some were accounted for through DP.

3.6.2. Issues of Validity and Reliability

According to Maxwell (2013), the two main validity threats in qualitative research, particularly interviews, are reflexivity (i.e., researcher's position and potential influence on the interview participant) and researcher's own bias. In general, validity refers to the believability of a statement or research finding, which needs to be supported by evidence, demonstrating its strength and power (Polkinghorne, 2007). As discussed already, a common critique of interviews is their proneness to errors, as they rely on individual memories and recollections of specific events (Creswell, 2014; Gilbert, 2002; Polkinghorne, 2007; Seah and Wilson, 2011; Walker et al., 2018). In this study, certain validity threats were accounted for by the adopted philosophical framework. In line with the research design, concerns around the researcher influencing the study were addressed through bracketing of the researcher's pre-conceived ideas (Giorgi, 2012; Mihalache, 2019; Neubauer et al., 2019; Tuffour, 2017; van Manen, 2019;

Wertz, 2005; Zahavi, 2019) and neutralizing the potential dogmas about reality (Dowling and Cooney, 2012; Laverty, 2003; van Manen, 2019; Wertz, 2005; Zahavi, 2019). To achieve this, the researcher thought about the knowledge, experiences, values, and beliefs she might bring into this study, either through her own encounters with the topic and/or through conducting a literature review, and consciously aimed to avoid having them drive the study process.

Methodologically, validity of this study was ensured by data interpretation that follows research paradigms (Sousa, 2014) and adheres to its conceptual roots (Polkinghorne, 2007). DP argues that scientific knowledge starts with a fresh, unbiased view of the phenomenon (Finlay, 2009; Neubauer et al., 2019; Sundler et al., 2019; Wertz, 2005). Therefore, its methodology underlies the philosophy that reflects on these natural, taken for granted, realist assumptions rooted in each individual, yet acknowledges the extent to which participant's knowledge might be flawed or limited (Salsberry, 1989; Sousa, 2014). For example, epistemologically, it examines that what cannot be known differently, but can *exist* differently (Giorgi and Giorgi, 2003). In other words, the individual cannot experience somebody else's experiences, but an experience of a phenomenon can exist in a variety of forms. Therefore, as per Giorgi (2008), one of the common mistakes in descriptive analysis is affirming the reality of an experience and presenting it as something that is, rather than as something that presented itself to the participant and/or was experienced as something. A researcher should not make the existential claim of the object, but keep it in the experiential realm (Giorgi, 2008; 2012), which will be demonstrated in presentation of the findings. One way of ensuring the reliability of the interviews is by including raw data in the presentation of findings as direct, verbatim quotes, which further boosts the credibility of the findings, as does an explanation of the social and cultural context of research (Polkinghorne, 2007; Sousa, 2014; Sundler et al., 2019; Wertz, 2005). According to Wertz (2005), excerpts of raw data are the hallmark of phenomenology, as they reveal the groundwork upon which the analysis has been conducted.

A further possible way of ensuring validity is triangulation of data sources, methods, and researchers (Neubauer et al., 2019; Sousa, 2014; Sundler et al., 2019). However, reliance on interpretations from multiple researchers is time-consuming and given the subjective approach to research, interrater reliability might be invalidated (Tuffour, 2017). An alternative could include member-checking, wherein the findings are given to participants for feedback (Creswell, 2014; Finlay, 2009; Neubauer et al., 2019; Polkinghorne, 2007; Sousa, 2014). As per Giorgi (2008), both those strategies are misguided, as they are motivated by empirical considerations, not the phenomenological ones. DP assumes that the described reality of a phenomenon might not exist and might be difficult to empirically validate, not even by member-checking (Sousa, 2014). Following this framework allows for understanding of an experience through individual's perception of the wholeness of that experience, revealing things important to them (Finlay, 2012; Starks and Brown Trinidad, 2007), while remaining critical and reflective of the data (Giorgi, 2000; 2012; Laverty, 2003; Neubauer et al., 2019; Smith et al., 2013; Sundler et al., 2019; van Manen, 2019). Returning to participants to validate research findings might be a step into realist ideals, away from the phenomenological ones (Finlay, 2009). From a theoretical perspective, member checking is impossible because the participants describe their experiences from a natural attitude, yet the analysis is conducted from a phenomenological and field-specific one (Giorgi, 2008). Although Colaizzi's method views member-checking as important, Giorgi argues that verification of findings is beyond the point, as phenomenological analysis aims to improve knowledge for the discipline, not for the individual (Giorgi, 2008). Subsequently, member-checking was not implemented in this study.

Overall, this discussion demonstrated some of the most common issues encountered when conducting qualitative interviews. However, many of those traditional challenges could be overcome by using a certain philosophical framework. Likewise, DP comes with its own set of challenges, starting with a lack of concrete guidance on applying it. As such, there is a great responsibility on the researcher to ensure everything is done accurately, while, at the same time, limiting and bracketing the researcher's role by design. To an extent, the need for crude guidelines and distancing of the researcher might be counter-intuitive to other qualitative research, yet epistemological flexibility and diversity of this approach aims to reconcile the best of both worlds – the idiosyncrasy of experiences with the wider usability of findings. The next section presents the steps taken to devise the interview schedule that was used in data collection for this study, followed by the presentation of the research sample involved.

3.6.3. Conducting the Interviews in this Study

The researcher developed a flexible interview schedule (see Appendix 1) based on the extensive literature review on bereavement and grief, interwoven with the criminological and sociological research on imprisonment. Having a schedule enabled consistency in addressing certain questions, before allowing the participants to take the interview in directions they decided to. It also provided the researcher with a sense of structure and boosted her confidence, knowing there is a loose script to go back to, which proved to be important when working with more reticent individuals. As will be discussed, the schedule was modified throughout the data collection process, as minor issues emerged. Such slight adaptations are known to prior research (see Choudhry et al., 2019, or Spradley, 2003) and enable the researcher to take advantage of design flexibility and to focus on certain emerging themes. According to Maxwell (2013), new insights might escape a researcher who does not allow for design adaptability and dismisses any knowledge beyond established scholarly theories. Following a phenomenological framework, the focus of the questions was on participants' detailed narration of their bereavement experience(s) in carceral contexts. This enabled the researcher to discern the essence of bereavement, that what is generalizable, from the effect(s) that imprisonment had on bereavement, the perspectival and the irreal of it.

To stay true to the phenomenological framework, when engaging in data collection, the researcher bracketed out all the preconceived ideas and knowledge on who should be mourned for and how, making the data internally meaningful and avoiding relating it to any theories or pre-existing concepts (Holloway and Todres, 2003). This approach enabled participants to take each conversation where they desired, opening the inquiry to new realms of knowledge. For example, two individuals discussed their intense bereavement of a pet, rather than humans, and some compared death-related bereavement to mourning their living child who was taken away by the social services. During each interview, the researcher used probing questions to prompt the participants to expand and elaborate on ideas (e.g., "What do you mean by that…?", "You mentioned … Why did that matter to you?", "Could you give me an example of …?").

Each interview began with an open-ended question about participants' motivation for participating in this study. It then inquired about other opportunities they might have had to discuss bereavement, probing for their views on the importance of talking about death and dying, in prison and in general. Before discussing specific bereavement experiences, the researcher gathered self-reported demographics (i.e., age, gender, race), as well as some information on their current offence and sentence length, time served, and prior imprisonment (see section 3.7.4.). The original interview schedule was modified with time to enhance the clarity of certain questions and to prevent potential data omission by not directly asking a specific question. For example, many participants struggled with the concept of ethnicity and often needed assistance from the researcher in the form of prompting (e.g., "White? White British? White Scottish?"). Hence, the researcher changed that question to ask for race. Similarly, most participants found the gender question funny, as it was obvious, to them, which sex they were. Subsequently, the researcher started introducing that questions with "and just for the recording, which gender do you identify yourself as?".

The next set of questions referred to participants' views on the important stages of their life, relevant life-events, and people in those stages. Many participants struggled with these questions and gave brief answers, especially younger males. Those short answers were often underscored with participants shrugging their shoulders, indicating that they had finished answering. Some also became squirmish and restless by not knowing what to say. The researcher used those situations to build rapport and reassure her participants that there was no right or wrong answer. As per Polkinghorne (2007), each interview was about the participant and their experiences, it was their story.

The main section of the interview schedule engaged specifically with death experiences, first before imprisonment and then during, even though this distinction quickly became blurred. As discussed, the researcher allowed the participants to steer the conversation, encouraging them to describe their experiences, even if those did not necessarily refer to their current imprisonment or that research site. Although such approach might limit the potential for comparing the experiences of different research sites, that was not the aim of this study anyway. Hence, having participants take the lead on the interview was in accordance with the purpose of this study, exploring prisoners' experiences of bereavement in carceral contexts.

The researcher concluded the interviews by asking prisoners for their recommendations on how to improve bereavement experiences in prison and inquiring about the main differences, from their perspective, between being bereft in prison and outside. Finally, the participants were given the opportunity to discuss how it felt being interviewed on this topic and whether they would like to report any immediate benefits/harms. As discussed in the Ethics section (3.10.), there were safeguarding measures in place if participants required additional support after the interview, although nobody did. The next section presents the methodological and philosophical discussion around the required study sample, followed by the presentation of the two research sites. Subsequently, it engages with recruitment methods to discuss the process of getting to the final sample of individuals that contributed to this study.

3.6.4. Research Sample

Traditional approaches to research would argue that the least biased study results come from random sampling (Bonanno and Kaltman, 1999; Polkinghorne, 2007), the golden standard of research (Erickson, 2018). Yet, random sampling would imply that every potential participant fits the inclusion criteria, which was not the case in this study. Namely, for a phenomenon to be described, understood, and clarified in detail, participants should have experienced the issue at hand (Kristensen and Ravn, 2015; Laverty, 2003; Starks and Brown

Trinidad, 2007; Wertz, 2005), have knowledge on it or a relevant relationship with it (Wertz, 2005), and be willing and ready to talk about it (Laverty, 2003). Therefore, DP advocates for purposive sampling (Fry, 2016; Sousa, 2014). Although the inability to randomly sample from a wide pool of potential applicants might be perceived as a limitation to generalizability of the findings, generalization in this study was achieved through the theoretical framework used (see section 3.3.2.).

According to Wertz (2005), participants in phenomenological studies can be laypersons, experts on the topic, even researchers themselves. They could also be individuals with no personal experience of the phenomenon, but who are in daily contact with those who do (e.g., prison officers), as they could give an insight on the potential stressors or even be stressors themselves (Wertz, 2005). Yet, recruiting prison officers in this study would not address the main research question, as, despite the diversity in experiences of the same phenomenon, each experience is unique to the individual. Thus, prisoners' experiences of bereavement can only be relayed by prisoners themselves. From a phenomenological standpoint, prisoners' experiences are emic; their meaning comes from within the individuals (Starks and Brown Trinidad, 2007). Although other people's agency and institutional structure could affect one's reasoning of the outcome, by shaping and reshaping their ideas of oneself and the overall culture, it could not affect the structure, or essentiality, of a phenomenon. Those influences could only provide texture to the lived experiences (Holloway and Todres, 2003).

Regarding the sample size, some phenomenological authors would argue for a small and somewhat homogenous sample that would allow for nuances of an experience to emerge, gradually building a bigger picture (e.g., Smith et al., 2013; Tuffour, 2017). Finlay (2009), however, stated that studies that embrace DP would seek to recruit a wider sample, as they aim toward generality. Likewise, Laverty (2003) would argue for the diversity of research participants to enhance richness and uniqueness of data, and Wertz (2005) suggested that there is no strict formula for phenomenological sampling; it depends on the knowledge that is being gathered, the quality of data, and the participant's lifeworld. There can be no data saturation point in phenomenology because it seeks to identify the depth of meaning not the quantitative dimension of experience (Giorgi, 2009).

This study kept the inclusion criteria broad to demonstrate open-mindedness and avoid operationalization of bereavement as a phenomenon related to a certain type of death. The only three conditions that had to be met to participate in this study were (1) having had the experience(s) of death prior to and/or during imprisonment, (2) being incarcerated, and (3) being convicted. The latter was mainly a practical consideration to minimize the potential for transfers of this, already transient population. Although Moran (2012) argued that time spent in prison affects one's experiences of that space and could reveal the potential interaction between bereavement and imprisonment, prescribing the length of prior incarceration would significantly reduce the pool of potential participants. Given the high refusal rates for bereavement research in the community (Stroebe and Stroebe, 1983) and Calanzani et al.'s (2016) discussion on silent refusals through avoidance of engaging with researchers in any way without clearly refusing to participate, the researcher decided against artificially limiting her sample size in this study. She was flexible and tailored the recruitment procedures and sample size to each research site.

3.7. Recruitment of Prison Sites and Participants

The scarcity of prior research examining the concept of bereavement within imprisonment, especially in Scotland, provided little guidance on which prison population to focus on in this study and subsequently, which research sites to request access to. The contrasting gaps in bereavement and criminology research complicated this decision further. Namely, prison research is scarce on female prisoners (e.g., Bosworth et al., 2005; Covington, 1998; Crewe et al., 2017) and elderly (Her Majesty Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland, 2017; Maschi et al., 2015), and bereavement research could benefit from studies on males (e.g., Jones et al., 2019; Stroebe and Stroebe, 1983; Zinner, 2000) and young adults (e.g., Jones et al., 2019). Therefore, the researcher targeted prisons that housed both genders and those holding long-term prisoners, to increase the potential of accessing a diverse population.

3.7.1. Research Sites

The sampling pool for this study consisted of 13 publicly managed prisons in Scotland. Given the operational differences between public and private prisons, the two private ones were excluded. Private prisons often emerge when public expenditures need to be reduced, but public safety, whether perceived or actual, must be guaranteed. They are run and financed like big corporations, which is also their main critique (Ryan and Ward, 2014; Taylor and Cooper, 2008). Some argue that private prisons serve to maintain an unequal society and reflect interests of the economically powerful (Ryan and Ward, 2014) at the expense of the terms and conditions of its employees (Taylor and Cooper, 2008). For example, Taylor and Cooper (2008) found low staff morale, degraded pay, poorer work conditions, systemic understaffing, and high officer turnover in their study on one private prison in Scotland. Hence, private prisons were excluded to control for potential confounding variables stemming from prison's organization.

The decision to include female prisoners immediately narrowed down potential research sites to five. Excluding prisons housing mostly remand and/or short-term offenders, resulted in four potential research sites.

Following the University Ethics Committee's approval, the researcher submitted the Ethical approval form to the SPS, requesting access to those four prisons. Yet, the SPS deemed the population in one of those too vulnerable and too low to grant access for studying such a sensitive topic as bereavement. Access was given to two other prisons, both housing male and female offenders, and one housing the elderly as well. The access to the fourth prison was provisionally granted, if the data gathered from the two institutions was inadequate. To protect the privacy and identity of each research site and research participants, the researcher will refer to the two prisons by pseudonyms – Camhanaich and Callan prisons. The next section explores recruitment procedure in each, followed by the description of the final sample.

To account for potential difficulties in recruitment, given the sensitivity of the topic, vulnerability of the participants, and power relations in the prison context, the researcher had broad inclusion criteria. The SPS suggested to have participants referred to the researcher through bereavement services, chaplaincy, or staff within each respective prison. Kristensen and Ravn (2015), in their study on recruitment procedures in research using qualitative interviews, recognized using a mediator, or a gatekeeper, as a well-known recruitment strategy. Prison research often depends on the institution to identify research participants (Abbott et al., 2018; Bosworth et al., 2005; Vaswani, 2018), as people working with prisoners can raise their concerns regarding the potential harm a study might present to certain individuals or if they might pose a risk to the researcher (Abbott et al., 2018). As per Abbott et al. (2018), assistance of prison staff is even more common in purposive sampling. Similarly, Bonano and Kaltman (1999) stated that bereavement studies based on referrals by a person of trust, such as a religious group, a former participant of the study, or a medical professional, tend to have the highest acceptance rate. However, such a method might only identify prisoners who have already reached out for support, yet this study was equally interested in the experiences of those unrecognized in their grief. Thus, the researcher negotiated with the SPS to allow each institution to lead on recruitment strategies. According to Apa et al. (2012), accommodating institutional variations in prison culture is an essential component in prison research.

After gaining the University of Strathclyde's Ethics Committee Approval, as well as the SPS's Ethical Approval, the researcher started recruiting the participants. Initially, the recruitment process was the same between Camhanaich and Callan prisons, with the researcher initiating an e-mail conversation with the institutions and scheduling an initial visit. The purpose of this visit was threefold. It enabled the researcher to familiarize herself with each institution, their schedule, and daily routine. This was an important component for recruitment and data collection, given the restrictive nature of conducting prison research. It also provided an opportunity for the researcher to discuss the research aim with her respective contact persons and engage in a dialogue with each institution, enabling them to suggest modifications, ask questions, and seek clarifications. As prior research indicated, gatekeepers (i.e., individuals who facilitate contact between the researcher and potential research participants) can be a critical factor in setting up a study; they have the power to make it challenging or successful for the researcher (Fox et al., 2011; Kristensen and Ravn, 2015; Patenaude, 2004; Trulson et al., 2004). Finally, the initial visit negotiated strategies to be employed to cause minimal disruption to each prison's daily routine (as suggested by Apa et al., 2012, Trulson et al., 2004, or Wakai et al., 2009). After the initial visit, each prison took the lead on the remainder of the recruitment. Since privacy implications are elevated when presenting findings from studies on prisoners (Abbott et al., 2018), to protect confidentiality and identity of research participants, the level of information that can be provided about each research site is limited.

3.7.2. Recruitment of Participants in Camhanaich Prison

The researcher met with her contact in Camhanaich prison, the senior member of the team, in October 2018. On the initial visit, the researcher and her contact agreed that she would e-mail him the recruitment poster within a week of the initial visit (see Appendix 4), to hand them out to prisoners, and a subsequent visit was scheduled. The purpose of the second visit was for the researcher to introduce herself and her study to the prisoners and staff, increase her presence in the institution, build rapport with unit managers, and initiate informal conversations about the study. This could have increased the researcher's credibility among prison officers, as well as prisoners (Fox et al., 2011). Approaching unit managers to inquire about their suggestions on which prisoners to speak to was another important step in navigating the prison grounds and acknowledging the prison hierarchy (see Rowe, 2014). Apa et al. (2012) noted that prison staff will eventually be the ones delegating the interview call from the researcher to the prisoner and escorting prisoners to the interview site. Thus, building strong relationships with unit managers and prison officers can contribute to the overall success of the study. As per Fox et al. (2011), the researcher should remember that officers are not obliged to assist in research and should, therefore, appreciate their support.

Apart from using staff-based referrals to get a purposive sample for this study, the researcher also used opportunistic sampling through snowballing technique, such as asking prisoners about any other individuals on their landing, who might be interested in participation. Although this recruitment strategy is not necessarily common in prison research (Abbott et al., 2018, see also Laws and Crewe, 2016), it is widespread in qualitative studies (Kristensen and Ravn, 2015). It has also demonstrated success in research with vulnerable and/or hard to reach populations, the so called *hidden populations,* such as sex workers, drug-users, people infected with HIV virus (e.g., Lee and Renzetti, 1990; Magnani et al., 2005; Syvertsen et al., 2012), victims of sexual exploitation and human trafficking (e.g., Acharya, 2014), victims of labour trafficking (e.g., Zhang et al., 2014), and un-incarcerated drug sellers (e.g., Jacques et al., 2014). Therefore, snowball sampling might incite an interest of those who did not ask for official bereavement support or who might have gone through bereavement in a different prison or in the community. Although this could bring the risk of assembling like-minded individuals (Laws and Crewe, 2016), the potential threat to validity was accounted for by design. Hence, the first wave of recruitment used staff referrals, supplemented by snowballing technique, and yielded nine participants, four males and five females.

After the first recruitment phase, the researcher sent the Participant Information Sheet and Informed Consent (see Appendices 2 and 3) to her contact for distribution to interested prisoners. This was done approximately two weeks before scheduling the first interview to allow the individuals enough time to read through the documents and re-think their decision to participate (Abbott et al., 2018). In the meantime, the researcher worked with the prison to obtain clearance for a voice-recorder. Although the first recruitment wave was successful, with no subsequent refusals, the researcher did another sweep in early February 2019. This time the focus was on prisoners convicted of sex offences. On the one hand, providing everyone with equal opportunities to participate in research and not (consciously) depriving anyone of any potential research benefits is in accordance with the third principle of the Belmont report on Ethical Principles in Research (i.e., justice). On the other hand, including diverse prisoner populations was part of the research design. Capturing as many experiences as possible would account for potential limitations of cross-sectional approach and add another layer to the phenomenological analysis, aimed at discerning the essence of bereavement from the contextual factors of that experience. The second recruitment wave was conducted in a similar fashion as the first one and resulted in 15 individuals expressing their interest to participate. There were three subsequent refusals, bringing the final sample in Camhanaich prison to 21.

3.7.3. Recruitment of Participants in Callan Prison

The recruitment process in Callan prison was significantly slower than in Camhanaich prison. The researcher sent an e-mail to her contact person in prison but got redirected to a junior member of a psychology team, who then worked with the researcher for the duration of the study. Him and the researcher scheduled the initial visit to Callan prison in November 2019. The researcher discussed the proposed recruitment procedure, but her contact had some reservations about the feasibility of the researcher approaching many prisoners at once, as she did in Camhanaich prison. Namely, many prisoners in Callan prison spend their days in educational or vocational activities, and it can be challenging to approach them as a group. Thus, he suggested that the researcher e-mailed him the recruitment poster and the Participant Information Sheet (PIS), so he would be the first point of contact between the prisoners and the study. He asked the researcher for permission to slightly modify the poster (see Appendix 5) to make the recruitment process easier. Since the structure and content on the poster remained intact, the researcher and her supervisors agreed. Upon permission, the original poster was used to get buy-in from the unit managers, while the PIS' were distributed to those prisoners that the researcher's contact and his on-site team believed might be interested in the study. This was done mid-December 2018.

The researcher scheduled a second visit for February 2019. At this time, she was informed that many prisoners in Callan prison have literacy difficulties, raising concerns about the extent of their understanding of the PIS and the genuineness of the informed part of their consent. It was therefore agreed that the researcher would use her second visit, and every subsequent one, once she started interviewing, to build rapport with new individuals her contact identified as potential participants. She would engage in a one on one, informal conversation about the study with them and go over PIS. Reading the document out loud to interested participants is a method used by Harner et al. (2011) in their study. These conversations were done in private, but the location of the conversations varied depending on the prisoners' location at the time (e.g., work shed, programming rooms, interview rooms). If they agreed to participate, after reading the PIS, the researcher would schedule an interview through her contact person in about two weeks' time.

The first recruitment wave yielded five participants, two males and three females, but one female soon dropped out, as she believed that such a topic would be too difficult for her to discuss at that moment, lowering the sample size to four. The first interview was conducted in late February 2019. In late March 2019, the on-site team went through the individual files of each prisoner they worked with and sent out another wave of recruitment posters to about 100 additional individuals. This resulted in another ten males expressing interest, but one revoked his consent before the interview and one was released early. Thus, the final sample in Callan prison was 12 participants.

3.7.4. Final Sample

The final sample for this study consisted of 33 individuals from two Scottish prisons: 21 in Camhanaich prison and 12 in Callan. Mirroring prior research (Belknap, 2015; Bosworth et al., 2005; Covington, 1998; Kilty, 2006; Olson and McEwen, 2004), and despite the extra effort invested in recruitment, the overall sample was predominantly male (roughly 80%:20%). However, this is almost five times higher than the proportion of women in Scottish prisons, which is currently around 4% (SPS, 2018). Out of seven females who participated, five were in Camhanaich prison and two were in Callan. As indicated in Figure 1, both prisons housed male and female prisoners, but the mean age was higher in Camhanaich.

Figure 1. Sample Characteristics

N=33		Total	Camhanaich Prison	Callan Prison
Gender	Male	26 (79%)	16 (76%)	10 (83%)
	Female	7 (21%)	5 (24%)	2 (17%)
Age Range		18-65	22-65	18-44
Mean Age		$\bar{x}$ =31.6 years	$\bar{x}$=36.8 years	$\bar{x}$=22.5 years

Given that many prisoners were recalled to serve the remainder of their sentence as a consequence of a breach of order or license, the exact time spent in prison and the overall sentence length were difficult to establish. However, the participants' self-reports on the offence type are presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Offence Type by Institution

Offense type		Camhanaich Prison	Callan Prison
(Armed) Robbery and Assault	Male	4	0
	Female	0	0
Assault (w/ Injury, Permanent Disfigurement)	Male	0	3
	Female	2	0
Murder	Male	0	0
	Female	3	1
Sex Offence	Male	9	6
	Female	0	0
Other (e.g., pub fight, theft, knife possession, house break-in)	Male	3	1
	Female	0	1

The next section examines the data collection processes, followed by the overview of the analysis procedure.

3.8. Data Collection

As discussed, data in this study was gathered through semi-structured interviews from a sample of convicted, adult, male and female prisoners, using a phenomenological framework. To fulfil this task, the researcher stepped back and asked open phenomenological questions (Fry, 2016; Holloway and Todres, 2003). The aim of this study was to explore prisoners' experiences of bereavement in carceral contexts. Given the theoretical complexity of bereavement and an interdisciplinary, as well as exploratory nature of this study, the researcher avoided defining specific terms. However, as per Giorgi (2009), she asked questions that would invite the participant to focus on a specific situation they have experienced. Otherwise, the data gathered could be too abstract or opinionated (Giorgi, 2009). Thus, the researcher asked general, but directed questions, such as "Can you describe any other opportunities you had to discuss this topic in prison, if any?", "To what extent was it important for you to discuss the topic of death and dying?", "Could you describe the wider situation around that time [of death]?". She also never directly challenged the participants, even if their statements differed from what prior research and/or other participants might have indicated (for example, around relationships with prison officers). Rather, she encouraged them to expand on their views (e.g., "You stated X. Why do you say that, could you explain that to me please?"). Furthermore, assisted by bracketing, the researcher entered the field acting like she did not know much about prisons, prison culture, and bereavement, allowing the participants to teach her everything instead. For example, she inquired about the typical day in prisons, the opportunities for spending one's free time, and the relationship with others. Finally, whenever a participant asked the researcher if she knew something already, typically prefacing it with *"I don't know if you've heard about X"*, she would answer negatively and allowed the participants to explain. This shifted the perception of power from the researcher to the participants, enabling them to control what was being said and how. From an analytical perspective, this created a data-set that comprised of information above and beyond just bereavement experiences, enabling a greater variety of dimensions to work with during imaginative variation and enhancing the internal validity of the claims. Likewise, it avoided narrowing the discussion to potential preconceived ideas about bereavement and enabled the researcher to gain a better understanding of the topic from the participants' perspective.

Before each interview, the researcher obtained a verbal confirmation from every participant on the following four conditions: (1) they read and understood the PIS; (2) they had no additional questions or if they did, those were answered then and there (one participant had additional questions on data storage and anonymity, which the researcher answered to the participant's satisfaction); (3) they agreed to be audio-recorded (one participant did not agree to being recorded, but agreed to researcher writing extensive notes); and (4) they signed the informed consent. Following the verbal confirmation of understanding all the information, the researcher turned on the recorder and started the interview.

During the interview, the researcher was mindful of openness, empathy, and attentive listening required of a phenomenological approach (Fry, 2016). Openness was achieved by bracketing prior knowledge and ideas, and constantly reminding oneself not to critique what was said, but to encourage further explanation. For example, one participant mentioned that they could not deal with bereavement in prison, although their emotions were there. There were so many other things that they needed to focus on while imprisoned, leaving no room for grief. While analysing, the researcher recognized that the literature review discussed suspended grief, yet what this participant was describing seemed, and indeed was, new and fascinating. This will be examined in more detail in the analysis section and will be referred to as fragmented grief; a term that encompasses more than just a delay or interruption in grieving process. It denotes a conscious coping strategy, as well as a reactionary response to bereavement.

As with recruitment, there were slight differences in data collection processes between the two institutions. Regarding the location of the interviews, Newman (1958) encouraged researchers to conduct prison interviews on a neutral ground, such as a prison library or education centre. Places that reinstate custodial setting (Newman, 1958) or might be dangerous for researchers (Liebling, 1999) should be avoided, although researchers cannot always make that decision. In Camhanaich prison, data collection was between November 2018 and April 2019, and interviews were held in the Agents' visits rooms. Those rooms were see-through, but sound-proof, accessible from the front of the house. Thus, the researcher did not have to go onto the landings. She was usually given two time slots per interview, including the break between them (105 minutes total). Although she aimed to avoid relying on follow-up interviews, as prior research discussed the unpredictability of the prison context, potential for an early release (Byrne, 2005), and limited opportunity to meet with the same participant multiple times (Abbott et al., 2018), this had to be done on two occasions. Hence, the range of the interview duration in this prison was from 28 minutes to 4 hours and 14 minutes, completed over two sessions. Data collection in Callan prison started in February 2019 and was completed mid-June 2019. The interviews in this institution were conducted on the landing, also in see-through, sound-proof rooms that are normally used for psychological assessments and one-on-one support. Most interviews in Callan prison lasted about an hour, ranging from 36 minutes to three hours. All interviews, bar one, were completed in one visit and data was analysed following Giorgi's (2000) framework.

3.9. Data Analysis

Giorgi (2000) proposed specific steps to a scientific analysis, yet he underscored that such a narrow, stepwise approach should be taken with reservation. Apparently, it could yield incomplete results, especially given the breadth of the topics that phenomenology could examine. However, it is argued that Giorgi's approach contributes to a robust analysis, providing a clear insight into the phenomenon examined (Jackson et al., 2018). Despite the large extent of data gathered in this study, the researcher did not use any software to assist in data organization and analysis. Computer coding appears as more systematic, structured, and scientific, but its main downsides are the superficiality in analysis and the inability to draw deeper connections, above and beyond the initial comparisons (Creswell, 2014; Erickson, 2018). According to Holloway and Todres (2003), computer aided analysis packages can overemphasise the relevance of parts in phenomenological analysis and shift the focus away from the whole. Therefore, in accordance with the aim of this research and its theoretical framework, the researcher conducted analysis by hand, following the steps discussed below.

As with other qualitative approaches (narrative research, interpretative analysis, life-story approach) (e.g., Creswell, 2014; Maxwell, 2013), descriptive phenomenological analysis begins with transcribing the materials (Wertz, 2005). As all participants in this study, bar one, consented to being audio-recorded, data collection yielded 32 recordings and one interview that relied on notetaking. Each recording was fully transcribed by the author and left as it was. In other words, the transcripts (and/or presented quotes) were not edited in any way, so they include swear words, grammatical mistakes, and dialectal expressions. According to Carmack and DeGroot (2014), some researchers edit quotations for clarity. Fry (2016) had similar concerns regarding the level of detail which to include in the transcript, whether to omit the non-verbal dimensions of interaction and repeated words, and how to represent and verbalize colloquialisms. The author deemed it important to analyze and quote transcripts as they were. As per literature review, there might be differences in bereavement experiences based on gender and class, which could be reflected in emotional intelligence and articulacy. Hence, the accuracy of expression can provide a nuanced meaning and mirror the individual's educational, social, and cultural background, potentially adding another layer in revealing the essence of bereavement. After transcribing all the recordings, the in-depth analysis began.

Step 1: Gaining a Sense of the Whole

This first step in Giorgi's descriptive analysis is reading and rereading the materials (transcriptions) to grasp the holistic sense of each interview (Giorgi, 2012; Giorgi and Giorgi, 2003). Giorgi argued that one cannot understand the general meaning of the data, without knowing the end of each conversation. At this stage, the researcher approached each transcript with no definitions, assumptions, or expectations of the findings (Neubauer et al., 2019). Nothing was common-sensical and anything could become a finding. Since the materials can be lengthy, the next step was to create smaller meaning units that would enable the researcher to retain information throughout the analysis (Giorgi, 2000; 2012; Giorgi and Giorgi, 2003). (The process of applying this framework is delineated below)

Step 2: The Process of Constituting Parts

Once the whole has been grasped, the researcher had a vague idea of how each description ended (Giorgi and Giorgi, 2003). Then, the materials were broken down in their constituting parts, the *invariants*, focusing on the phenomenon researched (Giorgi, 2000; 2012; Giorgi and Giorgi, 2003). In this step, the researcher read and reread each transcription numerous times, and every time there was a shift in meaning, she made make a mark (Giorgi, 2012; Giorgi and Giorgi, 2003). The following is an excerpt from the first interview in this study, a female in her late 20s. Each new meaning unit is indicated with a line:

> *"Eeeeeem, I was 15│and I've just lost my cousin [name]. │Eeeeem… That was… That was quite hard,│ 'cause he saved my life in a… [specific type of accident] when I was 13,│ so I lost him two years later, so… │'Round about then I started… Gettin' into trouble and stuff like that, that's when it really, mainly started."*

As per Giorgi (2012), the meaning units identified this way are arbitrary, they simply indicate a spontaneous move in a description or a switch to a different topic. They have no theoretical weight but are practical tools to assist the analysis (Giorgi and Giorgi, 2003). Therefore, different researchers are likely to denote different meaning units (Giorgi, 2012).

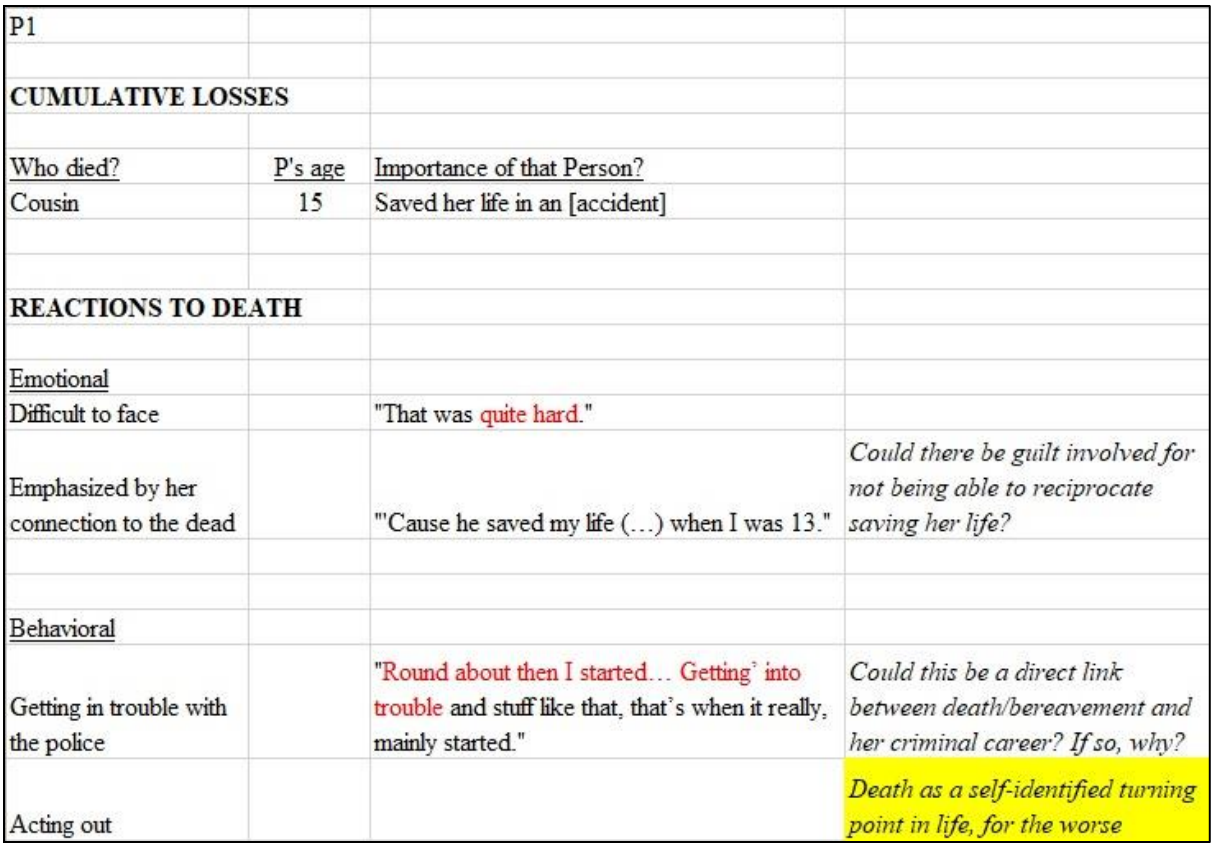
The second part of this step was to name those specific themes or create categories of data (Wertz, 2005) and reflect on them (Gill, 2014). For the purposes of this study, the author created an Excel sheet for each individual participant, compiling a secondary dataset with individual meaning units. In so doing, she noted certain questions that were analyzed and reflected on, after the whole transcript was divided into meaning units and themes.

Figure 3. Data Classification

MEANING UNIT IDENTIFIED	POTENTIAL TOPIC IT REFERS TO
Eeeeeem, I was 15 *and I've just lost my cousin [name].*	Identifies the **death of her cousin** and **her age when the death occurred**.
Eeeeem… That was… That was quite hard	**The effect that death had on her.**
'cause he saved my life in a… [specific type of accident] when I was 13,	Self-provided explanation on **attachment**/ **importance of that individual** in her life.
so I lost him two years later, so…	More **detailed timeline** of those two crucial events.
'Round about then I started… Gettin' into trouble and stuff like that, that's when it really, mainly started.	Links the death of that individual to the beginning of her criminal behavior; **behavioral expression** of bereavement?

As indicated in Figure 3, the researcher used all the data provided, not just the information related to bereavement. This was done to grasp a bigger picture of the overall situation a person was in when the death occurred. As the researcher was nearing the end of each transcript, the themes expanded then shrunk again. For the example above, the two main themes were *the death (cumulative losses)* and *the reaction to death*. The first theme had additional subthemes, such as the social relationship of the individual to the bereft, the age of the bereft at the time of death, and the relevance of that individual to the participant. The second theme was divided into emotional and behavioral subsets. Each subtheme was supported by the relevant quotations and the researcher's notes/thoughts were indicated in an additional column (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. An Example of the Process of Constituting Parts



P1			
CUMULATIVE LOSSES			
Who died?	P's age	Importance of that Person?	
Cousin	15	Saved her life in an [accident]	
REACTIONS TO DEATH			
Emotional			
Difficult to face		"That was quite hard."	
Emphasized by her connection to the dead		"'Cause he saved my life (…) when I was 13."	*Could there be guilt involved for not being able to reciprocate saving her life?*
Behavioral			
Getting in trouble with the police		"Round about then I started… Getting' into trouble and stuff like that, that's when it really, mainly started."	*Could this be a direct link between death/bereavement and her criminal career? If so, why?*
Acting out			*Death as a self-identified turning point in life, for the worse*

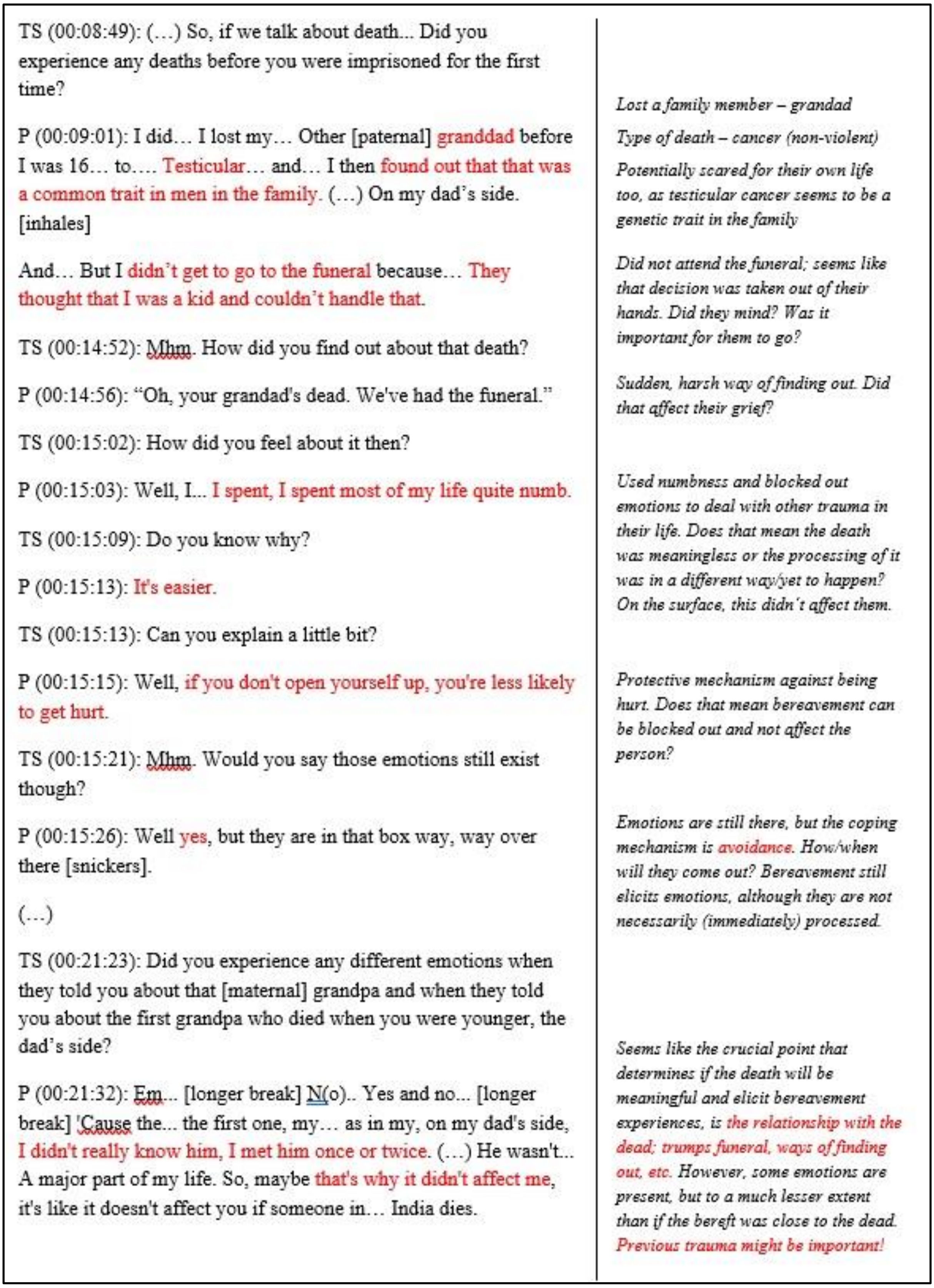
Through reflection, the researcher established the object as perceived (Gill, 2014) and identified the *what* of the conscious experience, the *noema*, as well as the meaning it holds for a participant, the *how*, the *noesis* (Gill, 2014; Neubauer et al., 2019). This helped in organizing the data for a later in-depth, structural analysis. Wertz (2005) argued that redundant, irrelevant, or incidental expressions can now be removed from the transcription and data can be cleaned, but the researcher did not do that for the reasons discussed above. Once the data was prepared, the third step was to reflect on each meaning unit to realize what it reveals about the topic, understanding its relevance for the study.

Step 3: Transforming the Data into Direct Insight in the Phenomenon Examined

The third step in the analysis is the crucial stage in DP and it relies on the imaginative variation (Giorgi, 2008; 2012; Giorgi and Giorgi, 2003), which includes transforming the data into expressions related to the field of study (Giorgi, 2012). For the example above, bereavement was understood as an emotional trauma or burden that could be manifested through anti-social and attention seeking behavior; it alludes to a behavioral expression of emotional issues. As per Giorgi and Giorgi (2003), this step reveals the nature of a phenomenon (e.g., outward, aggressive nature of bereavement) by articulating the lived experiences in a field-specific way (e.g., emotional trauma triggered or caused by death). This step also explicitly positioned the presented expression of a participant’s lifeworld into the essence of a phenomenon, void of individual specificities (e.g., death of an important individual might elicit a strong emotional response triggering an anti-social, expressive reaction). As per Giorgi and Giorgi (2003) and Giorgi (2008; 2012), this is the most problematic step, as there are no strict criteria on how to achieve it, despite it being the heart of this method.

Imaginative variation enables researchers to vary specific dimensions of an object and examine the effect that a removal of its characteristics has on that object (Giorgi and Giorgi, 2003). If the removed tenet was a key dimension of that object, the object would collapse, but if it was an accidental feature, the removal might cause a slight modification of the object, yet it would remain recognizable. For example, would the emotional reaction to bereavement be strong if the dead was not important to the bereft? Would a lesser emotional reaction also lead to a behavioral expressions of emotional hardship? Is any reaction necessary or is *bereavement* just a label indicating that someone has died, but carrying no specific meaning for the bereft? Giorgi and Giorgi (2003) stated that the researcher should constantly re-evaluate and reassess the transformed articulations of each experience, until they are satisfied that the extracted phenomenological content matches what was presented by research participants. Figure 5 demonstrates the application of imaginative variation when examining the relationship between the dead and the bereft, and the subsequent impact that death can have on the individual. This analysis is based on the interview transcript from the second participant, a female in her late 20s.

Figure 5. An Example of Applying Imaginative Variation to Data



TS (00:08:49): (…) So, if we talk about death... Did you experience any deaths before you were imprisoned for the first time?	
P (00:09:01): I did… I lost my… Other [paternal] granddad before I was 16… to…. Testicular… and… I then found out that that was a common trait in men in the family. (…) On my dad's side. [inhales]	*Lost a family member – grandad* *Type of death – cancer (non-violent)* *Potentially scared for their own life too, as testicular cancer seems to be a genetic trait in the family*
And… But I didn't get to go to the funeral because… They thought that I was a kid and couldn't handle that.	*Did not attend the funeral; seems like that decision was taken out of their hands. Did they mind? Was it important for them to go?*
TS (00:14:52): Mhm. How did you find out about that death?	
P (00:14:56): "Oh, your grandad's dead. We've had the funeral."	*Sudden, harsh way of finding out. Did that affect their grief?*
TS (00:15:02): How did you feel about it then?	
P (00:15:03): Well, I... I spent, I spent most of my life quite numb.	*Used numbness and blocked out emotions to deal with other trauma in their life. Does that mean the death was meaningless or the processing of it was in a different way/yet to happen? On the surface, this didn't affect them.*
TS (00:15:09): Do you know why?	
P (00:15:13): It's easier.	
TS (00:15:13): Can you explain a little bit?	
P (00:15:15): Well, if you don't open yourself up, you're less likely to get hurt.	*Protective mechanism against being hurt. Does that mean bereavement can be blocked out and not affect the person?*
TS (00:15:21): Mhm. Would you say those emotions still exist though?	
P (00:15:26): Well yes, but they are in that box way, way over there [snickers].	*Emotions are still there, but the coping mechanism is avoidance. How/when will they come out? Bereavement still elicits emotions, although they are not necessarily (immediately) processed.*
(…)	
TS (00:21:23): Did you experience any different emotions when they told you about that [maternal] grandpa and when they told you about the first grandpa who died when you were younger, the dad's side?	
P (00:21:32): Em... [longer break] N(o).. Yes and no... [longer break] 'Cause the... the first one, my… as in my, on my dad's side, I didn't really know him, I met him once or twice. (…) He wasn't... A major part of my life. So, maybe that's why it didn't affect me, it's like it doesn't affect you if someone in… India dies.	*Seems like the crucial point that determines if the death will be meaningful and elicit bereavement experiences, is the relationship with the dead; trumps funeral, ways of finding out, etc. However, some emotions are present, but to a much lesser extent than if the bereft was close to the dead. Previous trauma might be important!*

This participant identified different reactions to death than the first participant, but also indicated a difference in her own experiences of the two deaths, based on her relationship with the deceased [maternal and paternal grandpa]. She experienced emotions on a different level, depending on her attachment to the dead, but even the higher emotional response was not outwardly manifested. In fact, based on the interview, this participant acknowledged her emotions and recognized that they were difficult, but actively decided to supress them and put them aside ("they are in that box, way, way over there.") This reaction mirrors that of the first participant, in that the death elicited emotional disturbance, but this individual decided not to act on it in any way. Subsequently, the behavioral outbursts are unlikely to be the essence of bereavement, but they might be an accidental feature. Their removal did not collapse the phenomenon, just modified it slightly. Hence, it might be more appropriate to conclude that the nature of a phenomenon is not always outward and aggressive, but it is emotional.

In philosophy, imaginative variation would lead to universality. However, in social sciences it can only lead to generality, as social sciences account for the context, rather than strive to abstraction (Giorgi and Giorgi, 2003). At this stage, the researcher contextualized the contiguity of data within time and space by analysing the connections between the phenomenon examined, in this case bereavement, and its experiences in different social contexts, as described by research participants. For example, is the outward expression of bereavement related to being imprisoned? However, Giorgi and Giorgi (2003) cautioned against presenting the invariant aspects of a phenomenon through the established labels or existing jargon, to avoid specific theoretical strengths and weaknesses being automatically applied to the description. Although imaginative variation bolsters scientific rigor, and could consult theory and prior knowledge, DP requires creative language to illustrate the true essence of something (Giorgi and Giorgi, 2003).

Step 4: Synthesizing Transformed Meaning Units into the Structure of an Experience

Phenomenological analysis provides a nondualist approach to life (Finlay, 2012; LeVasseur, 2003); it neither assumes the truth to be on either end of the spectrum, nor in the middle, but reconciles the existence of its multiplicity. Therefore, the next step was to synthesize individual insights into a consistent statement on the structure of the experience (Giorgi, 2000; 2012; Wertz, 2005). In this stage, the researcher went back and forth among the meaning units, and between the unit and the whole, before the interdependence of parts and the structure of the whole was reached (Holloway and Todres, 2003; Neubauer et al., 2019; Wertz, 2005). Subsequently, the findings presented an insight into individuals' experiences and contextualized them within their physical and cultural environment (Finlay, 2012; LeVasseur, 2003; Wertz, 2005). All the transformed meaning units were collapsed into a consistent statement about the experience, used to clarify and interpret the raw data (Giorgi, 2012).

Step 5: Interpreting the Raw Data

Once a structure is established, it enables methodical and systematic understanding of the empirical data, as it reduces a myriad of details around different experiences to their essential components (Giorgi and Giorgi, 2003). Hence, each subsequent step in descriptive phenomenological analysis requires a more refined and specific analysis of the previous step. However, in the last step, the researcher went back to the holistic interpretation of data (Giorgi and Giorgi, 2003), this time through a field-specific approach. Wertz (2005) argued that epoché can be deliberately abandoned in the last phase of analysis to prompt phenomenological discussion on established theories (similar is presented in Sousa, 2014). But, according to Sundler et al. (2019), questioning researcher’s preunderstanding, identification, and awareness of ideas could be especially important during analysis. As per Fincham et al. (2008), emotionally sensed knowledge needs to be recognized, as personal experiences can bolster researcher’s understanding of nuances in individual experiences and explain data patterns (Carmack and DeGroot, 2014; Rager, 2005; Rolls and Relf, 2006). Thus, the researcher’s reflexive input on data collection and analysis allows the reader to judge rigor, plausibility, and evidence-base of the findings proposed (Neubauer et al., 2019; Wertz, 2005).

3.9.1. Self-Reflection on the Research Process

Self-reflection in qualitative research accounts for the ways in which the researcher’s values, beliefs, and biases might influence the research process (e.g., Phillips and Earle, 2010). Carmack and DeGroot (2014) refer to self-reflection as theoretical sensitivity and Ratnam (2019) argues that acknowledging and positioning oneself into their research is common when conducting, analysing, and writing qualitative research. Phenomenology calls for a genuine curiosity and empathy from the researcher, joined with reflexivity and awareness of their own position (Finlay, 2012). As per Fry (2016), empathy indicates attempts of sharing that phenomenological space with the other; of engaging reflexively with one’s own body and reactions, as well as with the intersubjective encounter with the participant. In other words, empathy would evoke feelings in the interviewer that would (subconsciously) mirror the emotions of the interviewee. For example, the researcher in this study found herself excited about certain things the participants were revealing, such as the approach of their release date or gaining a vocational qualification, but also sharing their concerns about certain issues and being sad over their narratives. Quite often after the interview, the researcher would phone her mom, just to see how she was doing. This was more prominent when the interviewees were either discussing their experiences of the death of their mother or speaking about their mothers as their main support in life. This could indicate the impossibility to fully detach from the data. Even when the researcher might not be bringing their input to the study, due to bracketing, there is no guarantee that the data collection will not have an immediate, albeit short, effect on the researcher.

Previous research has underscored the importance of the researcher's role in the interview, as well as in the interpretation process (Bosworth et al., 2005; Schlosser, 2008). One of the concepts the researcher struggled with in this study was the reaction to certain deaths, which could be due to her own lack of experience with it. For example, some participants' partners had a miscarriage while they were in prison. The researcher's natural reaction would be to say that she was sorry for their loss. On the one hand, that could be perceived as following social customs and assumptions, which phenomenology is aiming to bracket out. On the other hand, such a reaction would indicate empathy and involvement in participants' stories, which corresponds with phenomenological goals. Additionally, some prisoners had already indicated their annoyance with people saying: "I'm sorry for your loss" during the interview, especially people who have never met the dead or even knew the bereft themselves. Hence, the researcher was wondering about the effect her reaction might have on the rapport and whether her expression of condolences would weaken the rapport or strengthen it. Usually, she reacted as she saw fit for the situation. If the interview resembled a friendly chat by that point, she would say it, to which the participants usually replied saying that it was ok. If the interview seemed strained and distant, she would keep it to herself.

Prior research indicated that interview participants might have cathartic experiences, which could leave researchers anxious about the amount of harm they might have done and questioning whether they were (too) intrusive (Johnson and Clarke, 2003; Rolls and Relf, 2006). In this study, self-doubt and overthinking one's own actions and reactions were common, especially after the more emotional interviews. Did she push her participants too much? Should she have asked that question? Was she right to react the way she did? Given the intensive tempo of interviewing, such doubts often had to be moved aside until a more suitable time to process them. The researcher made a commitment to provide prisoners with a platform to express their experiences, so attending the interview distressed and mentally absent was not an option. Yet, once the fieldwork was done for the day, the researcher would unwind. This was partly done on her trip back home and partly once she arrived home. Sometimes this included crying in the bathroom, sometimes discussing parts of the experience with her sister and/or her partner. If there was a space to grow from this and improve her practice, she would, but on most occasions the researcher was simply overwhelmed, needed to let the emotions out, and move on. The fact that the fieldwork took over 12 hours each day of data collection, the overall exhaustion and tiredness sometimes took their toll.

To process all these emotions, some authors suggested compiling a research journal and writing down the thoughts prior to entering the field, as well as during fieldwork (e.g., Finlay, 2009; Giorgi, 2008; Rolls and Relf, 2006). Given the lack of personal experiences with bereavement and no prior encounters with grief research, the researcher believes that the assumptions and ideas she might have brought in her fieldwork were mostly based on the literature review she conducted and, as such, relatively abstract. This could also be the reason why some stories were, temporarily, overwhelming. Her interest in prison life, on the other hand, and background in criminology, could have influenced the study much more. Being aware of that, she aimed to temporarily forget everything she knew and explore every avenue the participants brought up. She entered the fieldwork with a curious mind and asked many follow-up questions. Yet, while directing the narrative toward the intersection of bereavement and imprisonment, she might have subconsciously relayed some ideas about prisons as oppressive and impermeable to individuals' needs. For example, although questions such as "Would you say prison has done anything special for you when you found out about the death, like, did they give you more time alone or allowed you more phone/visitation time?" or "How would you say other prisoners reacted to your bereavement? Can you describe if they understood what you were going through?" might not be leading in themselves, they might have set the tone for the remainder of the interview. Regardless, the researcher would argue that her impact on data collection, analysis, and interpretation was miniscule. Apart from the effect that the researcher can have on the research process, one of the main considerations when working with people is following the ethical guidelines of good practice in research.

3.10. Ethical Considerations

Research involving human participants must adhere to specific ethical guidelines that ensure good practice in research. The Belmont Report (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1978) outlines three fundamental ethical principles in research: (1) beneficence (i.e., ensuring that research benefits outweigh the potential harms to the participant or their immediate family), (2) respect for persons, and (3) justice (i.e., ensuring no negative discrimination will result from sampling procedures).

However, those practices are mostly directed toward research participants, not the researcher (Rager, 2005). According to Rager (2005), the prominence of positivism and objectivity in research led to a lack of concern with researchers' emotional response to the topic examined. This section first reflects on the ethical considerations in prison research, followed by the most prominent issues when researching sensitive topics. It then discusses strategies to mitigate those, before engaging with the potential distress the research can present to the researcher.

3.10.1. Ethical Issues in Prison Research

Some authors identified additional ethical issues when conducting prison research, such as creating a level of trust, protecting participants and their identity within the institution, safeguarding that data will not identify them post-release, and accounting for potential coercion and power relations in the institution (e.g., Abbott et al., 2018; Bosworth et al., 2005; Giallombardo, 1966; Liebling, 1999; Schlosser, 2008; Wacquant, 2002). Criminological research further discusses lack of support, even active resistance, by correctional staff and correctional agencies to prison research (e.g., Bosworth et al., 2005; Patenaude, 2004; Reiter, 2014; Ross and Tewksbury, 2018; Trulson et al., 2004; Wacquant, 2002; Wakai et al., 2009). Patenaude (2004) and Trulson et al. (2004) argued that part of this opposition to outside researchers comes from prisons' inability to control research methodologies, discoveries, and findings, and those that reveal prisons in a negative light carry a political threat and could, in extreme cases, result in publication censorship (Abbott et al., 2018; Byrne, 2005; Patenaude, 2004; Tubex, 2015). This aversion is even greater for qualitative research, which requires more collaboration with prison management/staff, a higher level of intrusion, and a potential disruption of prison routine (Patenaude, 2004).

As discussed, the researcher had to obtain ethical approval by the SPS and the University of Strathclyde's Ethics Board. Next, there were additional gatekeepers every step of the way. For example, prison governors grant access to their institutions and give permission for bringing in a voice-recorder; unit managers and prison staff are the first point of recruitment, as they can identify potential participants; prison officers relay the information on the scheduled interview to prisoners and bring them to the research site; prison officers also escort the researcher in and out of the facility; and finally, the front-door staff conducts security clearances prior to every visit. In each of these situations there is a chance for the institution to create challenges for the researcher, directly refuse to support their study, or limit the researchers' access to certain participants or the institution overall. Hence, the role of having a direct contact in prison is of undeniable importance (Apa et al., 2012). They know their institution and can assist researchers in navigating this territory, as well as introduce them to the system, while respecting the norms of behavior and hierarchy in carceral contexts.

Further ethical issues regarding prison interviews included possible repercussions by prison staff or other prisoners, who might perceive the participant as someone giving out (potentially harmful) information about the facility or other individuals. To minimise the potential risks and maximise privacy of the information shared during the interviews, they were held in a private, sound-proof room, without prison staff. Since prisoners would normally be seen in those places, this decreased the visibility of research (Abbott et al., 2018). Conducting interviews during regular visitation or programming times further minimized potential risk to the participant, as they would often be escorted to the interview in a group with other prisoners, who were also meeting somebody at that time. Interview scheduling was dealt with by the institution, so the researcher did not necessarily know the name of her next interviewee (see also Harner et al., 2011). Although prisoners signed the informed consent with their personal details, the researcher was rarely aware of their identity, decreasing privacy concerns. The researcher assured participants that their privacy and confidentiality would be guaranteed, which was emphasized by the PIS (see Appendix 2). The one exception would be the disclosure of intent of harm, either to themselves or to others, which would have to be relayed to the authorities. Participants were reminded of this before and during the interview, but such a situation did not arise throughout the course of this study.

Regarding the beneficence in prison research, the main tangible and direct benefit to research participants is the opportunity to share their story with someone other than the authority figures (Hanson et al., 2015; Schlosser, 2008). The indirect benefits of prison research, such as the potential policy and practice change, might not be relevant to those who enabled them. For example, some individuals from this study might be released by the time the findings will be published and any potential practical implications arising from this study might not be implemented for the duration of their sentence. In addition, participation in research might give prisoners an element of autonomy. For example, prisoners can agree to participate, but refuse to attend the interview that day, giving them the power to make their own decision. The researcher, and her contacts in each prison, made it clear to prisoners that they were not obligated to participate and that participation (or refusal of it) would not have any side-effects on their treatment in the facility or the length of their sentence. The voluntary nature of participation was reiterated at the beginning of each interview, as was the entitlement to withdraw one’s consent at any point in time during the interview or for 12 weeks after.

However, given the prisoners' position in the society, the heightened risk of coercion, feeling pressured to participate in research, and the potential for covert institutionalization were one of the main concerns in this study (Apa et al., 2012; Schlosser, 2008). For example, prisoners may not feel confident to refuse participation, given the power imbalance in prison's regulation of all aspects of prisoners' lives (Abbott et al., 2018; Earle, 2014; Giallombardo, 1966; Hanson et al., 2015; Schlosser, 2008). Hanson et al. (2015) interviewed 92 professionals and practitioners included in prison research, such as members of the Institutional Review Board (University Ethics Committee), prison administrators, research ethicists, and researchers, to examine their perceptions of prisoners' motivators for engaging in research. Their findings underscored the identified desire to make a social contribution, gain knowledge on the topic, benefit from the incentives provided for participation, and obtain social support, but also a potential coercion (Hanson et al., 2015). Despite trying to minimize this, the researcher could not control for situations of consent motivated by unintentional incentives, such as a breach of repetitiveness and routine, temporary escape from boredom, and the opportunity to leave one's cell (Abbott et al., 2018; Byrne, 2005; Fox et al., 2011; Hanson et al., 2015; Patenaude, 2004; Tubex, 2015) in the omnipresence of torpor and inertia (Earle, 2014). However, most participants in this study stated that they were thankful for the opportunity to discuss those experiences they might not have expressed before (see also Hanson et al., 2015; Harner et al., 2011; Hopmeyer and Werk, 1994; Liebling, 1999; Mahoney and Daniel, 2006; Olson and McEwen, 2004; Potter, 1999; Rodger, 2004; Tubex, 2015; Vaswani, 2014). The interviews sometimes brought them to new realizations, new knowledge, and new thoughts, positive or negative (Carmack and DeGroot, 2014; Rager, 2005), providing them with the opportunity to feel good about themselves and find a purpose in helping and contributing to society (Hanson et al., 2015).

To minimize this risk in the current study, the researcher initiated contact and started building rapport with prisoners before scheduling an interview, during the first few initial visits (see section 3.7.). Likewise, even though prison officers assisted with recruitment, which prior research found to be common in prison studies (Abbott et al., 2018; Bosworth et al., 2005; Vaswani, 2018), they only directed the researcher to potential participants, they did not recruit them. This reduced the level of institutional involvement in the study. Finally, the researcher did not offer any incentives for participation (see Hanson et al. (2015) for a discussion on banning direct payments to prisoners for research participation).

3.10.2. Ethical Issues in Research on Sensitive Topics

Sensitive topics could be broadly defined as those topics that might, in some way, be threatening to the participant, a social group they represent, the researcher, or the institution (Johnson and Clark, 2003; Rolls and Relf, 2006). They can contain stories on human suffering, trauma, and/or traumatic loss (Rolls and Relf, 2006; Whitt-Woosley and Sprang, 2018). Such research often comes with a cost, for the participant and the researcher alike (Carmack and DeGroot, 2014; Rager, 2005; Whitt-Woosley and Sprang, 2018). It can elicit emotional distress, guilt, shame, or embarrassment (Dickson-Swift et al., 2009; Fincham et al., 2008; Johnson and Clark, 2003; Lee and Renzetti, 1990; Vaswani, 2018; Whitt-Woosley and Sprang, 2018), and/or be on a subject that is considered a taboo (Rolls and Relf, 2006). As such, research on sensitive issues has additional ethical implications in data collection, analysis, and presentation of the participants' voices.

For example, there is a potential of engendering distress in participants. Even though participants must read and sign an informed consent, which lists the potential harms, prior to engaging in research, it is difficult to predict what individuals will disclose and how that might affect them (Johnson and Clarke, 2003). To minimise the potential distress in this study, the researcher repeatedly reminded prisoners that they did not have to answer any questions they felt uncomfortable answering or further discussing, and that they could stop the interview at any time with no repercussions. As the researcher conducted the interviews herself, she was able to gauge participants' reactions and body language, as well as comprehend visual cues of distress and discomfort (e.g., crying or becoming agitated). In such situations, the researcher offered her participants a break, suggested bringing the interview to a sooner end, or derailed the conversation in another direction.

As discussed in section 3.6.3., the interview schedule was structured to conclude by asking general questions and practical recommendations to avoid finishing on a sensitive matter. After the interview, the researcher sought for self-evaluation of prisoners' current mental/emotional state and requested their verbal confirmation that they did not require immediate mental health and/or emotional support. Some participants recognized that they got distressed but stated that they calmed down through the last set of questions. In accordance with good ethics in research, participants were offered to have a member of staff check up on their well-being later in the day, but they all indicated that such an intervention would not be necessary. Unfortunately, little is known on true effects of in-depth interviews on research participants (Johnson and Clarke, 2003), but the researcher respected the individual's decision, as she would have with any other participant (in the community).

3.10.3. The Distress to the Researcher

Apart from the potential harm and distress to participants, qualitative research can result in vicarious traumatization of the researcher (Abbott et al., 2018; Bosworth et al., 2005; Dickson-Swift et al., 2009; Fincham et al., 2008; Jewkes, 2014; Johnson and Clarke, 2003; Liebling, 1999; Rager, 2005; Rowe, 2014; Schlosser, 2008; Wacquant, 2002; Whitt-Woosley and Sprang, 2018). Researchers often become involved into stories, which can take its emotional toll and elicit powerful reactions (Borgstrom and Ellis, 2017; Crewe et al., 2017; Liebling, 1999; Rager, 2005; Reiter, 2014; Rolls and Relf, 2006; Whitt-Woosley and Sprang, 2018). Whitt-Woosley and Sprang (2018) examined secondary traumatic stress in social sciences researchers and discussed ethical dilemmas that might arise when faced with human suffering. Rager (2005) further examined the prevalence of compassion stress among researchers and found it to be a prominent issue. Although there is no one correct way to process the potential negative side-effects of research, Rager (2005) suggested counselling, peer debriefing, journal writing, and an emphasis on self-care throughout the study.

Carmack and DeGroot (2014) argued that qualitative research on sensitive topics is not binary. It cannot be reduced to the moments when it is happening, as the potential consequences for the researcher extend beyond data collection, to data analysis and interpretation. Experiences of vicarious traumatization and emotional toll of being exposed to death stories (Borgstrom and Ellis, 2017; Liebling, 1999; Reiter, 2014; Rolls and Relf, 2006; Whitt-Woosley and Sprang, 2018), although disembodied, can continue during the process of coding and analysis (Ratnam, 2019; Woodby et al., 2011). Listening and re-listening to the tapes saturated with pain and emotions can be draining (Carmack and DeGroot, 2014) and elicit compassion stress (Rager, 2005; Whitt-Woosley and Sprang, 2018). In this study, the researcher often replayed parts of the interviews in her head, questioning herself, and trying to comprehend whether she reacted properly, even more so immediately after the interview (see Ratnam, 2019). It took time to process and accept this as a side-effect of research, even though there was nothing the researcher could have done after the fact, and those feelings eventually dissipated. Prior research suggested methods of debriefing and taking care of the researcher's sanity (e.g., Johnson and Clarke, 2003; Rager, 2005; Ratnam, 2019; Whitt-Woosley and Sprang, 2018). In this study, the researcher used monthly meetings with her supervisors to raise any potential concerns. As per Johnson and Clarke (2003), researchers often reach out for support to their families and friends too. The author regularly phoned her sister, especially after the difficult interviews, to alleviate immediate stress, or her mom, just to have an uplifting conversation with a person of trust.

Finally, Johnson and Clarke (2003) discussed the issues around setting boundaries in sensitive research. For example, if a participant starts crying, should the researcher pause the recorder, console the participant, and/or keep objective and distant? There is no right or wrong answer, as each reaction will affect the interview in a different way. In this study, the researcher respected the participants' tears and provided them with a moment of silence, before offering to pause the voice-recorder. She also aimed to be supportive, ensuring the individuals that it is all right to express emotions, especially since the participants who cried often tried to stop and continuously apologized to the researcher for it. However, most of the safeguarding procedures the researcher employed were intuitive. Thus, one aspect discovered while preparing for this fieldwork is the shortage of any mandatory, official, structured, and practical training provided by the University, before granting the Ethical approval for this type of research.

3.10.3.1. The Need for Training of (New) Researchers

Lack of training in conducting interviews can lead to contact anxiety, feelings of unpreparedness, and worries about what might happen, especially when interviewing participants on sensitive issues (Johnson and Clarke, 2003). Prior research has found that face-to-face interviews inherently elicit anticipation and adrenalin, even in the most experienced researchers (Bahn and Barratt-Pugh, 2011) and Rager (2005) suggested including self-care techniques in courses on research methods for social sciences. Although the researcher in this study did not have any formal training in conducting prison interviews during her PhD program, she aimed to account for this by having a pilot interview with one of the prisoners in Camhanaich prison, with whom she built rapport during the initial two visits. Hence, she requested to interview that person first. The researcher was open with this individual, disclosing that they were a pilot participant. After the interview, the researcher asked them to comment on the questions and advise on any potential improvements to the schedule, which the participant happily agreed to, yet had no major comments.

Apart from the lack of interviewer confidence, which built up over time, the researcher experienced a different set of difficulties when interviewing reticent participants. It was very emotionally draining to conduct interviews with less forthcoming individuals, which is supported by prior research too. For example, Bahn and Barratt-Pugh (2011) found that interviewing young men can be difficult, as they are less likely to share their perceptions and feelings. They overcame this issue by introducing visual artefacts in their study to prompt more discussion (Bahn and Barratt-Pugh, 2011). In community bereavement research, Bonanno and Kaltman (1999) suggested that mid-aged individuals might discuss loss better, as they are highly active, their careers peak, and they find it easier to disassociate or minimize negative emotions around death. However, silences and short answers can be data in and of themselves (Polkinghorne, 2007), so the researcher had to find a fine balance between the two. Given the potential for elevated distress that conducting interviews on sensitive issues can cause to researchers, which could impact the research process, it is crucial to include training as a requirement for Ethical approval of such research.

Overall, this chapter discussed the methodology of this study. It introduced the research aim and research questions, addressed through qualitative methods. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews, following a phenomenological framework. This chapter then described the sampling methods used in this study, presenting the specific recruitment and data collection strategies for each research site. Finally, it raised the potential ethical concerns, which might have emerged throughout the course of this research, providing an overview of the steps the researcher took to mitigate them. The next chapter presents the findings of this study, that emerged through Giorgi’s (2000) Descriptive Phenomenological analysis.

4. FINDINGS

This chapter first discusses the phenomenological essence of bereavement, which transpired from the analysis of individual transcripts and a subsequent submersion of discrete differences to enable a general structure to emerge. It then examines the relational, social, and corporeal in bereavement, presenting the strategies used to confront, manage, or avoid processing grief while in the institution. In so doing, it elucidates the (inter- and intra-) personal, contextual, and spatial of bereavement. The final section of this chapter examines the role that prisons (inadvertently) have in processing new and old bereavements, and contextualizes imprisonment as a barrier, as well as enabler, within the grieving process. To this end, the Findings chapter is divided in four main subsections: (1) The Meaning of Death, (2) The Relational, the Social, the Corporeal, and the Visual in Bereavement, (3) Coping with Bereavement, and (4) The Role of the Institution.

4.1. The Meaning of Death

This subsection focuses on the wider implications that death can have for the individual, above and beyond its biological sense as the end of life. It first discusses the different meanings and the additional symbolic losses that the death of a person can bring. In so doing, it informs the emergence of ambivalence in bereavement and the idea of death as something happening to the living; those who are left behind are the ones suffering from death. Finally, this section explores the loneliness and aloneness of the bereft, which can be aggravated by the isolating context of a prison environment.

The prisoners in this study portrayed death as a powerful event that can affect many aspects of their life and bring long-term consequences. Apart from it being a termination of life, in a very narrow, positivist sense, death appeared to be symbolically perceived as a loss of self. For example, P5 described how, after his brother's funeral he

> *"ended up like smashing my room up and I left. But, I was staying on the streets, I wasnae going for a shower, I wasnae changing my cleethes, I wasnae eating. All I was caring was as long as I had a bottle of vodka in my hand and a fag, that's all I cared about."*

Or similarly, as R4 explained:

> *"I probably, after my nana had died, I was never the same wae social workers. They say I wasn't eating right, I wasn't doing things I was usually doing, I was kicking out*

> *at school, I was being a pain. (...) I was going out, smashing windows, going in any time I wanted and that, just because I'd lost my nana.“*

The two quotations above indicate a lack of care about life, a cessation of living in any meaningful way, simply existing. The idea of apathy and resignation immediately after death, or exacerbated by death, emerged numerous times among the individuals in this sample. It was often combined with the use of drugs and alcohol to numb the emotions that were stirred by death. While not all deaths were traumatic, with regard to the circumstances under which death occurred (i.e., violent death, sudden death, natural death), the initial reactions to any death, at least for this sample, were shock and disbelief. As will be discussed later in this section, shock can be understood as a bodily response to a trauma that is yet to be processed on a cognitive level. As such, it could be argued that all deaths presented a certain type of distress to the individuals in this sample, irrespective of the relationships with the dead. However, it is equally important to note that death was oftentimes yet another trauma happening to the participant, which could indicate an interaction between a cumulative effect of prior trauma and the ability to process grief. For example, P7 reported strong reactions to having her child taken into care, which coincided with her father’s death. So, she lost her child at the same time as her dad was dying from drug-related diseases. The fact that the child was no longer with her caused her immense stress and a sense of a loss of self, loss of her identity as a mother. As a result, she grieved for her child, although the child was alive and well:

> *“I felt like a baby too [when her child was taken]. Like, my mind, I couldn't do things myself when [child’s name] got taken away. My washing, my cooking, my cleaning, even cleaning my body, things like that. Didn't wanna do it. I didn't wanna go for walks, didnae wanna do my shopping, didnae wanna do nothing. I just wanted that baby, I just wanted to feel, like, cuddle with him and hold him and it was so weird.”*

Death was also equated with a loss of support and a loss of a sense of direction. Given the often chaotic and disorganized life patterns of the participants in this sample, death frequently presented a loss of a place to stay, as well as a loss of safety and security:

> *“I felt lost when my granny died, absolutely lost. (...) ‘Cause, it was like my mom had died and it was, when I was younger it seemed like it was one of the places where my dad didnae shout or get drunk, ‘cause my granny wouldnae put up with that. (...) It was a safe place.“ (R2)*

This further highlights the range of symbolic losses that a death can present to individuals, underscoring the relevance of acknowledging the cumulative effects of trauma and/or loss for the participants. Death was sometimes followed by inheritance disagreements, further drifting apart or dividing family members and causing fights. For participants caught in the middle, those family disputes created additional confusion and stress, but also a change in family dynamics. As per R1, her grandpa’s death led to a family breakdown. Her explanation vividly encompasses all the above-mentioned symbolic losses, underscoring the interplay of trauma, social support, as well as the disruption to her sense of identity and belonging:

> *“One of the negatives would be losing my grandpa, 'cause my family just fell apart. They did just literally fell apart after that. And because I was so young, I still needed my family. And, with my grandpa no longer being around, it was, it made it virtually impossible for me to connect with my family, because (...) they had just splinted apart, as a family. So, say, that's my family, and that's my grandpa, so the glue that held us together [shows with hands]. When that, when he died, they did splint apart, but not just because of the grief, but they splint apart from each other. So, they splinted off like a cobweb and that left me stuck in the middle going "well, where am I, belong, where do I stand?" And I'm only 11 sorta thing, so… It's made me the person, unfortunately, I am today because I don't handle negativity very well.“*

As R1 indicated, going through her grandpa’s death at 11 years old brought short-term, as well as long-term consequences on her life. It affected her relationships with her family, leaving her in the middle of a vortex with no one to turn to, and blurring her position in that context. It also affected her emotional development and the ways in which she processes negativity, possibly due to the shortcomings related to that specific situation, as well as the potentially unmet developmental needs related to her age. Death can also raise many questions and the majority of participants, who were first bereft as children, indicated a lack of support and grief literacy at that time. For example, P1 indicated her lack of understanding, of emotional curiosity, as well as of maturity to comprehend death:

> *“Because I was 15 [when her uncle died], I wasnae interested in talking about my feelings or emotions, and, or want to explain why I’m angry. (…) I just really wasnae interested at that age, eh, 'cause I couldnae understand it… And… Figure it out myself.”*

This highlights the power of death to disturb a family structure and isolate the individual, raising concern about the potential effect that being bereft at a young age could have on the individual's emotional, social, and cognitive development (which is mirrored in Neimeyer et al., 2002; Paul, 2019; Stroebe and Schut, 2015; Walsh and McGoldrick, 2013).

The participants in this sample often discussed multiple losses. Sometimes they just briefly listed all the people who died in their lives, other times they focused on a very few deaths that were the most impactful for them. Regardless, the person who died (or one of the people who died) was frequently the one who held everything in control and ensured tolerance (at the very least) among different family members. It was often the head of the family, typically a grandma or a grandpa. If the participant was slightly older, this would then be a mother or an uncle. Thus, the analysis implies that grandparents were frequently perceived as parental figures for many individuals in this sample, given their often chaotic lifestyles, which tend to start from a very young age. Such a relationship widens and complicates what Walsh and McGoldrick (2013) highlight in relation to grandparents and grandchildren having a special bond, uncomplicated by the responsibilities, commitments, and parent-child conflicts. Yet, for this population, grandparents also provided safety and security from abuse and violence at home, as well as an adult figure to look up to, despite having their own parents around. Once the participants became older and found some stability in their lives, this relationship often shifted back to their, usually, mothers or uncles. The discussion on fathers for this sample centered predominantly on them as abusive figures that contributed to family instability. This emphasized the relational aspect of death and dying that can go beyond the nuclear family (i.e., parents and children). In any case, death often presented the loss of one of the very few people that were always there for many participants. For P14, "the only person I could turn to [grandma] wasn't there anymore." Likewise, for P1, her mother was more than just a family member, she was her support, her house-mate, as well as her friend:

> *"I never really had my own place, always stayed with my mom. (...) It was only ever really me and my mom, eh."*

As well as the impact of death on themselves, some participants recognized its impact on others. For example, some individuals discussed the change that they saw in other family members after another person, often their spouse, had died. Yet, this was never openly discussed within the family and was tacitly accepted as normal. For example, R2 described how the house felt different when her grandpa died, culminating with her grandmother's death, after which another family member completely renovated it, making her not want to go there ever again:

> *"And then, my granddad died… My granny… She kinda… Went a bit weird when my granddad died, so em… She was always going away, with her pals, going on holidays, and I think she didn't like being in the house either. 'Cause we didn't like going there, um… And then when she died, my uncle [name], he just, he take everything in her home. Well, everything in her house and even scraped the wallpaper off the walls and stuff like that. So, like, I've never been back in the house, fae the day of the funeral."*

The above quotation acknowledges the relevance of family in bereavement and the potential lack of communication between the family members. R2 also implied that there is a symbolic meaning of space, in that a house can be a safe place or something representing the dead, which was altered once the person died (the spatial in bereavement will be revisited in section 4.4.1.). This was briefly mentioned in Wilson et al. (2020) by indicating the psychosocial losses of death, such as the loss of accommodation and/or permanent address, loss of possessions, and loss of relationships. Despite it being something terminal and irreversible, something final, the emotional, social, and symbolic implications of death can infinitely prolong the pain of the bereft. Given the relevance of context in which the bereavement is experienced, certain aspects of it can be harder to process in restrictive settings, such as prisons.

4.1.1. Situating Bereavement within the Prison Context

As discussed in the literature review, prisoners occupy a space they have limited or no control over (e.g., Philippe-Beauchamp, 2019), share it with individuals they did not choose to share it with (e.g., Switzer, 2015), for a set amount of time during which their lives seem suspended (e.g., Cope, 2003; Wahidin, 2006). The individuals in this sample reiterated an overwhelming sense of liminality, aggravated by the monotony of endless waiting and passing of hours without engaging in any meaningful (social) activity (see also Wahidin, 2006). Throughout that time, life on the outside keeps moving, making them

> *"alone when you come in, you're alone throughout, then you're alone once you get oot... And you can't, if anything happens outside, you are completely helpless (...). You can't do anything for anyone... (...) You're left in limbo! (...) It's [prison] such a false environment" (P14).*

This correlates with what Wooff (2020) described as a liminality, being between socially constructed identities, in his discussion on the embodiment of police custody. The participants in this study conceptualized prison as a false environment, a cruel environment. It was described as a place where the relationships are opportunistic with mutual understanding but without trust and where one cannot confide in anyone "*'cause they'll all backstab ya. At a heartbeat.*" (P4). Such an understanding of the prison context further amplifies, and potentially compounds, the experiences of grief in carceral settings (as discussed in section 4.4.).

In this study, some participants indicated that death prompted them to improve their lives, it engendered a positive change. For others, it was a catalyst for self-destructive behaviors and suicidal thoughts. In both scenarios, the dead was highly relevant for the individual, emphasizing the relational in bereavement. However, the former often emerged as an idea while imprisoned, whereas the latter was more commonly discussed as a situation experienced on the outside.

> *"I always, I always, this might sound stupid, but I will still say it. Eeeem, I always lie, I sometimes lie in my bed and I always say in my cell, I need to pull my socks up, because my mom would be looking down saying "Why, why the f did you not get yourself, you're 25-year-old and you're still doing this [crime and imprisonment]?" You know what I mean? Pull your socks up, get a life." (P11)*

P13, on the other hand, was in the community when his mother died, and the death shifted his thoughts in a more negative direction, attempting suicide the day after his mother's funeral:

> *"I went up there [on a hill with a cliff] and I looked over the side and I thought it's sooo easy just to take one step and go over, and all my, my worries would be... Finished. (...) My two pals came up and stopped me from doing it. That was a lowest point in my life was losing my mom."*

These two opposing responses to experiencing a mother's death in two different contexts could suggest that death is a turning point in life, but the wider circumstances might mediate the direction of that change. For example, a carceral setting might be conducive to positive responses to bereavement, forcing individuals to find a positive outlook on death, amid the deprivation of other tools to process bereavement while imprisoned. Yet, it could also bring to the fore the spatial and temporal aspects of bereavement, whereby many participants claimed difficulties comprehending that death has happened before being in the community without that person. Although it is not always clear what led to what, death could exacerbate existing anti-social patterns of behavior or precipitate one's initiation with criminality. For example, R9 clearly linked his drug-abuse with the death of his mom:

> *"And then, when I turned about 15, 16, it's when my mom died, that's when I really started taking drugs properly. I'd smoked, em, cannabis, before I was 16 but that wasn't, that wasn't even for pain or for to numb anything, that was just fitting in, you know, (...) it's just peer-pressure."*

Drug and alcohol abuse were common coping mechanisms among the participants in this study, most often used to numb the emotional and physical pain stemming from prior life traumas including, but not limited to, bereavement. Fuchs (2017) discussed the idea that the bereft feel pain over something that is not there, a presence of pain in the absence of the individual. For the participants in this study, this "as-if presence" could exacerbate the already existing sense of liminality due to their imprisonment. The ambivalence of death and the temporal and relational artificialness of prisons created two conflicting realities.

This cognitive dissonance around death, even without the additional impact of imprisonment, resulted in the expression of contradictory behaviors in some participants. For example, R11 recognized his tendency to act violently and use expressive actions that would distract him from thinking about his grandma, yet were prompted by his emotional suppression (e.g., I started fighting *because* I held it in):

> *"I suppose, like, (...) that was kinda like the first big loss I've dealt with, was like my, my gran dying. I think, like, after that, that's when like (...), like the drinking, and then fighting, and all that kinda started type of thing. Like, I didnae attempt to deal wae it, like I hold everything in, so..."*

To an extent, this could be viewed as another paradox demonstrated by death: the reconciliation of the two seemingly opposite ends of the spectrum through simultaneously engaging in both the externalization and internalization of feelings. Such ambivalence could exacerbate confusion, distress, guilt, and self-blame among the bereft. This was common in situations of delayed or absent emotions, which can be augmented by unexpected deaths. In cases of death due to alcohol or drug overdose, many participants discussed feelings of anger and blame, but also rejection and unwantedness. For example, P4 was struggling to grasp the reasons why her father drank himself to death:

> *"I used to think why would he [father], why did he want to drink himself so much, why was he doing these things and I'd never get the answer. (…) I felt like he… Didn't love us anymore."*

Given the often complex personal histories of individuals in this study, which were sometimes intertwined with experiences of physical and/or sexual (child-) abuse, the inability to resolve the matters with the dead further complicated their grief and emotional opacity. Participants frequently expressed hatred toward the dead's past actions, anger for not getting the answers, but also confusion about their simultaneous emotional numbness:

> *"I still had a lot of anger in me and I couldnae get it oot and I was taking it oot on another things, em… (…) I didnae care what people thought about me, because I was so angry, I was… [2 seconds break] I think the reason why I was so angry was because I couldnae get answers to why he was [abusive dad], he has done what he had done. And... I kinda like, see, started arguing with everybody and even though I was still getting beaten up aff all people, I was like... I had to make, I had, the reason why I was getting beaten up aff people was because I wanted to know if I could still feel pain. And I couldnae actually. I was so numb, but so angry at the same time." (P18)*

The described emotional ambivalence was occasionally exacerbated by the societal expectations to grieve in a certain way, as well as by the individual's anticipation to be supported by others if their reactions were non-conventional. For example, some prisoners in this study felt extreme happiness at the death of another (abusive) family member. Yet, there were situations where their family members had different, often conflicting, reactions to death, despite shared experiences of domestic violence. As P18 further explained, while he was overjoyed by the death of his real father, his brothers fell out with him because of it; they struggled to *"come round to the fact that I hate my dad."* This demonstrates the complexity of factors involved in bereavement and its highly subjective nature. No two individuals will experience death in the exact same way, not even if it is a death of the same person (e.g., a family member), as it depends on their relationship with the dead, the space in which bereavement is experienced, the history of trauma and grief, as well as the coping mechanisms employed. What might seem like the same situation to the outsider-observer, will not necessarily be the same for those experiencing it. Because of the interplay of the individual, the relational, and the social, prisoners' grief is often disenfranchised, leaving them alone in resolving the issues they had with the dead, as well as with the death itself.

4.1.2. Death is Happening to the Living

Although every participant described reacting somewhat differently to each death based on a variety of other factors, an underlying shared characteristic of bereavement, which contributes to its phenomenological essence, was that death is happening to the living; the bereft are the ones who keep living with the death. The participants often indicated that they were the ones left to face the consequences of death, they were the ones who suffered, not the dead. Oftentimes, death was yet another difficulty they had to deal with, in their already chaotic lives with myriad other losses happening simultaneously. As P5 indicated:

> *"It was just like why is this happening to me? (...) 'cause my life is already full of shit and it's quite, it's quite, why it needs to top it with another death? But of all people, my brother."*

This highlights the powerlessness and lack of agency around death in a sense that death is one-directional. It has the power to take an individual and impact the bereft, yet there is nothing a bereft can do to affect death or to prevent it from happening, which was, at times, aggravated in carceral contexts. Even more so, death is often (socially) perceived as a natural next stage in someone's existence (unless untimely), but it can still be painful, even abnormal, in the context of the bereft's daily life. Some participants understood death as a temporary roadblock, albeit difficult: *"But, everything's gotta go back to the way it was, doesn't it? (...) Life goes on, eh?"* (P3). The length during which bereavement would be troubling to the bereft, directly impeding their daily functioning, was dependent on a variety of other factors and was not the primary focus of this study. Nonetheless, prolonged grief, which was discussed in the literature review and classified as a pathology in the DSM-5, appeared to be a relatively common occurrence for this population. In some instances, the participants were still disturbed by deaths that occurred over 20 years ago. This might indicate that maladaptation to bereavement conceals a deeper story of the potential multiplicity of trauma, which cannot be resolved by looking at death in isolation. The findings from this study indicate that the temporal aspect of a relatively dichotomized view of grief as normal or abnormal, complicated, or prolonged, might need to be reconsidered within the context of imprisonment. This will be revisited, when discussing the spatial and contextual aspects of bereavement.

As suggested, mode of death can enhance feelings of ambivalence, as well as the perception of being a passive object in the world, receiving the death notice. P14 described his thoughts on the aftermath of a suicide stating that it is not what suicide does to the person that makes it problematic, but what it does to the people they leave behind:

> *"To me, suicide is the worst thing someone can do… Em… To themselves. Because it's not… [4 seconds break, sighs] it's the people that they leave behind."*

While this corresponds to the idea of death happening to the living, it also indicates that certain types of death might be more difficult to process (see also Field and Filanosky, 2009; Melhem et al., 2004; Romanoff and Terenzio, 1998; Vaswani, 2014; Young et al., 2012). Power and agency, or lack thereof, emerged in this study as important aspects of imprisonment, but also of bereavement. It could be that the power imbalance between the act of death (as the termination of life) and the state of being bereft (as something being imposed onto the individual) makes it increasingly difficult for this population to acknowledge bereavement, which is further aggravated by their helplessness while imprisoned. This seemed to emerge as an issue regardless of when and where the death occurred. Hence, by exercising its power over the individual's life, death can leave the others powerless, making them passive recipients of this act. As discussed in section 4.3., (lack of) agency around death brings another layer to Sykes' (1958) *Pains of Imprisonment* through deprivation of autonomy and safety. Indeed, many participants highlighted that the inherent unpredictability of a prison context can make them increasingly vulnerable and at risk of becoming a potential target of bullying. For example, R4 insinuated that prison climate can change in a second, requiring prisoners to be in the state of constant readiness toward the unexpected:

> *"It's like, even right now, I could be sitting, obviously, talking to you, next thing somebody could burst in here, start fighting and that. It, it's… It's... It's the jail."*

This, almost paranoid state of incessant alertness, paired with the multiplicity of unmet needs, cumulative impact of trauma and bereavement, and preexisting mental health issues, could further aggravate the participants' mental health conditions:

> *"Because when you got in that depression, it can eat into you. And I understand why there are all these deaths in jail. (...) Because, when the door shuts and you're there yourself, and it's, it's like I said, a wee box that is, aaaaa it does play with you, the words that you play, it does play tricks on you." (P16)*

Yet, death, especially violent death, was also experienced by the individuals in the community, prior to or in-between incarcerations. For some participants, frequent exposure to death made it clear to them that a criminal lifestyle and associated risks are a part of their family, a part of who they are, of their identity. For example, P7 indicated that she grew up around death and violence, but it was not until her uncle got shot, that she started thinking more about the role of death in her life. It was no longer something “cool” that she saw on the TV, but something very real that was affecting her loved ones:

> *“That was quite scary, that was when I started thinking of crime. I remember that was when my mind started thinking about drugs and guns and all these things. Because I would hear my mom talk about "he shot this person, he shot that person, he got caught so he got shot for that". (...) And drug laundering, money laundering, and all this stuff going on.”*

This suggests that death might be, to an extent, normalized for some participants in this sample. As will be discussed later, many participants were angry at prison management for not intervening in time to prevent prison suicides, but they also understood that prison services are ill-equipped to cope with the sheer number of individuals requiring mental health services. As R4 explained,

> *“there is a massive thing about people killing themselves. Like, last y(ear), this year even, I think there's been a couple so far. (…) And it just shows that… Mental health, they don't, like, they do try in here, you can tell they're trying, but they've no got just one person to deal with, they've got [a] thousand, nearly.”*

However, the incidents of death are not something one can ever get used to. As per Walsh and McGoldrick (2013), risk and resilience in adaptation to death rely on the individual, the family, the community, the culture, and the wider society. As the findings show, experiences of multiple (often traumatic) deaths from early childhood on, could have affected the individual’s emotional, social, and psychological development. For example, P9 recognized that the circumstances he was exposed to growing up, shaped who he is today:

> *“And I've always been, like, told, since I was young-whatever you see, don't repeat. Obviously, I've seen a lot of stuff and I just couldnae repeat it. That's why I... I think that's the person I am now is, 'cause... How I was brought up as a child.”*

The findings indicate that emotional maturity and readiness to engage with bereavement are related to a plethora of other factors, some of which could be traced back to early childhood experiences (e.g., emotional regulation, attachment, stable environment). That bereavement depends on situation-specific factors (e.g., relationship with the dead, type of death), the individual's developmental stage (e.g., emotional, cognitive, social), as well as the wider environment was argued by other research too (Paul and Vaswani, 2020; Walsh and McGoldrick, 2013). Yet, frequent exposure to traumatic deaths among this sample could have further implications for the processing of bereavement, especially in situations where death contributed to the individual's perceived lack of emotional and physical safety. Given that processing of grief and accepting emotional support requires a level of trust, the above-mentioned characteristics of prison might make it difficult to mourn.

4.1.3. Loneliness and Aloneness in Death

As Lobb et al. (2010) indicated, death and bereavement can lead to loneliness. In this study, death often coincided with a loss of support, as the most important individual, who would otherwise be the one supporting the prisoner through bereavement, was often the one they were grieving for. On the other hand, many participants already isolated themselves from their communities due to (or during) their imprisonment, to become free from emotional liminality imprisonment can bring (see also Marti, 2020). In that case, bereavement did not make them much more alone. Yet, the findings from this study support the argument that death can further disenfranchise this population. Given that bereavement carries an individual and a social component, conscious isolation of the participants from their social support while imprisoned seemed to be a technique for temporary adaptation to the overall difficulty of their situation, rather than a preferred method of processing bereavement. For example, to mitigate their pains of imprisonment, some individuals decided against displaying pictures of their family members in their cells and tried to avoid thinking about their life outside. This is in accordance with the earlier discussion on suspended lives while in prison and on the ambivalence between feeling something, while aiming to become numb (as a protective mechanism). Many participants argued that if there is no emotional attachment to people, there is nothing to feel pain for. As P10 described:

> *"I just don't put pictures up, in jail. I don't even put pictures of my son up. Em… I cannae have, I cannae afford to have that emotional attachment to people."*

Conversely, another common way that participants dealt with death in prisons was by demonstrating to their family members that they were still there for them and putting their needs first. This was especially prominent around death anniversaries when prisoners had limited options to support those outside and they made sure to phone their family members, provide them with support, and find out if they were all right. The participants themselves often decided not to mark death anniversaries in any specific way, as it was just a reminder of yet another year that they were away and isolated from their loved ones. At times, however, cutting the family ties for the duration of the imprisonment was just a natural next step. This was more prevalent with repeated offenders because, as P3 explained, neither side *"cannae be arsed [visiting] any mair.*" Similarly, the idea of prison as an artificial setting re-emerged here, intertwined with the theme of powerlessness and existential ambivalence (see also Wahidin, 2006). According to P19, while one is prison, they do not actively live:

> *"(...) it's no healthy, you're living in your mind. And, you know, it's really… And (...) the minute you're out that door you just start living. Aye, it's only so much easier 'cause you don't think about living, you're living. It's, it's like riding a bicycle. Ken, you've had your bicycle taken, never forget. And you open that door, ken, and you know what to do."*

Stroebe and Schut (1999) argued that there are times when the individual is actively dealing with grief and times when they are passive about it. Yet, for prisoners in this sample, this division was not always easy to achieve. The participants often expressed the sense that there was nothing they could do to affect processing their bereavement. Namely, the coping strategies they used on the outside were rarely available in prisons, and their temporal agency and access to specific type of activities they felt would support them in their grief, was often limited (see section 4.3.). This aggravated the feelings of being misunderstood, as well as their disbelief that the death has occurred, which was enhanced through spatial exclusion from the context that the dead inhabited. For example, R7 claimed that other prisoners could understand that bereavement hurts, but nobody can know how he really felt:

> *"Naebody understood what I was going through. They could understand how it hurt, but they didnae know what I was going through, how it made me feel, you know?"*

This quotation corresponds with the earlier discussion on bereavement as an individualized experience. As such, others might be able to empathize, based on their own experiences, but each bereavement situation should be acknowledged separately. Thus, the perception that one’s social surrounding cannot understand their feelings is in a sense isolating and can exacerbate a sense of aloneness in one’s bereavement. This brings into question whether grieving can ever be efficiently done in prisons. The fourth section will discuss this further, but if accounting for the structure of bereavement, which encompasses the individual, the social, the temporal, and the contextual, current UK prisons might not have the ability to accommodate the intersectionality of these factors. Certain aspects of bereavement, such as the mental health or the psychological consequences of it, could be addressed in prisons (in theory). Yet, the social side of it, for example, sharing one’s grief with others who knew the dead and experiencing daily life without that person, might be more challenging, thus isolating the bereft prisoner.

However, isolation and avoidance of emotions from participants in this study were not reserved for prison settings only. When outside, some individuals reported that they would not speak to their families about death because it was hard on everyone involved and stirred up emotions. Albeit not new, this idea of aloneness is interesting in the prison context, because one of the things a person cannot escape in prison is crowdedness and noise. *“People are round about, the noise, you are overwhelmed.”* (P18), yet at the same time, one is utterly alone. The contradiction of being surrounded by people but left alone with no one to turn to emerged strongly among this population not just during bereavement, but also during imprisonment, and at times, during both. For example, P6 was grieving his parents and was saddened by the fact that they were no longer there for him in times of need: *“Them not being there when you wanted them to be there. Eh, lonely, as well, massively, like, that was quite bad.”* And R4 compared the difficulty dealing with imprisonment, which is inherently a lonely experience (Crewe, 2009; Ferszt, 2002; Harner et al., 2011), to his experiences of being in care, where he was constantly surrounded by people. Being in prison was a new social setting for him :

> *“I hate being alone, it's... I think it's ever since I've been in care, I've kind of been round that many people, but I need to have that, like, contact, I need to speak to somebody. I've no, never really had like, that time being on my own. (...) After that, alone is scary, which is... So, it's, that's you, you're in, you're in the new world.”*

This might allude to certain differences in the quality of relationships created when in care compared to prison, despite some shared characteristics, such as institutionalization, high levels of violence, and fragmented trust. When looking at research on children in care, Ahnert et al.’s (2006) meta-analysis and Welch et al.’s (2018) literature review discovered that the quality of the relationships depend on the staff turnaround, child-adult ratio, and the level of training provided to staff, similar to what the literature review discussed on prisoner-staff relationships. However, unlike in prison settings, there is an indication that secure attachment to care providers could be established for the population in care. This was more common among female children and in home-based environments rather than the centre-based care (Ahnert et al., 2006).

Prisoners in this sample did not only discuss the experiences of death and bereavement prior to and/or during imprisonment, but they reflected on the strain that being in prison put on their existing relationships. This was usually framed through regret for not being in the community to support their loved ones in times of need, aggravated by feelings of guilt and self-blame. For example, R12 was disappointed in himself for not being able to support his sister through miscarriage, because of his, as he said, "*daft mistakes. And that hurt me. I don't really blame myself, but I felt horrible that I wasn't there for my sister.*" This provides another dimension of experiencing loneliness and aloneness in prison. Namely, it engenders more than just feeling alone by the individual prisoner, as the lack of inter-personal support and closeness, due to their imprisonment, can force aloneness on other members of their family too.

Another strong theme among this sample was the idea of a lost time; a thought that could be isolating. Because of being imprisoned, some participants felt like they threw away the time they could have spent with their family members, regardless of whether those were dead or still alive. Instead of cherishing the time spent together, they are now mourning their time alone. R3 was mad at himself for being in prison, instead of with his family, feeling:

> *"anger toward myself... Eh, though obviously being in here was… Whereas something as simple as not committing offences and being out there, during the time eh that 'n all, it's all just being able to have those days with those people, em, so there was definitely a lot of anger against myself."*

Similar feelings emerged among participants whose family members died while they were imprisoned. For example, P12 was going through a complicated bereavement of her mother, who died suddenly just a few years before the participant was supposed to go back to her community. This caused her immense pain and she explained that she was

> *"angry at myself… Because if I hadnae committed a crime and been in here, I'd… I have tae, I have tae try and forgive myself for no being, you know, like oot there wae her [mother]."*

Some participants, especially those serving long sentences, raised concerns about individuals dying before their release. This increased their anxiety and, again, started a discussion around powerlessness while imprisoned. Elevated worry about the possibility of someone dying was consistent with the concept of anticipatory grief (e.g., Lane, 2015). For example, R9 was nervous about his dad's health and annoyed with the way his dad reflected on his mortality:

> *"My dad's quite weird about stuff like that, you know? If I die, he always, he's always like "If I die, don't be sad". Why are you telling me that?! Don't fucking say that, you don't need to remind me about when you're gonna die dad, you know? I don't wanna know about things like that. He's got a bad heart, so..."*

Similarly, P16 worried about his lengthy sentence, which might prevent him from being in the community around the time of his mother's death. His discomfort was increased by the anxiety that going to a funeral as a sex-offender has brought him in the past, due to the stigma attached to this type of crime. Therefore, thinking about the potential of his mother dying and the subsequent problems around his funeral attendance were troublesome for this individual:

> *"I don't know if I could do another funeral, like… And my mom keeps sending me, remembering, she says "you are doing 22 years, you might never see us again". That doesnae help mom. That doesnae help, I say, I don't think…"*

These quotations underscore the contextual in bereavement and the existence of multiple realities in prisoners' lives. While the individuals were in the institution, life outside was moving (e.g., Moran, 2012; Wahidin, 2006), which could exacerbate feelings of being alone, misunderstood, and isolated from the community. The participants' level of engagement and potential for participation in the life outside varied with the extent of information they received from and about their communities. As such, they were socially isolated and emotionally alone.

Finally, some prisoners were concerned about their own mortality, oftentimes prompted by somebody else's death rather than their own (old) age. For example, P14 acknowledged his health concerns after the death of his cellmate, explaining how being locked up with someone increased his anxiety. Once again, the severity of the overall situation was aggravated by imprisonment through spatial, social, and emotional distance from one's circle of support, non-readiness to access services in prison, prison's inherent unfavourability to emotionality and its expression, as well as the general difficulty in getting help – *"trying to see a mental health nurse in here is like trying to see gold dust."* (P4)

Overall, this section discussed the idea of death as a turning point in participants' lives. Carlsson (2012) defines turning points, when applied to offending and desistance, as events that led to a change in one's life trajectory and emerged as actions or processes that assist in interpreting (offending) behavior. In this study, death could be perceived as a turning point in life but also as a significant biographical event (see Rowling, 2008). It could lead to a family breakdown, a loss of support, a loss of a safe space, or a termination of future resolutions or plans. The participants also acknowledged that death was something happening to the living; they were passive recipients of the aftermath of someone's fate. A plethora of additional meanings that could be ascribed to death illuminated the complexity of this issue. While prior research mostly focuses on the psychological, spiritual, and behavioral aspects of bereavement, the findings discussed here revealed additional layers in which the bereft could be impacted. Arguably, this could be further challenging with prisoners, considering the higher prevalence of bereavement experiences among prisoners. This underscores the need to acknowledge the cumulative effects of death, trauma, and other losses that could be happening to an individual, as well as their interplay. The next section will examine this further, by looking at the relational, the social, the corporeal, and the visual in bereavement.

4.2. The Relational, the Social, the Corporeal, and the Visual in Bereavement

As discussed in the literature review, there is no one, correct way to grieve. Underlined by the findings of this study, bereavement can be impacted by a range of overt and covert factors. For example, the individual's perceptions toward death and its symbolic meanings, the feelings of power and control (or lack thereof), as well as a death's potential to socially disenfranchise the griever are as relevant as the processes happening subliminally. Despite the post-modern, DSM-5 classification of complex and prolonged grief as a psychiatric disorder (see section 2.2.3.), there is no real social consensus on the duration of "normal" grief or on the requirement for presence or absence of certain physiological, social, or behavioral reactions in bereavement (Ferszt, 2002; Hall, 2014; Hopmeyer and Werk, 1994; Lindemann, 1944; Stroebe et al., 2017; Thompson et al., 2016). Indeed, the idea of continuing bonds discussed in the literature review (e.g., Klass, 2006) challenges the idea that the relationships, and therefore grief, should ever end.

Bereavement is an emotionally charged experience that could lead to volatile reactions (e.g., Ferszt, 2002; Hall, 2014; Hopmeyer and Werk, 1994; Neimeyer et al., 2002; Stroebe et al., 2017; Worden, 1991). As will be discussed next, the phenomenological essence of bereavement is in the initial shock, which can unfold in a variety of ways but often requires a safe space to process these emerging thoughts, feelings, and reactions. For the participants in this study, this shock aspect seemed to hold true regardless of the relational aspect of bereavement (i.e., their relationship with the dead), as it happened on a chemical, unconscious level. It was commonly manifested through physiological reactions or (inexplicable) physical pain. Only after those emotions became situated, acknowledged, and processed through consciousness could the feelings emerge, enabling the individual to resume (at least partial) control of their self. As such, it could be argued that the unpredictability and liminality of a prison setting (see Wooff, 2020) can elevate anxiety, impeding the individual from engaging in grief work and potentially leading to behavioral outburst and/or withdrawal.

Barrett (2012) argued that emotions enter consciousness once their physical and physiological nature is no longer expressive enough for the body to mitigate them. However, understanding emotions requires shared conceptualizations of the meaning of physical changes, which makes them socially constructed but biologically evident (Barrett, 2012). For example, laughter typically represents joy. It is evident through a facial expression and has an auditory component. Stress, on the other hand, can indicate nervousness, anxiety, or some level of imbalance in the body, and can be displayed through restlessness, headache, and increased sweating, among others. Thus, even if the bereft believe to have processed their grief, their bodies might imply the opposite. As such, it might be difficult for prisoners to conceal their emotions, if they are unaware of the cause of those physiological reactions.

This section starts by discussing the relevance of the relationship with the dead for the subsequent processing of bereavement and re-examines the concept of family. It then considers the social aspect of bereavement, followed by the discussion of shock and bodily reactions to grief. Finally, it further examines the already discussed relationship between the mode of death and bereavement, focusing on the impact that witnessing death could have on the bereft.

4.2.1. The Relational Aspect of Bereavement

Experiences of parental drug abuse, being in care, and overall chaotic lifestyles prevented many individuals in this sample from developing strong and healthy bonds with others. This was not limited to their immediate family members but also in relation to romantic relationships, which were often characterized by instability. Although many participants indicated a level of attachment with certain individuals on the outside, which aggravated the pain of separation that imprisonment and/or death brought upon them, those relationships were often complex and strained through a variety of factors. For example, P9 claimed to be close to his siblings and his mom, whom he described as a heroin addict. At the same time, he stated that he could not speak to his mom about anything that is (or was) troubling him. He explained that ever since he was a young boy, he could not confide in his mom, his dad, or his sister, yet considers himself close to them. On the contrary, P5 was brought up in the care system and moved a lot through his childhood. The subsequent lack of stability due to frequent changes in caregivers and locations, made him equally distrustful toward others:

> *"Like, I got to like, even when I was like eight or nine, I got fed up at that age. Like, I knew like I'd be getting moved on and again and… Always that. But it's just, aye, I just would need to deal wae it, but also made me feel like I couldnae trust anyone. Like literally naeone. Like not even my brothers and sisters." (P5)*

These experiences reflect wider research on forming secure relationships between care providers and children in care, identifying that those relationships are stronger in home-settings than in care-centers (Ahnert et al., 2006). This could be due to smaller groups in the former, which more closely resemble the typical family bonds, but could also be because of the wider, environmental factors. For example, children in care-homes might invest more energy into ensuring their belonging to a peer group, rather than securing their attachment to adults. Welch et al. (2018) further discussed the challenges that different types of care settings can present for the emotional, social, and relational development of a child, but also stressed the benefits of removing the individual from a complex, dysfunctional, and potentially dangerous family environment. Likewise, Ahnert et al. (2006) underscored the importance of stable care experiences during that sensitive developmental period of forming bonds. Welch et al. (2018) argued that care leavers often lack emotional and practical support from their families, are at a higher risk of homelessness, isolation, and loneliness, which could lead to social exclusion and poor mental health. It could strain the individuals' transition to adulthood, as well as their independent, grown up life (Welch et al., 2018). Care-experienced individuals in this study specifically discussed a lack of a sense of belonging and stability in life:

> *"Cause I was moving aboot quite a lot, so I saw no point in talking to them [school peers]. I was moving ab(oot), 'cause I was in care. I was moving a big chunk of it." (R8).*

Thus, frequent movement through childhood and homelessness in adulthood prevented some participants from developing strong relationships with their family members and/or peers, as well as from creating attachment to objects and possessions:

> *“At first I would get annoyed at that [council taking his stuff] and I can't see why they've done it. But, at the end of the day, like, it's only stuff. It's only a picture. Ken what I mean? Like, that's no end of the world.” (P5)*

However, as will be discussed in section 4.4., objects might have an important, symbolic role in bereavement. Taken together, this contributed to and enhanced the overall feelings of rejection and aloneness for some individuals in this sample, as summarized by P5:

> *“I felt like as I've just got turned and left with not really much support and help. I've been like in the care system my whole life.”*

It could be argued that a lack of a safe space, of a space where they belong and feel protected enough to be vulnerable, prevented these individuals from processing their cumulative losses. This idea was discussed in the previous section, but not having a strong starting point to engage with emotions, whether in prison or outside, could further complicate the processing of grief for the individuals in this sample. Namely, while death brought aloneness for some participants, it also triggered memories of previous experiences of being lonely and forgotten, making them less willing to seek help or even consider it as an option. The interaction between isolation, social stigma, and mistrust in people/institutions, can be aggravated inside and outside of prison in case of specific offences, for example sex offences, especially with children. The stigma associated with this type of offence is acute, both in public imaginaries and in carceral contexts (Crewe, 2009). In this study, such individuals often felt like they were not worthy of being helped while imprisoned because they were wearing a shirt of a different colour (distinguishing them as sex offenders). When discussing their life prospects upon release, some participants were struggling not to internalize their label and ascribe themselves an identity of being morally and socially unacceptable (see Tyler and Slater, 2018). They argued that the societal perception of sexual offences can be protruding, increasing their worry of not being able to find their way to live with this label:

> *“It's, it's the worry of... What family can I build when I'm outside, having this hanging over me for the rest of my life? You know. I can sit down and have a conversation with someone, more than a few hours, or whatever amount of time. They can make their opinion of me. And I think I can do good with that. It's... When I get out, who's going to be willing to sit and listen. 'Cause, obviously, I wanna tell them the truth. That I've been in prison and stuff. Having them, not having them search me up and go "Oh, you*

> *know, just read something horrible about you." But, it's also finding your own words for it." (P21)*

Living in times of fast and easy access to information through the internet exacerbated this internal identity struggle that some individuals were experiencing. For example, P19 argued that one's life is over after being imprisoned on a sex offender charge, which could symbolize another set of losses incurred by this population: a loss of their pre-prison self, identity, social contacts, and/or relationships. P19 thought that the only way to keep living is by changing their identity. Nevertheless, he strongly opposed to it:

> *"My, my understanding of the S.O. part of things, um, people who would get an S.O. and it's like, they're hated. They're, there, there's, ken, the, um… To the point where, yeah, you have to conceal your own name. Um, and all these wee things, ken, it's… At first, when I first got oot, it's like, I had to actually, I don't hate my name, but the social system wants you to. You never thought of changing your name. And I says at the time [quite strongly, with opposition] No! Ken, I don't think my parents will be happy, I don't think my ancestral tree would be happy aboot it, that I'm gonna change my name, ken? The bottom line is, I've made a mistake, right? And I've been punished."*

This could be due to what Hareli and Parkinson (2008) describe as social appraisals that have developed to address issues regarding others and are rooted in comparison, norms, and social judgements (e.g., deservingness). Based on the previous discussion on the importance of support and understanding in bereavement, experiencing social death through stigma and labelling created an additional strain for some participants in this sample and was elevated based on the type of their charge. This resembles the idea of a secondary punishment through the overreaching arm of the state (e.g., Crewe, 2015, Wacquant, 2002), experienced in the form of reintegration barriers and public judgment. For others, however, a different type of social isolation emerged way before their charge and imprisonment, when they were still children. It could be argued that some participants had their childhood stolen through conflicting expectations put in front of them with minimal or no support provided to achieve those. As this developmental ambivalence shaped their early years, they sometimes created (mal-)adaptive coping mechanisms that made it more difficult to discuss emotions in their adult life.

4.2.1.1. Childhood and Family Experiences

Certain participants experienced a multiplicity of trauma, being subjugated to the actions and abuse of their adult caregivers. For example, R6 discussed his childhood through persistent parental abuse, which continued until he was taken into care.

> *"That [bad times in life] would probably be when I was getting abused, eh. I was getting abused from… [3 seconds break, thinking] From age five to seven. Basically, get punched every day, get sexually assaulted by my dad. My dad had done it to my brother, my big brother, my big sister, my little brother, my little sister, so he'd done it to five people. [...] It's a dark day for us. Since then, I went to care."*

This quotation underscores the complexity and instability of relationships some individuals faced from their early years, which could affect their attachment to certain family members, their life-course, and subsequently, their experiences of bereavement. Likewise, P13 identified the onset of his teenage years as the turning point in his life. He finally felt strong enough to confront his abusive father, rather than just bracing himself and hoping for the abuse to stop:

> *"I always remember, I turned 14 and I was big enough to save my mom and… (...) I heard the screams and you used to just put a pillow over your head and try and get to sleep. And I thought, nah, I'm not doing this anymore. (...) So, I went down and I pushed my mom behind me. And there was a bottle of milk on the fridge. (...) And I picked it up and I smacked it across my dad and it caught him. I said "Don't you ever lift your hands at my mom again." And he never did after that."*

While the first quotation underlined the end of parental abuse due to an external factor, the removal of a child from their home and their placement into care, the second example demonstrated the individual finding the courage to take the matters into their own hands. However, both individuals were still children, which highlights the potential link between early childhood experiences and emotional and social development in later life for the individuals in this study. Apart from the exposure to domestic violence growing up, some participants transpired as the protectors and providers of support to their parents, whose substance abuse got in the way of their parenting. As R10 described, when he was a young child, he had many intimate conversations with his mother in the middle of the night:

> *"(…) in the middle of the night, if I've would like, see, my mom was having a wee drink, but, and then I would hear her greeting doon the stairs and that, then I'd go down, make sure she was all right. And em… Go and speak to her, make sure that, just gae her a cuddle, reassure she was all right and that. Em… The fact is I know that she's not had the easy life either, em, and that's not the only times we've had, like, heart to heart conversations. Em… But aye, I gae… And that's… And that's it, I think… (…) That's probably been fae at least when I was about seven or eight."*

He continued his story of being forced to grow up early, intersecting it with ideas of safety, security, and (in-)stability:

> *"I'm never really feeling safe anywhere that I'm at. Cause obviously, with my mom [alcohol addict] I found that out, like, even fae I was young and in the house, tried to be the man of the hoos. So that when my mom came, there was somebody there protecting her as well. Although it shouldn't be that way aboot, but at that point, I cared about my folks and I cared about myself, you ken what I mean."*

Due to the relevance of having a safe environment when bereft, to allow for expressing vulnerability, blurring the lines between being a child and being forced to grow up could have affected the individuals' emotional development and control.

A few participants further discussed this idea of having adult-like responsibilities imposed onto them from a young age. They had to take on duties that they otherwise would not have (or at least not to such an extent), had they been in a stable and nurturing environment. For example, prisoners who were the oldest of their siblings reported the requirement to step into the parental role early on, to be a role-model for their siblings. At times, this stifled their chances to develop their own identity and stand up for themselves, if and when needed. Given their imprisonment, some participants felt guilt and a sense of failure in their role. As R10 further explained, "*I've always had to be the one tae… Be a role-model and it, it doesn't really help saying that I'm in jail, ken what I mean?"* P7 discussed the specific caring responsibilities that fell onto her, being the second oldest sister. Yet for her, that was empowering:

> *"See, […] my big sister never really paid attention to us. I was the one that was like, changing the bums, wiping the noses, picking them up from school, dropping them off to school, helping my mom cook the tea. Em, babysitting, stuff like that. I'd say that was the very important time in my life."*

This is yet another example of multiple conflicting realities in the lives of some individuals in this sample. On the one hand, they were confronted with situations that demanded of them to take responsibility, behave as adults, and become a head of the family, although they were still children themselves. On the other hand, however, they felt like they were continuously infantilized and dismissed in their interactions with parents, carers, school, and now prison:

> *"It's quite weird going back oot. Cause as soon as you're in here, you're like, oh! So, you get fed, you get clothes and that stuff, you go back outside, you're like "Oh, what the hell is going on here?"" (R6)*

When asked to identify some positive times in their lives, when they were happy and optimistic of where their life was heading, only a few individuals mentioned having (close) friends as a highlight of their growing up period, which could indicate that loneliness and a lack of close relationships started early in their lives. Three individuals specifically used the syntagm *best friend* when talking about their peers: two in the context of bereavement (their best friend died) and one when reflecting on his experiences in care, which were negative apart from the fact that

> *"I met my best friend when I was in [care]. So, probably one of them [positive aspects of his life], because I've known him since I was what, 12-13? And we're still best pals ever since, so it's probably meeting my best pal, aye." (R4)*

A few individuals also referred to their mom as their best friend, although this was more common when reflecting on their teenage and adult years. Despite (or potentially due to) the negative experiences and lack of parental care the prisoners in this sample were facing growing up, most would classify their relationship with their mom as strong. This could be explained by Bandura's (1977) Social Learning theory, whereby if negative and violent behavior is not sanctioned, the (then) children internalize and normalize disruptive relationships and actions.

However, due to their early experiences of care, domestic violence, drug and alcohol misuse, and family breakdown, the individuals in this sample also described feeling very close to specific adults who were not necessarily their immediate family yet played the role of a primary caregiver. This will be important for funeral attendance of prisoners (see section 4.4.). The complexity of children's attachment to care providers is mirrored in prior research, especially if there is still contact with their birth parents (Ahnert et al., 2006), which can diminish relational continuity (Welch et al., 2018). Due to the often complicated family matters for the individuals in this study, grandparents and uncles strongly emerged as parental figures. For example, R1 reflected on the strained relationship with her mother, whereby she had to take care of herself from a very young age. Her grandparents, on the other hand, were nurturing and caring, but everything changed with her grandpa's death, when she was about 11 years old. In accordance with other participants who identified a direct link between their childhood experiences and their actions and reactions as adults, R1 believed that her initial struggle with imprisonment stemmed from the lack of structure throughout her childhood, which was aggravated by the death of her grandfather:

> *"Outside? I was kind of left to my own devices. So, I found prison really hard, I wasn't used to that kind of support and control and everything else, 'cause my mom, basically, at the a(ge), I was around ten or eleven, and my mom called me into the kitchen, she was holding the only baking tray we ever owned, em, a packet of frozen sausages, and a bag of frozen chips. [...] And she basically went, and pointed to the oven, "there's the oven, here's your dinner, make it yourself". And from that day forth, I had to make all my own meals and I was only a kid. Best thing is, I didn't even know how to turn the oven off and on. So, I was kind of left, so I had to make my own breakfast, my own lunches, my own packed lunches for school, I'm still at primary school when this happened, em, and make my own dinners. And if I was too tired to make my dinner when I came back at night, I never got anything. Simple as. I was then, my mom was then much hands off. My grandparents, on the other hand, they nurtured, they supported me, but that was only really up to my grandpa's death in '98."*

The importance of family of choice, rather than the blood family, can be problematic when it comes to funeral attendance as prisoners, which is revisited in section 4.4.

The need to take care of oneself from a young age and be self-sufficient regarding one's physiological, emotional, and social needs, often elevated the sense of insecurity and the perceived lack of safety among the participants in this study. As indicated by the literature review, processing of bereavement requires a safe environment and established trust (e.g., Finlay and Jones, 2000; Hall, 2014; Jakoby, 2012; Lobb et al., 2010; Matthews and Marwit, 2004; Vaswani et al., 2016). Yet, this aspect was usually lacking in the lives of the participants before being imprisoned, due to their personal circumstances, during imprisonment, as well as post-release, upon returning to their communities, indicating the extent of bereavement issues within and beyond the carceral contexts.

Research suggests that prisoners tend to go back to the same communities they inhabited before being imprisoned, which can elevate their chances of reoffending (i.e., revolving door) (e.g., Crewe, 2005; Makarios et al., 2010; Petersilia, 2003; Testa and Jackson, 2019). Although this emerged as relevant for bereavement experiences among the participants in this sample, many also raised concerns about their prospects on the outside. For example, some worried that they would explode, because they have been suppressing their emotions for so long (see section 4.3). Others argued that they could not have a fresh start without changing the environment and the individuals they spend time with on the outside. Many prisoners described their peers as

> *"not the best people that you would (...), like, when you see them you feel like... Crossing the road. You don't want to stay with them." (P5)*

Yet sometimes, those people and places were the only thing prisoners have, indicating the relevance of context in bereavement. As P21 highlighted, it would be nice to start fresh in another city, but there was something about the city that he grew up in, that made it feel like home. P5, who previously discussed his peers as not the best group to be around, had similar dilemmas about having a supportive environment when he was about to leave care. He was offered a place to stay in a different city or he could return to his hometown, risking homelessness and a lack of formal support. However, there was something appealing to the familiarity of his own city, so he opted for the latter:

> *"a week after my 16th birthday, it was people I was staying with, they says, "you can either go to back [city 1] where you're from, (...) but youse gonna be homeless, and like you're be on your own, you will have some sort of support, but not much. Or if you stay with us, we can help you get a good job, buy a house. Everything." But when, aye, 'cause I've never been separated from family and my siblings and stuff like that, I chose [city 1]."*

These quotations underscore the need for an integrated, multi-agency approach to supporting people in care or in prison (see section 6.2.). Although release to the same area was discussed as a potential risk of falling back into the prior habits and old crowd, it was also highlighted as necessary to process grief for this sample. Subsequently, these contextual factors could minimize the individuals' opportunities to find safety and stability, emotional attachment, and spatial belonging in prisons, as well as outside.

4.2.2. The Social of Bereavement

The perceived need to be surrounded by friends and family to process grief, engage in mourning, and adapt to life without the dead emerged strongly among this population. This is mirrored in general bereavement literature but might be exacerbated for individuals who are restricted from doing so. While in the community, they appreciated having had the opportunity to reminisce about that individual who died, share stories with their family members, laugh, and remember the good times. This was sometimes related to specific social rituals around death, such as going to funerals or visiting graves at death anniversaries. Other times it was simply a discussion within the family to keep the memories alive (see also Walsh and McGoldrick, 2013). For example, R11 perceived funeral attendance in the community as a way to get closure, celebrate life, and put a positive spin on a difficult situation through support of others:

> *"You get that wee bit of closure, you get to see, like, how happy people are. Like, after it, like, you, you'll get people just telling like, daft stories and that, you know what I mean? So, it gaes you, it gaes you a good laugh, you know what I mean?"*

Similarly, R4 enjoyed coming together with the rest of his family to celebrate death anniversaries. Although it was a sad situation, he also viewed it as positive. He was happy to stand at the grave with the others and to think of all the good and bad times they had together: "*It was, I laughed pretty much the whole time."* Prisoners who lived in smaller communities reported situations when the whole community would get together and commemorate the death of a person. This highlighted the social role of bereavement and various rituals that people engage in to keep the memory alive. For example,

> *"where we live in [place], usually on anniversary, if somebody dies, we get the Chinese lanterns, we go up the hill on the day that they died, we usually light, em, the lanterns. (...) Another pal, again, he liked hills and, em, a tree was planted up, we call it "[name]'s tree", we always sit there, it's like a resting point."* (R2)

Klass' (2006) theory around maintaining contact with the dead through conversations, customs, and acting like that person was still there, or at least present in one's mind, could explain the above examples. The participants gave numerous examples of continuing their bonds with the dead outside of prison as well as inside (discussed in section 4.3). However, they indicated that prisons constrained the social aspect of this process and, as such, emerged as one of the main barriers for grieving. As P19 stated, in prison the person grieves on their own, whereas out there, bereavement is perceived as shared. P12 emphasized the relevance of going through grief with one's social support, even if they addressed their bereavement while in prison:

> *"Right, even if I did dae bereavement counselling within the prison, I still think when I go oot there, there'd be part of bereavement wae family. So, I would have that support of the family in the whole bereavement, 'cause I've got her [mom's] ashes and they've no scattered them, and they won't before me and [brother's name] are oot."*

In accordance with Stroebe and Schut's (1999) Dual Process model, the participants discerned between the times when they needed to grieve alone and times when they needed to do it together with their social circle, ideally in the environment where they lived with the dead. Leaving prison and adjusting to life without that person was underscored as necessary to get closure. For example:

> *"I'll do more when I do get out and go home, and go and see them, and find that he's not there [his father]. [...] I'll finish, I'll get total closure on that. Because, you know, last time I saw him was as he was pushed in the wheelchair down these front, down these halls as they are in here [last prison visit]. And he walked out the door. Or, rolled out the door." (P15)*

However, some prisoners in this sample were aware that they will not always be able to process death with others in the community, because those on the outside may have grieved already. As P1 stated, her family will have been going through their grief together for 12 months and will be in a different mind-set to her by the time of her release. This idea of a fragmented grief will be revisited in section 4.4., but it is a novel concept emerging from the data in this study. Grief could be conceptualized as fragmented, as it can emerge and reemerge, consciously and subconsciously, at any point in time and regardless of the development of the grieving process. It can manifest itself through the body, without the individual necessarily understanding those physiological reactions as a response to grief and, as a result, not acknowledging them as bereavement experiences. This is different to the idea of a suspended grief or delayed grief reactions (e.g., Aday and Wahidin, 2016; Ferszt, 2002; Harner et al., 2011; Young Junior, 2003: Wilson et al., 2020), where mourning is prevented until there is a closure or where grief reactions emerge much later than expected. Given the tendency of the participants to mask their emotions with substance use (see section 4.3.3.), the continuity of which can be interrupted through imprisonment, the grief of prisoners in this sample tends to be kept in this liminal space of neither being fully engaged with, nor being fully distracted from. The phenomenological approach has already identified bereavement in prison as an individual as well as a social task; they both need to be present for the phenomenon to exist. Yet, it could be argued that the prison population is restricted from fully exercising either of those components given the differences in conceptual realities between the two. This implies that bereavement can be isolated and isolating, as discussed in the previous section. It can make the individuals lonely and longing company, yet simultaneously avoiding company because of their different stages in grief.

4.2.3. The Corporeal in Bereavement

Sociology and social thought have seen an increase in focus on the exploration of embodiment and the body beyond its objectified, physical self, and into the historical, social, and cultural implications a body might engender (Shilling, 2016). In this study, the participants often described initial reactions to death as a sudden physical weakness, losing the ground under one's feet, feeling paralyzed, or speechless. Some individuals remember being overwhelmed with warmth and experiencing severe nausea. P13, for example, recalls collapsing after hearing about his son's suicide and R4 reacted similarly to the information about his mother's death. While these two individuals experienced a sudden inability to support their own weight, R6 reported a different type of lacking control. He felt paralyzed after his friend's suicide: "*I couldnt' move... Aaaaa, I couldn't do it, like, I was like I can't, I can't like, my whole body was shaking.", *a reaction that was similar to that of P18, who initially could not speak.

Another common reaction was the feeling of being "gutted", which is an informal Scottish word that encompasses being extremely disappointed, upset, saddened, devastated, and/or destroyed, Fuchs (2017) referred to this idea as choked with grief. The word gutted is especially telling in the context of bereavement, as it originally signifies the removal of internal parts of something, which would indicate that experiencing somebody's death can be equivalent to the losing a vital part of oneself (Valentine, 2013). Some individuals in this study indeed felt shortness of breath, pressure on their chest, and respiratory issues once the shock subsided and feelings emerged. The participants commented on the role of the body in bereavement through their experiences of sudden, extreme pain and discomfort. For example, P18 indicated that death notification *"Just hits you like a ton of bricks."* P4 provided a more in-depth insight into bodily manifestations of grief by saying:

> *"It'll be physical, like, it feels like someone stands, stand on your chest or some massive lump in your throat, and, where you can't breathe properly. Em, like, yeah, physically, physically hurts and mentally hurts in your head."*

In many ways it seemed like the body was saying something that the mind could not or will not accept, yet it was still manifested subconsciously. This is comparable to subjective experiences of stress; an individual does not need to be aware that they are stressed or know what they might be stressed about, but the body will react. The person might feel sick, they might lose their appetite, experience sleep disturbances, their palms might be sweating, or their mouth might be dry. There are many physiological reactions that the body is doing to signal the mind that something is not quite right. This can be linked to the Husserlian view of mind and body as intrinsically related and phenomenology assumes a connection between the two, it takes a holistic approach to them (Jackson et al., 2018). As was discussed in the methodology chapter, the body is not just a passive object existing in the world. It is a tool that receives sensory impulses from its surroundings. It acts like a sponge for the sensorial, the acoustic, the tactile, the olfactory, the gustatory stimuli from the environment and, at times, reacts to it (e.g., body language in communication). As R11 indicated, when discussing the emergence of memories, the body is gathering impulses from the environment, whereof the mind might not even be aware:

> *"Aaaa, nu and again [he gets reminded of the dead], but it could, like, literally, it's like I said, sometimes it's, it doesnae even take something to trigger that, it's like the daft wee things, you know what I mean? Like you can hear somebody saying something oot of the windees or whatever, it's just something daft like that, you know what I mean?"*

The role of the body as a receptor of different stimuli can also result in bodily exhaustion during times of elevated stress or trauma, passivity, and withdrawal (Fuchs, 2017), which might be the reason behind the prominent atmosphere of apathy with this sample (see section 4.3.4.).

4.2.3.1. The Shock of Bereavement (Emotions vs Feelings)

The findings from this study support prior research in that the initial reaction to death is shock (e.g., Fuchs, 2017; Kübler-Ross Model). This occurs regardless of the relevance of the person who died to the bereft and manifests itself similarly to a physical accident or trauma. For the participants in this study, the initial shock was often accompanied by disbelief and perplexion, exacerbated by the prison context. Namely, prisoners often lacked the objective insight into what was going on in the community, so receiving the death notice can be increasingly difficult and further aggravated in case of a violent or unexpected death. For example, P1 was struggling to understand the fact that her mother died suddenly in her sleep, since she spoke to her on the phone just a few days ago:

> *"I kept saying "No, it cannae be right, cannae be right, I just spoke to her, eeeerm, on the Thursday.""*

A few bereft individuals in this sample sometimes lacked timely and complete information about a death, usually because they were in prison. Some participants discussed finding out about it accidentally (e.g., from the newspaper or on social media upon release). This was mirrored in Ferszt (2002), who found that the manner of delivery of death news elevated shock and disbelief about the death itself. Although her small sample size precludes generalisation, Harner et al. (2011) supported Ferszt's (2002) findings and Young Junior (2003) underscored the importance of having a supportive environment when receiving the news about death. In this study, there were different justifications as to why family members decided to conceal that information, some of which will be discussed later, but regardless of the (un-)timeliness of the death notice, it was always perceived as a shock by this population.

According to Fuchs (2017), grief can be compared to anxiety, in that the person constantly experiences a threatening presence of something that remains invisible. Although the initial shock could be identified as the "fight or flight" response, once those emotions sink in, the feelings emerge. That is when the acknowledgement of grief, and the subsequent processing of bereavement, can initiate (Barrett, 2012). As literature review discussed, this is rarely a linear process and does not always have a fixed endpoint (e.g., Klass, 2006; Neimeyer, et al., 2002; Seah and Wilson, 2011; Stroebe and Schut, 2010). A range of feelings can occur during this process, shifting in their intensity as the individual moves through grief. For example, R8 reported being in disbelief for about a week, after which he got angry. Anger is common in bereavement research (e.g., Hall, 2014; Neimeyer et al., 2002; Rowling, 2008; Seah and Wilson, 2011; Thompson et al., 2016) and emerged strongly in this study too. Usually, it was not anger toward anybody or anything, just general feelings of anger, which could be related to powerlessness regarding the inability to change the situation. R8 was angry that he could not speak to his uncle anymore, who committed suicide, neither about the suicide nor about anything else in life. The fact that his uncle was just with him the night before and "*seemed completely normal*" (R8), the suddenness around it, further aggravated this participant's disbelief.

Although the initial shock seemed to be the essence of receiving a death notice, the subsequent processing of grief depended on the relationship with the person who died. For example, R10 discussed the death of his dad's second cousin with whom he was not very close. As such, this death did not make a strong impact on him:

> *"I was quite shocked. Em… And I did get quite sad, but… As I say, that wasnae someone that I was gonnae [3 seconds break] absolutely burst down into tears and just, not be able to handle."*

P18 described similarities in his initial reaction to death, underscoring the differences in his subsequent processing of that information, based on the relational aspect of bereavement:

> *"After she [mom] gives me the bad news, it's like I cannae speak sort of thing. And… End up just kinda saying goodbye, sorta thing, and then just hanging up the phone and then trynna put on like a brave face, going to my cell sorta thing and if I need to cry, I just cry in my cell, sorta thing."*

This quotation indicates that the individual will modify their conscious actions, which follow the initial reaction, based on the relationship they had with the dead. If they need to cry, they will do so, but away from the others. Even though the coping mechanisms for bereavement can be somewhat different in prison and in the community (see section 4.3.), the body can be understood as the primary place where a loss is manifested.

It is widely argued that the population in prisons experiences sensorial deprivation brought about by imprisonment (Crewe, 2007, 2011, 2014; Herrity, 2020; Jewkes, 2005; Liebling, 1999, 2014; Philippe-Beauchamp, 2019; Wooff, 2020). For example, Marti (2020) discussed the practices of transforming and decorating the cells to manage certain senses. This might include putting things in front of the window bars, rendering them invisible, or by evoking memories through smells and immersing oneself, sensorially, into their own world (Marti, 2020). Some research also argued that prisoners struggle with the physical distance from the community (e.g., Bosworth et al., 2005; Rhodes, 2001) and experience social, emotional, and psychological aloneness (Aday and Wahidin, 2016; Ferrera-Pena, 2010; Ferszt, 2002; Harner et al., 2011; Olson and McEwen, 2004; Potter, 1999; Vaswani, 2014), which presents another layer of pain. Additional difficulties in coping with bereavement emerged strongly when discussing birthdays, death anniversaries, or Christmases, as family-celebrated holidays, indicating the relevance of body memory. Hentz (2002) critiqued the focus of grief research on psychological, behavioral, and emotional processes, and considered the idea of a bodily memory emerging anew before each anniversary. In this study, many prisoners indicated a weird feeling around that time, like they knew something was wrong, days, even weeks before the actual date. Their body was telling them information that their mind did not want to comprehend or recall. For example, P11 indicated that dealing with his mother's death seemed to be getting harder as times go by:

> *"The first, the week leading up to [anniversary]… It's, is… I'm all over the place. And it's, it's been over ten years now. Um, it's like it's fresh, just like yesterday. Leading up to that week. And it's been like that, it's just, it's… I don't know. I thought it'd get easier. But I feel like it's harder."*

Apart from the corporeality in bereavement, this study also found that one of the most common things that prisoners would like to have but cannot, because they are in prison, was human contact. Examples such as the two below were all too common in this study:

> *"I wanna be able to see him [brother], gae him a cuddle. (…) Cannae gae each other cuddle over the phone." (R10)*

> *"And you should be able to gae your family a k(iss), be able to gae your family a kiss and cuddle [at the funeral], you know what I mean?" (P3)*

Although the latter part was not necessarily in response to bereavement, it does underscore the relevance of bodily in humans, of physical contact with the loved one. Hence, when looking at bereavement and imprisonment, one could argue that grief becomes locked within the individual and contained within the prison walls. Even though it tries to resurface using the body as the medium to communicate with the world, the individual is consciously and continuously suppressing it. The prison environment, with its ceaseless presence of others, is perceived as an inappropriate space to process bereavement. Namely, it does not provide the shared social, physical, and emotional aspect the participants indicated that they needed in bereavement, only the potentially overlapping spatial and contextual dimensions of it.

4.2.4. The Visual in Bereavement

In line with prior research on bereavement (e.g., Field and Filanosky, 2009; Hall, 2014; Lobb et al., 2010; Neimeyer et al., 2006; Umberson et al., 2017; Vaswani, 2014), this study has found that some deaths are more difficult to process than others. However, witnessing death and/or finding the body emerged as an additional strain for the individuals in this sample. Given their often chaotic lifestyles, characterized by substance abuse, trauma, and violence, many participants reported close encounters with death, which further complicated their bereavement (as will be discussed shortly). When grieving a death of a child or a young person, ideas of injustice and anger emerged strongly (see also Christensen et al., 2017). For example, P4 experienced death of her young child. Although she did not want to discuss that death in more detail, she did say that "*my little boy, he never should have died. Never!*" On the contrary, deaths of elderly individuals (e.g., grandparents), where it was seen as the next step in life, or of people dying of cancer, where it was perceived as a way to cease their pain, were easier to accept. In such cases, participants could prepare themselves, to an extent, for the imminence of death. Yet, even then, the element of shock was present. As indicated by P21, whose grandma died of cancer:

> *"It's like something dropped in the center of my chest. Like, physically fell. And then… Nothing. 'Cause I was ready for it and I ready-ed myself for it [gran's death]."*

The ambivalence toward death was discussed in section 4.1, yet it re-emerged strongly in situations of cancer. On the one hand, the individuals were happy the person died and classified death as something good, a relief from pain. On the other hand, they were upset and angry about the person's suffering. This internal conflict was especially strong when the individuals witnessed death or saw the individual deteriorating, sometimes rapidly, up until the point of death. Subsequently, there seems to be something in visually witnessing deaths that could make bereavement difficult. Indeed, some prisoners in this sample discussed their decision to distance themselves from their family members dying of cancer as a protective mechanism. P21 was describing a death of his grandma, whom he claimed to have loved and cared for very much. As such, he wanted to keep a positive mental image of her and did not want to see her destroyed by cancer:

> *"I selfishly just didn't want to see her ill. I knew it would hurt... Too much. (...) I really didn't wanna see her skinny, gone, no hair. Not the granny I remember." (P21)*

P3 found the effects of cancer on his grandma equally distressing, but he was there to witness it: *"I've never seen a fucking cancer rip you up, rip through a human like this in my life, man!"*.

The data further shows the impact of witnessing death on the processing of bereavement (see Neimeyer et al., 2002). Many participants either found the dead body or were present when death occurred, most commonly in situations of an overdose, and both situations were described by the participants as traumatic. For example, P13 remembered the way his two best friends looked, who both died of a heroin overdose *"lying there with their needles out of them. (...) And the mess of their arms is unbelievable".* Similarly, P8 still experienced nightmares from the distress of finding his uncle's murdered body, even two decades later:

> *"It was me who found his body, it was me and my partner who find his body, in the middle of the field. And it's nae really... (...) The, the, the look, his eyes, my uncle's eee… I think, it's like a moment, I've only looked at it for a split second, I couldnae look any mair. It was a… But his eyes… That's the first thing that jumps into my heid. Every morning. His eyes. I can see his eyes. And I just, I think of dread, fear, upset, lost, gutted. Eee, I think, I think all those. (...) So, it really messes me up. And I know, 19 years ago this happened, but… I cannae, I cannae… Get it out of me heid. I tend to bottle up." (P8)*

Likewise, R9 discussed finding his mother's body as a teenager and then having to see her again as a part of identification. Her death was noted as a suicide, but he suspects it was an accident of mixing pills with drink, which elicited feelings of blame. He described how:

> *"I went to her house that morning… And em, as I walked in… She's been there, you know, so it's hard to explain, she was just lying there. And I was a 16-year-old and I just phoned the police. (...) But she must've been dead, pfff, hours, so it was too late. It was way too late. (...) I kinda blame myself for that. (...) She was stone-cold, you know, pale white, there was nothing I could've done, what I ever could've done. So yeah... It was me that found her (...). Then I had to go and identify the body again, stupidly!"*

Another individual described the death of a person he used to spend time with while in a homeless hostel, encompassing the relational, the spatial, and the proximal in bereavement. He was not close to this person in the same way that he was close to his family, but this death still had a strong effect on him. This suggests that the impact of trauma stemming from the exposure to violent deaths can magnify the experiences of bereavement, its long-lasting consequences, the need for support, and the overall complexity of grief:

> *"One [death] that affected me the meest was… A guy that basically, after I turned 16, (…) I tell to my mom that I was gonna go doon to the homeless. (…) And they give me a flat to stay in. And basically, it was in a homeless hostel and all the folk that were staying in the flats they were like, well... Heavy drink addicts and heroin addicts (...), I started getting close to a few of them. And then one day, I had, when I started going and going to this chap, just to go and see him, and then (...) he was yelling and that, and just he was white, white as fuck. White like I've never seen anything before in my life. And em... I went like what's happening? (...) He started shaking like fuck, I tried, he wouldn't make any sound, he wouldnae... See, I didnae know how to check if somebody was breathing or anything like that. I was just basically trying to shake him and wake him the fuck up. And I run down the stair, I go to the security, and went back upstairs, they've phoned an ambulance and that and they told me just to go back into my room. And em... See, that's one of the things I've had nightmares aboot it, fucking... [3 seconds break] Sort of in my heid, I've done it. (...) I was trying not to go back there and fucking, ken, I'm bursting into tears. I have naebody to talk to, because... There's peer mentors and that in the hall but... (R10)*

P6 was one of the participants who experienced finding a dead body, as well as witnessed death first-hand. His dad struggled to cope with the death of his wife (the participant's mother) and killed himself on her birthday, *"hanging from the stairs. Eee, I cut him down and that, but it was too late."* This participant also described having to resuscitate a person he cared for, which was depicted as especially painful and coincided with similar accounts from other participants. His partner accidentally overdosed, and he was the one trying to bring her back to life:

> *"Aye, I was there for the whole experience, so… E, it's… Pretty bad, so… [few seconds break] You know that the last thing you're ever gonna, you're daein is hurting them, so… 'Cause you can feel it, with the ribs, with when you're resuscitating, so, it's not good that way."*

On the one hand, the person died in their arms making it inherently difficult to process. On the other, the participants worried that they might have hurt the person while trying to save them. There were a few instances in this study, where a person overdosed with the participant and, in some cases, the participant was subsequently charged with involuntary manslaughter. Thus, the ambivalence around death emerged: was it possible to save this person? Did they contribute to their death? Many questions were left unanswered complicating their bereavement and eliciting conflicting feelings of guilt, anger, and sadness.

Witnessing death did not only happen in the community. Many prisoners in this sample observed death in prison as well. As P10 described:

> *"I've seen somebody hanging in the hall. That was, em, in here. Em… You do see that. Not a lot now, but back then. (...) 'Cause it's double gaffs, sometimes you can get put in cells in a way that, boys, it's double bed, tsss, it's bunk beds, hang themselves fae the top pole. And then, as I was walking past them cell and I've seen the boy dangling there. It's not right."*

In situations of prison death, the participants were often angry at the institution for not preventing the death, but also for the ways in which the deaths were handled. This will be revisited in section four, but some participants indicated unease about being in high proximity of a corpse without appropriate safeguarding measures in place. According to R1:

> *"The thing is, staff didn't stop me from coming oot my room and standing at my door and I've looked down, and I've seen folk in forensic suits, hoods up, and everything. (...) It was like a crime scene. And it was in my face."*

The above examples all underline the shock and discomfort that death can bring to the living, which can be exacerbated by close exposure to the body and/or witnessing death. Seeing the corpse was described as a very powerful image that, at times, elicited a sensorial overload. As such, it stuck with the individuals and made death difficult to process. Some quotations arguably described symptoms akin to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, which could further traumatize the bereft and complicate their bereavement, especially in restrictive environments.

As discussed in this section, the participants underscored the relevance of relationships that go beyond immediate family when talking about bereavement. In so doing, they also reconceptualized family as something they felt close to, yet distant from; safe, but unsafe; adult-like, while still being children. The relationships they spoke about were often unstable, disrupted, as well as disruptive, affecting their emotional regulation and aggravating feelings of utter loneliness. Still, the social component of bereavement emerged quite strongly among this population, albeit impeded by the prison context. The participants argued for the need to be with others in the community, to be able to acknowledge death and engage in processing of grief. They also discussed the bodily manifestation of bereavement, which corresponds with Husserlian assertions of mind and body as intrinsically linked. Finally, visually witnessing death sometimes led to a sensorial overload, which was additionally traumatic, and further complicated the individual's bereavement. Regardless of whether a death occurred while the individuals were in the community or in prison, grief often (re-)emerged through different triggers, needing to be managed. The next section will examine the coping strategies employed by this sample to distinguish the essential in bereavement from the context specific.

4.3. Coping with Bereavement

Coping refers to processes, strategies, and styles of handling the perceived situation in which bereavement positioned the bereft (Stroebe and Schut, 2015). As the literature review discussed, this can be done in a multitude of ways. For example, the bereft might engage in emotional withdrawal and closing oneself off (Dosser, 2016; Leach et al., 2008), what Woodward et al. (2020) refer to as emotional non-acceptance and diversion. They might experience feelings of anger and guilt (e.g., Field and Filanosky, 2009; Melhem et al., 2004; Young et al., 2012), hostility (Jakoby, 2012), or overall emotional numbness (e.g., Neimeyer et al., 2002). This could also be related to specific cultures, as Valentine (2013) discussed the absence of a shared tradition of mourning among the British population, which could lead to embarrassment for not having dealt with grief in a specific time-period or creating justifications for keeping the dead in ones' life.

Participants in this study quite commonly reported a limited range of emotions and/or being dead inside, which could create additional difficulties when attempting to re-negotiate their understanding of reality following a death experienced in a carceral context. Given the reduction in sensorial stimuli while imprisoned (e.g., Laws and Crewe, 2016), distinct understanding of time (e.g., Wahidin, 2006), as well as the conceptualization of prisons as precarious places for expression of emotionality and vulnerability (e.g., Wacquant, 2002), the data indicates that bereft individuals might struggle to reconcile what they think they should be feeling, based on the socially expected responses to death, with what they are indeed feeling, based on the complexity of their overall life experiences, which can be further compounded by the cultural norms of prisons. Yet, as the previous section discussed, bereavement can emerge in various ways, some of which are corporal and out of the individual's control. Thus, even though prisoners might be suppressing and/or bottling up their emotions, they could not nullify or erase them. This would indicate that a person can be bereft, in the sense that they can feel the loss, perceive the loss, and reminisce about the dead, but still avoid consciously expressing their grief and working through it. Such understandings of bereavement could explain individual differences in experiencing and processing grief in this sample, but potentially more generally as well. While some participants displayed outward aggression, others internalized their pain. Therefore, coping strategies ranged from avoiding and suppressing the issue, through more neutral responses such as calling a relative or reminiscing, to (re-)acting on it, often through violence, substance abuse, and/or self-harm.

This section first discusses the specific mechanisms that participants employed to achieve emotional diversion; a strategy that can be used to avoid engaging with bereavement, as well as during the process (e.g., Stroebe and Schut, 2010). It then revisits the idea of continuing bonds with the dead, both in the community and in the institution, by examining the role of memories. Finally, it examines the disengagement from multiple coexisting realities the participants experienced and a culmination of emotional suppression, resulting in general apathy toward life, feelings of helplessness, and overall resignation.

4.3.1. Emotional Diversion

The findings from this study indicate the tendency among many prisoners to search for diversion from their feelings. They tried to keep their mind and body occupied with anything available, rather than dealing with their thoughts. As Greer (2002) found in her study on managing emotions in a women's prison, emotional diversion in a prisoner population is partly due to their prior experiences of trauma and abuse that required of them to develop alternative methods of managing emotions, and partly due to the perceived contextual constraints in prison. Laws and Crewe (2016) further argued that prisoners mostly use distraction or rumination to cope with emotional experiences, with the former being used much more often.

Woodward et al. (2020) supported the idea of diversion as a coping mechanism on their sample of youth with PTSD symptoms receiving acute psychiatric care. Yet, they underscored that diversion is not necessarily negative: if emotional non-acceptance is low, diversion can be a positive coping mechanism. A common theme among prisoners in this study was a tendency to combine emotional diversion with high emotional non-acceptance. Namely, the contextual barriers to grieving in prison (see section 4.4.) often interacted with the potential cumulative impact of the participants' prior emotional and physical trauma, affecting their emotional regulation. For example, many individuals struggled to understand that a death has happened on the outside. Those who acknowledged the fact that it happened, did not always have the tools or the will to process it. This created a paradox in emotional understanding of two equally unchangeable situations. On the one hand, many prisoners displayed acquiescence with the finality of their imprisonment, but on the other, they seemed to be struggling to accept the definiteness of death. As P21 stated, *"I hate the word "dead", because it's so final."* While the former was often brushed off, since one cannot change the past, perceived as something "*you kind of have to live with it [imprisonment]."* (R10), the latter tended to be brought to consciousness over and over again:

> *"I wake up and r(eality), r(eality), the reality hits me again. My uncle [name]'s not here." (P8).*

This mirrors the discussion from the literature review, whereby being imprisoned can elicit a prolonged sense of eternal present (e.g., Moran, 2012; Philippe-Beauchamp, 2019), a sensorial liminality, bringing into question the potential impact of an interaction between these two causes of a temporal loop. Yet, at no point was the individual able to leave the dead in the past. This could imply the relevance of power and agency in the lives of this population; while the offence was an act that they could have controlled (in theory), death was passively imposed onto them (as discussed in section 4.1). As such, most individuals were able to accept imprisonment as a consequence of their actions, but bereavement elicited feelings of helplessness, which were exacerbated by the prison context. P14 indicated that there was not a lot that prisoners can do regarding funerals, as they are *"kind of at mercy of what they [the prison] can give you, so…"* From a phenomenological perspective, while death is absolute, bereavement can be empowering and disempowering, depending on the relational, the social, and the contextual components surrounding it.

Lack of emotional, physical, and cognitive acceptance of death manifested across this sample through prolonged periods of disbelief and difficulty coming to terms with it. While bereavement theory supports this, it was further aggravated within the carceral setting due to isolation from the community, limited insight into the life outside, and exclusion from participation in social rituals (e.g., funerals). Even if individuals were in the community at the time of death underpinning their bereavement experience, their (often) chaotic and unstructured lifestyles kept them out of touch with reality:

> *"I started taking drugs [after dad abuse], started taking alcohol, just to try and forget. But the more I started taking drugs, the more I started drinking, the more the problems were still there. But they kept building, and building, and building, and I kept taking more, and more, and more, and... Before I knew it, well, it just blew up. I knew it was*

> *just a, I knew the day was coming when it was all gonna blow up in my face, so... [exhales] That's all I did. But I didnae think it was actually gonna blow up in my face when I came intae prison, because... After my first year in prison, I, I tried to take my own life. And that wasnae, it wasnae a good start." (P18)*

This inability to ever take a break and focus on the detrimental effects of their continuous exposure to harm on mental health might have aggravated their disbelief and non-acceptance of death, supporting the concept of fragmented grief. This was true despite sharing the spatial and temporal dimensions of bereavement with the others and grieving in the community. For example, P5 reflected on the death of his brother, which occurred a few months before coming into prison:

> *"But even when I saw him in the coffin, at funeral, it was like, he looked fake. He looked like a, a dummy. It just wasnae, he didnae seem... I don't know."*

Apart from the social component of bereavement, working through grief requires time (Doka and Martin, 1998; Matthews and Marwit, 2004; Walter, 2007). Yet, as the findings suggest, in cases of a traumatic encounter with death, the time passed did not necessarily assist. This could be due to a lack of space, opportunities, and capacities among this sample to process such and similar harrowing situations, which could further complicate their bereavement. As per Woodward et al. (2020), emotional diversion requires synergy with the acceptance of death, and at least one of those components was often lacking for the participants in this sample. Going back to P8's experiences of his uncle's death from 20 years ago, the image of finding the murdered body still haunts him, preventing him from getting closure:

> *"Aaaaa, disbelief, ken… Even now. (...) Aye, I can't, still, didnae… I don't know, something in my brain. I kept on saying no, I'm gutted and upset. It's like my brain's not taking it in yet. I'm worried about when my brain does take it in. How it's, how I'm gonna react to it."*

This idea that their brain could not process death was frequently mentioned by the individuals in this sample. They often seemed to have struggled with the emotional and rational aspects of managing difficult situations. Some individuals discussed the perceived internal conflict between having emotions yet consciously concealing them, and knowing that they have emotions, but being unable to feel them. For example:

> *"I think my dealing with the death that I've dealt, of my mum and then my brother who's got viciously murdered, I think it's just water over duck's back. I… Heh… [stutters] It's, like, emotionless, I'm not got any feelings. I know I love my son, I know I love all my kids, but it's like, I can cry for five minutes, hearing the news, and that's it. D' you know what I mean? I don't know if it's the way I've been brought up as a kid, where my father, my father was very abusive." (P13)*

Once again, this quotation reiterates the relevance of early years' processing of trauma and emotions for the development of coping mechanisms required in later life.

Looking at different academic disciplines, Rager (2005) found that women diagnosed with cancer used emotional diversion to cope with their disease, which enabled them to discuss their experiences unemotionally. This could imply that emotional distancing can be used by the person suffering or dying, as well as by the person watching the others suffer or being bereft. In Rager's (2005) study, the women were moved to tears when talking about the individuals who helped them through their experiences. Similarly, although claiming numbness, many participants in this study shared funny stories, expressed their affection toward the dead, and even shed a tear during the interview. This could imply that emotional diversion might be used to process one's emotions but does not necessarily indicate that individuals do not feel anything at all.

4.3.2. Do Not Show Emotions

Prisons entail a range of emotions, but prisoners tend to avoid becoming emotional in prison (e.g., Aday and Wahidin, 2016; Choudhry et al., 2019; Crewe, 2015; Salina et al., 2011; Wooff, 2020; Wilson, 2011). This is often explained by the prisoner subculture that values machismo, hegemonic masculinity, and toughness (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005; Choudhry et al., 2019) with prior research finding the inappropriateness of emotional expression in female prisons as well (e.g., Byrne, 2005; Greer, 2002; Mahoney and Daniel, 2006; Mageehon, 2008; Suter et al., 2002). Similarly to Goffman's (1959) conceptualization of life as a theatre performance, many participants indicated that showing emotions would make them vulnerable to bullying and abuse. In line with prior research (e.g., Choudhry et al., 2019; Jewkes, 2005; Wilson, 2011), there were also strong ideas of masculinity and gendered norms in this sample, which could further impede bereavement. As R9 explained:

> *"They [prisoners] have a face on, they have a mask. And they don't really like to take it off, cause, once again, there's another stigma attached to the prison. And what a male should be."*

Thus, one cannot grieve properly because they have to be emotionally strong and stoic. P18 discussed that when an individual is in (emotional) pain, they are more likely to just agree to whatever another prisoner might be asking, simply to get them out of their cell. As R8 further discussed:

> *"You need to have a brave face on and not let people see you, like, if people see you sittin', greetin', and actin' sad, they will take advantage of you."*

Or R5, who reflected on the social aspect of grief that is lacking in prisons, yet suggested that isolation can sometimes support this process. However, he underscored the detrimental effect that bullying can have for processing emotions:

> *"If you're on your own, aye [you can grieve in prison]. But you cannae grieve with eenbody else. Unless you want bullied the whole day and it just makes you feel worse, so… I wouldnae do it in front of folk. I would dae it in your cell."*

This tendency to make fun of people in pain and to take advantage of their vulnerabilities further eroded the potential for creating supportive relationships in prisons. However, female participants provided a few examples of collecting money to buy flowers for the funeral of another prisoner's family member and/or other instances of being a great support. As these examples referred to a different prison, a female-only institution that was not included in this study, this might indicate gendered differences in prisoner subcultures. Furthermore, as indicated by those women who had experienced bereavement in that prison, it had a much higher staff to prisoner ratio and the ethos of the institution was different and, allegedly, more humane. This begs the question of whether and to what extent prison as an institution impedes bereavement. It might be that a complex interaction of gendered norms, societal perceptions of prison toughness, and unfavorable attitudes within and between prisoners and staff perpetuate a hostile environment and social isolation burdening the bereft prisoner.

According to some participants, emotional concealment is not always restricted to prison settings and could also be demonstrated in the community. Yet, such behaviors were believed to stem from chaotic and unstable childhoods that encouraged not showing emotions:

> *“My dad's took that side of the passion of my life away from me, that I can't cry. Because we always got told that men don't cry, men don't show their emotions and this is what got thrown into us from a very, very early age.” (P13)*

As indicated above, gender socialization might be another important aspect shaping emotional regulation for this sample. For example, Kaplan (2006) discussed gendered expectations of emotional expression in particular circumstances, which require of men more positive or outwardly resilient responses to negative situations. This affected their self-expectations, whereby inhibition of negative emotions acts as a protective mechanism to preclude self-rejective feelings if the norms were violated (Kaplan, 2006). Subsequently, many participants aimed to divert their thoughts using a range of tools, the availability of which was context-dependent. In the community, they could frequently choose which coping strategy to engage with. For example, some participants often went for a walk and briefly extracted themselves from a situation, while others went to a pub. Coming into prison limited their options and presented them with a different context; a context where they had to develop new tools, making some participants feel lost:

> *“How can I deal with this, sorta thing, it's… Kinda hard to kinda, wrap my heid around things, because I mean, you don't know how to react, when you're in prison. But you know how to react when you're outside. Outside I know where I'm gonna go - pub, and normally drown my sorrows.” (P18)*

Similarly, R11 described a variety of support mechanisms he had on the outside, which made it easier for him to process death. Whereas in prison, as he said, the main type of support would be to talking to a professional:

> *“I think, like, outside, like… It's, it's a bit mair easier. Like, if you don't have, if you don't have like, the kinda, like, support network, if you cannae speak to somebody, like… Even, I'm not saying it's the right thing, but getting up and going for a drink or getting up and saying, you know what, I'm gonna have a fag or I'm going for a walk. Like, you've got that option, like you, you can dae kinda other stuff, you know what I mean? Like, you can go around or you can go to the gym and use a punch bag or whatever else, you know what I mean? Like, there's thousands of other things you can do other than talk.” (R11)*

Although a few individuals indicated their engagement with constructive activities, such as woodwork, writing poetry, or drawing, to keep their minds distracted, many participants found this change of setting difficult to process. In the community, they had their established mechanisms to deal with challenging situations and a greater freedom in choosing which strategy to use, when, and for how long. Outside they *knew* what to do and where to go, whereas inside there was *"nothing you can dae"* (P6). Although most prisons have a variety of support services in place, participants also listed a range of reasons (not) to engage with them. Sometimes they were not in prison long enough to get enrolled in prison programs, due to the long waiting lists. For example, P5 saw no point in adding his name to the list, as he would not have enough time to complete it anyways:

> *"(...) there's like a really long waiting list. They do have a bereavement course, but like, for you to get on it, it's like a lifetime, so huh [smiles]. I just couldnae been bothered, because I'm out in like, ten weeks."*

Other times they feared opening up. P13, whose experiences of paternal abuse throughout his childhood were discussed already, worried that working through his problems would cause a flood of emotions he would not be able to stop:

> *"I just physically cannae let this wall down to let, allow myself [to cry]. Because I think, if the flood-gate's open, it would never close. And I think that's the problem. (...) I'm too scared to even open that shell just a tiny, tiny wee bit. Or this, all these emotions are gonna come out."*

Similarly, some participants refused to attend support services, because they knew that once the session was done, they would need to put on a brave face and go back in the hall, pretending like nothing has happened. Others had negative prior experiences of re-living the pain through engaging with support, yet without managing to solve their issues, which made them more apprehensive toward opening up again:

> *"I did try and speak to, up in [prison name] (...), 'cause my heid was in a really bad way up there. (...) And then they hand me over and I went mental with them. Listen, they dae this all the time. They made me go through everything again, ken, what we found and bla bla bla bla bla, and it just... Made me bad, just messed me up again." (P8)*

Or as P12 indicated:

> *"I apologized to them all, to the bereavement counselling, you know, there is nae point in starting something that I cannae finish and I'm left, open up the can of worms. You know, it takes time, and em, just to be left, so it wouldnae be fair."*

However, P12 successfully resolved some of her other traumas through available support while in prison, which could indicate that there is something inherent to grief that might make individuals reticent about processing it in carceral contexts. This could be a combination of social stigma and feelings of being undeserving of getting support because they caused harm to the society. It could also be influenced by the established norms around who can grieve, for whom, and for how long, and prisoners' experiences sometimes do not fit this narrow criteria. Some participants also claimed that their emotions were just not coming as they have been suppressed for so long that they did not even know how to feel. As discussed in section 4.2, sometimes the feelings were there, but manifested via bodily reactions, rather than as specific cognitive patterns embraced through socialization. For example, P13 recognized his feelings as a sensation of stabbing in the back of his throat, yet he claimed he could not be emotional. R8 associated his inability to feel and express emotions to his experiences of being in care. Although he indicated his confusion about why this was happening, he believed that he was unable to engage with any emotion apart from the two very conflicting ones:

> *"'Cause all the experiences I've been through, since obviously I got put in care, like, I don't know, I don't think I can deal with emotions like other people. Like, it's, what if I'm meant to feel an emotion, the only two emotions I feel is happy or angry. And that's it. I don't feel sad or anything, I don't, I don't know how to explain it. It's weird. I tried to explain it to Programs, and Programs didn't understand me either."*

The experiences discussed above could also indicate that, for this sample, emotional suppression started early (or earlier) in life and was reinforced through institutionalization. Not (ever) having had a safe environment to start unpicking those sensations made some participants feel different and potentially aggravated their feelings of aloneness. Hence, these findings might add another dimension to Doka's (1999) concept of disenfranchised grief by questioning the extent to which prisoners' grief is disenfranchised solely by their marginalized position in the society. Based on the multitude of disadvantages these individuals faced in life, it might be argued that fragmentary approach to understanding emotions may alienate some individuals even further.

Apart from going for a walk or to a pub, many participants indicated visiting graves as another good strategy to process bereavement. In phenomenology, graves are a form of shared conceptualization of death (Fuchs, 2017). They are a symbolic representation of the person who died and, as such, they enable the grieving process. However, prisoners are not allowed to visit graves, which could interfere with grief work. For example, R4 misses the ability to visit those who passed away on their death anniversary. Although his understanding of death highlights a Westernized cultural concept of death, it underscores the spatial and the proximal in bereavement. Interestingly though, in R4's discussion on attending graves, physical closeness to the dead trumped the immediate need for social in bereavement:

> *"It's, it should be, like, a human right. So, I don't think it's fair that. I know that I've done crime and should be locked up for it, but it should be like that right that you can go see [the grave], even if like, guard goes and takes you, but they won't. Aye, it should be something now."*

He further explained that he already lost time he could have spent with his mom growing up, because he was put in care:

> *"I didn't really get to spend much time with my mom for like a good, good few year and... Ever since I was in care, like, it's just ruined my life pretty much. (...). I should get the right just to go down, even for like ten minute or five minute, I'd be happy. Even a glance, going down and seeing my mom's grave, even a glance of it... Brilliant!"*

The above quotation highlights the potential of cumulative loss and trauma to manifest itself later in life and aggravate and/or complicate the experiences of bereavement. It also reiterates the previous discussion around the lost time that emerged strongly in this sample.

The inability to commemorate the dead how and when the participants would like to, made bereavement in prison strenuous for this population. This aligns with Stroebe and Schut's (1999) theory on Dual Process Model in bereavement, as well as with their more recent concept of Overload (2016). According to the former, the individuals cyclically engage in active processing of bereavement followed by a passive approach to grief. Yet, the latter also suggests a relationship between the stressors, those things the bereft need to deal with, their coping strategies, and the adequacy of care received to cover the potential complications arising from a stressful event (Stroebe and Schut, 2016). As discussed, the tools available to participants to manage bereavement while imprisoned were different than what they might have had on the outside, which sometimes evoked frustration. Apart from the limited availability, the participants also experienced limited accessibility to amenities, and at times, they were just not in the mood to engage with what was available. For example, P4 indicated that television would not help if she were not in the right mindset:

> *"Well, yeah, you can watch the telly and stuff like that, but when you're in the state of depression, you couldn't concentrate on the telly. So, it depends."*

Hence, when the individuals could not or would not engage in activities to divert their thoughts by watching television, playing game consoles, attending work or recreation, they bottled up. This resonates with the discussion on corporeal in bereavement (see section 4.2.3.), according to which feelings emerged once emotions settled in. So, although individuals usually indicated that they bottled up their feelings, in practice they aimed to distract their thoughts to prevent those feelings emerging in the first place; to divert emotions from settling in one's consciousness.

Some individuals further discussed a partial withdrawal into themselves to avoid feelings of guilt for enjoying life. For example, they indicated that they struggled to laugh or feel happy, as they felt that such behaviors would be a betrayal of the dead. P1 thought that she had to be sad all the time to show that she cared about the dead:

> *"I just felt low, like it is wrong to laugh, wrong to be happy… (...) And I know my mom would want me to be happy, but I just felt guilty I was in prison, guilty for being happy when I should have been there, with my mom… I just couldn't enjoy myself."*

As P1 described, it is not just feelings of guilt for being happy, but also for ending up in prison and losing time she could have spent with her family members. This is similar to what Fuchs (2017) described as an exclusivity of grief, whereby its gravity prevents the bereft to experience other, potentially competing feelings, which could be perceived as deserting the loved one. As such, grief is constantly in the back of one's mind becoming an existential feeling of detachment and not-belonging to the world (Fuchs, 2017). Conceptualizing death in this way enriches the prior discussion on aloneness in death and could explain why many participants engaged in new, potentially harmful behaviors in its aftermath.

4.3.3. Numbing the Pain

Although coping mechanisms discussed by participants differed on the individual and contextual level (i.e., in prison or outside), the essence of it was to either suppress the physical pain that bereavement has caused or divert their thoughts and attention onto something else. The most common ways for participants to numb the pain was through self-harm, drug- and alcohol-abuse, and, in some of the most extreme cases, suicide attempts.

4.3.3.1. Self-harm

Unresolved trauma and emotional suppression can have a variety of mental-health implications and lead to, among others, instances of self-harm (Jakoby, 2012; Halsey, 2018; Harner et al., 2011; Leach et al., 2008; Lewin and Farkas, 2012; Rodger, 2004; Taylor, 2002; Vaswani, 2015). Self-harm was sometimes used to divert one's attention from emotional to physical pain. For example, P1 started engaging in self-harm after her mother's death

> *"to take that heavy feeling off my chest, you know? To take the pain away, grief, to focus on the pain from cutting."*

For some participants, self-harm was the only way they knew how to deal with their emotions, apart from the outward expressions of aggression. Many participants in this study suggested that they lacked stability and safe space throughout their childhood to develop emotional intelligence, limiting their toolset for solving emotional issues. R4 claimed that:

> *"(...) when I've started that [cutting himself] was when, after my mom had died, but it's like, like, 'cause I didn't really speak to staff [in care] about my mum dying. Like, it was one of the solutions I came up. Eee, it was my way of dealing, it was either smashing up or cut myself."*

Looking at the impact of gender on self-harm, prior research has classified women as more emotionally expressive, yet prone to internalizing violence. Men, on the other hand, tend to be portrayed as stoic; more likely to internalize emotions and externalize aggression (e.g., Belknap, 2015; Gächter et al., 2011; Suter et al., 2002; Walter, 1997; Zinner, 2000). Yet, this study has found that men were equally likely to engage in self-harm as women, but they volunteered that information less often and had to be specifically asked about it. Male participants also described using different means to achieve the same goal than females. While females often resorted to cutting, males were more likely to direct their aggression toward something, as described by P21:

> *"My self-harm is always, I hate blood, so I never cut myself or anything like that. Like, punch walls a lot, stupidly, I overdosed on pills a few times…"*

It is interesting that he included overdose as a type of self-harm, even though both actions aim to take control over one's life and numb, manage, or fully cease emotional pain by diverting it into physical. To these participants, self-harm provided a ready-made, available, and easily accessible means to vent out emotions without having to think about it:

> *"Possibly more than what I realised [was self-harm due to deaths]. Eh, I've always said it's always been multiple things going on at once, eh. I tend to bottle things up (…) it's no something I think of this is the reason I was doing this or doing that, eh. (...) There is possibly something that can be done, but at the moment in time... It's just something that cannae be done, so whether you blame yourself or not, it does affect you in a way, but... It's, it's no something that can be helped, I don't know. I don't know what I am trying to say all right, but it possibly is part of why I self-harmed at some points." (R3)*

Hence, self-harm provided some individuals with a temporary escape from their grim, burdensome reality, regardless of the root cause of it. For other individuals, self-harm colored their monochromous life and made them feel the pain, reminded them that they were alive:

> *"Like, I've done that [a huge, long scar on her inner arm]. Like, that was a really deep cut, like, right down to the bone. (…) It takes feelings away, that's much of the point why I do that. Like, I can be overwhelmed with a feeling and cut, cut, and it takes, makes you, em, seeing the blood (...), sometimes I just need to see the blood to... It's just like, my world's like, not colorful anymore, eh. I don't know why I do it. When I was younger it's just sheer rage, but not... It's just like... I'm numb." (P7)*

This resonates with the earlier discussion around experiences of long-lasting abuse, whereby some prisoners said that they used to provoke fights on the outside, simply to see whether they were still capable of feeling pain. Due to years of victimization, they built walls around them, making themselves impenetrable to any emotion. So, they needed to feel pain to see whether they were still a human. P4 also indicated that she liked:

> *"Ahhhh, the physical pain of it. Like, I could feel it. Instead of like, it was in my heart and my head, so… I could actually, physically, feel the pain. And, I guess it kind of gives me the emotion of feeling alive again."*

These quotes further support the arguments around the bodily in bereavement and the difficulties understanding the corporeal side of emotional pain. By inflicting physical pain upon themselves, a wound that is present, visible, and felt, the individuals found escape from the internal pain that was tearing them apart, and which they sought to suppress and bury. This seems to be a learnt way of coping with difficulties that was brought into prison and adapted to bereavement experiences in carceral contexts. As P2 explained, she engages in self-harm when she cannot run away from her feelings anymore:

> *"Only when things get a bit much [does self-harm]. When… Everything starts to affect me and that box [where she keeps her emotions] gets a bit too… Close."*

Phenomenologically, the mind is involved in physical pain; there is intentionality toward inflicting it, as well as toward dealing with it. The individual is conscious of its source, which makes it easier to process it. There is no ambiguity around this pain, as it is no longer related to bereavement, but to the aftermath of a self-inflicted harm.

Given that prisons are not conducive to emotions, participants often described using self-harm as a coping method yet being discreet about it. As the literature review discussed, certain behaviors in prisons tends to be perceived as attention seeking and/or risky behavior that needs to be managed by tightening the oversight (Harner et al., 2011; Kilty, 2006; Philippe-Beauchamp, 2019; Wooff, 2020). For that reason, prisoners frequently decided to cut those parts of the body that were not easily exposed:

> *"'Cause I don't want them to like… Then I'd have to go to the hospital and things like that. And then it ends up going on my record and then they think that I'm doing it to kill myself, when I'm not. I'm doing it just as a release, so I don't, I don't tell them." (P4)*

Failing to address the needs of prisoners who self-harm might be putting those individuals at a greater risk by enabling them to perpetuate the cycle of emotional trouble expressed through self-inflicted violence (e.g., Kilty, 2006). If the participants were caught using such strategies, those behaviors tended to be managed through medication and/or by isolating them in a suicide cell, instead of understanding the root cause of the problem. As per P1:

> *"I just started cutting my arms too, and… Started making deeper cuts, and I just didn't care if they see it. So that's when they put me on my meds…"*

Prison needs to balance acknowledgement of individual's agency with behavioral management. This is especially relevant for women prisoners, who have histories of prior abuse. Some researchers found that self-harm can be understood as a women's way of expressing resistance and taking control over their lives (Kilty, 2006; Liebling, 1999; Philippe-Beauchamp, 2019), which was echoed by P4:

> *"But, it [self-harm] was my way of controlling, 'cause everyone kept telling me what to do and what I had to do and stuff, and it was my way of controlling. It's the only thing I had control of. So yeah, it was… Bad times."*

This, again, is linked to the prior discussion on the impact of cumulative trauma on emotional regulation and coping mechanisms. Given the overall perception of powerlessness and lack of control over one's life, reduction of autonomy can further interfere with prisoners' grieving processes by limiting their freedom in choosing how, when, and with whom to grieve (Vaswani, 2014; Wilson et al., 2020). Hence, many participants discussed their involvement with drugs, in the community and in prison, with aims to delay facing reality (echoed in e.g., Cope, 2003; Crewe, 2005; Wacquant, 2002; Walker et al., 2018).

4.3.3.2. Drug Use

Participants described using drugs to pass time, prevent nightmares, self-medicate, or suppress the reality, even though they knew that such strategies might not be an effective long-term solution. For example, P8 was struggling to accept the death of his uncle for over two decades and, in retrospect, he acknowledges that his coping strategies might have been flawed:

> *"But it's like, tr(y), trynna tae cover up bereavement wae alcohol or, what I've done was heroin. That's all I did. Doesn't help the problem, does it? It just masks it, until it wears off, and then it's all back in the heid. And it's shit."*

Drugs were often used by participants before coming into prison, while in prison, as well as by the prison to control and suppress expressions of negative emotionality and self-harming behaviors. Some stated that the availability and accessibility of drugs was higher inside than outside, which could affect bereavement in two opposing ways. For some participants, prison was the first opportunity to get clean and engage with their thoughts. They finally took the time to think and process some of the traumas they were accumulating over their life. P6 claimed that he’s

> *“never been in this position at any point in my life, where I've been drug free and I'm starting to deal with my issues and that. It's no, nah [smiles], wouldnae happen.”*

Similarly, some individuals saw prison as a safe way out of the lifestyle they got trapped in, a place to break the cycle of drug abuse and violence. This could be due to a forced isolation from the outside stressors and the original criminogenic environment. The latter was prominent with younger participants who saw the inception of their drug use in the need to belong to a peer group. Prior research on children in care homes has found that their secure relationship with adult care providers waned as the child grew older and their peers become more interesting and rewarding to spend time with (Ahnert et al., 2006). Given that many participants in this sample indicated complex and unstable relationships with adults throughout their childhood, the impact of their peer group might have been even more significant than what it would have been for those with steadier childhood experiences. Thus, R10 referred to his imprisonment as a *“blessing in disguise”* because he would have otherwise, in his words, probably died of something. For many participants who decided to stop using drugs while in prison, that was also the first time they reflected on their lives:

> *“Now that I'm here, I'm starting to breathe again. I'm starting to deal with stuff that I've, I've never dealt wae for years. So, I'm starting to live again. This is me, getting in my eyes reborn. D' you know what I mean? So, I'm starting to realize, well, couldae dealt with that situation better than what I did before. And this is, a lot of people are not gonna say this, but this is what prison's good for.” (P13)*

For some participants, prison was the place they felt safe and away from their abusers, which was more prominent for women in this sample (see also Abrahamson, 2009). One participant stated that she kept offending (shoplifting and minor offences) to be imprisoned for a short period of time, because that was the only way she could keep herself safe. Such understanding of prisons is in direct opposition to previous assertions that one cannot really live in prison, only exist (see also Crewe and Ievins (2020) on reinventive prisons). However, it does imply that this population rarely had a chance to stop spiraling downwards and start processing their emotions, neither in prisons, nor outside. Engaging with all those feelings can make imprisonment difficult, as the previous trauma re-emerges on top of current, daily worries that every individual is occupied with. This could indicate that there is something inherently (re-)traumatizing in the restrictive context of prisons.

In contrast, some participants continued their substance use in prison as well. This could affect bereavement, by perpetuating avoidance of processing feelings and bottling up. It also impacts relationships within prison. As Crewe (2015) identified, the presence of drugs in prison, or lack thereof, can affect the institutional ethos/climate, which constantly reacts to internal and external pressures (Liebling, 1999). As one female participant observed:

> *“(...) it's too obvious when there's drugs in my hall. I don't know what it's like for the boys, but I've, I've actually summed it up. When there's drugs in [hall name], you can tell. Because a) a lot of people are hyper and there's people mixing it and they don't know what they mix. And I mean, never mix. When the drugs are running low, they start bitching and arguing, and squabbling, and squawking, and scrocking [spitting] at each other. I mean, seriously, shut up. And (...), 'cause they just don't have the energy to lift their feet, so they are kind of dragging their feet all over the place. And then, when they've got no drugs... There is a bit of animosity and a bit of negativity, you can feel the vibes in the atmosphere and then after a couple of days or so, it will just calm doon. And then for ages, it will be absolutely nice, but, you know, as soon as there's drugs in the hall, you can tell, because people's behavior just totally changes. Or they strictly give it away by their absence.” (R1)*

Drugs in prison emerged as a peripheral theme in this study, mostly to describe the overall atmosphere. Prisoners also mentioned the differences in strength between prison drugs and drugs outside, which could lead to their enhanced dangerousness in prison, but also post-release. For example, people can get used to prison drugs and their tolerance to drugs can be reduced, elevating the risk to accidentally overdose upon release (see CSJ, 2015; Merrall et at., 2010). Some interviewees described using medication to cope with imprisonment and boost their energy levels to be able to participate in many activities and keep themselves busy during the day. For example, P5 discussed smashing his pain killers and using them to get a high:

> *“Well, it's kind of tricky [to cope with imprisonment], I won't lie, but like, there is like, like tablets that I'll take. Like, I'll be honest, like I would snort a tablet and they will*

> *gae me like a bit of energy, ken what I mean? But like, aye, like, that's like kind of what I dae."*

Although such behaviors were disapproved of by participants, it was also normalized in the prison context, as summarized by P6:

> *"(...) you shouldnae really dae drugs in prison, but that's just the way it works here."*

Drug abuse in prison points to another paradox of being imprisoned for committing a crime but engaging in another illegal act to support oneself through the state-mandated punishment for the initial act:

> *"You're in prison for committing a crime, but you're also committing crime when you're in prison, because you're taking illegal substances and you're taking drugs, which are… Illegal outside. And when you're in here, they are even mair illegal, because you're in here, so..."* (P6)

When looking at drug use from a bereavement perspective, it further perpetuates numbing the feelings, avoidance, and emotional suppression. In both contexts (i.e., imprisonment and bereavement) drugs were used to pass time by blocking out the reality. In prison, this reality can be monotonous, stuck in the now, and emotionally liminal, while in bereavement it can manifest itself through competing pressures of temporal, spatial, relational, and contextual aspects of death. Yet, by engaging in drug use, the individuals could endlessly extend time and never process their issues, just keep pushing them down the line. Subsequently, many participants feared that they will ultimately explode, which brings into question their reintegration chances and public safety. For example, some discussed their concerns of falling back into their old habits once they get released and need to face their environment. Others remembered prior situations where their grief was triggered by a sensorial input or a bodily memory, and they lost control of themselves. P3, for example, described that he was doing great on a supervised release order until the anniversary of his partner's death. He then snapped and ended up stabbing a person. Likewise, P4 indicated:

> *"I think the problem I'll have [upon release] is that I've suppressed them [feelings] for so long. And I'm gonna get out and like, they might all just go boom and come to surface again. But I am trying to address obviously things, so that that doesn't happen."*

Thus, the problems of emotional avoidance transcend beyond the prison walls and could have implications for release.

Occasionally, other life-changing events urged the individuals to cease their drug use and engage with the services offered in prison, as a preparation for release. For example, P6 reflected on his recent decision to change his lifestyle, prompted by the death of his partner, which required of him to step up to his parental role. He needed to be sober to be able to provide adequate care for their son, who was also imprisoned at the time. However, becoming clean was creating various problems for him and stirring up emotions that were buried for a long time:

> *"I'm having a few problems now, because, obviously, I've not, I'm not using drugs to cope with everything on a daily basis now. So, I'm, I'm having a lot of problems at night, sleepin' and that, eee… Problems during the day as well, flashbacks, certain noises and smells bringing back, bad neighbors, waking up screaming at the night..."*

This quotation indicates the relevance of having a safe space to process emotions for these individuals, as well as of their perceived requirement for appropriate (and timely) access to support. However, as many participants underscored, this was not always the case in prisons.

4.3.3.3. Mental Health Support

As implied earlier, some prisoners viewed prison as a safe haven. They appreciated having all the support in one place and not having to go around looking for services. Unlike on the outside, where the onus for engaging with different institutions was put on the individual, the availability of a "one-stop shop" in prisons, combined with the restriction of movement, increased the readiness of some participants to seek for, and accept, help:

> *"I'm stuck here, I cannae go anywhere [smiles]. Like, before I had to go to a doctor's appointment and then I'd get medication. So, in here, 'cause, obviously, all the help's there, like, I'm taking it. Cause I don't have to go anywhere, but I am taking it." (P5)*

Yet, the availability of support does not always indicate a high quality or timely support. Many prisoners criticized the long waiting lists and a lack of care when discussing mental health in prisons (see section 4.4.). This could indicate another contradiction. On the one hand, some participants argued that they were often left to their own devices, having to request everything that they might need. Apparently, nobody would *offer* them any support:

> *“Like, in here, the first thing I got told from one of my first Pos [personal officers] I had in here, he told me that "I will never come to you. If you want anything, if you want something, you ask me." That's what I got told, so…” (R4)*

This mirrors what Corcoran (2017) discussed on prisoners being tacitly offered bereavement services, especially when compared to victims and survivors of crime who tend to be openly invited. On the other hand, some participants claimed that all the responsibility for managing their lives was taken away from them. As per P2, participants felt that they were infantilized and discouraged from thinking independently, since “*no one expects anything from you [in jail].”* This could further complicate bereavement in cases where individuals might be unaware of the existence of certain services, which many claimed that they were, and/or oblivious to the fact that they needed help at that point in time. Namely, quite a few participants reflected on their adolescent years, when they refused to seek for support and would have appreciated being mandated to engage with services, potentially as a condition for release. For example, P8 argued that his bereavement might not have developed into a long-lasting trauma, had there been assistance available for him during his prior imprisonment(s):

> *“I think what I want to say, if there was mair help for some in the jail, I believe, 20 years ago, 'cause that's when my life went oot of control, pure out of control (...) getting the guys in the right time, it could help change them, eh?”*

Others doubted the credibility of support offered in prisons, claiming that it was just *“a vague… charade of support for you, but there just isn't any.”* (P21), which further impeded their readiness to access prison services.

So far, this section has examined emotional diversion and non-acceptance of death among the participants, as well as the strategies employed to numb the pain. Yet, as Klass (2006) suggested, the bereft can continue their relationship with the dead through continuing bonds. From a phenomenological perspective, this is a healthy way to bracket the dead in the past and open oneself up to present and future endeavors. However, as will be described next, data indicated a need for a clear (cognitive) distinction between the memory realm and the “now”, if the bereft is to release themselves from the shackles of living in parallel realities.

4.3.4. The Presence of Dead

Although the body of the dead is no longer present, their presence can be felt long after. They can be imaginary companions and provide conversation partners to the bereft (e.g., Bennett and Bennett, 2000; Fuchs, 2017; Hall, 2014). They can be experienced through the body and the senses, for example as hearing someone's voice, sensing their touch, and catching their smell (Valentine, 2013). A few individuals in this study reported the dead coming to visit the bereft in their dreams and feeling the dead around them. However, strong reactions to death and the subsequently felt presence were not always triggered by human death, as, for some, a death of a pet elicited similar emotions. This could be due to prior trauma and abuse experienced by many prisoners in this study, which resulted in diminished trust and weaker attachment to people. For example, P2 described her struggles to create a special bond with people, as she did not like *"the human race."* Yet, she found it easy to connect to animals. In her narratives, she referred to her cats as her babies and thought of herself as their mother. Subsequently, when one of them died, she decided to believe that its death was a gateway to a better life, especially since she was not there to take care of it. She also claimed that the cat often came to visit her at night-time, keeping her warm and cosy, and making her *"more relaxed. And everything just seems to go away."* The perceived presence of her beloved pet also helped her fall asleep:

> *"Oh, well, sometimes I can feel him all night until I, like, fall asleep, sitting next to my legs. Or if I'm unwell, he would force himself like inside my ribcage."*

In a similar vein, P17 was talking passionately about his two dogs, whose death *"(...) hurt! It hurt more losing my dogs than my brother, really!"* Although pet bereavement was not always more significant than human death or replacing the dead human, it supports and further develops the discussion on the relational aspect of bereavement beyond just nuclear family.

Apart from the perceived physical presence of the dead, some dead were metaphysically present in the memory of the bereft. Memories were recognized by the individuals in this sample as both an impediment to continuing with their life post-bereavement, but also as a driver to do so. This was partially discussed in section 4.1.3., whereby some participants avoided having visual displays of memories, such as images or personal belongings of the dead but also of those still alive, as it increased their pain of separation. Others resorted back to memories and used pictures to reminisce about the good times. When discussing bereavement, many decided against having pictures in their cells as they felt like they were bringing that person to prison through them. For example, P11 would like to have a picture of his mom, but not in prison:

> *"I've not got that [picture of mom]. (...) I would [like to have it], but no in prison. I just, I always feel like I wouldnae bring my mom in tae prison. I feel that I wouldnae do that."*

This widens the previous discussion around certain implications that being in a carceral context might bring regarding personal responsibility, stigma, shame, and guilt. The participants often tried to keep their prison life separated from their outside life, as *"a separate piece of life that should probably get forgotten about when I'm in outside."* (P21). Similar ideas were reflected in wider scholarship on individuals' perceptions of time spent in prison as something distinct from the rest of their lives, where life is put on hold and where time is not used; it simply passed (e.g., Brown, 1998; Cope, 2003; Earle, 2014; Philippe-Beauchamp, 2019; Wahidin, 2006).

As Fuchs (2017) argued, memory of the dead is a conscious representation of a loved one in which the bereft is aware of their absence. It does not entail the "as-if presence" and ambiguity around co-existing realities, but demonstrates a clear, cognitive distinction between the past and present. Hence, instead of relying on the bodily recollection, memories are situated in one's mind and can be evoked deliberately (e.g., Fuchs, 2017; Hentz, 2002). Yet, as per P12, the individual must be ready to make that step and knowingly leave the presence of the dead in the past:

> *"I thought that, if you cry, it means you're, you're letting her go. Em... [4 seconds break] But, I sit there, looking at her picture and [says through tears] I talk to her, and... And, again, that, that, that pure pain, that hurt. And then it's ought to come oot. The grief is, I got a lot of tears to come. But, one of the lassies says "[Name], doesnae matter whether you cry or you don't cry, she's gone." You know, it didnae mean that if you cry, you've got memories. You know, em, and it was the truest word that eenbody has ever spoken to me. You know, because even if they were dead, you know, I feel she's still here, she still lives in each and every one of us."*

Once the perception of the dead is left in the past and the bereft continues living in the present, they can then turn to different means of keeping that memory of the dead alive.

Apart from the potential distinction between a bodily memory and a consciously evoked one, the participants also reflected on the existence of thoughts that come to mind when unprovoked, triggered by a sensorial stimulus. In line with other findings from this study, if the bereft acknowledged the death and situated it in their mind, this type of emotional elicitation was often perceived as positive. For example, many discussed having a passing thought of the dead while watching their favorite show on the television or, more commonly, football matches. R2 was briefly reminded of her friend, while doing something else:

> *“Just like… I was watching a thing on telly, [name] was always somebody who can sit and talk to you about the football, he's a massive Celtic fan, and em, Celtic win and I thought ooooh, [name] woulda like that. Em… And then the thought was gone.”*

Such a short recollection of the dead would indicate that the bereft accepted death and was no longer struggling with situating the dead between the two coexisting realities. They were safely stored in the back of one’s mind and peacefully coming to the fore every so often, which enabled the bereft to live in the present. Based on the narratives emerging from the data, it seems like the frequency of the dead visiting the living is not a crucial difference between accepting and not accepting death. Instead, it appears to be the interaction between the attitudes toward the situation, the passage of time, and the extent of the emotional upheaval that such a (passing) thought would bring to the bereft. For example, P16 still speaks to his granny every night, but those conversations resemble the conversations that some people have with God. It is more like a general chat and, as he said, a giggle, without any deeper emotions involved:

> *“I speak to my gran, I dae. I speak to my gran. Every night. Before I go to my bed. Always. Even with my papa. (...) About like football. My papa was a Rangers fan [smiles].”*

He continued saying that grandma was his best advice-giver, so he still looks for her whenever he feels down. As P16 recognized himself, his grandma is now an imaginary persona, a *something*. This was described by a few other participants too, arguing that the dead assumed a different, usually inanimate form, but were still present for and with the bereft, always following them and looking after them and their loved ones. P16 further elaborated:

> *“I say he [grandpa] went up to the stars. I said, “Just look for the brightest star” and I said “that's our wee papa looking for you.” And even at the day, he'll [the participant’s son] still say to me “I keep looking for my papa.”"*

Hence, even though the body of the dead no longer shared the same spatial dimension with the bereft, they were sometimes conceptualized as a voice or an appearance (i.e., the stars) that continued to guide the bereft through difficult times and were very much present on the intrabody level.

Apart from feeling and hearing the dead, some prisoners continued their bonds through tattoos and jewelry made of the deceased' ashes. Many participants indicated that their family members were cremated, rather than buried, and some discussed using ashes to make jewelry and keep the dead close to them that way. This idea understands life (and death) on a meta-level, whereby everyone turns to dust but even that amorphous mass of ashes can still symbolize the person that it once was. Although there is no face attached to it, like it would be in the picture, it is something tangible that the individual can always carry on them and keep the bodily closeness to the dead. R15 explained that the whole family had pieces of jewelry made with his dad's ashes melted inside it. R9 discussed a similar idea:

> *"We got half her [mom's] ashes put into the ground and half her ashes in a, in a box, and we would get a ring. So, I'm gonna get a diamond, e, made out of the ashes. You ever heard anything like that?"*

These ideas align with Klass' (2006) continuing bonds theory, as well as the phenomenological understanding of bereavement, which discusses presence in absence. A few participants also argued that the dead are continuing to live through them, which they supported by giving examples of other family members telling them that they sound just like the person who died (see also Valentine, 2013). Although many individuals claimed that one can never know when the grieving process is done, and different theories have different views on this issue, the dead is never truly absent; they are forever embodied in the minds of the bereft.

The discussion above indicates that the bereft can move on and continue living in "the now" once they stop carrying the weight of the dead on their shoulders and cease behaving as if the dead were still present. This is an important distinction for this population given a multitude of difficult encounters with death that could continue triggering bodily reactions, which the mind will then aim to counteract. Situating the dead in the past enables the individuals to process their feelings and consciously keep the dead as the (eventually distant) memory; it enables the individuals to be free from liminality. However, due to the physical, structural, and cultural barriers in prison, many participants struggled to separate the past from the present, *"(...) it's not a healthy place. For bereavement this is death. Because we didnae live in here, we live in the past."* (P19)

4.3.4.1. Respect Toward the Dead

The findings indicate that, in times of bereavement, the participants experienced internal conflict of identities, influenced by their perception of self as an object in the social world. Namely, the identity of being bereft needs to be reconciled with the objective reality of being a prisoner, while they both share limited, if any, sociality. Prison enforces social and emotional distance between prisoners and staff (see section 4.4), yet bereavement needs closeness. For example, many participants indicated that they covertly wanted external acknowledgement that the death has happened, sought for understanding of the position they were in, and required respect toward the dead, which would, by proxy, indicate respect toward themselves and vice versa. Yet, they actively maintained emotional distance between themselves and others. Honor and regard for the dead also transcended the temporal and contextual, and emerged as one of the essences of bereavement. For example, R4 remembered the situation soon after his mother died, while he was at school:

> *"Um, (...) somebody started speaking about my mom and I am dead protective over my family (...) and these boys said "ha ha, is she deid or something?" and I, I attacked him."*

This quotation shows that the individual wanted others to treat those who were dead (i.e., his mother) with respect, even though the others might not have even been aware of that death. However, the findings reveal that the bereft implicitly expects others to position themselves in that realm of bereavement, which is one dimension of reality for the bereft, when engaging in any contact with them.

Respect toward the dead was identified as particularly acute when it came to joining rituals as prisoners. Some participants were ready to decline the opportunity of going to the funeral, even though they knew that such a decision would probably impede their acknowledgement and processing of death. Still, it would be less tarnishing for the dead (who is being escorted to their new home through the funeral) than having them there in cuffs and chains. Not going would be something that the individual would need to come to terms with themselves, but going to the funeral and, borderline, ruining it, was seen as disrespectful by participants. It could be argued that such ideas were drawn, again, from guilt, shame and self-blame, rather than anything else. Indeed, occasionally, some participants disclosed their self-proclaimed selfishness, stating that they went to the funeral just to make it easier on themselves; they did not care what the community might think. Whichever action was perceived as more respectful toward the dead, was the one the individuals usually pursued. Yet, to even have those internal debates, the bereft had to feel respect toward the person, which was then transformed into an action.

Similarly, some participants felt extreme anger toward the way the funeral was handled by other family members. These emotions partly emerged because the individuals were powerless to influence it, they were excluded from the social ritual due to being in prison. Yet, such reactions also arose because the participants thought that tarnishing the funeral demonstrated a lack of respect for the dead. For example, as per P3:

> *"And I just snapped man, I, fuck, I drag(ged), I dragged the G4S [security company] right over, double-cuffed and cuffed on the chain (...). I fuckin' snapped man. I was like, "you can't gie your daughter, you're fuckin' crematin' your daughter in a cardboard box. A fuckin' cardboard box. you're sitting makin' thousands of pounds and you put your daughter in a cardboard box" [speaks with disgust and disbelief]."*

The quotation above also indicates that respect is related to the relational aspect of bereavement. One must care about the person to seek respect and validation of the situation from others, as well as to feel negative emotions if the actions of others were perceived as contradictory to what the individual thought was the right way to address the situation. The final example of respect was related to police handling the dead body. This was usually linked to traumatic deaths, either suicides or murders, but some participants recalled how the body was oftentimes just left on the scene with the police and other crime scene investigators stepping over it back and forth. The individuals understood that the area had to be investigated before moving the body, but they thought it to be a sign of utter disrespect.

4.3.4.2. Apathy and Resignation

As indicated already, and in accordance with research on other prison-like institutions such as detention centers (Gashi et al., 2019), prisons seem to engender passivity. However, it is not clear whether this general apathy, recognized by many participants in this study, occurred before being imprisoned, at some stage in their lives when the extent of negative experiences was just too much to care about anything anymore (i.e., an emotional and psychological overload), or during their imprisonment. Hareli and Parkinson (2008) discussed apathy as a tendency associated with sadness. This study also found that it was often related to bereavement. For example, P6 recognized that he used drugs most of his life, but associated death with specific moments when he did not care about anything anymore:

> *"I would say it's tae do with a, a lot of it is to dae with bereavement. Just… I've took drugs, that's for, all of my life, and periods where I've been, no had a bad experience*

> *through deaths, after I've kind of, got myself kind of stable again. But at them moments in my life, I just didnae care about anything, e... Didnae bother wae, wae nothing at all, e..."*

On the other hand, P13 believed that the general resignation that he felt stemmed from the abuse that he was exposed to during childhood:

> *"I can only say what I think is, is going back to my childhood and it's got this big shell around me and it's not letting my emotions out, d' you know what I mean? (...) Can't be bothered anymore. And it's, honestly, I can't. I cannot be bothered to have argues with anybody."*

Other prisoners linked their mood directly to their imprisonment, as P16 described that being in prison changes a person, makes them become emotionless:

> *"Jail changes you. From outside. When I've, when you're outside, you show mair emotion. In jail you don't. I've no showed any of my emotion. And I've lost my wee cousin. And my gran. (...) Like, you build up walls and block it all out. You have to. You become like a robot in here, you become... Emotionless, you do. And I'm not just saying it for me. People do, in the jail, become emotionless. Because it's the only way to protect yourself."*

This was supported by a female prisoner as well, who argued similar things about becoming emotionless and turning into a robot. Some participants directly linked their loss of will to fight and make progress in life to death anniversaries. For example, P3 described that as the "*anniversary of my partner, of my partner's death came up, that was it. (...) I was just tired. (...) I didnae gae a fuck.*" Many participants explained that every anniversary was yet another reminder of the bitter reality where the dead was no longer there.

This section discussed some of the strategies employed by the participants to manage their bereavement in prison and in the community. It examined the role of acknowledging death and the difficulties around emotional diversion due to (previously) established mechanisms of coping with trauma. It then reflected on self-harm and substance abuse as a way to escape the reality of imprisonment, of bereavement, or sometimes of both. Finally, it engaged with various manifestations of the continuous presence of the dead, underscoring the importance of distinguishing between emotional and cognitive perceptions of it, the absence of which could lead to general apathy. The next section will focus on the manifestation of these various aspects of bereavement, specifically within the prison context.

4.4. The Impact of the Institution of Bereavement

The literature review discussed the relevance of culture in emotional expression and the manifestation of (gendered) social norms through individual's grieving patterns (e.g., Doka and Martin, 1998; Dosser, 2016; Hall, 2014; Neimeyer et al., 2002; Thompson et al., 2016; Young Junior, 2003; Zinner, 2000). Greer (2002) further argued that emotions are individually, culturally, and contextually grounded, while also being situational, interactional, and temporal. The aim of this final section is to further underscore the importance of acknowledging bereavement, as well as the cumulative impacts of prior trauma and loss on the experiences of imprisonment for this sample. This is relevant not just from a human rights' perspective, but also given the potential detrimental effects of unprocessed emotions on public health and safety, including on the participants' overall success in reintegration.

To this end, this section overlaps the individual, the social, and the cultural in bereavement with imprisonment. It starts by discussing the spatial aspects of grief, which can increase the participants' perception of powerlessness and restraint. It then highlights the significance of a wider relational aspect of bereavement and the identified lack of opportunities for participation in social rituals among the individuals in this sample. Next, this section examines the conceptualization of time in prisons, followed by the (un-)availability of formal and informal support. Finally, it will discuss the participants' view on the tendency of prison culture to discourage emotional expression, concluding with their suggestions for change.

4.4.1. The Spatial Aspect of Bereavement

Due to the intersectionality of many factors associated with bereavement, there might be a certain degree of overlap between the social and the spatial, which, to an extent, can be formed by the social. However, while the social focused more on the relevance of other people in bereavement, of social support and participation in rituals, the discussion of spatial is directed toward the external, physical space in which the bereavement is experienced, as well as the internal, emotional and cognitive space. Fuchs (2017) conceptualized death as a loss of the shared world; the bereft is no longer coexisting in the physical, corporeal, and/or emotional space with the dead. From a Husserlian perspective, co-experience of the world is significant for transcendental intersubjectivity, which forms a base of human relationships and understanding of others (e.g., Fuchs, 2017; Gill, 2014; Holloway and Todres, 2003). This means that the individual's "now" includes the real or implicit presence of those with whom they share their experience of the world (Fuchs, 2017). Yet, some participants explained that they were often unable to occupy even the communal grieving space to exercise and express relatedness and their emotional permeability to others:

> *"No [you can't fully grieve in prison]. Because you are, you are shut off from everything else. Shut off from all the family being around, shut off from everybody grieving together and, you know, I'm gonna remember where we sat at the funeral with my nan. You know, and everyone sitting and listening to it, do you remember this and do you remember that, and thinking of that while you're growing up. You're away from that. You know, they're all doing that at the wake or wherever and you're not." (P15)*

Lack of opportunities to share their grief and be bereft together (in the community) emerged strongly among the individuals in this sample, as discussed in section 4.2.2. Although participants reported speaking to the dead and used their new conceptualization of the dead as a guidance in life (see section 4.3.3.), the extent to which they can co-share and co-create reality with them was additionally impeded through both imprisonment and death. As per R3:

> *"It's harder to accept in here, it's harder to understand. That it's actually happened [uncle's death]. Eh. (...) You're just kinda, you're sitting there and you might look up the window or something 'n' think... I'm never going to see him, but... You can't... Feel the same... 'Cause you're not part of it all."*

The "now" suddenly became a part of the past, of the "no longer", and eventually, time might run over the reality that was, until then, unquestioned. However, the "now" continues through imprisonment due to prisoners' suspended life (e.g., Wahidin, 2006) and in this study, many participants struggled to acknowledge that change in their everyday existence. Prior research described a rift between people *doing* life in the community and *existing* (alive-ing) while in prison (e.g., Marti, 2020; Wahidin, 2006), which some prisoners aimed to counteract by staging a homely narrative around their cells (Marti, 2020) (see section 2.6.1.). For many interviewees, their realities were reduced to basic existence, breathing, eating, and sleeping, at least until they got released. Subsequently, they struggled to reconcile the two and find their position in those coexisting but separate realms of imprisonment and bereavement.

Bereavement comprises of an active and passive component, the individual and the social, the physical and the emotional, the corporeal, the intellectual, and the spiritual. Yet, in prison, there is restricted access to a meaningful space and an absence of place the participants could call their own. For example, Philippe-Beauchamp (2019) discussed phenomenological corporeity in prison and the lack of privacy, warmth, and lighting in prison space. Hence, personalization of it might indicate giving meaning and connecting with one's cell and oneself (Baer, 2005). Some participants in this study attested to that by providing examples of individualizing their prison cell by bringing in things from the outside:

> *"You can cover your room in posters and you can get slippers, you know, your own bathrobe in, and you can get your own bedsheet, you can get them to jail. Em, you know, customized stuff like that. You can get all these things that are good. You know, and it makes you feel more home like that. Your own curtain. Yeah, so I brought my own, feels like my room. Only thing I'm not allowed in is football stuff." (R9)*

Apart from getting items sent to prison, R6 gave an in-depth description of re-arranging the existing furniture in a way that he preferred:

> *"You get bed boxes and then you put stuff in and you put it underneath your bed. People lift them up and unscrew the wheels on them and then put them against their bed and make them like wee old stands. (...) I put them side by side and made them like a table. So, I'll eat my dinner, eat my dinner of that. And I've got one that's got like, eeee, model stuff I made. (...) And then I got like folders and that, folders that I've got in the other half. (...) And I put eeee, juice, cotton rolls, sugar and crisps, all that stuff in one and turned that against the wall."*

Setting up one's cell in a way that makes people feel more at home could also provide a perception of safety, as cells are one of the very few places where prisoners could have privacy, find peace, and let their guard down (see also Marti, 2020; Herrity, 2020; Laws and Crewe, 2016). For example, P1 claimed that one can only be themselves behind the cell doors. In front of others, *"you just need to put this front on like you're dealing with it [any issues you might have]."* However, even those adaptations of space, in the attempts to make it one's own, can be counteracted by otherness and by the insignificance of a wider prison space (Switzer, 2015), bringing into question the opportunity to process grief in a place absented from self.

The findings suggest that this forced isolation, yet constant exposure to people, can play with one's mind. Some individuals wanted to be alone, but aloneness could make them overthink things and spiral into negativity. P4 discussed the protrusion of death-related thoughts in the absence of other activities:

> *“Because, all, when you're locked behind the doors that's all you got to think about, is just that [death], as on the outside you can… You know, you can keep yourself busy or you can go get yourself drunk, or…”*

As discussed in section 4.3., the availability and accessibility of pre-existing strategies to process bereavement in carceral contexts might be limited for this sample. The support services available in prisons are examined in section 4.4.4. but, as the findings suggest, the experiences of processing death cannot be equated with just that. Namely, imprisonment inherently aggravates feelings of loneliness. Even when prisoners have a cellmate, those relationships tend to be void of meaning and reduced simply to a physical presence of another body in the same space. As P19 explained:

> *“Ken, you want company, you want to see another human being moving. (...) But, then you've gotta, it's sort in the balance. You gotta say, well, do I want to smell this guy's shit, do I wanna hear him coughing, do I want to hear all this and that's a balance.”*

The above quotation indicates that having a cellmate requires finding a balance between allowing another individual close to oneself, but at the same time tolerating their presence (see also Laws and Crewe, 2016, and Muirhead et al., 2020). Hence, the participants who disclosed sharing their cells rarely shared anything more than just physical space, and even that could be a reason for arguments. So, most prisoners in this sample preferred being alone, as it gave them some control over their daily life. As R5 demonstrated:

> *“[I prefer] No having somebody. ‘Cause it's, they can control your telly, they can eat all your, they can get all your teen [canteen], it's just, pish having a co-pilot. ‘Cause you wanna watch something, they wanna watch something (...), it's better having nae, not having eenbody in there wae you.”*

Unlike death, which is brought upon the individual and can be isolating, prisoners can also consciously opt for isolation from others by requesting a single cell, though this is not always available, avoiding the company of other prisoners, and/or choosing when to interact. For example:

> *“E, in a way, yeah [likes single-*cell]*. There's more space. But I still… I don't know how to explain it, but I still get bored to sit by myself. So, like, sometimes I'll go to window and talk to people.”* (R8)

This is supported by Laws and Crewe (2016), who indicated that more challenging emotions can only be processed in a personal cell. Yet, as discussed, bereavement has a social and an individual component, an active and a passive one. Hence, it could be argued that willful isolation of the participants is just another coping mechanism they employed. Even when they were bored or felt the need to communicate with others, as per above, they would still not necessarily enjoy the enforced presence of their cellmate or of other prisoners, which is difficult to avoid (see Laws and Crewe, 2016). P6 discussed a lack of choices in prison to remove oneself from the environment and get privacy:

> *“Eeee, you could, if you asked fae a staff, they would, you could be put in a suicide cell, which is a hundred times worse than being in the hall, so… That's one other way you can take yourself out of the environment. Or if you've committed an assault, to get yourself put into segregation unit, taken away fae other people, so... It's no all right, it's not good, not a good choice to have. Either lock yourself in your een cell or you assault another prisoner (...). You've not got many choices that way.”*

Yet, as per Herrity (2020), performing one’s identity through distancing from the soundscape of prisons and company of others enabled the individuals to resist the reality of their everyday life; to be in their own world. This resonates with the prior discussion on agency, power, and the element of choice in coping mechanisms, or lack thereof, that emerged strongly among the participants in this sample.

4.4.1.1. The Phone as a Portal to the World

One item that some participants reported as a symbol of connection to the community and their real life was the phone. It provided them with information about the outside world and, as P12 alluded to, it presented the embodiment of support:

> *“[I] would’ve liked to have the door to be left open for me to go to the phone and have that access to the phone. Em, to phone family and get some sort of comfort fae family at that time.”*

While access to the phone offered solace and a sense of connectedness, it was also a medium for receiving death notification. Being told by the staff to go and use the phone was rarely for a good cause, even if the reason was not openly stated. As per P3:

> *"They never told me [about the death], just… Manager came in and says 'you need, you need to go and phone your family.' I was like 'How?' Like, 'well, you need to go phone your family, it's serious, you need, there's something wrong.'"*

The participants were sometimes informed about the death through a regular phone call with their family or friends, which was often beyond the prison's control. One of the common issues that the individuals raised about the phones in the hall was the lack of privacy (see also Laws and Crewe, 2016). As P5 indicated:

> *"(…) when you're, you're standing in a hall with 40 other people and half of them are, like, hyperactive. They didnae care if you're on the phone or not, you're not really getting much of your phone call. So, aye, that's really, really, really frustrating. Like, really annoying."*

Other times, however, some participants were allowed to use the staff's office phone. This was more common if the prison received the news about the death first. According to the individuals in this sample, the family would typically phone the prison and request for that prisoner to phone home. Thus, even though the officers would get the information before the prisoners, they were rarely the ones relaying that news and the participants thought it was not their place to do so anyway. However, the interviewees agreed that it was important for staff to know from the harm-reduction perspective. Death is not an easy message to communicate to a person and prisoners can react in different ways. As P10 explained, the staff had to take precautions when speaking to him, as they did not know how he would react.

4.4.1.2. Relaying the Death Notice

The findings suggest that both ways of relaying the death notice have their positive and negative aspects, yet they both equally remove agency and decision-making from the prisoner, making them, again, passive recipients of the news. It could be argued that this would not be any different if the individuals were in the community, getting the information from the hospital staff or receiving a phone call by a distant relative. But the participants often felt like they were the last ones to find out (as discussed in 4.2), aggravating their feelings of passivity and helplessness. For example, P12 was deprived of accurate, timely, and complete information on her mother's condition, who died of a sudden heart-attack, which denied her the possibility to consider asking for a final visit at the hospital:

> *"But, I'm thinking, my mother's stable, my sister's saying massive heart-attack, stents, bypasses, what, what's happened here? (...) By that time I'm locked up. So, I couldnae, you know, find oot what was going on. Em, so, I kinda just said, "Right, I'll phone in the morning." I believe that I should've go oot to the hospital that night to see my mother. To say my goodbyes."*

Incomplete insight into the development of the situation (e.g., if someone was sick with cancer) and/or into the circumstances of death made it increasingly difficult for some participants to acknowledge death. P14 reflected on the phone call he received about his ex-partner dying without getting any additional information about the circumstances of her death:

> *"I got a phone call in the prison here, telling me that she had died [daughter's mom]. And they still don't know how. Eeee, no one could tell me. Um, what had happened or anything, so it's… Um… Basically, because there's no information, I still don't have like end-result."*

Paul (2019) discussed the relevance of having complete information around death, as well as access to rituals, to facilitate positive bereavement experiences in children. This idea is mirrored in Walsh and McGoldrick (2013), who argued that being in direct contact with the dying, having clear information around the circumstances of death, and participating in social rituals can facilitate the individual's, as well as family's adaptation to loss. Although prisoners are limited in what they can do in situations of death, the participants still wanted to know what was happening on the outside. They wanted to feel like they belong to that community, to know and think like everyone else, and be no better or worse than others:

> *"My family wouldnae lie to me though and be like, "oh, everyone's doing all right". They'll say "oh this person is struggling or that person is struggling", 'cause my ma 'n' that know that I'll stress out. I know that people get upset about it [death], so I'd rather they were open with me and say "aye, we are struggling", it's easier for me to be like accepting, instead of overthinking 'n worrying, just thinking they'd lied about that. So the family were in the good with keeping me involved. (...) So I keep my part*

> *in my family, I like that. (...) So part of that was something that helped me a little." (R3)*

Apart from the limited amount of information the participants were given, they were also deprived of the immediate presence of a supportive environment and human touch when receiving the death notice, which prior research underscored as significant for processing the news of such nature (e.g., Ferszt, 2002; Harner et al., 2011; Young Junior, 2003).

Some participants indicated that they would have preferred finding out about the death from a family member, rather than from an officer:

> *"I'd rather find that [his best friend died] aff my girlfriend and my family than the officer coming in and tell me. 'Cause I think if an officer did come in and told me, I would have reacted in a certain way. I would have took it nae in, instead of coming to terms with it myself. I would've just took it nae in, as it was their fault because they told me." (R8)*

This further demonstrates the significance of the relational aspect of bereavement and the necessity of social support. As R8 explained, it would be easier to blame the officer than to take it in and *"come to terms with it myself"*. In this respect, prison officers would be perceived as strangers to the prisoner but also to the person who died. P3 expressed similar ideas around the relevance of knowing the prison officer telling them bad news. It is easier to accept death and react to it in a socially appropriate way if there is a perception of safety, trust, care, and comfort embodied in the individual relaying the news:

> *"It's usually staff that know me. That knows us. So that way it makes it a lot easier. 'Cause you nae want some member of staff that you don't know comin' in tellin' you that, and then... Ending up snapping then and there and ending up daein' something stupid to this member of staff." (P3)*

4.4.1.3. Breaching the Routine

Apart from the phone, which can represent a portal to the community, opening cell doors at non-scheduled times was seen as a different symbol that can elevate individuals' anxiety. This is another contradiction that imprisonment brings. Namely, doors can present a physical barrier to the world, a division between the solitude and the company, between the individual and the community. When the doors are closed, one would expect that opening them would be a good thing. It would temporarily remove those physical barriers, enable the inter-bodily presence, and the potential interpersonal interaction. However, for participants, hearing the key turn when it was not supposed to immediately indicated that something was not right. As P16 explained:

> *"It, it's a strange thing. When you're locked up and you get the key opened, aaaaa, something's happened. You hear them [guards] turning the lock-key in here. And yes, you know, it's either one of three things, you know, it's either they're searching the cell, or you've got an agent, or there's something happened. And that's the only three times they'll open you."*

P15 expressed similar concerns:

> *"I second-guessed it. Um, one of the guards come at the door, about seven o'clock Sunday morning, and I said to him 'A bit early, ain't ya?' He went, 'Come on!' I went 'All right, what's going on?' 'You need to phone your mom'. Heh, why would he get me out to phone my mom at seven o'clock in the morning? So... I went, 'all right, ok', so I rang her and she said 'Yeah, he [dad] died.'"*

Thus, participants described that, in a strange way, it was nearly better to be behind closed doors, lulled up in a routine, since even the slightest detour usually suggested bad news. For example, P1 indicated that she *"knew automatically it was something wrong"* when she was told to go to the manager's office but in a different unit than usual. She also discussed how having one's name unexpectedly shouted by the staff further triggered a set of psychological and physiological responses, taking her back to the day when she found out about her mother's death:

> *"Anytime like… You're shouted by a staff member or you're wanted for something that you did not ask about… And then you panic… What if your family had phoned in and you panic. (...) It [hearing your name] just, it just takes you, takes you right back to that, that day when I was told [about her mom's death], eh."*

These reactions almost seemed like they had the elements of Bandura's (1977) conditioning, whereby staff actions that departed from the routine triggered negative experiences and elicited a physiological response. This underscores the cumulative impact of prior trauma and makes it more likely for prisoners to experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)-like reactions before even being informed of the death. Inflicting shock (i.e., the initial bereavement reaction) on the already stressed body and mind can aggravate the experiences of bereavement in prisons.

4.4.2. The Contextual around Bereavement

As discussed in section 4.2., emotions are socially constructed and biologically evident (Barrett, 2012). Therefore, even if prison does not share the conceptualization of emotions that is dominant outside, the bodily manifestation will still occur, as it happens on the unconscious level. This could lead to another ambivalence within the individual. Their body is telling them that something is wrong, but the context they are in is not conducive to further processing these ideas, which could enhance perceptions of helplessness and powerlessness.

Participants suggested that death can make them lonely and alone, yet imprisonment is an isolating experience too, on many different levels. It is physically separating people from the community, it is mentally separating them from the life outside, it is corporeally separating them from the others, and it is separating the body from the mind. The participants perceived their imprisonment in a vacuum, as something surreal, a separate chapter in their lives that they just needed to *"get on wae"*. P14 indicated that being bereft in prison makes them doubly-confined – physically within the prison walls and emotionally within their body. Each layer of confinement these individuals face adds onto the general feelings of powerlessness and lack of control over the past, the present, as well as the future. As P14 further explained:

> *"There's not a lot you can do whilst you're in here. The only thing that you can actually, possibly, look forward to in, in a way of a closure or something happening, is actually getting yourself leave and then getting, resolving issues that you've got, but... Restricted by the walls that you're behind, you've got no hope of getting closure. I mean, I look at people in the hall and I see them, em, struggling with things and stuff... People outside struggling with stuff and that, and you can't do nothing. You are completely helpless. That's what your false environment is about."*

Isolation from the context in which a death occurred made it hard for these individuals to process grief, in a "false environment". For example, P15 indicated that he found it difficult to fully deal with bereavement, while simultaneously being isolated from it. Lack of spatial proximity and the inability to participate not just in social rituals around death, but in any social aspect of this process, further exacerbated the perception of aloneness for these individuals. As per P18, *"outside you can grieve with your family. Inside you grieve on, you grieve alone."* Participants often said that they missed being at the funeral and having the ability to visit the dead. In addition, they oftentimes did not even know where the graves were. Depending on their relationship with other family members, their ability to get that information ranged from being easy to being incredibly difficult. Yet, that is something that many would like to know. To an extent, it could be argued that participation in rituals could give them a sense of normalcy.

4.4.2.1. "It has to be the close family. (…) The system's fucked up!" (P7)

Section 2.6.3. of the literature review indicated that prisons often focus on safety and security, above and beyond individual's mental and emotional well-being, even though one could lead to another (Byrne, 2005; Crawley and Crawley, 2013; Drake, 2014; Ferdik and Smith, 2016; Halsey and Deegan, 2017; Kilty, 2006). Some participants further alluded that this, joined with time and cost requirements to enable funeral attendance for prisoners, as well as with the tendency of some to abuse prisons' generosity and aim to get contraband, led to strict regulations regarding the eligibility to go to funerals. As R2 explained:

> *"I think because of the cost and because of the getting an escort tae things like that [funeral], that probably wouldnae ever happen [going to others', not just immediate family]. And, plus the fact that a lot of people milk things… I mean, let's be realistic."*

Many participants were angry that they were not allowed to attend funerals of any individual other than their immediate family. As defined by this sample, that would include their parents (or grandparents), their siblings, their own children, and/or their (usually current) partners. However, as discussed before, their family relationships were often strained and the person of importance was commonly not a part of their nuclear family, which could lead to disenfranchised grief. For example, in the (physical or emotional) absence of their biological parent(s), the bond with other individuals, such as uncles, emerged strongly. Relationships with ex-partners, especially if they had a child together, were also commonly raised as important. This is mirrored by prior research (e.g., Wilson et al., 2020) and further underscores the relational aspect of bereavement, as well as the significance of families of choice for this population. One of the main complaints and suggestions for change the participants had, was to "cut some of the red tape" (P12) and allow funeral attendance for individuals beyond their immediate family. P3 was openly annoyed about the inability to go to his uncle's funeral and his lack of power to challenge it:

> *"It's the prison, they decide if we can go or not. If they say, they say no, nothing you can do aboot it. (...) My uncle [name], 'cause that, that was my nana's sister's husband. (...) That sortae pissed me off. (...) Well, he's still my uncle!"*

As indicated above, some participants also reported instances where other prisoners asked for funeral attendance only to engage in the drug trade and *"wreck it for us"* (P1). Hence, prisoners understood the safety, risk, and resources concerns that the prison service will need to consider before granting them permission to attend a funeral. As P3 further stated:

> *"So, they've gotta make, check all this oot, just to make sure that people that are going to be there are the people that gotta be there. So, I think, so I cannae score."*

On the other hand, depending on the type of crime committed, a few participants were apprehensive to attend funerals as prisoners. Some were ashamed and did not want their family to see them in handcuffs. Others were scared how the community would react, especially if they were imprisoned for murder or a sex offence. This could be explained by what Hareli and Parkinson (2008) discuss as social emotions (e.g., shame, embarrassment, jealousy), as they depend on other people's thoughts, feelings, or actions and tend to be related to social conventions. Similarly, for this or other reasons, some participants had family members who did not even know they were in prison, especially children (e.g., young cousins). This is telling of the level of stigma that pervades society that even in times of grave emotional pain, there was nevertheless a perception that the community would channel their anger and hurt toward the prisoner. P16 was scared about his own safety and conflicted as to whether he should go to his grandma's funeral:

> *"But, I was scared to go. I did have, I, I, I was terrified. I wanted to go… But (...), I've been in jail for three year. (...) I think it was just my nerves kicking in. (...) I, everyone plays in my heid, are people gonna come doon and attack me, eh, you know what I mean? It's just, I raced through my heid. (...) I was, I was a bit easy, uneasy."*

For some, such as P16, going to a funeral was the first contact they had with the community in a long time, which made them additionally nervous to go, although they would usually do it regardless. A few participants, however, considered not going as they felt that attending a funeral as a prisoner would take the attention off the dead. P21 indicated that it is

> *"almost like stealing the limelight from her [grandma's] funeral. If I turn up, with guards, having come from prison. It's almost like they'd [family] feel obligated to talk to me and it will be about me. It was all about her and I wanted it to be about her."*

These quotations indicate that the participants understood funeral as a celebration of life, not a mourning of death or a place to discuss their own situation. It is a gathering in honor of the dead. Regardless, it was clear that they were unintentionally shifting the focus away from the dead and onto themselves, given the handcuffs and/or chains they had to wear. This made the majority of participants uncomfortable and tarnished the whole, already painful experience, even more. P17 was visibly annoyed about the fact that he had to wear a chain that was aggravated by the fact that he, allegedly, did not know about this requirement up until it was time for his transfer. In retrospect, he indicated that he would never had asked to attend the funeral, had he known about the chain:

> *"If I ken I would've been on a dog chain, I wouldnae be there for the first time either. (...) I thought I'd be hand-cuffed, but not on a big chain." (P17)*

4.4.2.2. The Role of Stigma

Stigma, fear, and embarrassment emerged strongly with this population creating another ambivalence in exercising and expressing bereavement as a prisoner. There was a strong drive, a need to attend a funeral and celebrate the dead, get closure, and leave them in the past. But, on the other hand, there was a perception of being out of place, bringing shame to themselves, their family, and the dead. At times, the participants tried to find ways to reconcile those two conflicting forces. For example, P20 decided to go but kept himself at a distance:

> *"I could've sat beside the family, but… I was too embarrassed and that, with the handcuffs. And so, I picked a different row away from them. That was embarrassing for me, yeah, but that was embarrassing for the family, you know, having me in here."*

This could be partially explained by Kaplan's (2006) discussion on self-value as a reflection of individual's alignment with positively or negatively placed values in the social system. Given the overwhelmingly negative social perception of prisoners (further exacerbated for certain types of crime), it might be that the individuals created sentiments of lower self-worth (see also Lane, 2015). The strong feelings of shame that the participants described when talking about bereavement could also indicate that funeral attendance highlighted the reality of being imprisoned for the individual, as well as for their family. This would mirror the earlier examples where funerals were the first time individuals were out of prison. As such, it might be that some participants never had the chance to clearly negotiate the experience of being in prison with themselves and others, yet funerals blurred that divide between the prison and the community. In a similar vein, others were not comfortable with the security escorting them. This could further demonstrate the social and relational aspects of bereavement. Apart from the presence of others' body and mind that serves as a comfort to the bereft, funerals typically included all those who cared about the dead (or the bereft), creating a shared, meaningful experience. Having strangers present was perceived as a barrier to saying goodbye and paying respects. P1 described her experience of going to her mother's wake as a prisoner:

> *"So, as I'm hanging over my mom's coffin… I've got this woman hanging over me…I just felt so uncomfortable with these strangers being there, just didn't feel, didnae feel right."*

Given the often lengthy bureaucratic procedures that precede funeral attendance or, in some instances, the final hospital visit, the interviewees gave examples of paperwork failing to get approved in time. For example, P16 said that he tried to get a final visit with his grandma, but by the time the prison processed everything, she passed away. Similarly, P4 was distressed about not being able to say goodbye to her dying grandpa:

> *"I ju(st), the only thing that I would've changed is if they could've hurried up with my, like, coming down to see him [grandpa] then that would made a massive difference for me. Em, just to get to say goodbye to him."*

This complements the earlier discussion on the lack of power that prisoners have, whereby processing some of the critical moments in their lives will be decided by somebody or something else, such as prisons and/or their administrative and bureaucratic procedures (see Armstrong (2020) on structural violence). Hence, some individuals argued that there should be systems in place to allow prisoners to respectfully say their goodbyes through a wake, a funeral, or a hospital visit in a safe, non-stigmatizing way. As P12 suggested:

> *"Let's put a system in place that, you know, aye we [prison] need to do our checks, but it's us that's taking this person to the hospital to see whoever it is that's passing, you know."*

Many participants considered it poor management if, rather than putting stronger measures in place, prisoners who were considered high risk were banned from executing, what they perceived as, their human right to pay respects to the dead. They were also unhappy if they needed to choose one event only. As P4 stated:

> *"Oooooh, see, that's what the governor asked me actually. He said which one would I rather do [funeral or hospital visit]… And I said both. I think I should have had the right to do both."*

This quotation further demonstrates the issue between (human) rights and agency that emerged strongly among the participants. While prisoners were aware of their situation and understood that they could not (always) get what they wanted, they still felt like they were overly punished when it came to the denial of the possibility of funeral attendance. Hence, death and bereavement could be understood as compounding the experiences of marginalization and disempowerment of these individuals. According to P1:

> *"Fair enough, you're a prisoner, I get that, but… (...) End of the day, people make mistakes, and… They should still be part… Part of that [funeral]."*

Many participants underscored the importance of being in the community to be able to fully process death. Yet, as discussed in 4.3, some participants delayed processing their bereavement through drugs and alcohol. Some had their grief delayed by someone else, by not informing them of the death. Finally, others consciously delayed it for the duration of their sentence, waiting to be back in their social context, to experience life without the dead. This indicates the relevance of different conceptualization of time in the community and in prison.

4.4.3. The Passing of Time

Just as there is no indication of the present time in prisons, prisoners have a skewed perception of the past, as well as the future (e.g., Byrne, 2005; Cope, 2003; Earle, 2014; Moran, 2012; Philippe-Beauchamp, 2019; Wahidin, 2006; Wooff, 2020). Every day was the same, there was not much to look forward to, yet equally, there was no point living in the past. Likewise, some participants suggested that time spent in prison was a waste:

> *"A total waste. There is nothing. You cannae plan, you can't have any plans, ummmm, so it's, it's pointless. You ken, if you cannae, there's nothing really constructive. Everything's here, everything's, same day, the same time every day." (P19)*

This could imply the uncertainty about prisoners' future, reflecting again the perception of liminality present is so many aspects of the individuals' lives. Some participants stated that they had plenty of time on their hands and when that time was void of meaningful activities and socialization, it could seem even longer. A lack of any visual stimuli that could indicate the passing of time was described as an additional burden to some prisoners, *"That's what I hate about in here, there's never clocks anywhere. It's annoying." (P5)*. P15 indicated that there is a lot of time to be used up, but for the majority of it, the individual is alone:

> *"It might just be a very long time, you know, when you, when you, when you're in here, sitting around, 'cause what we've got plenty [of] is time. And a lot of that time, you're on your own."*

Spending time alone with one's thoughts could have a negative impact on prisoners' mental health and additional implications in times of bereavement. Constant social isolation can play with people's mind and death can exacerbate the feelings of powerlessness, helplessness, and a lack of agency. The opportunities to commemorate the dead and celebrate death anniversaries were limited, and the individuals were sometimes left in a limbo of reality and fiction.

> *"Aye, it's just… It's hard fae in here, there's not really much I can dae. I know it's coming up [anniversary]… Kinda gets you down a bit… [3 seconds break] If I allow it to take over, then I'll take oot my frustrations on everybody else. So I try and… [3 seconds break] Keep my spirit high. (...) I channel my energy and either punch a fucking wall or I roll about my mattress and use it, basically, like a punching bag [gives instructions how to do it]." (R10)*

They knew they had feelings for the dead, but they struggled expressing them, as a result of being in the environment that was typically not conducive to expressing pain. The individuals often started doubting themselves and questioning whether they were still a human, a sentient self, due to a lack of emotions expressed. They thought that there was something wrong with them and felt blame for not reacting the way that they thought they should have. For example, P16 felt confused and guilty for not having grieved some of his family members yet:

> *"I've never gret for my wee cousin and I've never gret for my gran. Only papa. Sometimes I say to myself I'm twisted… But I cannae, (…) I need to get in my head and say she's no, she's away. But that, it's, it's, aye it is strange."*

As discussed in section 4.3, bottling up emotions, numbing the pain through drugs and alcohol, emotional diversion, or physical distance through imprisonment prevented many participants from ever engaging with their emotions and acknowledging death. For many, coming into prison was the first time in a while that they were sober. Some referred to it as a life-saving event and younger offenders indicated it was a wake-up call to change their ways before they, themselves, ended up dead. Yet, as previously discussed, for some being sober also presented a challenge by enabling the suppressed emotions to emerge and requiring of the individual to work through cumulative impact of prior trauma. P7 indicated that she just does not *"got the brain power to deal with all that. (...) It's cracking me up."* Subsequently, the participants described fragmented grief.

4.4.3.1. "It's almost like I've delayed my bereavement" (P6)

According to the data, bereavement appeared slightly easier to process if death occurred prior to the imprisonment. This would give the participants time to adapt to life without that person. At the very least, they knew that the individual would not be there upon their release, given that they were not there upon their arrest. On the other hand, if death occurred while imprisoned, many participants struggled to comprehend that some people will no longer be there, once they get back. P16 had difficulties reconciling the present that was happening outside and the present that he suspended, (re-)living it in his memories:

> *"That's what keeps me happy [pictures]. But, I think that tricks you. Because, I think, you look at the photos and say - ah, I'll see you when I come oot. And they're no there. And it does play, it, it really did play with my mind."*

The participants understood that the time passes and that lives continue, but their body has been deprived of all the sensorial inputs that would signal to the mind that the death has indeed happened, in a way that would allow them to realize and accept it. Their contact with the dead was often limited even beforehand, due to their imprisonment. Thus, it was difficult to conceptualize that the dead will physically not be present upon release. In any case, one action interrupted the other: grief was suspended by imprisonment and/or imprisonment was disrupted by bereavement. P15 illustrates this point further by explaining that he could only do so much to process death while removed from his environment:

> *"I've done as much as I can in this confined space. I'll do more when I do get out and go home, and go and see them, and find that he's not there. And then I think that they'll*

> *start, not that it'll start again, but then I'll, I'll sort of, I'll finish, I'll get total closure on that. (...) You know, the first thing that I'm gonna do when I get out is go home. I don't know what I'm expecting to do or see when I get there, but I think it's just something I need to do. Just to, I don't know, just to be where he [dad] was, you know? Before he died. (...) I'll pick up again when I do get out."*

Many participants indicated that they were constrained in the extent to which they could visually, experientially, and socially acknowledge death, due to their imprisonment, which sometimes detrimentally affected their mental health. In addition, as Kaplan (2006) argued, social contexts determine self-awareness of an experience and one's emotional expression. They imply appropriate responses to situations evoking self-evaluation, which, in turn, brings positive or negative self-feelings of varying intensity (Kaplan, 2006). Hence, even though prisons offered a variety of services, the culture and context of imprisonment might prevent individuals for engaging with them. As such, prison can be concurrently viewed as an enabler of support and a barrier to it.

4.4.4. Mental Health (and other) Services in Prison

Apart from the standard mental health services, usually offered through a psychology department, some participating prisons provided specific bereavement services too. These could be related to chaplaincy and religion, but not necessarily. The findings highlighted a difference in the perception of mental health and bereavement services among participants. While the former were often viewed in a negative light, the latter were seen as an institution that offers stability and eliminates judgement. For example, P1 explained that the chaplaincy was there to help her cope, they were not there to judge. They were also reached easier than the mental health, for which there were often long waiting lists. As P4 vividly described, *"trying to see a mental health nurse in here is like trying to see gold dust."* According to the majority of individuals who discussed this topic, some of the main issues with mental health services were high staff turnover and being severely understaffed (which was significantly more prominent in Callan prison). R11 provided his calculation on their availability:

> *"There's what, nearly 400 other people in the prison. If, if an appointment lasts an hour (...) they cannae see everybody, you know what I mean, like, the prison need to dae meer tae rely on dealing with them."*

Some of those organizational issues reduced individuals' perceived confidence in the services offered and many participants viewed them as inadequate to serve prisoners' needs. R4, for example, discussed large cut downs they allegedly experienced:

> *"It's been cut down tae like two. Or one. It's just people leaving. (...) like the two people for the whole jail. Which is scary because there is a lot of mental health issues in here. (...) They can't cope in here. It's, it's one of the biggest problems in prison; the need for mental health staff. It's, especially being in jail, that breaks you down, causes mental health."*

The lack of staff availability to provide support made prisoners less motivated to engage with mental health services. Contrary to other programs in prison, the completion of which could be an expectation for parole approval, prisoners had to request mental health or bereavement support themselves, *"it's all self-referral anyway"* (P1). Some indicated that they started avoiding mental health services and stopped confiding in them because of their frequent, on the spot cancellations. As R1 described, this brought her emotional upheaval:

> *"I'm talking about my past and I'm talking a lot about my trauma, and I'm talking a lot about grief and death, and this and that. And I'm hyping myself up and when being told "Oh, programs got cancelled, but we couldn't be bothered telling you." I broke down the next night, I couldnae sleep, I couldnae get to sleep, I ended up breaking doon in tears, because it just, the emotion of having to get myself all hyped up for the programs, just to be let down."*

In contrast to mental health services, which were often viewed as volatile and difficult to reach, one of the things many interviewees liked about the chaplaincy was the stability of service it provided.

4.4.4.1. The Role of Chaplaincy

Unlike the mental health staff, prison chaplains tended to be in their position for a longer time. This could be perceived as another emotional, temporal, and corporal ambivalence. Namely, chaplaincy was physically present for the duration of the individuals' grief but despite their proximity on various levels, they did not share the relational sphere between the dead and the bereft, limiting the extent of their ability to support prisoners. However, their constant presence enabled many participants to establish a trusting relationship, build rapport, and discuss bereavement experiences, if they so wish.

Chaplaincy was also viewed as impartial. Even if the individuals would not consider themselves as religious, they appreciated the option of speaking to a chaplain. The stability that chaplaincy demonstrates in prison improved the readiness of many participants to engage with them. They appreciated that chaplains would not *"ram religion doon your throat"* (P8) but could be approached on a human level. R3 had a different experience with chaplaincy and preferred speaking directly to bereavement services, yet the essence of commitment remained the same – having the ability to establish rapport and access continuous support:

> *"You wouldn't mind hearing from a bereavement person, that one that can actually help you and, you know. Eh, cause they will spend a bit more better time with you. You can have a bit more, you can do a five week session, sorta thing, which is five sessions of sort. You can get comfortable with them before being able to speak with them. Whereas with the chaplaincy, it's more whenever they are able to, they've got other things to be doing and stuff."*

Thus, bereavement services offered a structured support, while the chaplaincy support was more informal. As discussed, engaging with bereavement inevitably encompassed considering other issues. This could be a painful and lengthy process for which the interviewees wanted to have a safe environment. They described prisons as places of low-trust, individualism, and often void of meaningful relationships with others. From a phenomenological perspective, bereavement requires trust, making it difficult to address it while imprisoned. As P2 stated, "*You have to trust to come forward."* Many individuals also discussed a strong *us vs them* narrative between prisoners and staff. There can be some mutual understanding but there is limited support and trust:

> *"We are prisoners and we are reminded daily that we are prisoners. Em… Whether we lost somebody, whether we got shit going on ootside with families, we're still remem(ber), reminded, you are the prisoner!" (P12)*

As per Hareli and Parkinson (2008), people's place in a society gets defined through social norms, other people, groups or organizations, driven by social concerns. Social appraisals then affect social emotions (e.g., shame, embarrassment, jealousy, guilt), potentially leading to a cycle of social disenfranchisement, poor evaluation, and the (re-)production of stigmatizing labels for this population. Subsequently, being treated as a second-class citizen, regardless of their personal circumstances, further discouraged some interviewees from engaging with prison services, and led some participants to attempt taking control over their lives.

4.4.4.2. Prison Suicides

Prison is a scary and a noisy place. For many individuals it is an unfamiliar space (Marti, 2020), which can elevate anxiety and uncertainty (Wooff, 2020). Many participants felt fear, shock, and confusion upon entering their cells for the first time. Some were scared for their own survival, others felt physically constrained. R6 shared his first impressions as

> *"scared of getting battered in here or something. (…) Like me, first time I walked in here, I was only 16. Walked through the doors and "What the hell is this place?" I got 24-hour suicide watch, 'cause I was actually, I was gonna kill myself one time, but I didn't. It's... Something we should talk about in prison."*

Similarly, P13 came into prison for the first time when he was middle aged. That was an even greater shock for him and impacted his adaptation to prison life. As he said:

> *"Never been in prison in my life. And that was a big shock, please believe me, it did. See, when they shut that, that door to you, oh no, man, what am I doing here??? And I took a long time to settle down, I did. I was… I, I felt like I was claustrophobic and all that."*

The pressure of going into the unknown, with minimal support and increased occurrences of bullying, played with one's head and made some participants contemplate or attempt suicide:

> *"The heid starts spinning. (…) It just goes to your heid and you think, your mind just goes blank. And that's, that's the easiest way to say it, it just goes pure blank and you don't even think. You just dae it [suicide attempt]. (P16)*

An aggravating factor around death and suicides in prison, according to the participants, was a lack of conversation around it. The individuals described that prison goes into lock-down until the body is removed and then everything is back to normal. They were upset that such situations were not given much consideration, so they all shared the experience of death through forced isolation (lock-down). Yet, prison suicides were also rare instances where prisoners empathized with staff. As R4 indicated, officers never discussed the suicides. Just like grief tends to be left unacknowledged, prison deaths are enrobed in a similar veil of silence:

> *“Officers, you never hear the officers talking about it [suicides in prison]. Never. And yeah, it's like one of the hardest things, obviously, if you ever doin', goin' round doing security checks and the first thing you see is somebody hangin fae a light. That's no something you wannae talk about. It's... I hope they, like, the staff in here, they have to got like a good mental health thing. (...) Aye. It's... A problem that they never spoke about to anybody.”*

Prison suicides and their suddenness, or prison deaths and their proximity, could have a detrimental effect on individuals’ mental health. On the one hand, they became more aware of their own mortality and on the other, there was a lack of discussion around this issue, although it was obvious that it impacted both prisoners and prison staff. Just knowing that prison deaths and prison suicides are lurking, albeit sudden, made prisoners uneasy. As Pl4 further explained:

> *“It's scary the fact that... Somebody can come in, ten seconds later just hang themselves. It's, it's something that shouldn't happen, especially in here. But, you've got, obviously the girls they do it, but obviously the boys do it as well, which is, is worrying. Could be somebody next to us, I could be talking to, and then one day, next night he's deid. It's scary.”*

A lot of participants were angry that suicides happened in the institution where they were supposed to get help. They were also annoyed that no one did anything to prevent bullying. Hence, they asserted that they always had to be cautious and alert, demonstrating elevated awareness of their environment. As a result, some participants described feeling embarrassed for having nightmares and yelling in their sleep. They feared being teased and bullied, indicating that such behavior showed weakness, lack of control over one’s own body and mind. As per P6:

> *“It can be quite embarrassing when you're waking up screaming at night and you got neighbors next door to you, so... [smiles uncomfortably].”*

One female prisoner in this sample further raised concerns about the lack of space to be angry, to yell, and to “lose it”. Even that aspect of emotional freedom was perceived as been taken away from the participants, so they came up with alternatives:

> *“I do yell. 'Cause I did it just recently. I broke down in my room. But the thing is, you've gotta be careful when you do it, because your neighbors might not exactly*

> *appreciate it. Em, and, if you do rounds and throw stuff, your neighbors won't appreciate it. The best thing a lot of people do is they'll either punch a pillow, which doesn't always work, especially if they're not proper pillows." (R1)*

Despite the limited avenues to emotional expressiveness, the above quotation demonstrated a way in which the participants created some room for their own needs. The final section will discuss the role of staff in imprisonment and bereavement, concluding with the idea of (re)humanizing the individuals in this population.

4.4.4.3. Relationship with Staff

Prison officers are expected to act rationally toward prisoners and their human needs, yet the context in which they are working is one of constant hostility and demands (Crawley and Crawley, 2013; Crewe, 2015; Drake, 2014; Rhodes, 2001). This could lead to tensions between the job role and the caring role of officers. For example, the findings indicate that many participants maintained contact with the dead by speaking to them or laughing with them, but hearing voices could make prison staff wary of what might be going on. R8 stated that he was repeatedly put in a suicide cell (segregation) under suspicion of having a phone:

> *"I see him [uncle] and I speak to him. Even in here I've done it. (...) I've been in sui-cells like seven times for a phone. They [staff] think I've got a phone. But I've explained to them that that's what I dae. (...) It can happen at any time, just a general conversation."*

Some interviewees also expressed a desire for their situation to have been treated with more respect. Many participants would like prison officers to come and check up on them, let them know they cared. P1 explained that she was hurt that after her mother's funeral, everything in prison went back to normal; the prison reality clashed with her emotional reality at that time:

> *"I left [from funeral] back to prison, so it was like - right, lunch, everyone back to normal. I've just seen my mom lying there, d' you know what I mean?"*

This mirrors prior research on bereavement experiences of prisoners, whereby they were expected to promptly return to the prison routine, depriving them of any opportunity to mourn adequately (Aday and Wahidin, 2016). Although the individuals knew it will not bring the deceased back, they sometimes felt like there was a lack of respect toward the dead, which further exacerbated their pain, helplessness, and dissatisfaction with the overall situation. Their perceived need for support was increased in times of bereavement when those cell-doors just got closed behind them and they were left alone with their thoughts. As Laws and Crewe (2016) also discussed, having an open door is psychologically different, it widens the immediate physical environment. Regardless, very few prison officers are trained to undertake bereavement support duties, as this is usually outsourced to social or healthcare professional, and/or the voluntary sector (Corcoran, 2017), which was underscored by the individuals in this study too. They could share their experiences with mental health services, bereavement support, and/or other prisoners who are a part of specific schemes (e.g., the Listeners; see Jaffe, 2012). Still, what many participants needed was a small act of kindness, an acknowledgement of their struggles or as P1 phrased it: *"It's the Little Things"*.

4.4.4.4. Humanizing the Prisoner

One of the last questions asked in this study inquired about something that prisoners would like to have but cannot because they are in prison. The researcher did not specifically instruct the participants to refer to times of bereavement; it was a general question. The majority responded by noting their craving for human touch, feeling loved and cared for, having someone to talk to, as well as some small vices/comforts, such as *a fag* (cigarette). As P19 indicated, being in prison takes away those small happinesses in life that they used to have, the simple things like

> *"hear[ing] phone ringing. (...) Aye, the really simple. I just wanna hear a river. Eh, I wanna hear the wind go through the trees. Simple as that."*

Prisoners were also longing for their feelings to come back, to be able to feel *"my, my confidence, my self-esteem, my dignity (...). Just, as long as I'm safe and well-fed, and warm."* (P7).

This underscored the absence of humanity in prisons and the artificiality of that environment. These participants saw nothing to look forward to, commemorating significant dates was too painful, the loneliness was way too real, and the futility of such an existence became a reality. These findings mirror Laws and Crewe's (2018) discussion on lack of sensorial stimuli, which can make it difficult to escape boredom and frustration. Yet, many participants did not limit their wish for emotionality, closeness, and normalcy to prison setting but extended it to post-release. A few were scared and apprehensive about being released for fear of falling back into the cycle of substance abuse and criminal lifestyles. This brings back the earlier discussions of ambivalence as to whether this felt apathy and frigidness were inherent to the prison environment or an adaptation to the expectations and norms of behaviors that the prison culture (inadvertently) perpetuates. In a sense, this is the perennial importation and deprivation question of what was there first – a group of people who imported a certain culture into prisons or the contextual factors that made people adapt to the new setting (or a mixture of both).

Overall, this section discussed the interplay of bereavement and imprisonment. It examined the relevance of space in the (co-)creation of reality, as well as the necessity to be physically and mentally present in the context of bereavement in order to process it. It then reflected on the temporal aspect of imprisonment and looked at it through the lens of bereavement, focusing on fragmented grief and the (lack of) available mental health and bereavement services in prisons. It also reflected on the unavailability of staff and other prisoners to offer trusting relationships and sustained support, and in so doing, it examined the subcultural barriers of emotional expression and the impact of prison suicides. The findings highlighted the context of imprisonment as antithetical to the essence of bereavement, yet the two are intrinsically linked as *"In a way, it's [imprisonment] a death on its own (...). 'Cause you're definitely not living. (...) It's only your past."* (P19)

5. DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the findings presented in chapter four and situates them within the wider body of literature to highlight the empirical, philosophical, and methodical contributions that this study brings to the fields of criminology, justice, and bereavement. It starts by reminding the reader of the gaps in current research, as well as of the relevance of researching bereavement and imprisonment. It then discusses the reasoning for the analytical framework used and reintroduces the research questions to demonstrate the advancements to knowledge that this study has made, before discussing policy, practice, and research implications, as well as limitations of this study.

5.0.1. Situating This Study within Existing Knowledge

As discussed in the literature review, criminological research has indicated an elevated prevalence of death among current and former prisoners (e.g., Courtney and Maschi, 2012; Testa and Jackson, 2019; Vaswani, 2014). Their narratives are often steeped with examples of prior trauma and abuse (e.g., Courtney and Maschi, 2012; Crewe et al., 2017; Halsey, 2018), and there tends to be a lack of stability and structure in their lives prior to imprisonment (e.g., Testa and Jackson, 2019; Webster et al., 2006). Consequently, within criminological research, the relevance of family of choice has emerged quite strongly for this population (e.g., Aday and Wahidin, 2016; Crewe et al., 2017; Hendry, 2009; Hopmeyer and Werk, 1994; Masterton, 2014). Numerous authors identify imprisonment as a psychological and sociological paradox of being alone but with others (Byrne, 2005; Halsey, 2018; Halsey and Deegan, 2017; Liebling, 1999; Rhodes, 2001; Sparks and Bottoms, 1995), being alive but barely living. This perpetuates the social perception that there is no room for emotions in prisons, although prisons are inherently emotional contexts (Aday and Wahidin, 2016; Choudhry et al., 2019; Crewe, 2015; Greer, 2002; Jewkes, 2005; Salina et al., 2011; Wooff, 2020; Wilson, 2011).

Conversely, prior research on grief and bereavement has examined the emergence of conflicting, ambivalent emotions following death. For example, the presence of sadness and happiness, love and hate, emotional overwhelmedness or overall numbness (Jakoby, 2012; Worden, 1991). Death was found to have the power to end unresolved businesses, relationships, and dreams, as well as to seize opportunities to ever get answers (e.g., Hopmeyer and Werk, 1994; Thompson et al., 2016; Young Junior, 2003; Walter, 2007). Bereavement theory and research also demonstrated the potential for emotional pain to manifest itself as physical pain and other physiological reactions (e.g., Hall, 2014; Hopmeyer and Werk, 1994; Lindemann, 1944; Saunders, 1964; Stroebe et al., 2017; Thompson et al., 2016; Worden, 1991). For example, Harner et al. (2011) argued that even when there is emotional control and suppression, that does not necessarily indicate or result in the disappearance of pain. Instead, pain can emerge in different ways, including through the body (e.g., Harner et al., 2011). Interestingly, Choudhry et al. (2019) discussed imprisonment as a chronic illness, given that both situations present a crisis of embodiment, of self, and of identity. Such an understanding of prison could explain why some individuals manage their imprisonment well, while others struggle with prison as *hurt* (Choudhry et al., 2019). As discussed in the literature review, prisoners' acknowledgement of emotions could also be related to the distinction between fronting and masking, as proposed by Crewe et al. (2014). When adopting the former, one embodies the inauthentic version of self, whereas the latter is a reactionary, defense mechanism to stifle the emerging vulnerabilities. However, one aspect that is less understood in prison research, is the potential co-dependence of the two bodies: of (1) the physical body of the individual, with all its cognitive, emotional, and sensory components, and (2) the body of punishment, which Herrity (2019) conceptualized as being actualized through prison structure with its ideological, social, and expressive side. Thus, bereavement during imprisonment could bring ache to the individuals on various levels and the bereft prisoner can experience bodily pain of imprisonment, just like an illness might bring, emotional pain of bereavement, which can be manifested in physical ways too, and mental pain of having to manage it all while struggling with the potentially suspended reality within the often coexisting, but rarely overlapping, temporalities of bereavement and imprisonment.

Overall, an analysis of prior research has revealed gaps in knowledge regarding the interaction between bereavement and imprisonment, as well as in discerning the aspects that are inherent to bereavement from those that are individual-, cultural-, and context-specific. This study advances current scholarship in bereavement and prison research by (1) explaining the meaning of death for this sample of prisoners, (2) providing a nuanced understanding of the effects of the relational, spatial, temporal, and visual in death on bereavement and the role of prisons, (3) detailing the importance of agency, power, and choice in employing coping mechanisms for grieving, and (4) highlighting the role of the body as a means of communication with the world. As will be further discussed in this chapter, the findings also advance current bereavement policy and prison practice by revealing the essential role of senses and consciousness in bereavement, as well as underscoring the relevance of acknowledging the prior and cumulative impact of trauma and grief, when providing support and understanding the impact of bereavement more generally. Being cognizant of death could drive intentional or reactionary behavior in the bereft, as well as evoke memories or create trauma and PTSD-like symptoms. The findings further indicate the simultaneous existence of multiple emotional, temporal, and social realities within a person, between the bereft and the environment, as well as of the bereft and the dead. Hence, the potential that someone or something will trigger the resurfacing of parts of those complex life-worlds among the prisoner population, which are intertwined with histories of multiple and often violent deaths, can elevate their sensitivity to their surrounding and require further academic attention.

Through descriptive phenomenology, this study included a sensory exploration of the phenomenon to give it its humanity. Namely, Ashworth (2003) argued that a phenomenon, a *thing*, cannot exist in itself. This posed the question of whether and to what extent bereavement can co-exist with imprisonment; a context of sensorial deprivation (e.g., Jewkes, 2005; Laws and Crewe, 2016; Liebling, 2014; Philippe-Beauchamp, 2019) and this study argues that it can, in a fragmented sense. As per Corcoran (2017), a sphere surrounded by grief, shame, and anger tends to be inconsistent with emotions and the concepts of justice, begging the question as to whether there is room for the presence of grief in prison. To further examine these relationships, this study focused on the following research questions:

1. What are prisoners’ experiences of bereavement in carceral contexts?
    1.1. What is the effect of bereavement for this population?
2. What are the potential layers of bereavement?
    2.1. What is generalizable about bereavement experiences and what is individual-/context-specific?
3. How do prisoners cope with bereavement prior to and/or during imprisonment?
    3.1. What is the role of the prison in prisoners’ experiences of bereavement?

5.0.2. Addressing the Research Questions

Regarding the first research question, *What are the prisoners’ experiences of bereavement in carceral contexts?* and its sub-question examining the effect of bereavement for this population, the findings indicate a high prevalence of multiple bereavements among the individuals in this sample, as a part of lives already characterized by trauma and loss. The relationships between the dead and the bereft ranged from close family members, to grandparents, uncles and aunties, friends, and even friends of the participants’ children, and pets. Using DP confirmed prior knowledge on some of the symbolical losses that death can present, such as a loss of support, a loss of a home, and a loss of opportunities to spend time with the dead. However, this analytical approach further revealed death as a loss of individuals' envisioned present, even though the "objective" reality, which the individuals remember as true prior to coming to prison, was gone the moment they entered prison. Death brought a loss of self and a conflict of realities by symbolizing a finite end of what used to be, without providing a framework for adapting to the new now.

This ties into the discussion on the second research question, *What are the potential layers of bereavement?* and the subsequent attempts to discern the essential from the individual- and context-specific through the application of Giorgi's (2000) Descriptive Phenomenology. Here, the findings reveal the multi-layered nature of bereavement. Although every experience was specific and true to the individual, their transcendental dimension encompassed a different set of more general nuances. Namely, the structure of bereavement entails the relational aspect, the temporal, and the spatial component, the corporeal and the cognitive element, as well as the visual and the contextual. This study has identified that the underlying issue of bereavement in prisons is prisoners' inability to reconcile the coexistence of multiple realms of reality, given the structural, social, psychological, emotional, and contextual barriers to being fully exposed to each. Subsequently, recognizing the overlap of these dimensions, wherein the bereft can situate themselves and invite others around them (the interpersonal aspect of bereavement) in that shared sociality, is challenging.

Finally, regarding the last research question, *How do prisoners cope with bereavement prior to and/or during custody?* and the examination of the role of prison in those experiences, this study argues that prisoners' experiences of grief are fragmented. They aim to suppress their feelings for the duration of imprisonment, yet they cannot deny the existence of those. Every so often these emotions emerge and the strategies to manage them depend on the realm in which they are situated: the cognitive, the corporeal, or the social. Findings also indicate that it is challenging to process and express grief in carceral contexts, due to sensorial deprivation and lack of environmental stimuli. By removing the bodily dimension of the individuals' communication with the environment, the experience of the phenomenon is impoverished.

The subsequent section provides an in-depth discussion of the empirical, philosophical, and methodological contributions of this study. It demonstrates different ways in which each of these topics were addressed, while advancing the overall understanding of bereavement and imprisonment through the concepts of body and embodiment, temporality and spatiality, and selfhood and sociality.

5.1. Empirical Contributions

The findings demonstrate that bereavement is not a simple and linear process, which mirrors the existing knowledge from grief and bereavement studies (e.g., Stroebe and Schut, 2016). Yet, by examining the lived experiences of bereavement in carceral contexts, this study has revealed a coexisting, multifaceted interplay of the contextual, social, relational, sensorial, and individual factors that can further encourage or inhibit processing of grief and expression of bereavement. Mirroring prior research, deaths were a common occurrence in the lives of this sample and some initial reactions to it might have been the same among participants. Yet, the extent to which they acknowledged, understood, and processed the bereavement(s) often differ among individuals, as well as within them. For example, the initial shock when faced with the death notice emerged consistently across the sample, albeit the subsequent reactions were more nuanced and variable. This was typically dependent on the relationship with the dead, which, in this study, was examined beyond the nuclear family. Thus, this study was able to build from prior research and elucidate some peculiarities of bereavement experiences. In so doing, it added more variables to consider when providing bereavement support. For example, the impact of the mode of death, especially the visual aspect of it; the relevance of a cumulative effect of trauma and loss on bereavement; emotional awareness and self-control, which is intrinsically linked to the body-mind relationship and embodiment of grief; the necessity to have a context welcoming of emotional expression and vulnerability, beyond just establishing trust in the support service/providers; as well as the need for external acknowledgement, recognition, and respect toward the dead and the bereft. This further advances the understanding of this phenomenon in a prison context and bereavement more broadly. This section first discusses the meaning of death for the individuals interviewed, followed by the relevance of trust and the impact of grief on one’s identity, concluding by underscoring the pervasive sense of powerlessness among this sample.

5.1.0. The Meaning of Death

The meaning of death for this participant group was as multi-faced as their experiences of bereavement. The findings confirmed the existing knowledge on the symbolic meaning of death, such as the loss of future, termination of unresolved issues, loss of support, or loss creating financial issues (Hopmeyer and Werk, 1994; Thompson et al., 2016; Young Junior, 2003; Walsh and McGoldrick, 2013; Walter, 2007). The participants also portrayed death as a loss of safety or a loss of a home (Walsh and McGoldrick, 2013). Death can trigger a family breakdown and/or a loss of family as the individuals knew it (i.e., death of a person who acted as glue in keeping the family together or a disruption in family as a unit; see also Walsh and McGoldrick, 2013). Death further symbolized the end of domestic abuse, although this sometimes led to conflicting feelings among different family members. Finally, for some participants, death was a motivator to change their life for the better and a wake-up call to engage in more prosocial action (see Hall, 2014; Valentine, 2013; Walsh and McGoldrick, 2013). Thus, people gave a meaning to these additional losses due to their lifestyles and prior experience of death and trauma. These ideas were not always reserved for human death, as pet bereavement emerged strongly too, especially when participants described fragmented and fractured relationships with people. This suggests that for people in prison, bereavement might go beyond the dichotomy of dead and alive, physically present and absent, as they are already detached from their social environment and physically removed. Therefore, death can create a turning point in life, motivate some prisoners in this sample to disengage from criminal behavior (or aim to do so upon release), seek help for their drug abuse, or take on the carer role in their family, which can have further implications upon release. Prior research already discussed the potential relationship between bereavement and recidivism (e.g., Finlay and Jones, 2000; Leach et al., 2008; Vaswani, 2014), and this study contributed new insights to the complexity of these considerations, suggesting that bereavement could motivate an individual to think about desistance too.

5.1.1. Lack of Trust

The findings indicate that this sample required a high level of trust in people to engage in the processing of trauma and/or bereavement, regardless of where and when the death had happened. However, participants predominantly described the prison atmosphere as one of a general lack of care, which can be debilitating. This is supported by prior research on imprisonment, which viewed prisons as environments of high gossip and low trust (Rowe, 2014). This was found on multiple levels: among prisoners (Jewkes, 2005; Liebling, 2014), between prisoners and prison officers (Crewe et al., 2017; Halsey and Deegan, 2017), as well as between prisoners, prison officers, and administration toward researchers (Patenaude, 2004). Participants in this study highlighted the necessity of building a strong relationship with the person with whom the individual should (and/or wants to) discuss death and bereavement. At the same time, some participants insinuated that the trust level in prison was so low, it was unimaginable to them that they would be able to process any of their issues while imprisoned.

This could indicate that it is not enough to simply have bereavement services in prison; there needs to be a prisoner buy-in for them, which might be achieved through the development of stable relationships with the support provider over time. However, the findings also indicate that even when the individual was interested in those services, and indeed, some have successfully completed certain prison programs, there was something inherent in bereavement that required trust and connection on a deeper level, which still discouraged the individuals from attending those. As discussed in section 5.2.3., the enhanced and amassed vulnerability of being a prisoner, being bereft, and having experienced trauma throughout their lives, made many participants increasingly wary of emotionally engaging with others within prison.

The significance of trusting relationships with services, bereavement practitioners, fellow prisoners and/or prison staff, also draws attention to the social component of bereavement. Many participants indicated their inability to process death while surrounded solely by strangers, even if they were bereavement professionals, which is contradictory to Walter's (2007) assertion that bereavement became detached from its social roots and the bereft are increasingly opting for specialist bereavement support, provided by strangers. Yet, in this sample, the participants were mistrustful toward the mental health staff, potentially due to the lack of privacy and danger of being in the system that could use their vulnerabilities against them, for example through putting them on suicide watch. There was also something about those outsiders not knowing the person who died or the nature of their relationship to and with them. As such, many participants thought that the professionals just would not understand them or their grief adequately. This supports the idea of a life-world as being shared with the others. Thus, the findings suggest that where the dead belonged to a different life-world, a different social reality, this lack of shared social and spatial context with the dead could inhibit one's grief. However, as this study also indicated, there might be some exceptions to this, whereby the need for a shared context could transcend into the domain of a shared concept of death and be satisfied through spirituality. For example, the participants indicated the usefulness of having someone to talk to and share the burden that they were carrying. This could be by speaking to strangers (i.e., volunteers or researchers) or even through chaplaincy, regardless of their religious orientation. Offloading the burden in a safe environment could bring temporary relief without the added shame or judgement. These findings mirror what Stroebe et al. (2003) discussed that people decide to participate in bereavement research for various reasons, such as sharing and coming to terms with the loss or hoping to contribute to a wider understanding of being bereft. For example, many participants indicated that their motivators for participating in research were either to support others in a similar situation and/or to help and support themselves, because their experience of loss *caused "[suicidal thoughts and bereavement that] was all messing with me heid"* (R12).

Regarding the chaplaincy, the participants viewed them as trustworthy and non-judgmental, at least when compared to the uniformed staff. The individuals felt less embarrassed speaking to the chaplains because their perceived role was to provide emotional and spiritual support to prisoners. This further underscores the social and relational component of bereavement, whereby the processing of grief requires a safe space, a trusting environment, and an understanding source of support. Likewise, it suggests that there is a need for a variety of supports to be available, formal as well as informal. Data also indicate that stigma, shame, and self-blame the bereft participants felt for being imprisoned and losing time with the dead, makes this population more susceptible to self-judgement, humiliation, and disenfranchisement in the context of bereavement. This seemed true within prison and outside as well, for example during funeral attendance. This might be due to a lack of balance between the intra-personal aspects of grief (managing one's own emotions and actions), inter-personal context of it (the social of bereavement), as well as the relational component (the meaning of dead to the bereft and their expectation of specific behaviors from others around them given the significance that the dead had for them), which is further compounded by the cold and isolating prison environment, as well as the stigma of a prisoner identity.

5.1.1.1. Social Emotions

Emotions such as shame, guilt, and embarrassment arose numerous times with the individuals in this sample, mostly when reflecting on imprisonment. Prior research argues that these emotions are social emotions, as they carry a moral element (Hareli and Parkinson, 2008). They also typically depend on interpersonal events, and/or the perception of one's actual or socially constructed self as a social object (Hareli and Parkinson, 2008; Kaplan, 2006). Grieving entails a social component that is intertwined with emotional and bodily, but more difficult to negate (Hareli and Parkinson, 2008), especially when experienced within a context defined by strong social norms. It might be that those three mutually dependent states, the social, the emotional, and the bodily, are pulling in different directions, leaving the bereft prisoner without a sphere of overlap and causing internal turmoil. Kaplan (2006) discussed secondary emotional responding that emerges following the primary experience of emotions. For example, a self-devaluation that arises from being angry at those who died, but then feeling guilty about being angry. In this study, such secondary responses could explain additional feelings of guilt and shame for the lost time with the dead, on top of the feelings of guilt and shame for being in prison (e.g., Mahoney and Daniels, 2006; Young Junior, 2003). Although the findings suggest that some participants found ways to accept the latter (see section 4.3.), they struggled with coming to terms with the former. This could be due to an interrelationship of the two, such as had they not been in prison, they could have spent more time with the person who is now dead, which might have moderated the guilt felt. Bereavement, for some, can be an emotionally volatile stage, yet life as a prisoner is unpredictable too. The findings advance the existing knowledge on the potential interactions of the two by uniting the interdisciplinary understanding of the relationship between the mind, the body, and the emotions in bereavement with imprisonment. Those three need to be contextually, spatially, temporally, and socially aligned to enable the individual to process their grief. However, the society and culture in prisons, the understanding of self as a social object, as well as the context-specific perception of time and space, can impede the creation of an environment supportive of engagement with death for this population.

5.1.2. Restructuring One's Identity

As discussed, guilt and shame featured in some of the narratives in this study, often regarding the time lost with the (now) dead. Herrity (2019) argued that prisons' constraining and spatialized practices fragment personal narratives and reinforce stigma too, often related to the type of crime. The findings support this argument, yet they further suggest that feelings of stigma and shame can transcend the individual and the intra-personal, and nest themselves in the social sphere. Rowling (2008) discussed the intrapersonal (self), interpersonal (others), and environmental sphere in her discussion of disenfranchised grief, and Lane (2015) discussed a similar phenomenon of shame among bereft prisoners as "imprisoned grief". Prisoners are locked in exactly for the purposes of keeping them out of society, which echoes in prisoners' sense of worthlessness, shame, and hopelessness, locking them within their mind (Lane, 2015).

Furthermore, as discussed in section 4.4., some participants expressed anger about the requirement to wear a chain when attending the funeral. They thought that such an appearance would potentially make a mockery out of the funeral, which was supposed to be a celebration of the dead. Embarrassment about the inability to honor the deceased, as well as their self-blame for missing the funeral, have already been recognized in research on death experiences among prisoners (Aday and Wahidin, 2016; Harner et al., 2011; Klass, 2006; 2014; Potter, 1999; Rodger, 2004; Taylor, 2002; Vaswani, 2014; Young Junior, 2003). The findings build on this knowledge by developing the concepts of shame, stigma, and self-blame into something that transcended the *I* and was nested between the real and the irreal, the objective and the subjective of bereavement. It was a type of stigma that was internally felt, socially sensed, and observed, yet discussed through the lens of death. For example, some participants viewed their presence at the funeral as an obstacle for the dead to have their final goodbye. Others thought they were less deserving of receiving family support for their own bereavement, because they brought pain (and bereavement) upon others, either due to being imprisoned and/or through their crime.

In addition to the internal struggles some participants raised about their funeral attendance, many felt that their experiences of bereavement were not recognized in prison. They were angry that life in prison resumed as normal, regardless of the pain they may have been going through. The prisoners in this sample knew that nothing could bring the dead back, but they often felt like some outsider or external acknowledgement was missing. This was most prominent when death occurred while the individuals were in prison, and, occasionally, around the times of anniversaries, albeit much less protruding. Vicariously, by providing the bereft with respect for their situation, the participants believed that the prison would demonstrate its respect to the dead; almost like a validation of someone’s life and of consequences that their death brings to the living. Yet, Corcoran (2017) found that systemic blockages around death and bereavement were common throughout the criminal justice system, even when looking at the grieving families unrelated to prison, whose loved one was a victim of a violent death. This might create additional space to start renegotiating the perception of bereft prisoners as offenders first, using the offender-victim dichotomy. This is especially important since prior research indicated that many offenders are (or were) victims themselves (e.g., Abrahamson, 2009; Bosworth et al., 2005; Greer, 2002; Halsey, 2018; Finlay and Jones, 2000; Palmer, et al., 2015; Suter et al., 2002; Young Junior, 2003; Wyse, 2013). In addition, as the number of homicides committed by family members or acquaintances was higher than those committed by strangers (Office for National Statistics, 2017; see also Walsh and McGoldrick, 2013), the boundaries between the offender and the victim can be blurred further. Hence, those bereft in prisons could have contributed to the death, highlighting the thin line between the deserving and the undeserving griever. As such, Corcoran (2017) argues that the system should avoid polarizing the bereft and assigning them moral values based on their legal acts, even though some individuals did that themselves as well.

The participants in this study also argued that enabling them to participate in bereavement rituals in the community, being a bit more lenient with some rules, and offering support, instead of just dismissing them and closing the door behind them, would further demonstrate that prison respected their bereavement and, as a result, the person who died. As Harner et al. (2011) argued, even those rare opportunities to show compassion in prisons tend to be omitted. Yet, the bereft want to have their loss recognized and acknowledged by the professionals and the criminal justice system (Corcoran, 2017), but also from the others in their immediate social environment, prisoners and/or prison staff with whom they are in daily contact. From a phenomenological perspective, acknowledging the relevance of the dead and being understanding of the bereft would overlap the objective life-world and the individual's life-world, potentially freeing them from mental liminality.

Finally, respect toward the dead and the bereft, as the essence of bereavement, was further supported by some participants being devastated by the organization of the funeral by other family members. There were a few situations where the participants thought that the funeral was nothing like what the dead would have wanted and that it was used by other family members to demonstrate their own social status, make it their time to shine. Even though such family conflicts can occur on the outside as well, prisoners had limited agency to affect death-related decisions. This also emphasizes disenfranchisement of the participants by excluding them from participation in the funeral planning stage. However, this study also discussed another extreme, where some prisoners were aggravated because they thought that family members spent a bare minimum on the funeral, denying the dead a proper farewell. Such a strong emotional response by prisoners who were denied the opportunity to attend the funeral, either by the prison authorities or by their family members, was mirrored in Lane's (2015) study. Since bereavement is individual, as well as social, its meaning seeks for unity between the real and the ideal. It presents the experience of thought, imagination, memory, and emotion (Neubauer et al., 2019), the essence of which needs to emerge on a meta-, trans-individual level to reveal the epistemological nature of the phenomenon.

The examples discussed above share a longing for acknowledgement and respect of the person who died and/or of the situation the bereft is in. This held true when participants were referring not just to prison staff and people who never met the dead, but to their family members too. It was important for the interviewees that the ones they loved and cared for were given adequate recognition when they died. As revealed, it was almost as if there was an implicit expectation that the others would know that by communicating with the bereft, they were entering another realm, making it a part of their shared reality. This is important for daily encounters with bereft prisoners, as the existence of multiple life-worlds could create a conflict between staff and prisoners. Since the role of prison staff involves the provision of care and well-being, there should be an enhanced understanding of different dimensions of prison reality: the emotional one, in which the individual is bereft and vulnerable, and the operational one, centered around order and safety. Those two rarely overlap and, as such, are deprived of sociality (inter-relatedness) leaving the bereft in-between the two states.

5.1.3. Powerlessness

Ashworth (2003) described selfhood as one of the core principles in phenomenology. It can be analyzed by asking what a situation means for the social identity of the individual, how it co-relates with their sense of agency, as well as with their feeling of being present and having a voice to potentially impact the situation. On the one hand, prisoners are required to reach out for services and take care of their mental, physical, and emotional health. Yet on the other, prison regime dictates everything for them. Prior research indicated that prisons could be controlling environments that demand compliance, either overtly, through physical power, or covertly, through bureaucracy and mind-games (e.g., Choudhry et al., 2019; Crewe, 2007; 2011; Haslam and Reicher, 2012; Rhodes, 2001; Wacquant, 2002). The prison decides the time spent in cells, access to facilities, food served, and daily schedule (Choudhry et al., 2019; Cope, 2003; Philippe-Beauchamp, 2019). As per Herrity (2019), the imposition of time over the individual is a form of control in and of itself; it can shift the focus on the past, deform the present, and obscure the individual’s future (e.g., Moran, 2012; Wooff, 2020).

Prisoners’ schedules are typically delineated in accordance with that which is (operationally) convenient to prison, rather than healthy or the most suitable for prisoners (Choudhry et al., 2019; Wahidin, 2006). However, Choudhry et al. (2019) found that some viewed prison as an opportunity to receive a healthy diet and achieve a good weight, while others saw it as unhealthy, as a place to gain weight, mostly through canteen. Prison can also be a wake-up call for individuals to seek and receive addiction support (Crewe, 2005; Halsey, 2018; Wacquant, 2002) and Wilson et al. (2020) argued that imprisonment can be a fortuitous event for some bereft individuals, as it prevented the potential escalation of negative grief responses in their participants. In this study too, some individuals experienced imprisonment as an opportunity to get clean, whereby the isolation from the environment could provide them with a chance to rearrange their lives. Others, however, felt that recourse to substance use was a way of managing time. Thus, some prisoners perceived their imprisonment as a blessing in disguise. They were disheartened that it took such a drastic measure to make them realize what they value in life, such as their family, their friends, and their relationships with others. It also made them understand the relevance of time they lost with their loved ones, reevaluate the direction of their life, consider remaining sober and off-drugs to avoid their own death, and embrace the opportunity to focus on themselves and restructure their lives upon release. And they were thankful for it. This strengthens Choudhry, Armstrong, and Dregan’s (2019) argument around prison as an opportunity to escape from chaos and lead a healthy life. For others though, imprisonment was the worst thing that happened to them. It was seen as pointless, boring, and a waste of life.

Nevertheless, the findings indicate a strong sense of powerlessness among this population and, when coupled with bereavement, it adds another layer of helplessness. As many prisoners in this study discussed, being imprisoned limits the ways in which they can commemorate the dead, as well as the times of day when they can do it. In addition, bereavement itself is disempowering and imprisonment further reduces opportunities to grieve with people they might want to grieve with, forcing them to be exposed to those they may not want to be around. This mirrors the findings from Laws and Crewe (2016) on disincentives to tackle complex emotions while imprisoned, due to the restrictions on movement, access to resources, and ability to affect issues in the community. Hence, when faced with problems, the best thing the individuals could do is to remove themselves from the environment and close themselves in their cells, maintaining at least a partial sense of agency. Indeed, many participants in this study decided to do so at one point or another. As the findings demonstrate, apart from the individuals’ partial agency to grieve how, when, and with whom they would like, participants also tended to be in a state of sensorial liminality.

5.1.3.1. Liminality

Just like they simultaneously inhabited their pre-prison and in-prison present, leaving them in a spatial, temporal, and mental limbo, the participants experienced a lack of stimulants from the environment that created a cognitive confusion (see also Gashi et al., 2019 and Philippe-Beauchamp, 2019). For example, Wooff (2020) discussed liminality in police detention, whereby the individuals felt in-between the two worlds, that on the outside and the one they found themselves in when being brought into custody. Marti (2020) further discussed liminality as a mindset between accepting new life in prison and aiming to live in the past, and Herrity (2019) argued that sounds could evoke a memory that would reunite the dislocated prisoner with their former and future self, reaffirming their identity. This study built on this knowledge, shedding new light on the difference between the reactionary response to bereavement and the intentional one grounded in consciousness (as will be discussed). By embracing the current life-world, prisoners can free a new space in their minds and break from the shackles of being mentally in-between. By holding on to the past, they become prisoners of their mind.

When faced with bereavement in carceral contexts, as per section 4.4., some participants started doubting themselves for not being able to express emotions that they knew they were feeling toward the dead. This mirrors the discussion on the need for the cognitive and emotional unity of the life-world. Namely, identity is a part of human sociality; it is provided through interaction with others, it links the individual to others, and determines the ways in which a situation can affect one's relationship with others (Ashworth, 2003). Herrity (2019) argued that the individual's intrinsic sociality arises from the subjective experiences of time and space beyond the here and now; what was before and what will be in the future. Yet, one's awareness of social selfhood can present itself as a problem when the individual becomes the subject and the object situated in the physical and social world (Ashworth, 2003), for example, through embodying the social stigma of being a prisoner. Similarly, Smith et al. (2013) examined the internal conflict that might occur when one's self-consciousness of being exposed becomes apparent through self-reflection and awareness of being the object of other's gaze. This could be what Goffman (1959) referred to as one's presentation of self in everyday life; when the emotion and shame of being viewed in a situation (i.e., at a funeral as a prisoner) makes sense from the interpersonal insight in the context (Smith et al., 2013).

The internal rift between what is experienced, what is lived, and what is understood emerged strongly among this sample. Many participants were unable to cross that bridge, they were caught in-between numerous coexisting worlds, pulling them in different directions and causing internal conflicts. Being bereft, they were aware of what should objectively be happening in their minds and their bodies, both physically and ritualistically, which was based on social norms and socialization, their sociality. They should have been a part of planning the funeral, they should have been with the person when they died. Being themselves, they often described what was happening inside them as numbness, which they perceived as scary and *wrong*. They *knew* that they had feelings, but they could not *feel* them, or at times, did not even understand grief and how to manage it, what prior research referred to as grief illiteracy (see Paul, 2019). They were limited in the ways in which they could perform their bereft identity, potentially due to prior trauma, immediate carceral context, and prisonization. This made some individuals think that there was a problem with them, that they were distorted, which impacted the essence of themselves, their selfhood. As per Kaplan (2006), the experience of emotions, dependent on the context, socialization, and individual's needs, becomes a part of self-evaluation of the emotional self, which can elicit a new emotional response. When this results in approval and content, it can enhance the overall well-being. However, as prisoners, the participants were aware that there was not much they should allow to emerge regarding their bereavement and its expression, not much they should display, based on the cultural context they found themselves in, their commonality. Hence, their role as the object in the prison life-world contradicted their identity as a bereft, leaving them powerless and somewhere in between the two worlds. As this study has found, for a phenomenon of bereavement to emerge holistically, in a shape where one can direct their intentionality toward it and address it, the temporal, the spatial, the relational, the emotional, the corporeal, the social, and the psychological domain must unite.

5.2. Philosophical Contributions

Grief is a universal human experience (e.g., Hopmeyer and Werk, 1994; Thompson et al., 2016; Young Junior, 2003; Walter, 2007), yet each loss is simultaneously personal and unique (e.g., Paul, 2019; Seah and Wilson, 2011). Similarly, bereavement is individual, but invariably intertwined with the wider social context through norms, expectations, and levels of support (e.g., Doka and Martin, 1998; Neimeyer et al., 2002; Paul, 2019; Vaswani, 2014). In phenomenology too, a life-world is universal. It exists locally and temporally within the co-presence of others creating the essence of an experience. Yet, it is also particular in its contextual and temporal actualization of that event (Ashworth, 2003). For example, Moran (2012) discussed that the past, and the future, can only be discussed in the present. Therefore, the context of the present will always have impressions on one's perceptions of the past (Moran, 2012), which might influence prisoners' assessment of specific events, as well as their thoughts and feelings about the future. As such, descriptive phenomenology was in a unique position to present individual accounts of a universal event (i.e., death) that occurred in two different contexts (in prison and in the community). By searching for the structure of bereavement, it discovered the relationship between the body, the mind, and the environment, which affected the nature of reaction to different triggers (e.g., sound, date, image) in grief. As de Souza and Hyde (2007) discussed, when it comes to difficult and awkward topics (such as death), some people can prefer to trivialize, dismiss, or make light of them. They can hide their real self and their experiences behind a façade, relegating to the background what is important to them, if it is seen as a threat to their outward persona. However, these shadowed feelings can emerge strongly and unexpectedly, challenging the individual's presentation of self (de Souza and

Hyde, 2007). Hence, this study contributed new knowledge by discerning between the active and reactive approaches to bereavement, which depend on the realm in which the texture of the phenomenon is situated. Thus, even though the experience of something becomes a part of the individual, the expression of that experience will depend on the positioning of self (the intrapersonal domain) in the shared realities of others.

This section starts by examining the relationship between consciousness and bereavement responses. It then briefly reflects on the transition from the imagined perception of realities with the dead to safely storing them in the past. Next, it discusses the role of the mind and the body in bereavement, and bereavement as vulnerability, regardless of the context it is experienced in. Finally, it focuses on the potential existence of the contextual barriers to grief actualization within the temporal and spatial realms of carceral contexts. This is done by reflecting on the concept of liminality to unpack the complexity of (co-)existing realms of emotional, corporeal, and cognitive consciousnesses in bereavement.

5.2.1. The Perception of Self

McClanahan and South (2020), while discussing the neglect of senses in criminology, posit that the senses connect the individual to their experiences of a phenomenon and, in a way, provide them with information on how to feel. Without going too much into the sociology of emotions, which was not the primary focus of this work, Kaplan (2006) argued that self-perception is evaluated against self-standards and the disjunction between the two elicit distress. Consequentially, individuals aim to either restore or enable compatibility between them by engaging in self-enhancing or self-protective strategies, which goes back to the discussion of self as an object and a subject of social encounters. As Laws and Crewe (2016) argued, there is an important difference between felt or experienced emotions and emotions that are processed and modified. Hence, if the participants' bereavement was acknowledged and treated in the mind, the self would be in line with their perceived standards and the sensorial input would be (pre-)situated in cognition, expected. As such, the individuals are more likely to respond with a controlled and intentional action. Yet, if it is not situated in consciousness and the mind was unaware of the death, this could have created an internal conflict with different needs to be mitigated (e.g., emotional, physical, psychological) at the same time, an internal overload. In that case, the subsequent reaction was often reflexive. As per Kaplan (2006), the intrapsychic experience of an emotion will become a part of the self-concept (i.e., a subject becoming an object) moderated by the context, socialization, and needs that require to be timely satisfied (e.g., a reflexive action or a composed response). The expression of emotions then becomes an object of self-evaluation (Kaplan, 2006), which could affect self-identity, *selfhood.* These nuances are key considerations in developing and implementing bereavement support. They indicate a level of mental readiness to engage with emotions, which could be moderated by the expectation of a specific social response, further developing the empirical understanding of an implicit relationship between the intra-personal, inter-personal, and transpersonal in emotionality.

Phenomenology would assume that the bereavement would end once the dead is safely removed from the "as if" dimension of reality into the conscious past (Fuchs, 2017). This does not demand the bereft to forget about the person who died, not even to *just* move on, as the relationships with the dead can remain. However, it requires awareness of distinct realities and deliberate evocation of memories, instead of allowing the bodily memories to control the mind (Fuchs, 2017). The dead should remain in the conscious past rather than keep living through the bodily dimension of the bereft. These insights enhance the Continuing Bonds Theory (Klass, 2006) by suggesting the need to separate the mind and the body, the cognitive bonds from the corporeal, inter-bodily ones, while maintaining the conscious relationships with the dead. Yet, this might be difficult for individuals in prison due to a different conceptualization of time, space, and embodiment of one's environment. Namely, prior research has found that prisoners often perceive their imprisonment in a vacuum from the rest of their lives, as a life on hold, as simply existing, but not really living (e.g., Cope, 2003; Earle, 2014; Herrity, 2019; Wahidin, 2006). Their bodies are in one space, yet their minds are somewhere else. They could be in the past, which some participants in this study indicated as unhealthy and playing with their minds, or they could be in their perception of the present, which can be monotonous, empty, and surreal. According to the findings from this study, and mirrored in prior research, prisoners' current existence is shaped by prior experiences. But what this study adds to the existing knowledge, is understanding of bereavement experiences specifically in carceral contexts. For some participants, prison was a blessing in disguise, a life-saving event. For others, it was the worst thing that has happened to them, akin to their own death. Yet, either way, their minds were confined in-between the now, the then, and the tomorrow.

5.2.2. The Mind and the Body

Husserl (1965) argued for the cohesion of the mind and the body, indicating that one cannot exist without the other. Any phenomenon is not just given or injected into the individual's perception, it is internally taken by the individual, reconstituted, and experienced within the boundaries of the world that he or she is living in and has occupied (Ashworth, 2003). As such, using descriptive phenomenology enabled this study to examine the idea of embodiment in two ways. On the one hand, it discussed the phenomenon of bereavement, which is a very emotional process (e.g., Buglass, 2010; Hall, 2014; Jakoby, 2012; Thompson et al., 2016) that can encompass a range of emotions, rituals, and people (e.g., Neimeyer et al., 2002). It can also require balancing the active and the passive in grieving (e.g., Stroebe and Schut, 1999; 2010; 2016), the individual and the social (e.g., Seah and Wilson, 2011), the real and the irreal. On the other hand, it could be argued that, for the participants, bereavement was evoked in a context of sensorial deprivation, making it potentially difficult for the body to gain input from the outside world and for the mind to make sense of it. McClanahan and South (2020) present *atmospheres* as a framework that captures the texture or intensity of carceral spaces, embodying a synesthesia of sensory artefacts and affective meanings that go beyond human perception and emerge through encounters. For Herrity (2019), the immaterial power of prison, the coercion that transcends the physical sphere, relies on time to mediate the transition between perception and imagination. But time and space are inextricably connected (Moran, 2012), which, as demonstrated in the findings, make prison a powerful site to examine the manifestation of these components through bereavement and to advance this philosophical framework.

As per Husserl (1965), the *world* is a combination of the rational, empirical, and spiritual components to which the *self* belongs and exists through living with others (Wasik, 2018). Yet, Goffman (1961) discussed that total institutions, like prisons, strip individuals of previous signifiers of self, in that every aspect of their behaviors comes under scrutiny. As such, it could be argued that bereavement might not even emerge consciously during imprisonment, albeit contemporary research on western institutions recognized the permeability and porosity of prisons (Crewe, 2015; Rhodes, 2001; Wacquant, 2002). Indeed, the findings indicate that grief appeared for this sample, but was often fragmented, as the participants aimed to put it on hold for the duration of imprisonment. This would imply a level of intentionality in fragmented grief, but also a consequence of the context, as it could be a subconscious reaction based on previous experiences. Since even small vulnerabilities can become magnified, they can increase feelings of insecurity and captivity (Goffman, 1961), and discourage prisoners from engaging with their emotions. Hence, the findings support the impact of the body on the mind and, to a lesser extent, the mind on the body, mediated by the culture. Therefore, the mind-body cohesion for this sample pertained even in the context that encouraged emotional suppression and potentially perpetuated sensorial deprivation.

5.2.3. Bereavement as Vulnerability

The findings indicate that bereavement in prisons could be perceived as vulnerability; it limits the accessibility and availability of tools to engage with grief, while simultaneously elevating the threat of punishment, social mockery, and/or risk of exploitation if doing so. Given the above discussion on reactions and intentionality, being bereft can overpower the body and mind of the individual. As discussed in the findings, participants often felt powerless, having to mitigate the damage that might have been done unintentionally, as a reactionary response to hardship (e.g., being seen crying or heard screaming due to a nightmare). They rarely felt like that had the control to proactively counteract specific impulses while imprisoned, to be aware of them, situate them, and engage with them. This supports the existing knowledge on bereavement and its manifestation in potentially oppressive contexts, and it also brings new understanding to prison research, contributing to the emerging field of sensory criminology. With regards to the former, it further develops the idea of disenfranchised grief (Doka, 1999), whereby certain grievers or types of death remain socially unrecognized and unable to be publicly mourned. The findings have shown that the mental idea, the bare concept of bereavement, is understood by other prisoners and staff, but not acknowledged, as the external expression of grief is discouraged with potentially harsh consequences for doing so (see also Rowling, 2008). Such a conceptualization adds a new layer to the original idea of disenfranchised grief in that the understanding of bereavement can be present in carceral contexts, but the opportunities to articulate grief are stifled; the state of being bereft is not acknowledged as a reason to violate the social norms in prison. Emotional expression can lead to bullying that prompted some prisoners, according to the participants in this study, to suicide attempts. Corcoran (2017) discussed secondary victimization of the bereft in (and by) the criminal justice system, addressing losses as a marginalized collateral to being imprisoned.

In relation to criminological scholarship, the findings highlighted a distinction between an intentional act and a reaction toward something, which deepens the discussion on the body as a medium of communication with the world. This contributes new knowledge to the emerging discussions on the sociology of embodiment and enhances current understanding of the sensorial dimensions of prison research within the nascent field of sensory criminology. As per McClanahan and South (2020), body's five senses interact with each other and with the world, and emotions can serve to adjust the relations between individuals and objects of their actions (Hareli and Parkinson, 2008). Hence, a multisensory experience shapes not only the lived dimension of a phenomenon, but it is embraced in social rituals and symbols too

(McClanahan and South, 2020). Applying DP to the analysis of the data has demonstrated that a multiplicity of reactions can arise in this restrictive context through the body. Subsequently, the findings demonstrate that even when individuals might be temporarily distanced from their true self, detached from their outside identity, and, arguably, institutionalized into the prison culture, there could still be an emotional, sensorial, and corporeal reaction to prior (and current) stressors, regardless of how far in the past they might have occurred. As per Ashworth (2003), the presence transcends itself in the future and the past. In other words, there is a part of selfhood that remains, a part of the basic structure of the lived phenomenon that individuals carry with them, despite the changing life-worlds wherein those might (temporally) not exist. However, social emotions, those that are targeted at others (e.g., aggression) and that shape the nature of the relationship with others (e.g., cooperation, avoidance) (Hareli and Parkinson, 2008), might need to be expressed as non-social ones when imprisoned, due to a (social) requirement to restrain communicative and practical functions of emotions in such contexts. This could indicate that the expected patterns of grief and bereavement are moderated by the social, physical, and emotional environments, and were enhanced in carceral contexts that support or inhibit certain behaviors. This is important knowledge, as this intra-bodily conceptualization of a phenomenon intertwined with the conceptualization of emotions could explain seemingly unprovoked changes in prisoners' behaviors, especially around anniversaries and other important dates. Hence, this study has bridged the gap and synthesized diverse bodies of knowledge by revealing the link between the conceptual, social, cultural, intellectual, bodily, and felt around the multifaceted expression of bereavement.

5.2.4. The Layers of Consciousness

Husserl (1965) also proposed a division between the rational and the empirical, the intelligible and the sensible, which would make the life-world a combination of two distinct worlds: that of the psyche and that of the nature (Wasik, 2018). This would indicate that individuals' experiences can be described by the evocation of structure of that phenomenon (Ashworth, 2003). The analysis of findings, through this lens, revealed a crucial distinction between the conscious reflection on memory and unprovoked elicitation of thoughts through a sensorial trigger from the environment. This further supports the cohesion between the mind and the body, the synergy between the sensorial and rational. For example, as indicated above, this study found that anniversaries, Christmases, or similar (typically) family times, could lead to feelings of anxiety, annoyance, and internal anger, while situated memories frequently elicited a different, much more controllable set of emotions. While the former was often dealt with reactively, aiming to thwart it, the latter was acknowledged and dealt with intentionally. As discussed in the literature review, intentionality is becoming aware of the physical presence of the body and using wisdom to transform those bodily experiences into knowledge (de Souza and Hyde, 2007). This could be related to spirituality, the interlink between the self and the other, the spiritual, affective, and cognitive in oneself, which aims to unify different layers of meaning-making (de Souza and Hyde, 2007). As such, cognitive memories, of which one is aware, did not lead to volatile, expressive behaviors in this sample. However, this could also be related to prison context, as the lack of temporal and spatial control over their environment could prompt retreating in oneself rather than being implicated in a physical conflict with others (Laws and Crewe, 2016). Hence, there is a distinction between reactive and intentional bereavement responses, as was demonstrated in the findings, which could be affected by the cognitive and emotional layer of an experience, encompassed within fragmented grief. For example, memories could make an individual happy or sad, make them smile or cry, but the participants learnt to process those and channel their energy into something else. Yet, if the bereavement impulses cannot be stifled, they will need to find an outlet, resulting in a reaction. The mind should understand why something is happening to direct the emotions toward that person or object intended. Hence, the findings from this study engaged with, at times, irreconcilable ontological realities that can simultaneously bring pain and pleasure, happiness and sadness, yet their epistemological awareness will drive the response.

5.2.4.1. Coping Mechanisms

Finally, the findings indicate that the participants employed various coping techniques (e.g., avoidance) aiming to counteract these emerging sensations, rather than accepting them into consciousness and perceiving them as *something*. Different approaches used and their subsequent success were moderated by the wider context in which bereavement was experienced, underscoring the relevance of the concept of fragmented grief. Sometimes the participants isolated themselves to avoid hurting others, other times they diverted their thoughts into more constructive activities, such as poetry or drawing. In absence of those, some resorted to violence, self-harm, and suicide attempts. Memories, on the other hand, were a (re-)call of certain concepts and ideas into one's reality or, at the very least, something that the mind understood. Therefore, they could be managed differently. As some participants indicated, that what is known to mind, what has been discussed, and is in one's consciousness is easier to live with. That makes sense to the mind and thoughts can be directed toward it, even though the individual cannot always control this due to external triggers. However, what is "unknown, I think, makes it scary" (P4). Thus, a dimension of being that is yet to be discovered, a lived experience of something new, might require further attention from the mind to understand it, process it, and, eventually, accept it. Otherwise, as discussed, it could lead to reactionary behavior and delays in engaging with the issue, which could restrain the individual in the sphere of liminality.

5.3. Methodological Contributions

This study provided a range of methodological advancements to the fields of criminology and bereavement studies. For example, while there is a rich body of knowledge on each individual discipline, a very few studies have examined bereavement in the context of imprisonment (e.g., Ferszt, 2002; Harner et al., 2011; Hendry, 2009; Hunt and Read, 2018; Masterton, 2014; Olson and McEwen, 2004; Wilson, 2019; Wilson et al., 2020). In addition, bereavement research typically focuses on the death of a spouse or other family members and uses women's experiences as a framework for bereavement for both genders. It also focuses on the psychological, emotional, and behavioral aspects of grief, potentially limiting the depth of understanding of this phenomenon by eliding its corporeal, relational, contextual, spatial, and social components, as well as the interaction of those. On the other hand, criminological research centers mostly around male behaviors and engages with the wider relevance of trauma and abuse for this population, rarely just bereavement. This study contributes to the existing understanding by examining the manifestation of grief among males and females within an emotionally and physically restrictive setting using an interdisciplinary perspective. Analyzing narratives through a phenomenological framework enabled the researcher to identify what was hidden in plain sight and to question common sense by engaging in phenomenological reduction and imaginative variation (see section 3.4.1.).

Using DP contributes to a very small pool of studies that opted for this challenging and underused, albeit powerful approach to inquiry with an ability to address a variety of human affairs (Giorgi, 2000; LeVasseur, 2003; Neubauer et al., 2019). As per Ashworth (2003), the strength of descriptive phenomenology is to recognize and verbalize, potentially for the first time ever, parts of the phenomenon that were, hitherto, taken for granted. It aims to elucidate components which always lay right there and without which the phenomenon would not be itself (Ashworth, 2003). Despite the lack of strict guidelines on conducting descriptive phenomenological analysis, as the methodology section argued, its methodological vagueness and epistemological eclecticism make it transferable to different disciplines, enriching the depth of one's understanding of a phenomenon. This study extended its existing usage from singular disciplines, mostly health, education, and nursing studies, beyond the range of disciplinary contexts (Ashworth, 2003), to an interdisciplinary study of bereavement and imprisonment.

The next section will further discuss the methodological advancements this study brought to the field by recruiting a diverse sample of participants to enhance the uniqueness of data (Laverty, 2003). It will then examine the additional contributions accomplished by the use of interviews, concluding with a brief discussion on the perceived benefits of ultimately submerging those individual experiences in the pursuit of essence.

5.3.1. Sample Diversity

Hentz (2002) argued that bereavement research focuses on psychological, behavioral, and emotional aspects of grief and the Methodology chapter of this study discussed that the phenomenological critique of psychology is in its reduction of human behavior to exactness and numbers. Stroebe and Schut (2015) further stated that most studies on grief focus on psychological inquiry of the individual's adaptation to life after loss, yet often leaves unexamined the wider social context that bereavement has affected, such as families, which this study has identified. Using Giorgi's (2009) framework in this study elucidated aspects of grief that go beyond the individual, psychological, and/or purely emotional experience into (inter-)personal, relational, sensorial, contextual, temporal, and spatial realms. This study had a relatively large sample (N=33), for a phenomenological qualitative study, of male and female participants with diverse individual characteristics. Specifically, the participants were adults aged 18 to 65 with a variety of educational attainments. Some were working toward a college degree before coming to prison, some left school as soon as possible. Some had a stable job, others worked occasionally, and some were living on welfare support. A few individuals were married with children, others had children without a stable partner, yet others had no family of their own. Several individuals discussed only one death, while others retold experiences of multiple deaths. For some, the first experience of death ever was the person who meant the most to them, while for others, the most significant one is yet to come. Some experienced death in the community, while others did so during imprisonment, yet others had been through both. As such, the findings are narrowing the gap in research by contributing knowledge on the diversity of relationships between the dead and the bereft, as well as by expanding the predominant focus on the traditional family make-up (Cacciatore and Raffo, 2011; Christensen et al., 2017; Jones et al, 2019; McNutt and Yakushko, 2013; Nolan, 2019) to families of choice. It could be argued that having a sample overwhelmed with diverse characteristics might blur the distinguishing features of each individual group. Although this study invited a convenience sample of participants who matched the broad inclusion criteria, it accounted for their diversity through descriptive phenomenological analysis. This enabled the understanding of each individual experience, while capturing the core of bereavement (see section 3 for more details).

5.3.1.1. Gender Diversity

This study was designed to include research sites that would enable sampling from both genders, aiming to address a prominent critique of the existing bereavement and prison research being gendered. This approach resulted in 79% of the sample being male and over a fifth (~21%) being female. Criminological research tends to focus predominantly on males and grief studies engage with largely female participants. In so doing, they both arguably perpetuate gendered norms. While grief research potentially disadvantages males and underrepresents their experiences (e.g., Doka and Martin, 1998; Stroebe et al., 2001; Zinner, 2000), the reverse could be said for prison research. Hendry (2009) and Zinner (2000) discussed that men are raised to be stoic and suffer in silence. On the other hand, women are socialized, in the Western world, to be empathetic, emotional, and open about their feelings (e.g., Stroebe et al., 2001). Prior research indicates that such gendered understanding of grief may cloud professional judgement of what is normal in bereavement (e.g., Rothaupt and Becker, 2007), even disenfranchise bereft men (e.g., Jones et al., 2019; Zinner, 2000). Walter (2007) and Valentine (2013) further examined the impact of culture in shaping the emotional reservedness among English grievers and Rothaupt and Becker (2007) discussed the relevance of culture in grief and bereavement rituals. This study addressed both issues by including male and female participants and employing data collection in the cultural context of two Scottish prisons; environments, which are widely argued to be emotional places (e.g., Aday and Wahidin, 2016; Choudhry et al., 2019; Crewe, 2015; Salina et al., 2011; Wooff, 2020; Wilson, 2011) that, at the same time, condemn emotional expression (Aday and Wahidin, 2016; Byrne, 2005; Cope, 2003; Greer, 2002; Haney, 2002; Jewkes, 2005; Mahoney and Daniel, 2006; Mageehon, 2008; Schetky, 1998; Suter et al., 2002).

Concurrently, this study enriches prison literature, as one fifth of the sample is female. Prior research identified women as an invisible population (e.g., Belknap, 2015; Bosworth et al., 2005; Kilty, 2006; Kruttschnitt, 2010), despite their inherently different experiences of imprisonment (e.g., Abrahamson, 2009; Crewe et al., 2017). This is mostly due to a much smaller proportion of females in the prison system (e.g., Scotland is currently at 4%, according to the World Prison Brief, 2021). Although this study did not engage in gendered analysis, which, as per Kilty (2006), could further disenfranchise certain individuals, the diversity of the sample provided rich narratives that encompassed a plethora of experiences. Hence, a more generalizable essence of bereavement was able to emerge, preventing the findings from being clouded by the gendered norms of emotional expression.

5.3.1.2. Remaining Differences in Demographics

Furthermore, participants differed in the prevalence of and type of death they were grieving, length of imprisonment, prior incarceration, as well as offence type. Some were imprisoned for life with as much as a few decades left on their sentence. Others were supposed to be released in as little as a few weeks. For some individuals this was their first imprisonment, others were more often inside than outside. A few individuals were imprisoned for murder, whereas many were serving time on a (historic) sex offence conviction. Others were in prison for robbery, theft, or an assault. As such, this sample provided a variety of individual characteristics, bereavement experiences, and offending behaviors, which were paramount to understanding the essence of bereavement. Again, following the phenomenological framework, individual mechanisms of experiencing bereavement and living with grief (either acknowledged or suppressed) were generalized to allow for its structure to emerge. Subsequently, the findings can equally inform bereavement policy and practice in prisons, as well as in the community (see section 6.). However, future analysis of this dataset might examine in more depth the differences in emotional expression between mainstream population and sex-offenders, since prior research highlighted the gap in understanding the regulation of emotions between men (Laws and Crewe, 2016).

5.3.2. Narratives of Death and Bereavement

Overall, the diverse sample underscored the relevance of embodiment in bereavement and of the intersectionality of gender, emotions, and wider social contexts in shaping those experiences. Although some participants discussed deaths that occurred while they were outside, their description of those events was situated in their current life-world. Because their reality will be shaped by the objective and the subjective, the real and the irreal, the individual and the social of the context they find themselves in, they might romanticize the experiences they had before, which are not stored safely in their memory. Subsequently, the Descriptive Phenomenological framework was able to identify the perceived obstacles to the ideal grieving process, aiming to reveal the essence of things. Hence, having a highly diverse sample demonstrated the applicability of this analysis to different fields of study, but at the same time worked as an internal validity check. To reach the essence of something and overcome the division between empiricism and rationalism (Wasik, 2018), between the subjective and the objective, the findings had to be reduced to a very few components of bereavement that held true regardless of the differences in individual characteristics and bereavement contexts. As per Giorgi (2008), the individuals' accounts of a phenomenon need to be submerged to allow for the essence to emerge, to generalize the peculiarity of each experience (Finlay, 2009). As phenomenology focuses on descriptive narratives without causal inferences, the simple fact that the structure might emerge, despite (or due to?) the shared barriers described by this sample, adds to the credibility of phenomenological studies (Ashworth, 2003). The final three sections of this study will discuss the implications of findings for the existing policy and practice, giving advice for further research and development. This will be followed by the examination of the study's limitations, before concluding this dissertation.

6. IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY, PRACTICE, AND RESEARCH

The discussion above has identified a number of policy, practice, and research implications emerging from this study. Prior research has indicated that UK prisons employ various agencies and counsellors to assist with the rehabilitation of prisoners (Rodger, 2004), but resources tend to be limited and many prisons do not have specific types of support readily available (Wilsonet al., 2020; Young Junior, 2003). For example, whilst most prisons will have access to mental health services, not all will offer bereavement services, as supported by the findings. Young Junior (2003) argued that prisons' budget is adequate only for essential expenses, so therapeutic needs often come second to control, order, and safety. Similarly, security considerations and staff shortages could impede the provision of one to one services, tailoring the support to group settings and their security demands (Corcoran, 2017). Providing bereavement services in prisons could be viewed as challenging and discouraged by prisoners and service providers alike for a multitude of reasons (Rodger, 2004; Vaswani et al., 2016), some of which emerged in this study. On the one hand, practitioners might fear for their own safety when working with prisoners or face financial or time constraints to deal with bereft prisoners (Rodger, 2004). On the other hand, prisoners might be mistrustful and find it difficult to confide in strangers (Vaswani et al., 2016). Corcoran (2017) further explained that prison officers are rarely trained in counselling and support, so bereft prisoners are advised to get help from mental health services or the voluntary sector. However, as the findings suggest, the prisoners in this sample would appreciate having someone to talk to, preferably in the form of an unofficial chat, even though having the option of an organized bereavement support is pivotal when working with this population. This chapter discusses policy and practice implications, as well as suggestions for future research, before addressing the limtations of this study in the next chapter.

6. 1. Policy Implications

As per Corcoran (2017), the current design of bereavement care does not recognize the unique set of challenges that processing grief in carceral contexts could entail. For example, the inability to acknowledge death as real and to receive social validation of a loss (e.g., through rituals) could impede prisoners' grieving process (Young Junior, 2003). As per Young Junior (2003), funerals are believed to be the main rite for bringing closure to one's death. The data from this study mirror this and suggest that without receiving such confirmation, some prisoners might postpone their grief, mostly due to the intangibility and unreality of death in the absence of witnessing either the death or the funeral/grave. However, prison regulations only allow funeral attendance for certain family members, and extended family or friends are typically not counted as such. Yet, as explained further below, participants' accounts of bereavement illuminated the salience of kinship ties to wider social relationships. Thus, this study suggests re-thinking the concept of immediate family in carceral contexts, especially when it comes to funeral attendance, and ensuring private space to encourage addressing the social aspect of bereavement. Staff training should also include a section on grief and mourning, to maximize immediate support available for bereft prisoners.

6.1.1. Embracing Bereavement in the Daily Life of Prisons

Bereavement policies in prisons should aim to create a shift in the institutional climate to make the environment more welcoming for processing of death and bereavement. For example, prior research has indicated the relevance of funeral attendance and participation in death rituals, as a part of bereavement process (e.g., Neimeyer et al., 2002; Romanoff and Terenzio, 1998; Walker, 2011). However, as this study has found, current funeral arrangements for prisoners can make their engagement stressful, unfulfilling, stigmatizing, and unappealing for the individual and others involved. This is partly due to lengthy bureaucracy involved, especially if there is a need for an overnight transfer, partly because of the inadequate mental health support going to and from the funeral, and partly related to the limited amount of time allowed with the dead, spent under strict safety regulations. Because of security concerns and public perception of prisoners as dangerous, attending a funeral of their loved one often involved being on a chain. According to some participants, this was one of the most degrading aspects of paying their respects to the dead. Thus, many decided against asking for funeral leave, despite their will to go and belief that it would help them in bereavement.

In addition, prison policies only allow funeral attendance for near relatives, what is often referred to in carceral contexts as immediate family. Based on the Scottish Prison Service (2011) regulations, immediate family consist of those individuals related to a prisoner by blood (parent, (great)grandparent, sibling, child), care-relationships, or civil partnership/cohabitation. Yet, the findings emphasized the complexity of interpersonal relationships among the participants, indicating the need to re-think such a narrow classification of important individuals in prisoners' lives. As discussed in section 6.2., collecting information on impactful relationships during intake procedures might enable the widening of regulations on prisoners' funeral attendance.

Likewise, when working through emotional issues, Laws and Crewe (2016) stated that many prisoners share their intimate problems with family and friends via phone calls, visitations, and letters. Yet, limited time and monetary resources, as well as the restricted number of phones available in prison halls and a complete lack of privacy, can create difficulties for maintaining this contact. Similar problems were mirrored in this study, in that the participants found it problematic and annoying to discuss sensitive issues over the phone, while others were yelling in the hallway and shouting snarky remarks. Given the relevance of social support in bereavement, these structural barriers could have significant implications for prisoners' opportunities to process grief. Hence, the provision of private space for death calls and bereavement visits, or even just having a space with sensory stimulation that might enable the bereft to acknowledge their grief in a way they find beneficial, should be considered. For example, having a special room to meet with the family, participate in funeral plans, and show vulnerabilities emerged in the data as something that is currently lacking in carceral contexts. Also, some participants indicated the need for a space where they could "lose it" (R1), shout and punch something, ideally a punching bag, without disrupting the daily functioning of the institution. Adding those rooms would provide prisoners with a wider range of coping strategies too. Finally, having a space for mindfulness, for sitting in silence, listening to the nature, or enjoying the daily sunlight and fresh air, away from the over-crowdedness and noise of a prison yard and prison walls, could enhance prisoners' overall mental health, not just in situations of bereavement, and should be considered a priority.

Thus, actively weaving bereavement into the fabric of a daily prison life might prompt more prisoners to engage with this issue. This would imply the necessity of developing a culture where these events are acknowledged and addressed. Building rapport and getting the individuals to share their prior traumatic experiences as early as possible upon intake could, at the very least, alert prison staff of the possibility of seemingly unprovoked behavioral reactions. Based on the findings from this study, the individuals might not process grief while imprisoned, but might be able to cognitively acknowledge the fact that the death has occurred, start situating their emerging emotions, and initiate reconciliation of the co-existing realms, narrowing the liminal space that the bereft prisoners in this study often inhabited.

6.1.2. Mandatory Staff Training

Crewe (2015) argued that positive relationships with prison officers can improve prisoners' overall well-being and Drake (2014) saw staff-prisoner relationships as a core to effective prison practice. Good rapport within the institution can have rippling effects on prisoners' quality of life, prison order, safety, and legitimacy of its context (Drake, 2014). To this end, prison officers, officers' subculture, as well as prisoner-staff dynamics can shape prisoners' experiences of bereavement too. Given their availability and physical presence in the institution, prison officers are usually among the first ones that prisoners turn to for support and guidance (Crewe et al., 2011; Halsey and Deegan, 2017). However, Potter (1999) argued that they often lack counselling skills or knowledge in meeting prisoners' needs, while Vaswani and Paul (2019) found that officers believed responding to trauma is not a part of their role. Jaffe (2012) argued that the reasoning for this might be the misapprehension of services, such as the Listeners, as a cheaper alternative to state provided services (see also Tomczak and Bennett, 2020). While this might be financially true, the findings have shown that the emotional, mental-health, and reintegration costs of inadequate bereavement support can be high, underscoring the need for creating a holistic approach to prisoner-staff relationship.

The findings indicate that some staff might show understanding and compassion on a personal level, in momentary interpersonal interactions, but in the conduct of their role more generally, the extent of professional support they could offer was limited. Similar findings were mirrored in prior research (Vaswani, 2018; Wilson et al., 2020), indicating the potential of institutional neglect and thoughtlessness to amplify bereavement experiences for prisoners. This could affect the level of support expected from the institution (Wilson et al., 2020), which was prominent in the findings of this study. Participants often felt like nobody cared about their pain or could not understand their experiences. Even when the support was offered, many prisoners could not overcome the perception of psychological and emotional exposure from attending the services, as well as their increased vulnerability when engaging with those. Thus, this study strongly advises including modules on mental health and bereavement as a mandatory component of the officers' professional training and development. Not only could this improve prisoners' experiences of imprisonment and enhance a sense of penal legitimacy, but it could empower staff, providing them with additional resources to support bereft individuals.

6.2. Practice Implications

Research consistently emphasizes the benefits of having bereavement services in prisons, as well as in the community. For example, Wilson (2011) conducted a mixed methods study on 11 male prisoners attending bereavement program in a category C prison in England and concluded that having a bereavement support program in prisons can be beneficial. However, similarly to this study, Wilson (2011) also found that prisoners would benefit from having access to general support, especially if they do not want to be a part of group therapy.

Hence, this broadens the discussion from the previous section, on the necessity of providing prisoners with consistent and holistic support, sensitive to their diverse needs.

6.2.1. Providing In-House (Bereavement) Support

The findings from this study indicate that many individuals struggle with adjusting to imprisonment, especially in their early days, when their anxiety tends to be high. Yet, prior research has acknowledged that displaying internal struggles could lead to bullying, self-harm, and suicide, further aggravating the inhospitable living conditions for prisoners and staff alike (e.g., Crewe, 2009; Wilson et al., 2020). Thus, there is a need to provide greater support for prisoners upon their entry in prisons. This could be established by conducting an extensive assessment of prior experiences of death and bereavement during intake, focusing specifically on cumulative losses and coping mechanisms employed.

Despite the current provision of bereavement services in some prisons, the findings indicate limited engagement with those. This could be because of the narrow range of support offered, which does not necessarily fit the needs of individuals. For example, while this study found that there is a request for structured provision of formal support, there was also an appetite for integrated support on a range of levels. Some prisons have specific bereavement support schemes, such as the Listeners scheme, which includes training prisoners by the Samaritans to provide confidential support to others in prison (Jaffe, 2012; Tomczak and Bennett, 2020). Yet, many prisoners in this sample doubted their credibility and neutrality, providing examples of personal information being shared with other prisoners (see also Laws and Crewe, 2016). Likewise, participants highlighted the low level of trust in prisons that goes beyond their relationships with other prisoners into relationships with prison staff, including the providers of health and social care services. Hence, support might elicit greater responsivity if conducted by volunteers outsiders, a humanist chaplaincy, or similar. Tomczak and Bennett (2020), though, caution against reducing bereavement support to voluntary sector and citizen involvement only, as that would obscure deeper issues and delay the needed systemic change. Due to different layers of bereavement experiences, individuals require distinct type, intensity, and duration of support at different stages of grief. Thus, support should be diversified, and the formal and informal services should be integrated to enable the provision of a holistic support, nurturing a culture that is accepting, recognizing, acknowledging, and responding to bereavement in carceral contexts.

NHS Education for Scotland (2017) previously published a set of guidelines for trauma-informed practice for the overall Scottish workforce. They emphasize the relevance of trusting relationships and prompt workers to identify traumas experienced by people they work with, as well as situations that might be triggering for individuals. A critical implication to be transferred to carceral contexts is the need to avoid criticism or blaming the person for their experiences, and to be mindful that behaviors and reactions might be trauma-related (NHS Education for Scotland, 2017). Thus, as discussed in section 6.1.1., prisoners should be provided with a safe space to convey emotions and narrate about the dead, if and when ready, without external judgement. Based on the findings, this would involve a private, intimate setting, ideally sound-proof but not see-through, where individuals can allow themselves to be vulnerable. It would also, ideally, be available for an unlimited time, to avoid having to compose oneself swiftly, after a support session, before going back to one’s cell and risking being seen by others. Since the findings highlighted the litany of losses and traumatic experiences among many participants, acknowledging ways in which this may shape their future responses to difficult situations and adapting responses to each individual’s needs is key.

Likewise, some participants did not see a point in reliving their traumas by engaging with them or perceived no benefits to discussing something about which nothing can be done; their perception was that talking about it will not bring the dead back. This could be referred back to the previous argument on the need for a holistic, institutional change and embracement of bereavement as a normal and natural part of life, rather than something that should be hidden when in carceral contexts. However, for many participants, coming to prison was the first time talking about their experiences with death. This could imply general death illiteracy and a lack of prior engagement with bereavement. Thus, a section on death and bereavement should be included in some of the existing, general prison programs. Given all the knowledge available on the detrimental and cumulative effects of unprocessed trauma, physical and emotional, treating deaths as turning points in the lives of this population seems crucial.

6.2.2. Implications for Release

Finally, the findings underscored the importance of the social aspect of bereavement, the wish to be around one’s family and loved ones during mourning. Yet, at the same time, some participants raised concerns about the effect that being released might have on their bereavement. This was partly due to many years of emotional avoidance and partly due to a lack of support services, or access to those, on the outside. For example, P2 argued that the prison environment was not a real environment, alluding to the inauthentic relationships with other prisoners and the potential for the bottled-up emotions to inevitably erupt once she was back in the “real world”. This coincides with prior research on imprisonment as a separate chapter in life, as a break from the world (e.g., Cope, 2003; Earle, 2014; Moran, 2002), which might affect re-entry (e.g., Crewe, 2015; Liebling, 2014). It also speaks to the grief research on complicated and prolonged grief. Namely, suppressing emotions for a long period of time and internalizing trauma can lead to complicated and unrecognized grief (e.g., Leach et al., 2008). Thus, acknowledging bereavement in carceral contexts is important not just for the duration of imprisonment, but has additional implications for release. Lack of engagement with those experiences and further disenfranchisement of the bereft prisoners could create behavioral and mental health issues upon reintegration, elevating the risk of reoffending, and perpetuating the revolving door of incarceration.

Overall, there is a need for more compassion from and within carceral contexts in times of bereavement. This could be achieved simply by having prison staff check up on the individuals, showing them that they cared about them, and that the prison understood the situation they were in. Some participants indicated that ensuring that the bureaucratic procedures were completed in time to enable prisoners to go to the funeral would further reveal the institution’s honor of the deceased and convey something of value to the bereft. It would symbolize the importance of a situation and give a sense of urgency to the, otherwise, sluggish procedures. Many prisoners mentioned the significance of the “little things” that would lighten up the atmosphere for them. For example, prison staff saying, “Good morning”, checking up on them, giving them a smile for no apparent reason. Simple acts of humanity and kindness could go far when working with bereft prisoners. As Wilson et al. (2020) indicated, prisons lack compassion, which might be needed for successful adjustment to grief. Given the evidence of engagement with self-harming behaviors as coping mechanisms in carceral contexts, and the currently aggressive institutional response to those, prisons also need to better balance their acknowledgement of individual’s agency with behavioral management, safety, and security. Thus, again, creating a more humane institutional ethos, where prisoners are not viewed as numbers needing to be managed but as individuals with diverse prior experiences, could improve bereavement experiences too.

6.3. Implications for Future Research

With regards to the existing gaps in knowledge and the implications for future research, this study suggests the following:

Given that current guidelines for attending funerals revolve around immediate family members and, even then, display a high level of discretion from prison management (see also Wilson et al., 2020), future research should examine ways of reconciling the reality of prisoners' relationships with current prison policies. It should investigate ways to enable funeral attendance for individuals beyond immediate family if those individuals were relevant to the prisoner. In so doing, it should seek for examples of international good practice that acknowledges the relevance of less traditional, yet more meaningful relationships.

Next, future research should examine whether the effects of bereavement and imprisonment multiply or mitigate one another with regards to the impact it has on prisoners and their families. Testa and Jackson (2019) indicated that, from a prisoner's perspective, the two effects are mutually aggravating and can result in higher levels of strain and anxiety due to diminished social support. Young Junior (2003) further stated that the multiplicity of secondary losses with which some prisoners are confronted (e.g., Sykes' (1958) deprivations), and which must be processed concurrently with bereavement experiences, can further complicate their grief. These findings were mirrored in this study, but the interaction between the bereavement and family relationships while imprisoned is still unclear. Thus, future research should develop a way of recording the incidence of bereavement among prisoner populations. This would need to be addressed at intake but also in a continuous fashion, either through the existing mechanisms (e.g., Scottish Prisoner Survey) or by creating new ones. That data should then be supplemented by a qualitative input to gain a more nuanced understanding of the interactions between the family, imprisonment, and bereavement.

In a similar vein, Laws and Crewe (2016) argued that a thorough discussion of emotions in prisons should encompass different levels of analysis: the intrapersonal, the social, and the environmental, calling for more research on spatial geography and emotional regulation in prisons. Likewise, this study elucidated the relevance of context in which bereavement has occurred. Therefore, future research should examine the extent to which powerlessness and limited agency to engage with a range of personal issues might exacerbate the perceived experience of bereavement while imprisoned. This should be embedded within the wider social and cultural context, including the gendered and classed analysis of data, to enhance the existing knowledge on the intersectionality of personal and societal characteristics when engaging with trauma and bereavement. Subsequently, the researcher suggests conducting an international comparative study of this nature to identify the extent to which different cultures and carceral contexts shape and influence ways of experiencing bereavement.

Finally, given the (potentially) long sentences that some participants in this sample are serving, it could be argued that offering bereavement services and focusing on the processing of grief while imprisoned could improve the individuals' chances post-release. For example, based on the earlier discussion on the differences between the intentionality and reaction, situating grief in the mind of the bereft would decrease reactionary behavior and potentially enable the individual to exercise or feel more in control of their feelings. Thus, future research should further explore the concept of fragmented grief and consider replicating this study, but on a sample with different demographics. This would bring new knowledge and determine whether having one's bereavement acknowledged and mentally bracketed in the past might reduce the need to employ certain coping strategies, such as substance abuse, upon return in the community. In so doing, an additional focus should be on the offence type, given that the findings indicate the existence of additional stigma attached to people convicted of sex offences, which sometimes resulted in feelings of lesser self-worth and undeservedness of help. Similarly, prior research reflected on the concept of deserving and undeserving bereft (Corcoran, 2017), distinguishing between individuals based on their legal offence: those who took away someone's life were perceived by the system as less worthy of being bereft. Yet, such a narrow perception of the individual's morality at times disregarded wider circumstances of the offence (e.g., self-defense or an accidental overdose), which could make such deaths more complicated for the prisoner to grieve and might require more support.

7. LIMITATIONS

Apart from the provision of suggestions for improvement and further development of knowledge in this field, there are also some methodological, theoretical, and practical limitations to this study that need to be addressed. A more abstract, general discussion on certain aspects covered in this section already took place in the Methodology section (see 3.6.) and they will now be briefly intersected with this study. This section addresses the restricted nature of an exploratory qualitative study and its limited potential for generalization of knowledge. It then focuses on the analytical framework employed, the use of which, somewhat contradictory, aimed for broad interpretation of the findings and reduced the place and scope available for an in-depth exploration of individual differences. Finally, it discusses some practical issues around conducting prison research and reflects on the ways in which the context of this study might have shaped the analysis and interpretation of the findings.

7.1. Research Methods

Prior bereavement research indicated that, for qualitative approaches to grief, reliability and validity of the measures remain a major concern (Stroebe et al., 2003). Yet, Stroebe et al. (2003) also argued for methodological pluralism in researching bereavement to realize the advantages of each approach, while overcoming (at least partially) their individual disadvantages. Although this study used qualitative research methods, it acknowledged the potential validity threats prior to engaging in fieldwork and addressed them by design. This was done by applying the descriptive phenomenological framework, which transcends the individual experiences to reach the more general essence of bereavement, while acknowledging each part that constitutes the whole. Yet, in so doing, the peculiarities of individual experiences could have been lost. Future research should use the same methodology, attempting to replicate the findings and ensuring reliability of this approach when researching bereavement in prisons.

7.2. Analytical Framework

As the methodology section discussed, DP aims to get to the essence of things. Its goal is to enable the structure of a phenomenon to emerge by collecting rich descriptions of a lived experience. In so doing, it understands everything as true in that individual’s life-world and abstains from adding any evaluative judgement. To this end, the researcher undergoes bracketing and approaches data collection with an empty mind. However, there is always a possibility, albeit minute, that bracketing was not fully achieved, either during data-collection, during data-analysis, or during both. If so, the researcher's prior knowledge, experiences, and world-views could have shaped the findings (see section 3.4.1.).

One way the researcher aimed to counteract the potential of influencing the study was by keeping the inclusion criteria for recruitment quite open. The only requirements were for the individual to have experienced bereavement, to be imprisoned, and to have been convicted. This resulted in a diverse sample, which is a strength, as well as a weakness of this study. On the one hand, diversely situated participants enriched the data gathered and advanced the existing knowledge by providing a stricter direction in search for essence. On the other, however, by sampling widely, the individual nuances might be lost. Namely, the structure of the phenomenon, its generalizable component, should be that, what remains constant regardless of the texture of that experience (i.e., the differences in individual accounts), whereas a more specific pool of individuals could have led to slightly different findings. This sample demonstrated differences in age and gender of the participants, as well as in their life events. There was a wide range of time served, remaining time, and the diversity in the offences committed. All this enabled the intersection of individual, relational, social, and contextual characteristics of the phenomenon to emerge. Stripping the texture of bereavement further, in this quest for essence, was possible exactly due to the sample's differences in their bereavement experiences. Those were partially shaped by the time, the place, and the mode of death that was related to the social, the relational, and the visual of bereavement. The (in)ability to participate in social rituals was another discrete factor among this sample, and so was the sheer prevalence of death experiences they had. Put together, bereavement and imprisonment added another temporal, spatial, and contextual dimension to the individual's life-world. This, to an extent, shaped their realities of death and, in turn, of imprisonment. Subsequently, while the emergence of essence is a strength of phenomenology, some of the textural nuances could have gotten lost along the way.

7.3. Practical Issues

Finally, one of the challenges this study was faced with was scratching underneath the surface of the typical participants' response of "you just get on wae it [bereavement]" or "you just do it". The researcher had to find a balance between harvesting those rich descriptions that the aim and methodology of this study necessitated, while respecting the privacy of the participants. However, the fact that this topic is understudied, indicated that the prisoners did not have a narrative ready for the researcher, as they might have had if this study was examining, for example, drug- and/or alcohol-abuse or offending. Some of those topics have been repeatedly told and retold by the participants, on their journey through the system, which could have affected their perception of the credibility of those stories. But bereavement was, for many, the first time to be spoken about. While this potentially increased the originality of the individuals' narratives, it also caught some participants off guard, making them resort to their safety net of "you just do it." As Herrity (2019) described in her ethnography on prison sounds, prisoners sometimes know something, yet they do not know that they know it. Hence, it is the task of the researcher to assist the participants in getting that data without asserting the researcher's own views. In this study, subconsciousness and a deeper relationship between the cognitive, emotional, and intentional processes interacted on (at least) three levels: the intra-individual (the processes happening within the individual, the inner fights), the inter-personal (the actions and reactions shaped by the presence or absence of others and their intra-individual realities), as well as the trans-personal (the realm that goes beyond the intra- and inter-personal, into the spatial, temporal, and relational of the context the individual(s) is/are in). The latter dimension encompasses all other realities that the individual is simultaneously inhabiting, embodying memories, senses, and current and past experiences, which all together shape the here and the now of a person's life-world.

Overall, these last three chapters provided a discussion of the findings, situating them in the current research context and underscoring the new knowledge they brought to the interdisciplinary phenomenological understanding of bereavement. Next, chapter six reflected on the policy and practice implications, suggesting directions for further study. Finally, this chapter examined the limitations of this study that should be considered when interpreting the findings. The following and the final section brings everything stated so far to a close.

8. CONCLUSION

This study examined prisoners' experiences of bereavement in carceral contexts by conducting 33 semi-structured interviews in two Scottish prisons and analysing the data through Giorgi's (2000) descriptive phenomenological approach. The findings support prior research in that there is no "right way" or "one-size-fits-all" way to grieve (Hall, 2014; Olson and McEwen, 2004). Although there are significant theoretical benefits of processing bereavement for the individual's health, mental health, and overall well-being, the findings also demonstrate that attempting to tackle complex emotional issues in prison can be unproductive (Laws and Crewe, 2016), unless approached in a holistic way. This brought new implications for bereavement policy and practice in general by adding another dimension to conceptualizations of time, space, embodiment, and sociality in prisons.

The literature review on prison research contextualized imprisonment through a series of paradoxes: a paradox of time (Cope, 2003; Moran, 2012; Philippe-Beauchamp, 2019; Wahidin, 2006), a paradox of space (Baer, 2005; Moran, 2012; Rhodes, 2001), and a paradox of existence (Crewe, 2009; Mageehon, 2008; Wahidin, 2006), to name a few. Similarly, bereavement experiences encompass a range of different contradictions, starting with the ambiguity of being physically absent (dead) but emotionally, mentally, and spiritually present in the bereft (Fuchs, 2017; Hentz, 2002; Neimeyer et al., 2002; Valentine, 2013; Walter, 2007). Despite the uniqueness of individual experiences of grief, deaths have the universal power to end relationships, discontinue dreams, and change life-courses (Hopmeyer and Werk, 1994; Thompson et al., 2016; Walter, 2007; Worden, 1991; Young Junior, 2003), the implications of which were examined further in this study.

In addition, most sociological, social work, and psychological studies on bereavement and loss have focused on death of a partner/spouse (e.g., Hopmeyer and Werk, 1994; Stroebe et al., 2001), death of one's child (e.g., Christensen et al., 2017), and/or palliative and end-of-life care (e.g., Agnew et al., 2010; Thompson et al., 2016), even though there is increasing diversity. Criminological and criminal justice research has examined losses too, but this has mostly been refracted through Sykes' (1958) framework of imprisonment as a loss of a previous lifestyle, loss of goods and services, loss of autonomy, liberty, and (heterosexual) relationships (e.g., Hendry, 2009; Schetky, 1998; Vaswani, 2014). This study has integrated bereavement and prison research, producing a new epistemological understanding of bereavement, while reconceptualizing the pains of imprisonment, and adding another layer of humanity to those who sometimes consider themselves as socially and emotionally dead.

This study used a phenomenological framework to examine prisoners' experiences of bereavement in carceral contexts. Phenomenology was applied to unveil the core of bereavement, while acknowledging heterogeneity, diversity, and the interrelatedness of human experiences. As per Seah and Wilson (2011), grief is a ubiquitous occurrence, yet the uniqueness of each is like an individual fingerprint. Encouraged by Phillips and Earle (2010), this study expanded upon traditional epistemologies, wherein minorities challenge the established claims, and created knowledge that extends beyond reductionism to a single characteristic or identity, such as gender, race, or social status. To appreciate the multiplicity of truths, it recruited male and female prisoners, and urged the participants to discuss the death(s) of a person (or people) most important to them, rather than focusing by design on a single, pre-determined relationship between the dead and the bereft. The individuals were also encouraged to discuss deaths that occurred before and/or during their imprisonment, to better understand the role of carceral contexts. Harner et al. (2011) argued that letting participants define their significant relationships allowed for an exploration of broader social connections, beyond family members, partners, and children. Employing a descriptive phenomenological framework for analysis enabled the researcher to transcend the individual, the social, and the cultural of bereavement, while recognizing the relevance and inter-relatedness of the three. Consequently, this study has contributed new theoretical, empirical, and practical knowledge to grief and prison scholarship, advancing interdisciplinary understanding of bereavement and imprisonment.

The findings from this study elaborate on ways in which death can be a powerful agent of change that can bring ease to the dying (e.g., in situations of terminal illness), but elevated pain and emotional distress to the living. Given its perceived power to overtake the individual's life, death and dying can make the bereft powerless. This idea of helplessness was exacerbated for the population in this study due to the structural, relational, and temporal constraints of imprisonment, as well as the strain that carceral contexts put on individual's agency anyway. Death also emerged as a factor that can bring an end to a chapter (e.g., abuse) and, as such, create new opportunities, making it a positive, almost liberating, empowering phenomenon. However, it can simultaneously leave many unanswered questions permanently open by closing future possibilities of resolution (see also Buglass, 2010; Vaswani, 2014; Walsh and McGoldrick, 2013; Young Junior, 2003). Such emotional and social ambivalence around experiences and impacts of bereavement on the individual resonate with prior research, whereby various, often conflicting feelings co-exist within the bereft (e.g., Jakoby, 2012; Paul, 2019; Thompson et al., 2016; Walter, 2007). Subsequently, bereavement can manifest in a range of behaviors. For some participants, it was recognized as a catalyst for engagement with drugs and alcohol. For others, death led to violent outbursts and/or offending, resulting in an increased contact with the criminal justice system. Death also caused emotional, social, and psychological withdrawal, which can be exacerbated by the mode of death and/or the context in which bereavement was experienced. Occasionally, however, experiencing bereavement, loss, and death triggered personal reflexivity, and an impetus to live differently, for example, to desist from crime.

As indicated by the participants, similar coping strategies were applied in carceral contexts as well as in the community, albeit with slightly different tools available to achieve that in each setting. Some methods included numbing the pain through substance abuse and self-harm, bottling up emotions, and/or distracting oneself. What made bereavement difficult for the population in this sample, was their lack of ability and opportunity to process death fully. Sometimes this stemmed from experiencing a bereavement at a very young age, other times from a multiplicity of co-occurring trauma and abuse, often interlinked with their chaotic lifestyles, and further restricted by imprisonment. Prison was experienced as a place that took away the participants' individuality, agency, and choice to engage in behaviors that would satisfy their emotional, social, and corporeal needs. At the same time, for some prisoners in this sample, imprisonment enabled them to process their grief by providing access to services, but it still disabled them from engaging with social aspects of bereavement given their removal from society, which further highlights the interconnectedness of various layers of bereavement. Likewise, Walsh and McGoldrick (2013) proposed a Family life cycle model of bereavement, emphasizing the relevance of a shared acknowledgement of death and a collective experience of loss, both of which can be strained, if not impossible, for the prisoner population.

Finally, many participants discussed a distinct phenomenon that this study has conceptualized as fragmented grief. Fragmented grief is both an intentional coping mechanism and an outcome of the impact of prison on the processing of grief. It is the process whereby bereavement starts and stops, responding to the wider contextual factors. As such, expressing grief can be intentional, but also reactionary. Literature already engaged with suspended grief (Aday and Wahidin, 2016; Ferszt, 2002; Harner et al., 2011; Walsh and McGoldrick, 2013; Young Junior, 2003: Wilson et al., 2020) as something that is lingering, coming and going, until the individual receives closure. What this study has identified among bereft people in prison is a more fragmented, rather than suspended, grief emphasizing the lack of agency to be and feel bereft in carceral contexts and further indicating the relevance of temporal co-existence of the social, the spatial, and the relational in bereavement. All these components need to be a part of the same life-world for bereavement to emerge and be successfully reconciled, even though these parallel worlds rarely aligned for bereft prisoners taking part in this study.

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APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Bereavement and Imprisonment - interview schedule

Before starting the interview, the researcher will make sure that the participant has read and fully understood the Participant Information Sheet, that the voluntary informed consent has been signed, and that the participant is aware of the audio recording. The researcher will also inform the participant that she might be taking written notes during the interview.

Participant ID number: ☐

Dear participant,

First of all, I would like to thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview with me. Your experiences are very important for this study.

I am aware that the topic of my research is quite sensitive, and certain questions might cause feelings of sadness and distress. Please let me know if, at any point in time, you would like to stop the interview, or take a small break. You should also know that the chaplaincy, mental health, and social workers in prison are aware of this interview taking place. You are more than welcome to ask for their services, should you feel the need to do so.

Also, I would like to remind you that all the information you share during this interview that is related to this study is confidential and will not be shared with others. However, I am obligated to report to authorities any disclosure of intent of harm to yourself or to others.

Would you have any questions about this interview?

At this point I am going to turn the recorder on, and we can start with the interview.

1. *Could you tell me why you decided to participate?*
    a. What other opportunities, if any, have you had to discuss this topic, either before or during your imprisonment?
    b. Would you say that it is important for people to discuss topics about death and dying? Why?

2. *I would like to get to know you a little bit better.*
    a. Would you be willing to let me know your current age, and what gender and ethnicity you would identify yourself as?

3. *If you could divide your life in the chapters of a book, or even in terms of stages, how would you divide it up – perhaps you could name each chapter or stage?*

    a. Why did you choose those chapters/stage, what is significant about each one of the stages you mentioned?
        - → Probe for the key events that have changed/impacted the course of their lives
            - → What is so significant about those events?
            - → How did those events shape them as people?
        - → Probe for important people (and/or places) in their lives in each stage
        - → Probe for the main themes that keep coming up

    b. If you could choose a certain event or a particular stage in your life that you would classify as a high point, where you were happy about your life, excited, and positive about your future, what would this stage be?
        - → Could you tell me something more about it?
            - → Probe about the important people/places/relationships
                - → What makes this experience so important to you?
                - → How did this experience shape your behavior at that point in time?
                - → How did it affect your future behavior?

    c. If you would now need to choose a certain event or a particular stage in your life that you would classify as the lowest point, where you very maybe sad, or under a lot of stress, disappointed, and felt overall mostly negative emotions about yourself, your life, or the others, what would this stage be?
        - → Could you tell me something more about it
            - → Probe about the important people/places/relationships during that time
                - → What makes this experience so important to you?
                - → How did this experience shape your behavior at that point in time?
                - → How did it affect your future behavior?

    d. Would you be able to identify a turning point in your life, when your life either changed for the better, or went downhill from that point?
        - → Could you describe this situation in more detail?
            - → Probe about the important people/places/relationships during that time
                - → Why did you choose this specific point?
                    - → Could you think of any other turning points?
                - → How did those incidents shape your behavior?
                - → Probe about the lifestyle, relationships, employment…

I would now like to ask you some questions about your experiences of death of a person who was important to you before you were imprisoned, and/or during your imprisonment. I would like to mention once again that you are entitled to ask for a break if needed, and you do have the right to stop this interview at any point in time.

4. *First of all, I would like to ask whether the length of time spent in [insert name of prison] and reason for being here, had any effect on your bereavement experiences.*
    a. If you feel comfortable sharing this information, could you please tell me what you are currently charged with and how long are you sentenced to?
    → How do you think this might have affected your bereavement experience(s)?
    b. If this is not your first imprisonment, could you briefly share your previous experiences of incarceration (charges, sentence length, etc.)
    → How do you think this might have affected your bereavement experience(s)?

5. *Could you think of all the people who died* *before* *you were imprisoned. Could you tell me a little bit more about what happened to that person/those people?*
    a. What was your relationship to them?

    b. How did you find out about their death?

    c. How old were you then/How long ago did they die?

    d. What emotions do you connect to that experience? How did the realization of that person's death make you feel?
    → Probe for physical, emotional, psychological reactions
    → Probe for certain methods of dealing with that person's death (funeral, wake, rituals with other people; who with)
    → Probe for coping mechanisms employed (Who did you talk to about this; Who/what was the main support to you during that period in your life; How did you express those feelings/reactions you mentioned; How did this situation affect your everyday life/work/education; How did it affect your relationship with others/family/friends)

    e. Are there still times when you think about this person?
    → How do you feel when you think about them?
    → Are there any specific things that you do that either remind you of this person or help you forget them?

6. *What, if any, other experiences of loss (either death or a different type of loss) did you experience before or around the time of this person's death?*
    a. Could you briefly explain what losses you experienced?

    b. How did those situations affect your processing of death?

    c. Would you say that this person's death reminded you of some other situations in which you experienced loss(es)?
    → Could you please explain those situations?
    → Would you say you have changed your behavior in response to those losses? If so, how?

7. *Did you have any experiences of (multiple) bereavement* *while being imprisoned**. Could you let me know a little bit more about those situations?*
    a. How long ago did those deaths occur?

    b. How would you classify your relationship with the deceased?

    c. How did you find out about their death(s)?
    → Probe who relayed this message and in what way
    → Probe if the death was expected or sudden
    → Probe for physical, emotional, psychological reactions to it

8. *What would you say are the main differences in your experiences of death before and during imprisonment?*
    a. Would you say that imprisonment made it harder for you to grieve? (How would you say that imprisonment played a role in your grievance)
    → What would you describe as some of the barriers to your grieving processes?
    → What, if anything, do you see as benefits of mourning in prison?

    b. What would you identify as important differences in getting the information about the person's death while imprisoned compared to when you were outside of prison?
    → Were you satisfied with the way the message was relayed to you in prison?
    → If you could choose anyone from prison staff to relay this information to you, who would that be, and why?
        → Probe if they would like to hear about it from someone on the outside (family, friends, neighbors)

9. *In what ways would you say that the death of a certain person impacted you while you were imprisoned?*
    a. Would you say you have changed your behavior in some way?

    → Could you describe what you did differently?

    → To what extent would you say that your overall quality of life has changed after you found out about the death of this person?

    → Probe about physical reactions; Medical help; Special treatment

    → To what extent would you say your relationship with prison officers has changed during this period?

    → How about your relationship with other prisoners?

    b. Would you say someone from the outside of prison played a role in your grieving processes, maybe your family or your friend? Could you please specify who it was?

    → Could you describe the role that [this person] played during this process?

    → To what extent do you think this helped you cope with death?

10. *Do you still think about this person who died?*
    a. In what ways would you say that prison responds to your grief?

    → In what ways can you express your emotions while imprisoned?
        1. To what extent would you say you can express your emotions?
        2. How would you describe the process of grieving in prison?
        3. What would you identify as the main differences from grieving on the outside?
        4. Who would you most often turn to for support in prison?

    b. Are you allowed to have the picture, or any other memorabilia of the deceased person in your cell?

    → Probe if that is of any value to them

    → Why would/wouldn't they want to have a certain object?

    → Probe what they would like to have on/with them

    c. Could you describe what you did immediately around that person's death?

    → Was there any ceremony for that person?

    → How did you acknowledge their death?

    → Could you describe what happened after you found out about that person's death?

    → Probe for any rituals (lighting a candle, having a mass)

    d. In what ways are you able to celebrate the anniversary of that person's death or celebrate their birthday, if you are able to?

11. *You indicated that you went to their funeral (if so). Could you describe how this process looked like?*
    a. Who escorted you?
    → How did you feel around that person/escort?
        → Was there another person you would rather have as your escort? Who would that be?
    → How did you feel during the escort?
        → If possible, what would you like to have had done differently?
        → To what extent would you say your escort had an understanding of your situation? Could you please explain?
    → How would you describe the overall experience of attending a funeral while being imprisoned?

    b. Could you tell me a little bit more about the funeral as such, for example what were you wearing?
    → Were you handcuffed?
    → Were you able to give speech/did you want to?
        → Were you able to stay for the whole service? What about the wake?
    → Overall, how would you describe the importance of this attendance?
        1. What impact would you say it had on you short/medium/long-term?
        2. If you find yourself in such a situation again, would you choose to attend the funeral again? Why (not)?

I would now like to talk a little bit about the overall atmosphere in prison around the time of that person's death.

12. *Did other prisoners know about that person's death?*
    a. How did they behave toward you?

    b. To what extent did you feel like they understood your situation?
        → Why would you think this is the case? Probe for concrete examples

    c. Would you say that you were able to express your emotions in front of other prisoners?
        → What impact did this have on you?
        → Could you think of anything you wanted to do but were not able to do because of other prisoners around you? Why would you say that?
        → Could you think of anything other prisoners did to help you deal with this person's death? What would it be?
        → To what extent did you wish other prisoners were involved in your death experience? Did you expect anything from them? What, why?

13. *Did the prison officers know about that person's death?*
    a. How did they treat you around that time?
        → Were you given any special treatment (time alone, medications)?
        → Were you revoked any privileges during that time?

    b. To what extent did you feel like they understand you?
        → Why would you think this is the case? Probe for concrete examples

    c. Would you say that you were able to express your emotions in front of prison officers?
        → What impact did this have on you?
        → To what extent would you say that the presence of prison officers modified the way in which you grieved? Why would you say that?
        → Could you think of anything prison officers did to help you deal with this person's death? What would it be?
        → To what extent did you wish they were involved in your death experience? Did you expect anything from them? What, why?

    d. Did you get in any trouble/misconduct around the time of that person's death?
        → Could you tell me something more about the incident(s)
        → To what extent would you say you changed your behavior and to what extent would you say it was a misunderstanding between you and the officers/other prisoners?
            → How did the officers understand your behavior?
    → Could you tell me why you decided to behave in such a way?
        → Would you classify such behavior as something normal for you? How often does this usually happen to you?
            → Probe for the consequences of such actions
            → Probe for suicide watch

14. *Were you aware of any support systems in prison that could help you process your grief?*
    a. Could you tell me which services you used? Why did you choose exactly those?
    → Why didn't you use any of the services provided?

    b. How would you describe your experiences with those services?
    → To what extent would you classify them as helpful?
    → What would you say was the greatest help they provided you with?
        → What would you say they lacked; what would you wish to have gotten from them but didn't?

c. Who/what was your greatest support while you were in prison during the period of bereavement-either within or outside of prison?

→ Could you describe how they supported you?

    → In what ways did you feel this was beneficial to you?

→ What other ways of support would you appreciate?

    → Was there anything you felt you lacked during this time?

d. Had you been outside of prison, would you say that you would grieve in a different way; was there something specific that prevented you from grieving in the way you normally would?

→ Did you have more support on the outside? What kind?

    → How did that make a difference?

→ Is there anything you feel like would help you, but was not available to you in prison?

15. *Is there anything else you would like to talk about?*

16. *How did it feel to be interviewed about bereavement in prison today?*

This will then conclude this interview. Thank you once again for your participation!

APPENDIX 2: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Participant Information Sheet for interviews with prisoners

Name of department: School of Social Work & Social Policy

Title of the study: Bereavement and imprisonment: an exploration of the experiences of grief and loss in carceral contexts

Introduction

You are invited to participate in a research study that seeks to understand the experiences of, and supports available to, people who encounter or are dealing with bereavement while imprisoned. This study is conducted by me, Tia Simanovic, a doctoral student at the School of Social Work and Social Policy at the University of Strathclyde.

What is the purpose of this investigation?

The purpose of this investigation is to gain an in-depth understanding of prisoners' perspectives on grief and bereavement prior to and/or during custody. Grief is a natural response to situations of loss, of inability to achieve something we wanted, or to any negative situation in life that challenges our idea of the world around us. This study will focus on grief following the occurrence(s) of death of a significant person(s). Instances of bereavement and grief might be experienced differently for people who are in prison. Yet, it is important that everyone gets their chance to process and deal with it in a healthy manner, in order to continue with their lives in a positive way in the long run. This investigation is a part of a larger study that aims to understand grieving experiences and coping mechanisms of people who are imprisoned, as well as to compare and contrast their manifestation of bereavement for deaths that occurred prior to and during custody. In order to emphasize the importance of grieving in prison, it will identify potentially available resources within prison to which prisoners could turn to, if needed, to alleviate the process of bereavement. If there are no such resources, this study would like to identify services grieving prisoners, and staff supporting them, would like to have available, and eventually find new paths to mourning in prison. In doing so, this study will conduct the in-depth interviews with a subsample of prisoners.

Do you have to take part?

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You do not have to participate in this study under any circumstances, and there will be no negative effects for you if you decide to do so. On the other hand, if you do decide to participate, you have the right to withdraw your consent from this study at any time, without giving a reason (unless you wish to do so).

Again, withdrawing your participation will have no negative consequences to yourself, your sentence, or the services you receive. If you decide to be a part of this study, you will participate in a private interview with the researcher. However, you do have the right to withdraw your consent at any point during the interview and stop the interview. You can also decide not to participate in the interview at all with no detriments to yourself and without providing the researcher with the reason for your decision (unless you wish to do so). Please note that your participation in this study will in no way affect your sentence length, sentence structure, parole, or your current treatment in the facility. There will be no rewards of any kind for your participation, nor reprimands for not participating in this study.

All the information you provide, that is relevant to this study, is confidential and is available only to the researcher. No one in your facility will have access to the information, or know about any of the information you have provided. In addition, if you decide to participate, you will get a special ID number so that your name is not used, and your confidentiality is protected. However, please note that it is my ethical requirement to report to authorities if you provide me with any information that might suggest that you or another person are in danger of serious harm in the near future.

What will you do in the project?

If you decide to take part in this study, you will participate in about an hour-long interview with the researcher. During the interview we will discuss in-depth topics around the grief and loss (due to the death of a significant person(s)) you experienced before being imprisoned and/or during your sentence, and ways of coping with it. We will also talk about the support systems available for you in the facility, as well as gather your ideas on what would be useful for you to make your grief easier. You will be asked questions about your family and your previous lifestyle, and some of the questions will be related to your current and previous sentence(s) (if you had any), as well as to your offences. However, most of the questions will be about death and loss in your life and the ways in which you dealt with those situations before you came to prison and now. I would like to audio record the interview. However, if you wish to participate but do not want to be recorded, that is a possibility too. In that case, I will set up an appointment for the interview with you, but instead of audio recording it, I will be taking detailed written notes of our conversation. Please note that this might take some additional time and last longer than the recorded interviews, as it will take me more time to write down all the information you share with me. If you are happy to participate in this fashion, please mark ‘No’ on the last question, which asks about being recorded.

The interview will take place in prison and the researcher will ensure it is held in such a fashion to offer you privacy. It will be held in a private, sound-proof room in the facility; the same room used by lawyers and social workers when discussing sensitive issues with their clients. The interview will be scheduled ahead of time, with only you and the researcher present in the room at the time of the interview. Your answers will be kept private and will only be available to the researcher and her two supervisors from the School of Social Work and Social Policy at the University of Strathclyde.

Why have you been invited to take part?

You are invited to participate in this study that aims to comprehend the process of death-related grief and bereavement in institutional settings, and compare it to grieving prior to your imprisonment. As a current prisoner, you might have the knowledge, insights, and experiences that can contribute to a better understanding of bereavement, as well as the supports available, for people in prison. You do not need to have any special knowledge or skills to be able to participate, just the will to share your experiences.

What are the potential risks to you in taking part?

There are no anticipated risks to your physical safety solely by participating in this study. However, there is a chance that some of the questions asked might upset you, remind you of some people who are dead, and/or resurface certain traumas and emotions that might make you feel uncomfortable or sad. You do not have to answer any questions you feel would be too burdensome for you, and you can stop the interview at any point in time, without giving a reason for your decision. The researcher will make sure to take precautionary measures to minimize the risks of your distress and will be in the room with you, and able to provide you with water or similar immediate support, if needed. In addition, the researcher will ensure that social work, health care personnel, and/or the chaplaincy are aware of this study, so you can get their support as well, should you decide to do so.

What happens to the information in the project?

All the information you share during this study, and is related to the study, is confidential. Your anonymity is guaranteed by providing you with a special study ID, so that you do not need to use your name or any other personal identifier. The key that links your name to your study ID is available only to the researcher conducting this study, and to her two supervisors at the University of Strathclyde. The prison security personnel will not have access to the information you have provided or your study ID.

However, please note that the researcher is mandated by law to disclose any information that indicates a risk of harm to other prisoner(s), staff, or yourself.

The information related to this study will be transcribed and securely stored on the University of Strathclyde computers. The recording will be deleted immediately after transcription. Your personal data will only be kept for as long as necessary, and securely destroyed afterwards, in accordance with the Research Data Management and Sharing policies of the University of Strathclyde. Given the synergistic process of data analysis of this nature of data, please note that you can withdraw all the information provided in the interviews up until the 12 weeks after the interview. The researcher believes this will give you enough time to change your mind about participation but is also not going to impede the study progress.

The University of Strathclyde is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office who implements the Data Protection Act 1998. All personal data on participants will be processed in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.

What happens next?

If you are happy to participate in the interview, you are kindly asked to sign a consent form confirming that you have fully understood this Participant Information Sheet. In case you still have questions, please ask them now, as it is important that you understand all the information before signing the form. If you have difficulties with writing, or are uncertain regarding your identity, just mark an "x" on the form. Once you have signed the Consent form, the researcher will proceed with scheduling the time for your interview.

You will have the opportunity to be informed about the study results in written form once the study is finished, if you so desire. However, given the time needed to analyze all the data (around two years), this might be difficult, as you might have been transferred to a different prison or released within that time-frame. The researcher will therefore give SPS access to the full report, so you will have the chance to access it through them or by sending an e-mail to the researcher.

Although the information collected will be used primarily for a Doctoral Dissertation, some parts of the data collected might be published in academic journals. All data that might be published will be anonymized. There will be no way the data could be tracked back to you.

Thank you for reading this information–please ask any questions if you are unsure about what is written here.

If you do not wish to participate in the interviews, I would like to thank you for your time and attention.

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This investigation was granted ethical approval by the University of Strathclyde Ethics Committee.

If you have any questions/concerns, during or after the investigation, or wish to contact an independent person to whom any questions may be directed or further information may be sought from, please contact:

Secretary to the University Ethics Committee
Research & Knowledge Exchange Services
University of Strathclyde
Graham Hills Building
50 George Street
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Email: ethics@strath.ac.uk

APPENDIX 3: CONSENT FORM

Consent Form for interviews with prisoners

Name of department: School of Social Work & Social Policy

Title of the study: Bereavement and imprisonment: an exploration of the experiences of grief and loss in carceral contexts

- I confirm that I have read (or have been read to) and understood the information sheet for the above project and the researcher has answered any questions to my satisfaction.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time, up to the point of completion, without having to give a reason and without any consequences. If I exercise my right to withdraw and I do not want my data to be used, any data which have been collected from me will be destroyed (provided the request has been made up until the 12 weeks after the point of completion of my interview).
- I confirm that my personal data (i.e., data which might identify me personally) can be used for the purposes of this study.
- I understand that I can withdraw from the study any personal data (i.e., data which identify me personally) at any time.
- I understand that data I have given is pseudo-anonymized data (i.e., data that cannot identify me personally—my race, my age, my gender etc.), and can be withdrawn should I request and require it, up until the 12 weeks after my interview.
- I understand that any information recorded in the investigation will remain confidential and no information that identifies me will be made publicly available.
- I consent to being a participant in the project.
- I consent to being audio recorded during the interview as a part of the project (please mark one answer):
    - ○ YES
    - ○ NO

(PRINT NAME)	
Signature of Participant:	Date:

APPENDIX 4: RECRUITMENT POSTER

Bereavement and Imprisonment:
A call for participants

What for?

→ A study on your experiences of death and grief prior to and/or during your imprisonment

How?

→ Through interviews with prisoners interested in this issue

→ The interviews will ask questions about your experiences with death and grief prior to and/or during your imprisonment, including what helped you cope with this and what did not

Why?

→ To better understand what it is like to mourn in prison, to compare those experiences with your experiences of death before imprisonment, and to identify what might be useful for you and others dealing with grief and bereavement in prison

→ Because your experiences are valuable, and could improve the services grieving prisoners are currently receiving

→ Because your voice can help understand your view on death and grief prior to and/or during your imprisonment

When and where?

→ Details will follow

Points of contact (for any additional questions):

→ Please refer to your chaplaincy, social workers, or mental health workers in your prison

→ The researcher will also be available to answer your questions on [insert date, time]

Thank you for your attention and I hope to meet you soon!

APPENDIX 5: RECRUITMENT POSTER (MODIFIED)

Bereavement and Imprisonment: A call for participants

What for?

A study on your experiences of death and grief prior to and/or during your imprisonment

How?

Through one-on-one interviews with prisoners interested in this issue

The interviews will ask questions about your experiences with death and grief prior to and/or during your imprisonment, including what helped you cope with this and what did not

Why?

To better understand what it is like to mourn in prison, to compare those experiences with your experiences of death before imprisonment, and to identify what might be useful for you and others dealing with grief and bereavement in prison

Because your experiences are valuable, and could improve the services grieving prisoners are currently receiving

Because your voice can help understand your view on death and grief prior to and/or during your imprisonment

Points of contact (for any additional questions):

→ Please refer to [X], [job role in prison]. Please return the completed sheet on the next page marked for his attention.

→ The researcher, *Tia Simanovic,* will also be available to answer your questions in a private setting around January

Thank you for your attention and the researcher hopes
to meet you soon!

Name:

Prisoner Number:

I **would** like to participate in/get more information about the study ☐

I **would not** like to participate in/get more information about the study ☐

Signature:………………………………

Date………………………………………