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Visualising Prison Violence - Exploring the Micro-Dynamics of Violence in Men's Prisons using Video Data

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where stated otherwise by reference or acknowledgment, the work presented is entirely my own.

Emily E. A. Qvist-Baudry, March 2025

Abstract

The present thesis presents an exploratory study in the field of prison violence. Until recently, most research on physical violence, both in and outside of prison, has been concerned with background and causal factors as well as social and structural contexts, leaving out the actual moments of violent action. A novel research trend, Visual Data Analysis (VDA), emerging from one of the major theories of violence of recent times (Collins, 2008), draws on photos and video footage to shift the focus towards interactions and behaviour observable in violent incidents. The VDA method allows for studying the micro-dynamics of physical violence by means of video-footage. Employing CCTV and mobile device-footage of violent incidents from YouTube as empirical material in combination with focus group interviews with current prison officers and ex-prisoners, the thesis contributes to the micro-sociology of violence, particularly prison violence, by examining the strengths and limitations of video data sampled online - as a general method as well as in the specific context of prison violence research - thus addressing a gap in the field of VDA research. At the same time, it tests the applicability of Collins' theory of violence to the prison setting, i.e., to a non-public context to which it has not previously been applied.

By analysing interactional processes and expressions of emotion and discussing interpretations of these with individuals familiar with the prison setting, the thesis finds that audiences in prisoner-on-prisoner fights regulate both the severity and the course of the fights; where (co-prisoner) audiences exhibit enthusiasm through cheers and encouragements, fights are prolonged, a finding which echoes Collins' (2008) observations of audience impact. The analysis further suggests that prison officers who exhibit anger or aggression through shouting, giving orders, or by invading prisoners' personal space provoke prisoners to exhibit similar behaviours or to use violence against the officers. Lastly, the study also shows that officers who exhibit fear through struggles to control bodily movements allow prisoners to take charge of the course of interaction, i.e., to gain or maintain emotional dominance, and to use violence, a dynamic resonating with Collins' (2008) notion of how violent interactions are initiated. Based on the findings, the thesis is able to present implications of technical features for future video research drawing on online-sampled data, thus contributing to a furthering of the VDA method. The findings have also laid a foundation for (indicative) practical suggestions for prison officer training based on both Collins' micro-dynamic approach and the VDA method. This highlights the potential of using video recordings of real-life incidents in the design of this type of training. The thesis concludes that Collins' theory holds promising potential in furthering the understanding of the dynamics of (especially) escalation and de-escalation of potentially violent encounters – with or without the presence of audiences - between prisoners and between officers and prisoners, and thus for future development in the field of violence prevention and intervention in the prison context.

Lay summary

The present thesis addresses the topic of prison violence by use of a new research method, Video Data Analysis (VDA). It tests the applicability of an innovative and recent theory in the field of violence, namely that of Randall Collins, to the prison context. VDA is a new research trend which emerged from Collins' theory of violence (2008) and draws on photos and video footage to analyse interactions and behaviour in violent incidents.

Until recently, most research on physical violence, both in and outside of prison, has focused on background factors and causes for violence, and also social and structural contexts, but has left out the moment of violent action itself. The VDA method, however, makes it possible to study the micro-dynamics of physical violence by using video-footage. This means that it examines the interactions and displays of emotion during violent episodes - or during situations of conflict with the potential to turn violent. By using CCTV and mobile device-footage of violent incidents from YouTube as data, in combination with group interviews with current prison officers and ex-prisoners, the thesis contributes to the micro-sociology of violence, particularly in the field of prison violence. It does so by examining the advantages and disadvantages of sampling video data online - and looks at the video-based method in general as well as in the specific context of prison violence research. This is the first study to use the VDA method in prison violence research and it therefore fills a gap in the field of VDA research.

At the same time, the study examines the usefulness of Collins' theory of violence (2008) in the prison setting, thus in a non-public context, and it is the first study to apply this theory in the area of prison violence. The thesis analyses the interactional processes and expressions of emotion, for example postures, gestures, and facial expressions, that can be observed during conflict situations, and discusses interpretations of these processes in the focus interview groups with individuals who are familiar with the prison setting. The analysis shows that audiences in prisoner-on-prisoner fights regulate both the severity and the course of the fights. In more detail, the thesis shows that where (co-prisoner) audiences show their enthusiasm through cheers and encouragements, fights last longer, and this finding supports Collins' (2008) observations on the influence of audiences in fights.

The analysis also indicates that prison officers who display anger or aggression through shouting, giving orders, or by invading prisoners' personal space provoke prisoners to show the same type of behaviour or to use violence against the officers. Finally, the study shows that if officers show fear by struggling to control their bodily movements, it becomes possible for prisoners to take charge of the development of the situation, meaning that they become able to gain or maintain emotional dominance over officers, and to use violence against them. This dynamic between officers and prisoners are in line with Collins' (2008) ideas of how violent

interactions begin. The thesis shows that Collins' theory of violence is useful in deepening the understanding of prison violence because it focuses on the actual situations of violence, and that in combination with video footage (the VDA method), it enables the researcher to analyse and define in micro-detail the different types of behaviour that escalate and de-escalate aggression into violence. This type of analysis is of great value to the development of strategies for minimising violence in prisons, for example in officer training.

Based on the results of the study, the thesis also evaluates the potential for further research using video material from online sources such as YouTube, by assessing the impact of technical features and their significance for the analytical potential of the video data. In this way, the study contributes to a further development of the VDA method. The study is also able to present a set of practical suggestions for prison officer training based on both the theoretical and methodological findings and the essence of the discussions in the interview groups. It therefore shows the potential of using video recordings of real-life incidents in the design of this type of training. The conclusion is that Collins' theory is valuable for deepening the understanding of the elements that escalate and de-escalate potentially violent encounters between prisoners and between officers and prisoners. The study is therefore important for future development in the field of violence prevention and intervention in the prison context.

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1.0 Introduction

The present thesis addresses the topic of prison violence by use of a novel method, Video Data Analysis (VDA), while at the same time testing the applicability of one of the most substantial theoretical contributions to the field of violence studies in later years, namely that of Randall Collins, to the prison context.

Although the VDA method is fairly novel, this researcher has employed it in previous work since her undergraduate studies with both her undergraduate and master's dissertations exploring violence in the night time economy (NTE) and public spaces respectively. The undergraduate dissertation examined the effects of body postures on the maintenance of dominance and 'saving face', thus applying a Goffmanian lens to the way fights in the NTE setting play out. The VDA method was further explored in combination with Collins' theory of violence in her MSc in which it was applied to public space violence – with some incidents in NTE settings, focusing more specifically on interactional aspects of the theory, particularly the role of bystanders in the escalation and minimisation of violence whilst also assessing the utility of online sourced video data. This inspired the present thesis' aim of testing Collins' theory of violence to the non-public setting of prison violence, i.e., in a context in which the relation between actors is both pre-established and known, while also testing the uses and limitations of online video data depicting prison violence. Hence, this study both methodologically and theoretically fills a gap in existing research.

In the present study, video data of violent incidents in prisons is analysed in terms of both situational dynamics and data quality (analytical potential). Collins' theory of violence is applied and discussed in relation to the depicted incidents of violence in prisons in the UK and the US. The clips are viewed and discussed by focus group participants who are familiar with the prison context. The study thereby contributes to furthering the understanding of the dynamics leading to either escalation or defusing of conflictual encounters between prisoners and between prison officers and prisoners. The study also contributes to the methodological development of video data analysis for future VDA research, and finally the findings in both areas lead to a presentation of implications for future training of officers. The rationale behind the study is thus to produce new insight into prison violence by approaching it in a novel way - by a micro-sociological, interactional, video-based approach - for the overall purpose of contributing to intervention strategies for this important and topical issue.

While both the theory, the method, and the video data used in the present study could be applied to any geographic context, the study has a Scottish focus for several reasons; in the initial research design, data collection was to be carried out within Scottish prisons in the form of CCTV footage and incident reports and interviews with staff and prisoners - a model which was however made impossible

because of the restrictions pertaining to the Covid 19 pandemic. As a result, the approach was reconsidered more than once. The final research scenario encompasses video data from prisons from various geographic locations in the UK and the US, sampled online, and interviews with ex-prisoners who served in Scottish prisons and officers presently working in Scottish prisons – it therefore has kept Scotland as its focal point. The following is a brief account of the present climate in Scottish prisons – i.e., contextual conditions (from the point of view of this thesis) prompting attention to questions of violence and safety with an acute need for intervention and reduction strategies.

Prison violence is on the rise in the UK and in Scotland, in particular, as such there is an urgent need for violence prevention and intervention strategies and measures. A quick google search on prison violence in Scotland, reveals headlines such as ‘Chaos behind Bars’ (Rodger, 2024), ‘The alarming Americanisation of British prisons’ (Keller, 2023), ‘Prison violence 'out-of-control' as 250 staff assaulted in Scotland every year’ (Amery, 2024), ‘’Broken’ prison system sets inmates up to fail, top Scottish inspector says’ (Brookes, 2024) - to name a few. Concerns are raised not only by the press, but also by stakeholders within the Scottish prison system; the Scottish Prison Service (2023a, 2023b, 2024), the Prison Governors Association (2024), and prison staff representatives (e.g., Community, 2024). The headlines today are almost identical to those from five years ago when the present study was initiated, only the facts behind them seem to be aggravated.

Both material conditions and safety are chronically contentious issues in Scottish prisons, as elsewhere in the UK. Scotland’s (and UK’s) prisons are overcrowded (Scottish Government, 2024a) and underfunded (Brooks, 2024) – entire prison blocks being out of service due to staff shortage (Hosie, 2024). In May 2024, the prison population amounted to 8,348 which is one of the highest levels ever recorded (Scottish Government, 2024a) which is presumed to rise further in the next years. These are numbers making hyper-vigilance “a necessary part of everyday survival” as “levels of violence increase”, according to the head of the Scottish Prison Service (Adams, 2024). At a structural level, Scotland is also challenged by having the third-highest incarceration rate in Europe (147 per 100,000 capita) (scotpho.org.uk), only exceeded by Latvia and Lithuania, though still nowhere near a USA or Russia level of 541 and 300 per 100,000 capita respectively (ibid.). The reasons for this are many; amongst them a significant number held on remand due to the backlog of court cases reaching an unprecedented high number in the aftermath of the Covid 19 Pandemic (Rowland, 2024), but also a “long-term trend for longer sentences” (Watson, 2024), and a reluctance to follow the presumption against short sentences (less than 12 months), a policy introduced in 2019 to “keep less serious offenders out of jail” (ibid.). In spite also of the early release of a significant number of short-term prisoners having served 40% of their sentences – an emergency measure authorised by the Justice Secretary in July 2024 to mitigate the overcrowding issue, now made permanent by law in Scotland as of November 2024 (Scottish

Government, 2024c) - numbers are still on the rise. The projected population was mid-2024 estimated to climb towards 9,000 by the end of January 2025 (Scottish Government, 2024b), and even though the January 2025 update on prison population figures shows a stagnation (the total number per January 31 being 8,260) it still exceeds the total capacity of 8,007 by several hundred (SPS, 2025)).

Under these conditions, it is no surprise that sick leave reached a new high of 65,719 working days for 4,900 prison staff across Scotland during the first 10 months of 2024 - well *en route* to break the 2023 total record of 71,364 days (Silvester, 2025). Despite efforts to improve working conditions for officers (SPS, 2024), recruitment and retention difficulties remain, and as a consequence less experienced officers and failure to deliver key work (MacWhirter, 2022) are now factors completing the vicious circle of a dysfunctional criminal justice system. A number of studies from the last several decades agree that lack of experience in officers is directly linked to increased risk of violence (Cooke, 1992; Cooke et al., 2008; Davies and Burgess, 1988; Kratcoski, 1988; Wilson and Brookes, 2021), a point which is also repeatedly addressed and corroborated by the focus group participants of the present study.

Prisoners also, and perhaps in particular, suffer from the current environment of unrest. A recent UK study from a London prison has shown that 7,7% of sentenced male prisoners suffered from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), while 16,7% suffered from Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (CPTSD), which is associated with previous, repeated trauma exposure and has anxiety, depression, psychosis and substance misuse as comorbidity (Facer-Irwin et al., 2021). The study finds that PTSD and CPTSD are often under-identified in prison settings and therefore trauma-informed care is insufficient (ibid.), a fact recognised by all main actors in the prison services (e.g., HMIP, 2008; SPS, 2023b; 2024; mwcscot.org., 2022). Previous studies have also shown that traumatisation of witnessing severe violence in prisons renders prisoners vulnerable to PTSD (prisonpolicy.org, 2020), so the number of prisoners already suffering from traumatic stress responses prior to incarceration, bringing the effects and risks of previous trauma (proneness to mental illness, victimisation or aggressive behaviour, higher risk of substance use), into the prison milieu, feeds into the spiral of increased levels of aggression and violence by sheer trauma response (ibid.).

On top of being overcrowded, underfunded, and short-staffed, Scotland's prisons additionally face challenges of an "ageing infrastructure" in which the "general condition" of prison facilities in Scotland makes them unsuited to host a "modern prison system" (SPS, 2023b, p. 4). A relevant example of this is Barlinnie, renowned as the oldest, largest, and toughest prison in Scotland. Barlinnie has thus witnessed and endured several lifetimes of changing regimes and policies within the prison system and over time has represented the whole spectrum of what makes a prison functional as well as the opposite.

Barlinnie was once a pioneer in the field of violence prevention via their flagship project, the ‘Special Unit’ (BSU) (1973-1994), designed to deal with a limited group of prisoners being “unmanageably violent towards staff in the mainstream prison system” (Nellis, 2024). Born out of a combination of a “strain of progressive thinking in the professional culture of Scottish penal practice” (Sparks, 2002, p. 562) and a pressing need to find an alternative to existing segregation and confinement units for Scotland’s most disruptive, violent, and rioting prisoners, the BSU was an experimental project, based on “enhanced levels of trust and internal self-governance” (ibid.), boasting art therapy and a radical democratic modus operandi in which staff and prisoners resolved conflicts and other issues of prison life by dialogue and community meetings - community comprising both prisoners and staff. Although the facilities hosting this experiment were not exactly state of the art (Sparks, 2002), the results were solid. During the 21 years of the Unit’s existence, the 36 prisoners serving time there, who were named the most difficult in Scotland, had, in their previous prisons, been responsible for 181 assaults but caused only two assaults and a handful of ‘serious incidents’ while in the Unit, most of which were related to cell barricading (Wilson and Brookes, 2021). Only four of the 36 were reconvicted (ibid.)

Scotland’s perhaps most notoriously difficult prisoner, Jimmy Boyle, who was serving a life sentence for murder and spent 4 years in one of the ‘cages’ of Inverness before being transferred to BSU as one of its first residents, explains the positive change he underwent in Barlinnie as follows; “[w]hat made the Unit unlike any other place was the way staff and prisoners were allowed and encouraged to sit down and talk together. This was the single most important factor of the Unit” (Boyle, 1984, cit. in Wilson and Brookes, 2021, p. 37). The BSU, thus, became a demonstration of “the general proposition that relations between staff and prisoners are at the heart of the whole prison system, and that control and “security flow from getting that relationship right”” (Fitzgerald, 1987, in Wilson and Brookes, 2021, p. 36). This correlates with the findings of the present study with both ex-prisoners and officers pointing to dialogue as a key factor in minimising conflict. The success of the experiment which brought about significant change in the behaviour of all of its inmates has been attributed to the following features of the unit; “high levels of staff experience and training”, “improved staff inmate communication”, “lower levels of security and control”, and unlimited visiting rights which in return enabled prisoners to absorb “different values” (Wilson and Brookes, 2021, p. 36) and to distance themselves from their “violent subculture” (Cooke 1989, p. 141). The project was representative of the change in regime (Cooke, 1992) that came into existence during those years - moving the focus and explanations of violent behaviour from individual, psychopathological factors to situational, environmental, and contextual aspects (Cooke, 1989; Cooke et al., 2008).

Although the specifics of the project would be irreproducible and perhaps also unfathomable today, the universal message that emanated from it continues to

resonate with scholarly findings that being treated humanely and with respect, and not least perceiving the treatment as reasonable, fair, and respectful is a key factor in preventing and minimising violence in prisons (Hulley et al., 2012; Liebling, 2011; Sparks, 2002; Sparks et al. 1996; Treadwell and Gooch, 2022; Wilson and Brookes, 2021). Being treated humanely and with respect is also recurrently stressed in the focus group discussions of the present work and echoes Cooke's statement that "difficult prisoners are only difficult in certain settings" (1992, p. 24). As to the reasons for the closure of a unit which had proven efficient in rehabilitating the most violent offenders, but also produced ambivalent reactions and evaluations, several authors contend that it was due to limits to what could be seen as acceptable both politically and administratively as well as in the eyes of the public (e.g., Sparks, 2002; Wilson and Brookes, 2021).

Barlinnie, today, still stands out as an example, albeit as one of the deteriorating conditions of and in Scottish prisons, now running at a 140% capacity (Brooks, 2024) despite being deemed unfit to serve as a prison. With a replacement plan supposed to have been accomplished by now but recently postponed until 2027, Barlinnie continues to have one of the largest numbers of violent incidents in Scottish prisons with 3,000 attacks since 2015/16, including the most severe incidents along with a 12% rate of prisoner-on-staff assaults (Amery, 2024). Staff sickness is currently a serious issue at Barlinnie (insidetime.org., 2025) and the prison also holds the dubious record of having the largest number of one-man cells used for double occupancy, which apart from raising human rights concerns also is acknowledged by the SPS to impact prisoners' mental and physical health (SPS, 2023b). Several studies show that negative effects of cell-sharing are especially prevalent in overcrowded conditions which is associated with lack of safety and higher levels of bullying and assault - in short, increased levels of violence (Muirhead et al., 2021).

For all Scottish prisons, the 2023-2024 *Scottish Prison Service Report* describes an increase in all types of assaults in prison compared to the year 2022-2023 (SPS, 2024, p. 32-33). During the year 2023-24, which saw an average Scottish prison population of 7859 individuals, a total of 31,110 incidents under the category 'breach of discipline' took place, of which 'assaults' constituted 2,024 episodes. Of these assaults, nine were categorised as serious prisoner-on-staff assaults (up by five from the previous year) and 114 as serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults (ibid.). Approximately 300 and 1600 were 'minor or no injury assaults' on officers and prisoners respectively, 'minor' defined as incidents in which the involved need only minor or no treatment. 4,771 incidents were recorded under the category "intentionally or recklessly endangering the health or personal safety of others" (ibid., p. 125). 3628 incidents were related to "consuming/taking/injecting/inhaling or concealing an unauthorised or prohibited article" (ibid., p. 124), substantiating later years' concerns regarding substance use/abuse amongst prisoners - especially "the unpredictability of behaviours" from use of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) "leading to increased episodes of violence" causing "significant harm to both

prisoners and staff" (MWSCOT.ORG., 2022, p. 44). These concerns constitute a recurrent mention in the focus group discussions of the present study, too.

Of particular interest to the focus of the present study is also that the SPS, which continues to "manage individuals who present an extreme risk of violence" finds that prisoner-on-prisoner violence is "a contributing factor" in assaults on staff - 26% of this type of assaults taking place during staff intervention in relation to "disruptive behaviour" displayed by prisoners (SPS, 2023c, p. 26). This supports this researcher's suggestion and part of the rationale behind the present study that there is a need to analyse and address officer intervention at a situational and micro-dynamic level in order to identify behaviour that works to minimise violence – and behaviour to avoid in order to prevent conflictual encounters from developing into violence.

The need for action is, as described in the above paragraphs, strongly supported by all stakeholders of the Scottish prison system and further exemplified by the fact that currently seven out of Scotland's 15 prisons have declared a 'red risk status' (Prison Governors Association, 2024), and the latest HMIPS scrutiny makes a number of recommendations, some of which are required to be carried out with immediate effect for several prisons (HMIPS, 2024). The inspection report describes how one prison displayed a "defeatist attitude amongst staff about the prospects of ever being in a position to improve this situation". For this particular prison, the inspectorate required that a "violence reduction strategy" be implemented and staff competency training be increased to the required level (p. 22). These recommendations and concerns speak directly to the aims and relevance of the present study.

Both politically and institutionally, plans are in place to curb the current crisis; the Scottish Government will be investing £881.1 millions in Scotland's prisons in 2025/26 (Amery, 2024) and the SPS have set goals for the improvement of prison life for Scottish prisoners in terms of both safety, security, and suitability of terms of their incarceration period (SPS, 2023b). These include a better and more individualised health care programme, a trauma-informed approach, in which "complex behaviours" are seen as "potential responses to trauma-related triggers" (SPS, 2023b, p. 25), better mental health and addiction recovery management amongst other measures. Violence reduction *per se*, is however only addressed at a general level (ibid., p. 19), and until any of the described measures, indirectly contributing to exactly that, bear fruit, there is an urgent need to deal with prison violence in alternative ways.

It is against this backdrop that the current research has been conceived. Shifting the focus from the political, structural, and infrastructural context, this thesis zooms in on the situational dynamics which enable violence to occur. In this, it follows the lead of relatively recent approaches to the study of violence and applies them to the prison context.

1.1 Introducing an alternative approach to researching violence

Physical violence has long been examined and sought prevented or minimised by focusing on motivations as well as cultural, structural, and social factors. Youth and street gang violence, for example, is often explained via "relative deprivation, gun culture, and peer group influences" (Nassauer, 2022a, p. 43), whereas protest violence often relies on explanations of motivations based on, for example, grievances, vulnerable political systems (Nassauer, 2015), inequality, and ethnic divisions (Bramsen, 2018). Although explanations of physical violence in prison are manifold and cannot quickly or easily be summarised, violence in prisons has similarly been explained through theories of prison (sub)culture, herein

> "the influences of the prison environment (including correctional officers), particular background characteristics of offenders (including personal needs), (…) on an individual's adaptation to incarceration" (Wooldredge, 2020, p. 175).

For example, prison violence has been explored as a reaction to perceptions of unfair prison regimes (Bottoms, 1999; Sparks et al., 1996), in relation to interpersonal relationships between prisoners and between officers and prisoners (Edgar et al., 2003a; 2003b) as well as in relation to the prison's physical and emotional spaces (Crewe et al., 2014). Overcrowding (MacDonald, 2018), use of drugs and psychoactive substances (PS) (Gooch and Treadwell, forthcoming; SPS, 2023c; 2024), poor mental health (Facer-Irwin et al., 2023), and staffing issues (Silvester, 2025; SPS, 2024) have more recently been highlighted as reasons for rising levels of violence in prisons as detailed in section 1.0.

In the last two decades, however, a different approach to understanding physical violence has emerged. Arguing that drives or motivations and social, structural, and cultural factors cannot explain what leads to violence, micro-sociologists challenge contextual (macro) explanations of violence. Instead, they hold that "situational dynamics are key to the emergence of violence" (Nassauer, 2022a, p. 41). This means that in order to understand why violence occurs, it must be studied in a way that allows for analysis of interactional dynamics leading to the outbreak of violence. One of the most renowned scholars to examine and theorise physical violence in this way is Randall Collins. Using visual material such as photos and video clips, Collins (2008) has conducted observations of violent interaction. Based on the visual data, but further drawing on a range of (mostly) qualitative studies of different types of violence as well as anecdotal evidence, Collins (ibid.) presents a theory which he argues can explain how situations, ranging from bar brawls to wars, turn violent through just a few interactional processes. The theory focuses on the emergence of violent *situations* rather than violent individuals and seeks to understand the circumstances under which violence occurs - thus identifying behaviours leading up to (or averting) violent conflict. Visual data, i.e., photos and videos, aid this task by

allowing for insights into what such interactional processes and circumstances look like in real-life situations of violence. Although Collins is not the only scholar to approach deviance, violence or criminogenic behaviour and interaction from a situational perspective, work of other scholars like Bottoms (1999; 2013), Felson (2009), and Wikström, (2004; 2019; 2020) primarily seek to explain *why* people act as they do, meaning that they build factors like morality and perception into their theoretical accounts. Wikström's situational action theory, for example, is one of the key theories to stress the significance of the interaction between individuals and the environment (or situation) within which they act.

The effort to explain *why* people make the choices they do, however, means that the theory focuses on morally oriented actions;

> "To explain the fact that individuals with similar crime propensities may or may not misbehave within a given context, the theory attributes primary causal relevance to the "perception choice process," that is, the way in which different individuals perceive and frame the specific setting in which they are acting" (Wikström, 2014, p. 72).

Even if Collins in his earlier work - e.g., in his contribution to 'conflict sociology' (Collins and Annett, 1977) or to sociological traditions (Collins, 1994) - strives to integrate the micro and the macro, his theory of violence (2008) rests solely on the situational dynamics which allows for a visual analysis of violent encounters.
His focus on the micro-details of violent interaction and use of visual data, circumvents the 'whys' of violence, and focus is instead on the 'hows' - and this is what makes for a novel approach to understanding the course of violence.

Following Collins' theory of violence (2008), a new research trend emerged, creating a new field of violence studies (Nassauer, 2022a) as well as a video data focused methodology to aid the enquiry into micro-factors in the emergence of violence. Recognising the increasing levels of recording of social life via phones, drones, and public space CCTV, Nassauer and Legewie (2021), argue that a pool of visuals has become available that depict social life, and violence in particular, as it unfolds. Recordings allow for observations of natural human behaviour and can thus be used;

> "to trace situations or events step-by-step to explain a process or outcome, focusing on aspects such as peoples' interactions, movements, fields of vision, exchanges of glances or gestures, and actors' facial expressions and body postures" (ibid., p. 136).

To examine such aspects, Nassauer and Legewie developed an "analytic strategy" (ibid.), labelled Visual Data Analysis (VDA) which is still being developed;

> "VDA resembles the tradition of visual studies with its prominent use of visual data. It is similar to ethnography in its focus on situational dynamics. Like experimental behavio[u]ral studies in psychology, it relies on detailed analysis of recorded individual and social behavio[u]rs. It resembles multimodal interaction analysis in its goal of analy[s]ing situations on all relevant interactional dimensions" (ibid., p. 138).

The VDA method has been employed in studies of criminal conduct, for example robberies (Nassauer 2018a; Mosselman et al. 2018; Nassauer et al., 2019), to examine the impact of bodily behaviour on how robberies unfold. It has been used to study policing and escalation of violence between protesters and police in protests (Nassauer 2015; 2018b), and demonstrations (Bramsen 2017; 2018), as well as the role that bystanders play in escalation of violence in the night-time economy (Levine et al., 2011), the risk for intervening bystanders (Liebst et al., 2018; Lindegaard et al., 2022), and how bystanders intervene into violent conflicts in public spaces (Bloch et al., 2018; Liebst et al., 2019a; 2019b; 2024).

Although the literature examining the interactionist perspectives of violence using video data is somewhat limited, the field has been expanding over the last decade, especially in the last 5 years. VDA allows researchers to analyse how, when, and where violence flares up or fizzles out by granting them access to footage of real-life altercations that were not previously available to researchers. Thus, video analysis is becoming increasingly popular and is also employed in contexts that are unrelated to violence. Examples of such settings include learning and teaching spaces, organisational and medical spaces as well as jury deliberations, and police interrogations (Nassauer, 2022a). Video analysis in these settings have been used to study how communication works between different parties within organisations (LeBaron et al., 2018), how recordings aid training of doctors through video reviews of their own work (Asan and Montague, 2014), how gesturing can aid students' learning (Alibali and Mitchell, 2007), the impact of different interrogation tactics (Alison et al., 2013), and the impact of and reactions to jurors' questions in court (Diamond et al., 2006). Whilst none of these studies examine the dynamics of violent encounters, they bear evidence to the fact that video studies are also used to examine interactions in private spheres or non-public spaces. However, *violence* in non-public spaces is as of yet much less studied and herein lies the gap which the present research seeks to fill by exploring violence in the prison setting.

It is the aim of the present thesis to contribute to the emerging field of VDA which promises new insights into violent interaction that could prove useful not only in understanding the DNA of prison violence but also in scaffolding intervention and prevention strategies. For this purpose, the project employs video data, sampled from YouTube - the source resorted to due to the mentioned restrictions of the pandemic - and focus group interviews with Scottish prison officers and ex-prisoners having served their sentences in Scotland. The interviews are centred around the video clips, with the participants viewing and discussing interpretations of the clips before debating further aspects of participating in and experiencing violence in the prison setting. To sum up, the thesis examines the applicability of Collins' (2008) theory of violence in relation to prison violence and assesses the extent to which video footage aids the insight into the roles that prisoners and prison officers play in amplifying and minimising violent interaction. The findings generated in the analysis constitute the foundation for another contribution of the present work, namely

practical implications for prison officer training by use of video data. The thesis is structured as follows:

1.2 Chapter overview

Chapter 2: *Literature review*

Firstly, this chapter outlines the theoretical foundation of the thesis, namely Collins' (2008) theory of violence. The theory outline starts with Collins' (2004) Interaction Ritual (IR) theory, as his violence theory (2008) builds on concepts from this. The theory section then highlights the key aspects and concepts of the violence theory that are used for the video data analysis before presenting the critique of Collins' theory of violence. Secondly, the literature review outlines video studies in the fields of criminal conduct, protest policing, and third-party involvement in public-space fights. These studies constitute the methodological inspiration of the present study and are therefore explained with an emphasis on their methodological contributions. The part of the literature review on video studies is rounded off with a brief presentation of the limited critique of the VDA methodology in existing studies. Thirdly, the literature review touches on explanations of violence in the prison setting; this section of the literature review first sets out the difference between the micro-sociological and criminological understanding of 'situation' before touching on existing (macro) explanations of prison violence in order to explain how a micro-sociological approach can be useful in enquiring into violence in prisons at an interactional level. The literature review is then concluded by a presentation of the research questions.

Chapter 3: *Research design and methodology*

This chapter first outlines the VDA-approach, drawing on studies highlighted in the literature review that promote and develop VDA as a method whilst also referencing literature that deals with VDA from a purely methodological standpoint. The section thus presents the methodological foundation of the thesis. The chapter then describes the research design, highlighting the changes that the design has undergone in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and explaining the challenges of data collection in these altered circumstances. Then a presentation of the data is outlined along with reflections on sampling, on how data is analysed, and finally on the limitations of the chosen research methods and the challenges met in the field.

Chapter 4: *Ethics - Online video data, focus groups, and co-viewing*

Chapter 4 deals with the ethical challenges and considerations of working with visual and sensitive data. The chapter presents a discussion of key aspects of the ethical debate within the field of VDA, highlighting implications and how these have been mitigated in the present project. The chapter also discusses ethical issues of doing

research in the prison setting, including how discussions of sensitive matters, i.e., participating in and experiencing violence, were dealt with. Finally, the chapter presents brief reflections on researcher well-being in relation to working with visuals depicting violence and working in an emerging field.

Chapter 5: *Prisoner-on-prisoner violence – Staged fights, trivial matters, and tension release*

The chapter is the first of two empirical chapters and examines prisoner-on-prisoner incidents. The chapter is structured around the video data and divided into two parts. The first part contains four sections that each presents a video clip transcript, followed by three sections; the first one outlines the video technical implications of each clip to highlight video features that aid and limit video analysis of behaviour and other situational dynamics. The second section outlines the situational analysis of each video clip; how interactional processes play out and impact the way in which the violence unfolds whilst also explaining how or if the observed dynamics correspond with Collins' (2008) theory of violence. The third section presents the focus group interpretations of the clips with an emphasis on how those who have experienced similar incidents interpret the behavioural clues of the depicted prisoners and officers – again to either corroborate or challenge the researcher interpretation. The second part of this chapter presents discussions of key aspects uncovered in the video analysis, examining these against existing literature to highlight what video analysis of data sampled from YouTube can say about the impact of different actors' expressions of emotions and behaviours on how fights between prisoners unfold.

Chapter 6: *Violence involving officers - High emotional energy, catalysts, and potential for learning*

Following an identical structure to Chapter 5, Chapter 6 is divided into two parts; the first part presents four clips depicting violence involving prison officers, highlighting technical features, situational dynamics, and focus group reflections for each clip. The second part reflects, in particular, on how prison officer behaviour in violence threatening situations impacts escalation of violence between prisoners and prison officers, relating these aspects to existing work on dealing with conflictual or violent situations both inside and outside prison. Also in this section, reflections on the challenges that prison officers meet when dealing with violent prisoners, e.g., psychoactive substances, are described. This part thus lays the foundation for the (indicative) practical suggestions for prisoner officer training, presented in the final chapter.

Chapter 7: *Collins, YouTube data, and implications for prison violence*

This chapter consists of three parts; the first part discusses the applicability of Collins' (2008) theory of violence to the prison setting, with a special focus on how the interactional processes that Collins argues are key to the occurrence of violence play out in incidents of prison violence, between prisoners as well as between prisoners and prison officers. This part also presents reflections on the role of the different actors present during violent incidents and discusses the impact of interactional dynamics between actors on the course of the violence, thus providing reflections on the research questions. The second part details methodological challenges and advantages of working with YouTube data visualising prison violence and presents methodological suggestions for future research involving data sources from YouTube. The final part of this chapter is a presentation of the practical implications of the findings; namely recommendations on how video data can aid prison officer training.

2. 0 Literature review

This chapter first outlines the thesis' theoretical foundation, namely Collins' theory of violence (2008), describing how the theory came into existence and developed over time (Collins 2013; 2019; 2020; 2022). It also presents key critiques of the theory before moving on to an outline of how the method that followed, namely VDA, is being used in studies of violence, criminal conduct, and protest policing. These studies have laid the methodological foundation for the present project and aided the development of the novel methodology. The VDA section is rounded off with brief critical reflections on the video method. Following this, an outline of relevant prison violence literature is presented, in which also aspects of conflict rising and conflict turning violent are described before finally presenting the thesis' research questions.

2.1 Theoretical foundation - Randall Collins, interactions, and violence

The foundation of Collins' Theory of Violence (2008) stems from his work 'Interactional Ritual Chains' (IRC) (2004) and follows the idea that focus should be on the situation rather than the individual. This means that rather than focusing on motivations and contexts, focus should be on the interactions that make up a situation. To contextualise Collins' notion of violence and explicate the understanding of violence employed in the present work, it seems relevant to briefly note how violence is understood in the field micro-sociological or VDA.

Gorringe (2006) flags the issue of its definition and argues that the notion of violence entails a "broad social understanding" (p. 118) with no consensus as to how it can or should be explained. He suggests that definitions range from the physical acts of harm to explanations involving the wider implications of acts of physical harm. In a similar vein, Jackman (2002) suggests that violence can be defined as acts which threaten to or may cause injury, physically or verbally, and with physical, material, social, or psychological consequences to follow, again suggesting that the notion of violence ranges from interactions and actions to the wider implications and social contexts of the phenomenon. Stanko (2000) defines violence as "as any behaviour by an individual that intentionally threatens, attempts to inflict, or does cause, physical, sexual or psychological harm to others or to her/himself" (p. 246). Seemingly, some consensus exists in the view that violence does not just consist of harmful actions, but its effects or consequences are also encompassed in its definition.

Collins, however, operates with a narrow definition of physical violence that focuses on the interactions and emotional dynamics of the moments of (physically) violent situations. Arguably, the use of visual data to study violent situations only allows for a focus on the violent interactions themselves - and the moments immediately before

and after. In essence, violence, for Collins, is defined in terms of situational and emotional processes and, although he does not explicitly define the concept of violence, his focus is on the actual violence actions and the interactions leading to it. The present project similarly works with an understanding of violence that is focused on physical harm, i.e., "behaviour involving physical force that can hurt, damage, or kill a person" (Bramsen, 2017, p. 1) - thus, physical violence on an interactional-situational axis.

2.1.1 Interactions, mutual focus, and emotional energy

The following sections describe relevant aspects of IRC that are foundational to Collins' (2008) theory of violence before explaining the details of the theory. This is followed by a discussion of the critique of Collins' theoretical contributions.

Collins (2004) argues that "[a] theory of interaction ritual (IR) and interaction ritual chains is above all a theory of situations" (p. 3). Previous theories can be said to have been part of a dualism characterised by either a macro-structural approach or one of over-individualised accounts, whereas Collins proposes an understanding of social phenomena through the dynamics of a situation. Situation, in his case, comprises the individuals "who come[] into it" (ibid., p. 4) as well as the encounters and interactions that occur in it. Collins borrows 'material' from Goffman and Durkheim to create the theoretical foundation for two of the main concepts of his theory, namely *mutual focus* (or *entrainment*) and *emotional energy* (EE). Goffman (1967) argues that encounters centre around a mutual focus or object; he uses the example of conversations to illustrate how mutual focus between participants works, suggesting that they have certain 'social rules' such as keeping the conversation going and reacting appropriately to humour or harms. Following the rules allows for a 'successful' conversation to occur, whereas disregarding them may result in a 'failed' encounter. Collins, to conceptualise interaction rituals, builds on Durkheim (1912/1964) who theorised *collective effervescence*; a sense of solidarity, shared emotional energy, and shared awareness occurring when individuals come together over shared symbols and sentiments, producing an intensity that cannot arise otherwise as for instance seen in a fist fight or a religious experience. The two concepts of mutual entrainment and emotional energy are central to the IR theory because IR entails "the process in which participants develop a mutual focus of attention and become entrained in each other's bodily micro-rhythms and emotion" (Collins, 2004, p. 47).

Collins argues that IR has four 'ingredients' which can also be understood as 'initiating conditions', i.e., dynamics that initiate interaction;

> "1. Two or more people are physically assembled in the same place, so that they affect each other by their bodily presence, whether it is in the foreground of their conscious attention or not.
> 2. There are boundaries to outsiders so that participants have a sense of who is taking part and who is excluded.

3. People focus their attention upon a common object or activity, and by communicating this focus to each other become mutually aware of each other's focus of attention.
4. They share a common mood or emotional experience" (ibid., p. 47).

He argues that these ingredients feed into each other, but that the two most important are mutual focus and mood. Arguably, what this suggests is that individuals impact each other when coming together through displays of emotion, which strengthen through collective effervescence. Collins (2004, p. 49) further highlights four outcomes of IRs, namely (1) "group solidarity", (2) "emotional energy" which involves feelings of elation, enthusiasm, confidence, and strength, (3) "symbols that represent the group" which refers to "visual icons, words, [and] gestures", - what Durkheim saw as sacred objects (ibid.) - and (4) sense of solidarity and morality or emotional energy (EE). Belonging to a group entails that shared symbols are respected and defended against outsiders or those violating the group's solidarity. Collins argues that EE is essentially an outcome of interactions between individuals and that it further refers to the solidarity and enthusiasm they generate between them. Recent work "problematizes two key assumptions about interaction encounters"; the first one, that they require physical co-presence of participants in an encounter; and the second, that those participants must necessarily be human (Henry, 2021, p. 1067). As the present work argues, and presents in the findings, the rise in electronic communications and digital environments does raise the question of whether some of the assumptions underpinning the emphasis on face-to-face encounters in Collins' work are sustainable.

Whether in person or mediated, however, the essence of Collins' IR theory (2004) is that interactions can be understood as rituals. Collins is, again, drawing on Goffman's (1967) conceptualisation of everyday interactions, wherein individuals follow common rules or procedures, e.g., greetings or conversations. Rituals also refer to larger formal interactions, such as religious ceremonies, as theorised by Durkheim. Collins (2004) suggests that the IR can be divided into informal, i.e., everyday interactions or "natural rituals", and formal, i.e., formally 'scripted' or "stereotyped procedures" of for example ceremonies (p. 50). He further argues that both types of ritual may result in shared symbols and feelings of membership. Whilst successful rituals result in entrainment, rituals – whether formal or informal - can also fail where interactions do not result in entrainment or where levels of EE remain low. Collins argues that this happens due to 'missing ingredients, such as "lack of shared initial emotion" (ibid., p. 52), meaning that "[s]uccessful rituals are exhilarating; failed rituals are energy draining" (ibid., p. 53). Whilst violence is often considered a breakdown in communication and interaction (Felson, 2009; Cooney, 2009), violence in a 'Collinsian' sense would still be seen as a successful ritual if fight participants become "entrained in each other's emotions and bodily rhythms, and caught up in a common focus of attention" (2008, p. 19). Like most successful interactions, where participants share focus that creates entrainment, violent situations entail a "focus on the fighting itself, on the situation as a violent one, and sometimes an emotional

entrainment in which the hostility, anger, and excitement of each side gets the other more angry and excited" (ibid., p. 82). What Collins hints at here, is likely the significance of capturing *the sensory experience* (Warr, 2021) of those engaged in violent encounters.

2.1.1 Violence as an interaction ritual

The concepts of emotional energy (EE) and mutual focus are central to violence as they create the foundation of any interactional ritual (Collins, 2004; 2008). Collins (2008) does, however, also argue that violence is difficult to perform as it involves both confrontational tension and fear. He holds that the difficulty of violent interactions stems from the tension that arises when interactions are antagonistic; in 'normal' interactions, EE and entrainment come from a focus on and enthusiasm towards shared symbols, whereas the solidarity and purpose is not shared by everyone in violent or conflict interactions - herein lies the tension that arguably causes confrontation. Thus, for the interaction ritual that is violence to be 'successful', fight participants have to overcome the so-called *confrontational tension and fear barrier* (ct/f-barrier). As Collins puts it; "[s]uccessful violence battens on confrontational tension/fear as one side appropriates the emotional rhythm as dominator and the other gets caught in it as victim" (2008, p. 19). Whilst the IRC theory suggests that successful interactions result in all individuals coming away from the interaction with feelings of, for example, enthusiasm and strength, Collins seems to suggest that "[t]hose individuals who are good at violence are those who have found a way to circumvent confrontational tension/fear, by turning the emotional situation to their own advantage and to the disadvantage of their opponent" (ibid., p. 20).

Most conflicts end in "bluster and bluff" (ibid., p. 21) because most individuals are unable to overcome the ct/f barrier, and because violence goes "against the grain of normal interaction rituals" (ibid., p. 20). Given this, Collins theorises key mechanisms which can be seen as aiding in overcoming the ct/f barrier in conflicts that *do* turn violent. Collins refers to these as 'pathways around the barrier' (elaborated in the section below). Additionally, Collins considers the role of audiences or crowds, and stresses the importance of crowd dynamics, especially in relation to violent situations being prolonged. This next section outlines the key mechanisms (or pathways) which are not only at the forefront of Collins' theory of violence but equally create part of the analytical foundation of the present thesis.

2.1.2 Pathways to violence

Collins' (2008) theory encompasses violence ranging from interpersonal one-on-one bar fights to wars and covers interactional patterns and processes relating to violence involving both the public and trained police and military, thus individuals with varying degrees of fight competences and experiences. It should be noted that the present thesis is concerned only with interpersonal violence in small groups of

individuals. It does involve prison officers who have received some level of training to deal with violent prisoners, but this does not necessarily translate into combat or fight competences nor to an ability to easily overcome ct/f.

Collins argues that although violence is often portrayed as competent, brave, evenly matched, and contagious, real-life violence is more often carried out incompetently, particularly where individuals are face-to-face. The incompetence stems from the fear that fight participants experience both in the lead-up to and during situations of violence; Collins holds that the fear is not about getting hurt or hurting others, but that "[t]he fundamental tension (…) is a struggle of opposing action tendencies within oneself" (ibid., p. 82). Unlike most interaction rituals, violence relies on what Collins labels as "non-solidarity entrainment" (ibid.), which generates a fear of going against another individual and rejecting the 'propensities to fall into solidarity with that person'. It is in this dynamic, he argues, that the tension zone lies, meaning that violence is never inevitable, as its actual occurrence is always a contingent outcome of situational dynamics.

For violence to be the outcome of a conflict situation, fight participants must manage to find a way around the barrier through certain *pathways* - or mechanisms. The first such pathway is *forward panic* which occurs when the tension and fear are prolonged and build up over time, e.g., where the police are chasing a suspect by car for a significant period before apprehending them. Collins claims that forward panic sets in where there is a shift from passive to active; when the tension of the waiting or the passivity is released, the individual experiences an emotional rush. He further argues that "[i]t resembles a panic, and indeed the physiological components are similar" (ibid., p. 85), thus the emotional rush resulting from the build-up causes a release into a "frenzied attack" (ibid., p. 89). Forward panic also often results in 'overkill', i.e., perpetrators beating their victim even after they have fallen to the ground. Collins argues that those experiencing forward panic feel an adrenalin rush as well as fury or rage which allow them to go into a frenzy. He also likens the forward panic experience to tunnel vision or an emotional tunnel (ibid., Chapter 3).

The tunnel aspect is further elaborated in Collins' later work (2013), in which he suggests that those finding themselves in the "tunnel of violence" (p. 137), experience a state of altered, violent consciousness which may last minutes, hours, or days. Thus, the *tunnels* are divided into short (minutes), medium (hours), and long (days) ones; the short tunnels may occur during robberies, bar fights, and police shootouts and this type of violence is "impulsive and unskilled; fighters have barely made it into the mouth of the tunnel, where they aim their blows or shots under high tension and then are precipitated back out of the tunnel by the emotional tension" (ibid., p. 138). The medium tunnels on the other hand include school massacres and domestic abuse, and "depend on stronger mechanisms which enable perpetrators to keep up their action, overcoming ct/f or transmuting it into repetitive violence" (ibid.). It should be noted here that these mechanisms are not described in detail but

generally refer to the physiological mechanisms of the ct/f, i.e., “the flood of adrenaline and cortisol, the extremely high heartbeat, the narrowing of perceptual consciousness to the violent action or some part of it” (ibid., p. 139). The long tunnels are seen in killing sprees, riots, and could extend to involve sustained, extreme violence in warfare. Whilst not clearly defining the mechanisms that lead to this extended tunnel, it is seemingly a prolonging of the above mentioned ct/f mechanisms – although the physiological effects are stronger during short and medium tunnels. Collins contemplates the explanations for long tunnels and continuous violence (lasting longer than several weeks) but concludes that further empirical work is needed to determine both the physiological and thus micro-sociological aspects that allow for individuals to stay in the tunnel for extended periods of time. Some of these aspects are picked up on in his latest work from 2022, but they are not relevant to the present thesis in which smaller scale violence is the subject of analysis.

The second pathway around the ct/f barrier is the *weak victim* pathway. Collins (2008) argues that the most prominent way around the barrier is attacking a weak or weaker victim. ‘Weak’ does not only refer to a smaller, physically weaker opponent or an opponent that is unable to hurt the perpetrator or aggressor, but also considers the ‘situationally’ weak, i.e., where the aggressor is able to initiate and control the direction of the interaction. He further claims that “[s]uccessful aggression is action no longer at cross-purposes, but action that becomes coordinated; aggressor and victim get into a particular kind of entrainment, where one takes the leading role and the other responds to it” (ibid., p. 135). Thus, the aggressor experiences an emotional momentum because the victim is caught in the tension, which in turn allows the aggressor to fully dominate the situation and creates a “one-sided flow” (ibid.). One-sided attacks are possible, because, as Collins also notes, the aggressor may become entrained in their own actions and emotions, a phenomenon referred to as *self-entrainment*, which occurs because the aggressor becomes emotionally aroused due to the momentum that comes with dominating the situation. In a practical sense, the weak victim pathway is a process in which the victim is not fighting or attempting to fight back but struggling to do so. This interactional pattern is often seen in muggings, domestic abuse, and bullying.

The weak victim pathway differs from forward panic in that forward panic requires a build-up and release which is what sends the aggressor into a frenzy, whereas the weak victim pathway relies on the aggressor and victim to take on specific roles; the aggressor dominates the situation, and the victim struggles to break through the tension and fear. Both pathways entail asymmetrical entrainment which is arguably a prerequisite for violent interaction – at least in situations of ad hoc violence.

Under the third pathway, *social containment*, there are two sub-pathways, namely *staged fights* and *violence as entertainment*. Staged violence differs from *ad hoc* violence or conflict turning violent, because staged fights are regulated and to some

extent restricted, making the ct/f barrier easier to overcome. Moreover, staged fights also often entail an audience which works to enact regulations and restrictions – or rules. As Collins notes, "[t]he audience not only influences whether a fight will be serious, mild, or abortive, but it also determines whether it is in the fair-fight mode" (ibid., p. 203). It should be noted that 'fair fight' does not necessarily refer to evenly matched and evenly skilled, but rather fair as in regulated and following certain (unwritten) rules. In a fair fight, the ct/f barrier is more easily overcome because the fight is controlled, e.g., audiences ensure that "rituals and limitations" are respected (ibid., p. 198). Audiences signal starting and stopping points as a way of regulating the violence - and may also work to prolong fights, especially by promoting enthusiasm, e.g., through cheering.

As is the case with the aforementioned pathways around the ct/f barrier, it is not (only) a fear of getting hurt that prevents fighters from overcoming the barrier, but a reluctance to go against the interaction conventions. Regulation or rituals help fighters overcome the ct/f barrier because violence is the *expected outcome* of staged fights. The involved individuals, therefore, are neither going against 'normal' interaction rituals nor are they experiencing a cross-purpose of interaction. Collins also suggests that;

> "Above all, the focus is on the social membership shared by fighters by virtue of these rituals; and on the elite social standing of those who enact the ritualism. There is much micro-interactional concern for appearing properly before an audience, and thereby rising above the audience" (ibid., p. 211).

This means that where audiences are present, the focus is not on the violent interaction itself but rather on the fighters' performance and that is the reason for the tension being relieved. Collins further claims that audiences who are focused and enthusiastic tend to promote more serious fights, whereas less focused audiences result in reluctance to fight. Additionally, smaller audiences may also reduce willingness to fight, whereas larger audiences promote (fight) enthusiasm. In this way larger and enthusiastic audiences 'elevate' the fighters "into the emotional cent[re] of attention" which creates solidarity between the fighters and thus through "common charge of EE", the fighters are able to get past the ct/f barrier (ibid.). Collins argues that fighters may initially experience "emotional inequality" (ibid.), meaning that they fall into a rhythm of dominator and victim (as is the case in ad hoc violence), but through regulation by the audience, such inequality evens out towards the end-stages of the fights.

Collins unpacks the notion of audiences playing a crucial role in whether fights happen or not and expands on the mechanisms that allow for supportive audiences. Two points are important here, namely prior announcement of fights and social ties. Audiences who assemble ad hoc, e.g., because they happen to be around when a fight breaks out, are less likely to be of a large size and are also less likely to have

pre-established ties. Fights which have been announced, however, are more likely to draw sizeable crowds in which audiences consist of networks, have a collective identity, and the fights involve known fighters. Thus, scheduled fights with audiences consisting of groups with pre-established ties tend to last longer and be more severe.

Collins also notes that "[s]ome audiences promote staged fair fights; others cheer any kind of fight at all, and may join in palpably unfair fights" (ibid., p. 237). This suggests that staged fights may not always be fair. Whilst not discussed in much detail by Collins, he does point to audiences as regulators in the sense of intervening to break up fights or mediate in violent situations (ibid.). This aspect is one of the key themes for a number of VDA scholars (Bloch et al., 2019; Levine et al., 2011; Liebst et al., 2018; 2019a; 2019b), potentially because analysis of audience (or bystander) dynamics is less dependent on facial expressions and more on bodily movements (Levine et al., 2011), group sizes, and how bystanders work together (Bloch et al., 2019; Liebst et al., 2018; 2019a), which implies fewer limitations regarding footage sampling. Existing VDA research on audience and bystander dynamics are outlined later in the literature review (section 2.3.3). As the findings of the present thesis (Chapter 5 and 6) will reveal, audiences also play a key role in the anatomy of fights between prisoners and between prisoner and prison officers.

The other sub-pathway of social containment, *violence as entertainment*, concerns violence for fun. Whilst some of these fights-for-entertainment may be staged, they are less likely to be fair and do not entail audience regulation. Collins (2008, p. 242pp) sees this kind of violence primarily as a crowd dynamic, wherein violence occurs as a celebration (e.g., following a sports event) rather than violence breaking out between a set of participants, with the entire crowd taking part. He argues that "events develop as crowds become emotionally entrained in the staging of the show; and are carried by the momentum of artificial conflicts into limited, if technically illegitimate, violence at dramatically appropriate moments" (ibid., pp. 242-43). Thus, violence occurs on the basis of collective effervescence because the emotional atmosphere elevates the group as a whole.

Collins further points to the concept of *moral holidays*, i.e., a feeling that 'normal' restraints can be ignored, "thus allowing for shouting, noise-making, and sometimes sexual display" (ibid., p. 243) as well as destruction of property and violence. Although the violence occurring during such moral holidays is often mild (ibid.), it suggests that those participating in it struggle to overcome the ct/f barrier, and where they do, the fighting skills remain incompetent. Kerbs and Jolley (2007), in a similar vein, note how both participating in and watching violent incidents can be perceived as a form of fun. Although they examine violence in schools, they note that adults also find violence entertaining to watch, but more importantly, they suggest that those participating in violence feel excited, hyped, and energized, which partly contrasts Collins' (2008) notion that fighters experience fear and tension, at least until the ct/f barrier has been passed – fighters may however feel the same type of

excitement once the ct/f barrier is surmounted. More closely in line with Collins, they ascertain a sense of effervescence amongst crowd members when watching a fight unfold (Kerbs and Jolley, 2007).

Collins raises an important point in relation to mood and intervention which has possible practical implications; he proposes the hypothesis that law enforcement, in Collins' case the police, is more likely to provoke violence when breaking up groups who are experiencing high levels of energy. The reason for that is that participants experience solidarity and high emotional energy, referred to as "carousing solidarity" (Collins, 2008, p. 258). Although Collins draws somewhat heavily on evidence reports and anecdotal evidence rather than visual data, he argues that police officers are unable to match both size and energy of such crowds and acts of police violence therefore provoke counter acts of violence or threatening gesturing due to group solidarity. This occurs particularly when police actions flout social conventions and/or are perceived as illegitimate (Henry 2021; Reicher et al. 2004). As such, a 'loop' of escalation is created where both sides become increasingly angry. This aspect was further elaborated in Collins' (2012) work on c-escalation (counter escalation) and d-escalation (de-escalation). The former refers to the dynamics described above and the latter points to lack of conditions which allow participants to overcome the ct/f barrier - e.g., lack of solidarity because those involved avoid conflict groups or because conflict groups are isolated or small.

What Collins (2008) is hinting at, without explicitly stating so, is that displays of high emotional energy (e.g., shouting, acts of violence, threatening gestures) serve to escalate situations of conflict or further violence (ibid., Chapter 7). Similar studies, drawing on both visual data (Nassauer, 2016) and interview data (Koerner and Staller, 2022), have shown comparable findings in the field of protest policing. These studies also highlight the potential of such findings in relation to training strategies for law enforcement. Examining similar dynamics in violent situations between prisoners and prison officers equally holds a potential for developing practical implications for prison officer training. These aspects are further detailed in Chapters 6 and 7.

2.1.3 Collins' micro-sociology in practice and expansions of micro insights

The primary goal of Collins' 2008 theory on violence was to expand the (micro-) sociological understanding of violence, but he also presents a number of practical suggestions or implications, i.e., how the micro-sociological approach to violence may be of value to violence reduction. The implications range from awareness of forward panic in police encounters and military actions to recommendations on "how to deal with bluster" (ibid., p. 464) and to learning how to recognise posturing and challenges (verbal and behavioural clues used where the antagonist does not want to fight) and distinguish these from actual threats of violence. The implications also cover suggestions for dealing with the weak victim pathway - i.e., learning which

techniques (e.g., managing EE) to use in situations of bullying, domestic abuse, or muggings. He even goes as far as to suggest that fights to defend honour (often seen in gang violence) could be replaced with “one-on-one fair fights” (ibid., p. 465), because fair fights are regulated, entail rules set by the audience (of which the fighters are aware) and thus become “self-limiting” (ibid.). As Collins himself also acknowledges, the implications are non-dogmatic; he does not claim that his suggestions should be implemented as they are presented but offers them as a way of conceiving new ideas for public and private violence prevention. Consequently, Collins refrains from detailing how these suggestions are to be enacted in real life and the practicalities remain vague.

In his 2019 work, Collins, once more, emphasises that the micro-sociological approach to violence may serve as a foundation for policy innovation or new initiatives in the field of violence prevention with the argument that “[m]icro-interactional theory points out situational conditions to avoid. And it offers micro-practices (…) to deal with threatening situations” (p. 251). This means identifying behavioural, verbal, and bodily clues that serve to escalate conflict or threatening interactions for the purpose of putting forth practical implications for the prevention of violence. Although Collins emphasises the ‘personal’ aspect, i.e., the practical implications of micro-interactional approaches in relation to ordinary people more than their implications for institutions (e.g., the police), efforts have been made to establish practical suggestions in the field of protest policing using visual data (Nassauer, 2016; 2018a), a field of study also referred to by Collins himself. This type of real-life research has demonstrated the applicability of the approach at an institutional level and in a training context as has the present study, in which practical suggestions for de-escalation to be employed in prison officer training were extracted from the findings - a topic dealt with in depth in Chapter 7 (section 7.3).

Whilst Collins (2020) does not elaborate on practical suggestions, he further stresses the importance of the micro-interactional approach – also hinting at the value of this approach for real-life situations - by focusing on the time scales of micro-conditions of violence, ranging from interpersonal violence to crowd violence and riots. In brief terms, Collins argues that different types of violence involve different time scales; *micro, meso*, and *macro.* Micro refers to hours or days, meso to weeks, months, and macro to years or decades – and even though the meso and macro part is outwith the scope of the present video data, the concept points to the importance of structural and social conditions that contribute to conflict. The micro-level ranges from one-on-one fights to organized crowds, herein small-scale conflict and protests and demonstrations which are observable in video footage. Such situations often see the micro-rhythms of entrainment and dis-entrainment, particularly where interactions are face to face. At micro-level, Collins speaks of “violence-triggering and boredom-thresholds” (2020, p., 5; 2022, p., 69), which explain how violence occurs or aborts. Where confrontations occur between individuals or smaller groups, escalation occurs within seconds of expressed hostility, e.g., an insult, and the individual initiating the

violence is most likely to win. Collins also notes that where individuals make use of posturing and challenges, i.e., where blustering occurs, fights tend to abort - blustering being a form of gesturing 'substituting' violence (Collins, 2008, p. 338), often seen in situations where violence aborts. This is the boredom threshold, and it is observed in conflict encounters that do not turn violent. He argues that where violence does not occur, the encounter breaks up within minutes because participants become bored of the repeated blustering. Group size also plays a role; Collins argues that where small groups outnumber an opponent (three-on-one to six-on-one), violence is more likely to occur. Additional individuals who may be present tend to observe, thus becoming the audience. These dynamics link to the previously outlined dynamics of overcoming the ct/f barrier and to the role of audiences and could be useful for expanding bystander training in relation to which video footage can be useful by pinpointing the kinds of dynamics to look for, e.g., to target audiences in efforts to minimise violence as suggested by Kerbs and Jolley (2007).

2.2 Critique of an interactionist approach to violence

The most common critique of Collins' interactional approach is that it overlooks motivations, social identities, and cultures, that may trigger violence (Cooney, 2009; Felson, 2009; Laitin, 2008; Wieviorka, 2011; 2014). I.e., the focus on the specific moments of violence neglects the wider factors that may contribute to violence occurring in the first place. Collins' latest work (published in 2022), however, touches on a range of different types of violence including wars, sexual violence, and sports violence and links micro-level violence to historical context, power dynamics, and social structure in an attempt to address violence in terms of macro-explanations, and to link the micro and the macro. Nevertheless, Collins maintains that violence only occurs where turning points in conflict occur.

The following two sections present a discussion of critique of Collins' (2008) theory of violence, focusing on the conceptualisations of the pathways to and interactional dynamics of violence and the evidence to support it as well as the micro/macro divide that dominates the criticism.

2.2.1 Questioning methods, evidence, and conceptualisation

Felson (2009) claims that Collins ignores theories of deviance when explaining violence, he holds that "[c]riminological theories focus on crime as deviance and generally ignore whether the crime involves harm-doing or not. Collins, on the other hand, studies violence and ignores whether it is deviant or not." (p. 578). Felson goes on to argue that to understand violence, one has to draw on criminological theories to highlight the reasons "why people break rules and why they engage in deliberate harm doing" (ibid.). This ties in with understandings of legitimate and illegitimate uses of violence; "[w]e approve of acts of self-defence and some acts of retaliation. We approve of harm-doing committed by individuals acting as agents of

social control, and so we call it punishment not aggression" (ibid.) whereas illegitimate uses of violence that are not perpetrated as self-defence or as self-help are condemned (Black 1983, Michalski, 2017). However, the point that Collins (2008; 2022) seeks to stress is that even though larger structures and contexts create the potential for violent situations, it is the emotions and micro-dynamics of behaviour that determine *if* violence occurs whilst also shaping *how* it occurs.

As such, Collins does not manage to factor macro aspects into his conceptualisation of violence, his focal point being that violence is difficult to perform, particularly on a face-to-face basis (Collins, 2008). This claim is questioned by Felson (2009) who brings into consideration legitimate and illegitimate uses of violence, asking whether violence would not be less difficult to perform if attacking an individual who had caused harm. Also Cooney (2009) and Malešević (2022) question the notion of violence being difficult to perform. Malešević holds that violence is intrinsic to social relations – while Collins (2008; 2022) suggests that violence signifies a breakdown in interaction. Similarly, Cooney (2009) highlights that violence "obeys universal social laws" (p. 589). In practice, this means that Collins sees violence as an interaction difficult to engage in, resulting in incompetent fighting skills leading to quick abortion of the violence, whilst Cooney and Malešević suggest that it is *part* of social interaction.

On a technical note, Bramsen - who holds that violent actors fall into a rhythm of violence actions allowing violence to 'breed' - finds that if Collins had analysed video material longer than a few seconds, he would perhaps have reached different conclusions about interaction once it turns violent (ibid.). This observation suggests that to analyse violent interaction, sampling should favour clips capturing as much of an incident as possible for more accurate analysis of how patterns of behaviour play out. Equally, Laitin (2008) questions "the coding rules" that Collins applies to analyse observations (p. 51); Laitin suggests that rather than applying a conventional analysis, Collins makes use of examples that hinder the ability to confirm theory whilst also making it unclear how to observe the pathways to violence. Thus, Laitin's key critique is that Collins fails to "specify the conditions under which the theory applies" (p. 52). Both Bramsen (2017; 2018) and Nassauer (2016; 2018b) present a similar critique. For Nassauer, the point of critique is the vagueness in Collins' descriptions of how emotions are expressed, and for Bramsen, like Laitin, it is the lack of clarity in his descriptions of how to observe pathways.

Revisiting the critique of the macro-perspective, Felson (2009) questions the role of confrontational tension and fear, claiming that;

> "Collins's basic argument is that human beings are reluctant to use violence because they experience 'confrontational tension'. It is well-known that learned moral inhibitions and the fear of getting hurt can inhibit violent behaviour. Collins, however, emphasizes the role of an innate tendency toward interactional solidarity. He claims that because of

> strong innate inhibitions about disturbing face-to-face social interaction, violence usually requires a forward panic" (ibid., p. 578).

However, Collins (2008) seemingly counters the critique with the notion of fight schools (elaborated above), whereby individuals in certain settings (e.g., military training, gang environments, or sports) learn to overcome the ct/f barrier, which allows them to internalise the techniques and the 'readiness' needed to participate in violence. This notion is however not applicable in situations of violence in 'everyday life' where forward panic is needed to engage in violent interaction. Felson (2009) is of the opinion that forward panic is poorly defined but suggests it could be similar to rage. He further argues that the causes of forward panic, namely weak opponents and the support of audiences, raise the question of what, according to Collins, causes violence when panic is not involved.

Cooney (2009) raises a similar critique of forward panic, arguing that dominance is intrinsic to many conflictual interactions that do not turn violent, and that Collins explains situations which do not use this pathway by "alternative pathways into the tunnel" (p. 588). Hagedorn (2009), however, argues that forward panic is a useful term to understand how emotional energy leads to violence but refers to examples which emphasise the situations involving a weak victim, such as "infantry in war waiting until the instant occurs when a charge leads to total domination; police ganging up to beat a helpless victim; mobs at soccer games; sports teams on an emotional charge or "run", and the mob violence of lynching" (p. 211). These examples suggest that Collins uses high-tension situations to develop the observations of forward panic which in turn begs the question of what a forward panic or weak victim pathway looks like in situations that are less tense, where fighters do not launch into a frenzied attack, and where victims attempt to fight back – arguably, these aspects need attention via the VDA-approach.

Felson argues further that ct/f is vaguely defined and relates it to empathy, as violence (according to Collins) can be inhibited by interactional solidarity, which refers to a sense of mutual support or energy when individuals interact (Collins, 2004). Interactional solidarity may also work to prevent further escalation. This would suggest that "people have an innate tendency for solidarity, but they can be overwhelmed by social pressures to attack, or the effects of weak adversaries" (Felson, 2009, p. 580). Felson further contends that Collins thus sees individuals as naturally good with social forces as a reason for being led astray.
Perhaps Collins reaches this conclusion as his theory speaks to a generality of violence but does not divide violence into meaningful categories, e.g., predatory and moralistic (or legitimate and illegitimate uses of violence as flagged previously) (Cooney, 2009). Cooney highlights that although there may be overlaps in different types of violence, they nevertheless arise under different circumstances.

When looking at Collins' notion of the weak opponent as a situational dynamic leading to violence, Felson highlights that;

> "[s]ome violence is predatory but much of it develops out of verbal disputes. Violent fights usually begin when someone complains that they have been wronged and makes an accusation (…), these disputes begin with an attempt at social control. Sometimes, in order to avoid blame and punishment the accused engages in remedial action, e.g., they apologi[s]e or provide an excuse or justification for their behaviour. This (…) shows that acts of submission help to avoid escalation, contrary to what Collins asserts*"* (ibid., p. 582).

This appears to be a slight misreading of Collins, whose central assertion is that violence can be, and often is, averted in such ways. Here, Felson discusses the different types of stimuli for violent disputes, such as name calling and bad mood, which facilitate aggressive responses and suggests that whilst "[s]ocial support and weak adversaries may affect the rewards and costs of aggression, (…) they are usually not instigators. The most important instigator of violence is perceived intentional attack" (ibid., pp. 582-583). It should be noted that Collins does not claim that all situations involving the weak victim pathway result in violence, rather he perceives it as a pathway to violence in a potentially violent situation.

Finally, Felson disputes Collins' notion of forward panic occurring as a result of a weak opponent and suggests that the opposite is a more likely cause. It remains unclear how Collins pinpoints it in visual material, a challenge similarly faced by this researcher - hence the need to draw on sources that clearly define facial and bodily expressions of emotion and behaviour (e.g., Nassauer, 2016; 2018a). Felson (2009) does agree that third parties as well as fear and power play a role in the outcome of violent situations but holds that they are not the sole determinants of the occurrence of violence. In essence, Felson's critique boils down to a vagueness of the terms used by Collins (2008) whilst also arguing that links between the processes leading to violence are completely left out. He criticises the notions of both entrainment and emotional energy, saying that 'energy models' are no longer used as explanations by psychologists. Collins, however, arguably uses energy levels to explain why violence happens when it does but does not see them as the root cause of violence.

2.2.2 Towards reconciliation of micro and macro

As briefly flagged, Felson criticises Collins for not drawing enough on criminological theories of deviance. Wieviorka (2011) similarly suggests that interactions alone cannot explain violence. He claims that Collins' theory of violence bears evidence to the fact that he *is* aware of the cultural, economic, political, social, and "social anthropological conditions which make violence possible and the processes which lead thereto" (ibid., p. 2). Thus, Wieviorka's key critique is that Collins' theory claims to be interactionist while it includes a range of "explanatory factors which [have] nothing to do with this paradigm" (ibid.). Wieviorka further claims that the explanatory

factors are not appropriately integrated, i.e., the links between micro and macro are not made clear.

Further elaborating on the micro/macro issue, Wieviorka (2014) argues that Collins "insists on distinguishing three levels: that of 'macro-history', that of individual consciousness and, between the two, the one which he prioriti[s]es (…) that of immediate interactions" (p. 52). He explains that interactionist explanations stand apart from political and historical ones, referring to Goffman's (1967) interactional approach and Katz's (1999) sociology of emotions, both of which are also referenced by Collins (ibid., 2014). Wieviorka points out that Goffman acknowledges that the interactional approach does not correspond with historical or political explanations of violence (ibid., 2011).

Like Felson, Wieviorka also dives into some of the main processes of violence as described by Collins; Wieviorka takes a deeper look at confrontational tension and fear. He briefly reiterates the notion of ct/f, and the difficulty of perpetrating face-to-face violence, but holds that while violence cannot happen without ct/f, ct/f may occur without violence necessarily following. He then questions Collins' view that violence occurs on the basis of interactions between actors in situ, arguing that it adds no depth to the understanding of violence (ibid.). He also disagrees with Collins' claim that violence is a conflictual *relation* and argues that "violence indicates rupture and not a relation and […] involves the subjectivity of the person or persons who perpetuate it, much more than the intersubjectivity of actors in relation interaction" (2014, p. 5).

Wieviorka claims that Collins' work acknowledges that the interactionist approach does not fully explain violence (ibid.). According to him, Collins' theory, whilst being "pragmatic in intent, (…) moves from being sociological to being rather ethnographical; in any event it is based on ethnographic studies" (ibid., 2014, p. 56). As such, Wieviorka maintains that the key to understanding violence is understanding the motivations and causes. He accepts that violence is difficult to perform but maintains that it does not occur based on interactional processes; violence relies on motivations and preparations (ibid.). The critique by both Felson (2009) and Wieviorka (2011; 2014) centres to some extent around the lack of connection to theories explaining motivations and causes of violence or a clear departure from such theories. The search for causes of violence is arguably driven by the dominating approach to violence that favours the macro-factors – and although Collins does attempt to incorporate this level into his grand theory, those of his critics who speak from a macro point of view (Felson, 2009; Wieviorka 2011; 2014), do not seem satisfied with the result.

However, the interactionist approach seeks to explain what happens when it does, looking in detail at the micro-dynamics of any given situation (Collins, 2008; Bramsen 2017; 2018). The focus is on the trigger points turning conflictual encounters violent

(Collins, 2022) – a point also recognised by Laitin (2008). Cooney (2009), similarly, applauds Collins for moving beyond propensity and disposition approaches to violence, although he, as previously described, also wonders why Collins' does not consider Blackian theory on violence which would constitute a move away from theories of violent disposition. Cooney appreciates Collins' work as one which provides fresh perspectives and considers new forms of data, highlighting in particular the use of video data, reconstruction of violent encounters, and close observation as important contributions. Similarly, Laitin (2008) argues that behavioural science is based on observation and that Collins' work therefore should not be ignored despite its vague explanations of violent conditions. Cooney contends that Collins contributes an original theory with a sociological foundation, namely situational interaction. To this Laitin disagrees, arguing that the situational interaction perspective combined with observation is more of an ethnographic approach than a sociological one, thus agreeing with Wieviorka (2014). As pointed out by Collins and Collinsian scholars, however, video studies of violence are not rooted purely in sociology but draw on a range of fields including sociology, criminology, social psychology, and biology, laying the groundwork for an interdisciplinary approach to studying violence (Nassauer and Legewie, 2021).

Collins' different perspective, focusing on the micro-details of violence, does not see it as necessary to explain *why* violence occurs but instead to provide insight into *what* happens *when* violence does occur. In doing so, certain aspects of macro-level theories may be questioned; one such example is that of the bystander effect, i.e., that a larger number of bystanders results in diffusion of responsibility and thus inhibits the likelihood of intervention (Darley and Latané, 1968). Recent studies, using video data, have challenged the notion of the bystander effect, suggesting that bystanders interact with one another to coordinate intervention (Bloch et al., 2018), that bystanders with pre-established social ties are more like to intervene compared to those without (Liebst et al., 2018), and that bystanders adapt their intervention strategies to specific situations (Ejbye-Ernst, 2023). These studies, whilst acknowledging the complexity of bystander intervention, and thus the macro levels of it, also support the benefit of moving beyond understandings of motivations and instead focus on what recordings of actual real-life incidents show in terms of action or inaction (ibid.).

Nassauer (2022a) jumps to the defence of the micro-sociological or interactionist approach to violence by addressing a range of critiques of the position and of Collins' theory. She starts by highlighting, like Felson (2009) and Wieviorka (2014), the lack of clarity or "specifications of concepts and causality" (Nassauer, 2022a, p. 44), which more specifically refers to the differing definitions of situation and context, to what constitutes a situation, and to how context is integrated into a situational approach. Nassauer first lays out how different violence scholars define 'violent situation', ranging from Collins (2008) who defines it as a sequence of emotional dynamics and micro-rhythms to Levine et al. (2011), who define it based on violent

interactions, like hitting and kicking, to Nassauer herself (drawing inspiration from Klusemann (2009)), who consider "interactions, interpretations, and emotions prior to violent acts" as part of a situation (Nassauer, 2022a, p. 45). Whilst she does not oppose Collins, she sets out to propose a clearer conceptualisation of situation within the violence realm;

> "[t]he situation begins with the co-presence of the actors who are later involved in (violent) interactions; that is, their temporal and spatial proximity, and includes interactions, interpretations, and emotions of co-present actors from the moment of co-presence until the outcome (here: violence)" (ibid.).

As such, context "is everything spatially outside and temporally prior to the co-presence of interacting actors, including systemic structures, culture, and individual attitudes, such as motivations or biases" (ibid., p. 46). In this way, she argues that 'micro' and 'macro' are not synonymous with 'situation' and 'context', but that situation is a specific aspect of the micro-level also allowing for a consideration of the macro-level factors that may impact the occurrence of violence (ibid.). In essence she argues, in support of Collins, that "situational dynamics can lead to violence even in the absence of context factors" (p. 43). Nassauer (2018a) and Nassauer and Legewie (2019; 2021; 2022) advocate for triangulation of data or mixed methods approaches to contextualise violent situations – an approach also adopted in this thesis – thus recognising the importance of considering violence beyond a situational level.

Nassauer (2022a) does acknowledge that linking micro and macro levels remain a work in progress but holds s that;

> "starting at the micro-level can enable more immediate potential for intervention. Thus, these situational video-based violence studies have a very practical side, offering avenues for violence avoidance through an intimate understanding of micro-level dynamics" (ibid., p. 56).

Summing up the critique of Collins, the main issue is that the heavy focus on the situational elements entails that too little attention is accorded to structural, motivational, and cultural aspects of violence. Although Collins' latest work (2022) has addressed different aspects or types of violence and this work refines his existing theory and enhances its applicability (Malešević, 2022), the macro dimensions of violence are still not taken sufficiently into consideration. Nonetheless, Collins, in both his earlier and recent work, acknowledges the role that macro (context) dimensions play in how violence occurs (2008; 2022), whilst maintaining that violence, regardless of social context, happens because of turning points in conflictual encounters and not because of "long standing structural conditions" (ibid., 2022, p. 1).

Existing VDA studies problematise the focus on the moment of violence proposed by Collins (2008), and call for triangulation in order to obtain circumstantial information (Bramsen, 2017; 2018; Nassauer 2018a; 2018b) rather than attempting to combine micro- and macro explanations. This suggests that structural conditions and social contexts of violence and the micro-dynamics of it can and (where possible) should be reconciled, e.g., to examine how emotional and interactional dynamics play out in different settings.

Still, both Nassauer (2022a) and Bramsen (2018) stress the importance of considering the context or setting in which the violence occurs. But what is important to note is that;

> "a focus on situational dynamics does not imply that structural and cultural factors are unimportant— but rather that they alone are not sufficient in accounting for why structural risks of violence do not result in actual violence in each and every possible situation. Thus, situational dynamics provide the missing ingredients for understanding the translation of risk into enactment" (Bramsen, 2018, p. 312).

What this means is that whilst contexts and motivations cannot and should not be ignored, they do not explain the dynamics that turn conflict violent, e.g., the 'trigger moments' and 'enabling conditions' required to understand *how* violence emerges in different settings, be it in the night-time economy, in public transport, or in prison.

Collins acknowledges that further empirical work is needed to address the issue of "theori(s)ing where the empirical foundations are not clear" (Barrie, 2023, p. 429). Collins (2020; 2022) points to the efforts of scholars like Nassauer (2019), Nassauer and Legewie (2019; 2021), and Bramsen (2017) - the pioneers of the VDA method - to highlight how the technological development is increasingly implemented in research on violence, how the methodological framework of VDA is developing, and how the findings of such visual studies are used to develop practical suggestions for violence reduction/prevention. As Barrie suggests, "[t]he theoretical insights of Collins surely have lessons to teach us about these violence situations. It will be the task of future work to tell us in more detail what these are" (ibid., p. 429). As the following section will show, such efforts are already being made and it is to this expanding, yet novel field, that this thesis contributes.

2.3 Visual Data Analysis - Interactionist video studies

In his work, Collins (2008; 2022) advocates for and uses visual evidence, i.e., video footage and photos, and recommends studies of micro-details via visual observation methods which enable the identification of body language and facial expressions, as these elements are indicators of emotion. He does not, however, clarify the technicalities of reading bodily and facial expressions and it is therefore necessary to draw on additional literature in order to expand on Collins' suggestions to put them into practice as discussed in the critique. The use of visual data in sociological and

criminological studies is a new approach which entails that only a somewhat limited number of studies exists, even if the field has expanded over the course of the present research. The aim of the present thesis is to contribute to this emerging field which holds promising elements in respect to aiding the understanding of how conflict turns violent.

2.3.1 Visualising criminal conduct

Anne Nassauer, a key contributor to the VDA literature, has conducted a few studies using video material to examine dynamics occurring in respectively protests and robberies (2015; 2018a). Her scholarly work has primarily been dedicated to a furthering of the methodological framework of VDA (2016; 2022a) – often in collaboration with Legewie (Legewie and Nassauer, 2018; 2023; Legewie et al., 2019; Nassauer and Legewie, 2019; 2021; 2022) - providing in-depth guidelines for VDA research design and points of reflection for ethical considerations. This body of work has provided the foundation for the present research design (outlined in Chapter 3). The essence of Nassauer's weighty contribution to the VDA method is therefore detailed in the following sections.

For the purpose of analysis, Nassauer (2018a) suggests descriptions or transcriptions of footage sequences focusing on "movements, actions, verbal accounts, and emotion expressions from the perpetrator(s) and victim(s)" (p. 133) as these features act as determinants for how situations unfold and are thus at the centre of analysis. These features also serve to develop insights into patterns of behaviour leading to a certain outcome. Nassauer (ibid.) has developed a thorough coding scheme, identifying both bodily and facial expressions of emotion and how to distinguish them, creating a useful foundation for further research. The coding scheme was developed for the purpose of examining robberies, or more precisely how robberies in convenience stores fail or succeed (Nassauer, 2018a) but may equally serve in research on other topics.

Analysing the emotional reactions and interactions between robbers and employees (store clerks) from CCTV footage from 20 robberies, Nassauer found that robbers, to be 'successful' - i.e., to complete the robberies - have to stay in character. In this way they are able to maintain the emotional dominance (ibid.). Nassauer describes that "a distinct set of behaviour and emotions" must be displayed to stay in character and thus allows robbers to complete the robbery whilst other types of behaviour must be avoided, otherwise the robbery "fails" (ibid., p. 144). To stay in character, robbers have to exhibit high emotional energy, referring to a strong physical presence, i.e., making oneself large, moving firmly, taking up space, and taking the initiative in interactions, amongst others. When displaying high emotional energy, individuals use loud voices, talk over others, and make threats and ultimatums. Where robbers are unable to stay in character or the clerks act 'out of character', e.g., resisting or not complying, forcing the robbers to also act out of character - wherein they cease

to display high emotional energy - the robbery fails. She also describes that once robbers are no longer displaying high emotional energy, they are unable to re-enter that emotional state.

Drawing on Collins' interactional ritual chains (2004), Nassauer (2018a) relates the effect of acting or dropping 'out of character' - whether it is the robbers or the clerks – to a break in the ritual (here; the robbery) which in turn results in an 'unsuccessful' interaction (the robbery failing). Similarly, in another study on robberies in which the impact of weapons and body postures was explored in relation to establishing dominance, Mosselman et al. (2018) found that guns ensured a larger degree of submission than knives as guns allow for postures which display dominance, thus enabling the robbers to achieve emotional dominance over the victims. The study obtained video footage from 23 robberies in shops, and, like Nassauer (2018a), all sequences were transcribed and coded in order to capture the robbers' and victims' bodily behaviour.

CCTV footage has also been used in studies of open-air drug trades to document the stages of transactions, to monitor buyer/seller activity around the occurrence of the trade (Sytsma and Piza, 2018), and to record when trades occur (Moeller, 2018) for the purpose of crime prevention. Using CCTV to identify behaviour or acts pre-transaction, during transaction, and post-transaction, Sytsma and Piza (2018) argue this behaviour has relevance for creating crime scripts for situational crime prevention. The crime scripts draw on the theory of rational choice to determine offenders' (rational) choices and decisions which is used to inform situational prevention, thus working to limit 'opportunities' for offenders to commit crimes. The study used CCTV recorded footage from police cases and coded data based on systematic social observation (SSO), which is a method used where researchers have access to *all* the relevant actors and events during the *entirety* of the situation or timeframe that they wish to capture (ibid.). Coding was divided into different stages to capture first transaction-related behaviour (e.g., exchange of drugs and money), then drug market participant behaviour leading up to and post transaction. Consistent with existing theories, they found that "buyers are most likely to initiate interactions (…), sellers are most likely to maintain a fixed position within the drug territory" (p. 96), and that dealers occupy a restricted area in which the trades take place, thus they tend to remain in one spot ("anchor points") (ibid.). As for practical uses of this type of study, the authors suggest that it aids the literature on crime scripts and situational crime prevention, highlighting in particular the importance of post-transaction behaviour which can help police to catch offenders.

Moeller (2018) similarly, examined when cannabis trades occur and the monetary value of such transactions, also obtaining CCTV footage from police. Cameras were positioned in areas where police suspected high drug trade activity and in a way that allowed for observations of the amounts of money and drugs changing hands. The study first examined prices and amounts, using statistical analysis to determine

mean amount rates, and then frequency of trades to establish the time of day when trades are most likely to occur, again using statistical analysis to determine the means. Moeller found that trades are usually small and occur more frequently after sundown and that buyers are more active “where [they] have more discretionary time” (p. 119). Prices would also go up at night-time and during holidays where buys were more frequent - additionally, prices were higher during “extreme weather” (ibid., p. 118). Like Sytsma and Piza (2018), Moeller (2018) observed in the video data, that sellers were stationary but often had ‘runners’ bringing cannabis and money to and from ‘safe’ locations pre- and post-trade. Again, such findings can aid police in catching offenders, e.g., highlighting timings of when and where to position officers for raids.

The studies cited here are evidence of new perspectives and insights into criminal conduct focusing on interactional elements, some of which support existing theories but also provide an extended layer of information, whilst others have direct applicability which could aid the police in updating existing crime prevention or minimisation efforts. As these studies make use of the developing methodology, VDA, several amongst them provide detailed outlines and explanations of methodological reflections and research designs which have been employed in the development of the present project’s sampling approach and video data analysis; e.g., transcription procedure (Mosselman et al., 2018; Nassauer 2018a) and observation procedure, which in the early stages use the SSO-approach (Sytsma and Piza, 2018). The present project draws inspiration from these methodological elements as detailed in Chapter 3 on research design and methods.

2.3.2 Visualising protests, protest policing, and use of force

Some of the first VDA studies were used to examine protest violence (Bramsen, 2017; 2018; Nassauer 2018b) and protest policing (della Porta et al., 2024; Nassauer, 2015; 2016). To start with Nassauer; she (2018b) holds that explanations of protest violence have relied on motivations as well as macro-explanations such as “political opportunities, resources, and grievances” (ibid., 2015, p. 4). Western social movements, Nassauer (2018b) claims, deem violence unacceptable. However, violence does occasionally occur during protests and existing literature points to the way protests are policed as an explanation for the outbreak of violence. This means that police tactics are assumed to play a key role in the emergence of violence (ibid.). Nevertheless, explanations of motivations and other background factors do not explain why some protests turn violent while others do not - a point also raised by Collins (2008) in relation to violence in general. Thus, *situational* dynamics, studied through video, can enhance the understanding of how interactions and behaviours turn protests violent.

Using a combination of interviews with protesters, journalists, and onlookers, who filmed protest events, as well as written reports and participant observation,

Nassauer (2018b) studied protests occurring in Germany and the US over a 50-year period and found five types of behaviour - between police and protesters - that are central to the emergence of violence. These behaviours include “spatial incursions, police mismanagement, escalation signs, communication problems between protesters and police, and property damage.” (ibid., p. 297). The study builds on findings from Nassauer’s previous protest violence study (2015) outlined below. Spatial incursions refer to territorial invasion (not personal space, but ‘invasion’ of designated protest or police space). Police mismanagement refers to police lacking overview and strategy, whilst escalation signs refer to actions perceived as dangerous - such signs can be displayed by both police and protesters. Communication problems refer to interruptions and breakdowns in communication between police and protesters - and property damage is self-explanatory. It should be noted that none of the identified behaviours involve interpersonal violence but a combination of them may result therein. This means that “combinations of behavio[u]rs lead to the perception that normally relied-upon routines have broken down and that one is in danger” (ibid. p. 301), which may then turn protests violent.

Nassauer (2015; 2018b) suggests that such insights possess timely practical implications that may inform guidelines for training in minimising protest violence. Nassauer’s earlier study (2015) triangulated “court data, police and protesters’ accounts, media accounts, reconstructions by researchers, and accounts from photographers and videographers who uploaded footage online” to reconstruct 30 protests in meticulous detail. The purpose was to examine both interactions that *do* result in violence and those which do *not* for the purpose of identifying violence prevention dynamics. The study identified the same behaviours to be avoided to prevent violence as the study outlined above (Nassauer, 2018b). Nassauer (2015) demonstrates how examination of interactions, displays of emotion, and behavioural dynamics are useful in developing guidance material based on real-life events. With inspiration from Nassauer, the present research also seeks to showcase practical implications emerging from video examination, particularly in relation to prison officer training (see Chapter 6 and 7).

Another scholar who also takes a Collinsian approach to violence and demonstrations is Bramsen, who has examined how micro-dynamics and reciprocity can spark violent interaction (2017) and why demonstrations turn violent or not (2018) in the Arab Uprisings by looking at protests in Syria, Tunisia, and Bahrain. Similarly to Nassauer (2015; 2018b), Bramsen (2017) triangulates interviews with activists, politicians, and journalists with participant observation and video data, applying a micro-sociological framework. Video data was obtained from YouTube and Facebook using simple sampling criteria such as videos showing violent or potentially violent situations, videos being filmed sufficiently close and being of sufficient quality to observe body postures and interactions between perpetrators and victims. This means that both perpetrators and victims had to be in the frame at the same time, and that videos could not have been edited in a way that would

obstruct sequences of interaction resulting in unreliable analysis. Detailing the potential of video analysis, Bramsen (2017) suggests, as do Mosselman et al. (2018), viewing and reviewing videos repeatedly and in slow motion to ensure that as many details as possible are captured. The present project draws inspiration from Bramsen's sampling criteria to allow for an exploratory approach for the purpose of examining the usability of available YouTube data - reflections pertaining to this approach are elaborated in Chapter 3.

Like the present researcher, Bramsen (2017) set out to 'test' Collins' theoretical work, additionally seeking to show how violence is reciprocal; in examining the pathways to violence (Collins, 2008 - outlined in section 2.1.2), she found that the patterns of the violence witnessed during the Arab Spring demonstrations corresponded to the pathways to violence-patterns identified by Collins (2008), and highlights two key patterns, namely the weak victim and the attack-from-afar pathways which Collins (2008) also theorised (these are, however, outwith the scope of the present study as these pathways occur in large scale violent events with use of weapons). She also found that violence was avoided where "eye contact and emotional equilibrium between police and protesters*"* occurred (Bramsen, 2017, p. 9) which supports Collins' claim that violence is difficult to perform when face-to-face (2008). Moreover, and again in correspondence with Collins' observations, Bramsen found evidence that violence is difficult to initiate. However, contrary to Collins' claim that fighters are good at finding stopping points to end violence even where the ct/f barrier has been overcome, Bramsen argues that once it is initiated, it creates "a new rhythm and mode of interaction with a certain momentum that is difficult to break" (ibid.).

Furthermore, while researching the conditions of violence and non-violence during the Arab Spring demonstrations, Bramsen (2018) identified five situational conditions (or pathways) that allow perpetrators to dominate a situation or avoid violent confrontation whilst also examining Collins' suggestions for minimising violence in protests. The five pathways to violence were attacking from behind, attacking outnumbered groups, attacking from vehicles, attacking from afar or above, and attacking at night. Thus, Bramsen's findings reveal that violence may occur even when emotional dominance is not established, and emotional dominance can be established without face-to-face confrontation, as both are absent from Bramsen's five pathways to violence. The findings, *however*, support Collins' general notion that violence is shaped by emotional dominance, but Bramsen questions whether Collins' suggestions for avoiding violence are applicable in authoritarian regimes as well. She concludes that micro-dynamics shape situations of violence in authoritarian regimes but emphasises that the analysis does not speak to the causes or triggers of violence. Certain insights from Collins (2008) may thus be seen as applicable, albeit with the caveat that "although violence can be challenged in some situations, if the potential victim keeps an upright body posture and eye contact with the perpetrator,

such situations can also be manipulated by the perpetrator to enable violence*"* (Bramsen, 2018, p. 312).

Bramsen essentially raises the question of the applicability of Collins' violence theory in a specific setting. Bramsen's study (ibid.) shows that certain Collinsian dynamics may be present but are nevertheless impacted by their context and may vary in the way that they are displayed or in the way they playout as also flagged in the critique of Collins (section 2.1.3). In this way she highlights the importance of appreciating the broader contexts in which violence takes place and that interactionist, video-based studies can factor broader context into the data analysis though triangulation or mixed methods approaches. The present study thus follows Bramsen's (2018) approach to analysis of video material and reflects on the ways in which 'Collinsian dynamics' play out in the prison setting as Chapter 7 will show.

Bramsen (2017; 2018) also stresses the utility of video studies or studies of micro-dynamics in relation to their real-life implications, and points in particular to how dynamics which serve to discontinue violence can be useful in violence prevention strategies. She argues that;

> "[c]onventional approaches to violence prevention focus on why violence happens and the attempts to remove these causes, but important practical lessons might also be gained from understanding how violence happens or not" (ibid., 2018, p. 312).

Thus, similarly to Nassauer (2015), Bramsen suggests that dynamics leading to violence *not* occurring have critical potential for violence prevention practices. As will also be shown in Chapters 5 and 6, the present data does not entail situations where violence does *not* occur. However, in combination with the reflections of the focus group respondents, the thesis highlights dynamics that speak to conciliation of violent conflict and can therefore present practical suggestions for limiting violent escalation.

Shifting the focus from a protest setting to policing in general, Willits and Makin (2017) have examined the power dynamics between police officers and potential offenders by footage from body-worn cameras (BWC). Police use of force has traditionally been studied using incidents reports, with some use of experiments in laboratory settings as well as field observations. Such methods have, however, been critiqued for issues such as lack of accuracy, lack of 'real' behaviour, and lack of objectivity respectively. As argued by other VDA scholars, video data provides the opportunity for detailed, objective captures of natural behaviour.

Willits and Makin (2017), for example, obtained footage from police to create a sample of 95 incidents in order to study the "variation in how and when force is applied during use of force encounters*"* (p. 59). They tested three hypotheses derived from existing literature on police use of force, namely (1) the longer it takes for to police to make contact with suspects, the quicker they are to apply force and

the longer it will last, (2) where suspects resist or are impaired, force is applied quicker and lasts longer, and (3), force is applied quicker and lasts longer where suspects are male and/or from a minority ethnic background. Using statistical regression models to measure temporal aspects of interactions, they found that use of force by police officers occurs early in encounters. Moreover, the study showed that force was introduced at an earlier stage in encounters with Black and male suspects, supporting existing theories (Willits and Makin, 2017) – the former two supporting Collins' observations of forward panic and the weak victim pathway and the latter problematising Collins' focus on situational dynamics alone. These findings suggest that the level of force and the situations in which it is used are not only determined by officer and suspect behaviours and verbal clues (i.e., micro-situational dynamics), but also demonstrate the impact that prejudices or preconceptions may have on situational dynamics.

The research cited above demonstrates how video studies are used to add new perspectives to existing fields of study, whilst also detailing methodological accounts, furthering the transparency of the VDA method. The studies, however, also bring to the fore critiques of the Collinsian approach, problematising the notion that violence can be understood through micro-situational dynamics alone, suggesting a need for testing Collins' approach to violence in relation to the contexts in which the violence occurs – critique and recommendation both supporting the rationale of the present research.

2.3.3 Visualising the role of third-parties

Within the existing body of VDA studies, the role of third-parties and bystanders have been examined both qualitatively and quantitatively. As previously described, in the areas of criminal conduct, protests, and policing, the prevailing gap in the literature is the interactional perspective. Similarly, bystander research in the social sciences has often focused on actions and motivations for intervening, the consensus being that bystanders are relatively passive during violent incidents (the bystander effect). However, the interactionist video studies point to the opposite being the case.

Using CCTV obtained via the police combined with corresponding police reports, Liebst et al. (2018), have examined the risk of intervening in violent emergencies, by focusing on emotions and verbal clues that indicate dominance, point of conflict and involved parties (perpetrators and bystanders). To assess severity of bystander victimisation, Liebst et al. (2018) examined clips in which intervention occurred both before and after serious violence – serious violence defined as "acts and consequences of violence include[ing] violence against a person on the ground, kicking to the head, an unconscious person, and multiple perpetrators against a single person" (ibid., p. 34). They found that one in six times, those intervening are victimised, albeit with a low level of severity. Moreover, bystanders exhibiting escalatory behaviour such as "threatening gestures, hauling, punching, kicking,

shoving, and weapon use" (ibid., p. 35), are more likely to be victimised than those exhibiting conciliatory behaviour, e.g., "making open-handed gestures, nonaggressive touching, blocking contact, holding a person back, and pushing and pulling antagonists apart" (ibid.).The study also found that the bystander's position in a given social group, along with the type of intervention, influence the risk of victimisation which means that social ties impact the degree to which bystanders are victimised (ibid.).

Another study focussing on escalation and de-escalation examined CCTV clips of aggressive interactions in the night time economy that ended in violence, identifying first the different participants (victims, perpetrators, and third-parties) and then dividing behaviours into escalatory and conciliatory (Levine et al., 2011). Escalatory behaviour included "hitting, slapping, punching, pushing, shoving, kicking, and dragging someone across the ground by hair or clothing" (ibid., p. 408) whilst conciliatory was defined as "making open-handed gestures, blocking contact, holding a person back, and pulling people apart" (ibid.). Levine and colleagues found that bigger group sizes increased the use of conciliatory acts and that incidents were more likely to result in severe violence where groups used behaviour that was more escalatory than conciliatory. They also found that conciliatory acts were more likely to be successful if more third-parties or bystanders intervened at the same time. These descriptions of bodily behaviour create part of the analytical inspiration as Chapters 5 and 6 will show

In a study on expanding the role of social relations, Liebst et al. (2019a) obtained CCTV through the police to examine how bystanders intervene in violent incidents in night-time economy settings. To examine how social relations impact the way in which bystanders intervene, Liebst et al. primarily drew on visual clues, such as shared focus (entrainment), bodily proximity, and synchronicity of movements, but checked against police case files in clips where clues were vague, thus following Nassauer and Legewie's (2021; 2022) methodological suggestion of triangulating or mixing types of data for the purpose of strengthening the visual analysis. Liebst et al. (2019) found that social relations influence how bystanders intervene; their findings suggest that bystanders are more likely to intervene where social relations exist but less likely to intervene if the number of bystanders increase - the latter supporting existing theories. They also found that most interventions de-escalate violent confrontations. However, where intervention behaviour is escalatory, interventions further escalate the violence (Liebst et al., 2019a).

Like Nassauer (2015; 2018b) and Bramsen (2017; 2018), identifying patterns of behaviours that escalate or de-escalate violent incidents, Bloch et al. (2018) examined patterns of bystander behaviour. Also using CCTV from police combined with reports, the authors sampled clips showing bystanders witnessing violent incidents and, like Mosselman et al. (2018), transcribed incidents and formulated them into story lines. Information regarding social ties was drawn from the police

reports. The study revealed three types of behaviour, namely distancing, ambivalence, and involvement. They found that the latter is displayed via interactions that are seemingly coordinated between the bystanders, thus creating a 'caring collective' (Bloch et al., 2018).

Further studies have examined the bystander aspect with video footage; using cross-national video data, Philpot et al. (2020) found that most public conflicts see some form of bystander intervention or help and that the more bystanders present, the greater the likelihood of intervention, thus calling into question previous studies of the 'bystander effect'. In extension of Liebst et al. (2018), another cross-national study (Liebst et al., 2019c) found that intervening bystanders were rarely victimised and non-intervening bystanders were never physically harmed. More recently, Liebst et al. (2024) have examined the aftermath of violent incidents, focusing in particular on how victims were consoled, where acts of consolation included hugging, gentle touching, handing dropped items, and helping victims off the ground. They found that female bystanders who are affiliated with the victims are more likely to provide consolation - a finding also seen in consolation studies with primates (ibid.).

The studies outlined above steer the bystander field towards a focus on bystanders that frequently intervene and suggest that bystander victimisation risk is low (Levine et al., 2020). Building on this new evidence, Levine et al., argue that violence reduction programmes are limited in their effectiveness because of the classical understanding of the role of bystanders. They further suggest that based on evidence as outlined above, programmes should be redesigned to consider the positive effects of bystander presence; the idea that bystanders are unlikely to intervene should be challenged and programmes should therefore lay their emphasis on intervention. Finally, they recommend that bystander training should focus on the actual risks of bystander intervention and that such training should take place away from the classroom settings and instead take place where incidents happen, ideally in the aftermath of an incident (ibid.). As pointed out by VDA scholars, the novel insights into violent incidents have clear practical implication (Bramsen, 2017; 2018; Nassauer and Legewie, 2021; 2022). The studies outlined in the sections above primarily evince practical implications for the police and police training, but the bystander aspect could be applicable to both police *and* the public (participating in bystander training). It may also be applicable in the prison setting where prisoners may intervene into violence between other prisoners (Brewster and Tucker, 2015).

By analysing naturally occurring phenomena, i.e., video footage of real incidents, it is possible to gain knowledge of situated events and natural reactions from different actors. The studies cited in this section use data showing public places and dynamics may differ when the violence is situated in the prison context. It is, nevertheless, evident that video footage provides new insights into bystander behaviour, an element worth examining in incidents of prison violence to identify how bystander dynamics impact the course of violence between prisoners and between

prisoners and officers – and thus part of the analysis of the present study. Furthermore, the findings presented by Liebst et al. (2018) and Philpot et al. (2019) that bystanders are rarely victimised and that victimisation, when occurring, is unlikely to be severe initially served as patterns to be examined in the present study but as the bystanders in the sampled clips are not victimized and the patterns echoes those found by Liebst et al. (2018) and Philpot et al. (2019), this was not made a theme for observation. The 'bystanders' in a prison context are different to those 'in the street' as they have pre-established relations with those involved and are not just passers-by. As will be discussed in Chapter 5, the data therefore addresses the role that audiences and bystanders play in amplifying and minimising severity of violence and the way in which they police fights between other prisoners.

The studies cited bear witness to an emerging methodology, providing new insights into criminal conduct, particularly violence. Video footage offers a new perspective on violence along with a new methodological framework by which it can be examined (Moeller, 2018; Liebst et al., 2018; Lindegaard and Bernasco, 2018). Moreover, it grants the opportunity to map the patterns of violent incidents as they occur and provides new understandings of dynamics such as bystander actions and reactions.

2.4 Critical reflections on video methods

Evidently use of video data is gaining popularity; a recent study in the field of protest studies has developed a methodological framework for studying protests using videos (della Porta et al., 2024). Based on Nassauer and Legewie (2021), the authors propose an extension of the existing protest event analysis (PEA) framework to include video. The PEA approach, like many others, focuses on quantification of events or analysis based on journalistic data. However, with the increasing use of footage being recorded during protest, filmed by both private people and journalists, the possibility to integrate video into PEA seems like an obvious next step, thus the approach was dubbed vPEA or video enhanced protest event analysis (della Porta et al., 2024). Similarly to Bramsen (2017), della Porta et al. suggest the use of different footage and photography from the same event to reconstruct protest events and like other VDA studies, the aim is to study facial expressions, body language, and verbal clues as well as density, intensity, timing, and frequency of interactions for the purpose of assessing group dynamics, atmosphere, and interactions between protesters.

In the same journal issue featuring the above-mentioned article, a couple of commentary pieces were published; the commentaries include a critical take on the technical aspects of video data, its sources, and the potential influence of AI (Earl, 2024); an enthusiastic embrace of a new angle on an existing approach that also flags the ethical considerations (Grimm, 2024); and a comment on tackling the micro/macro discussion (Malthaner, 2024). The critique highlights critical reflections that are also relevant for the VDA approach in general;

Earl (2024) raises several points of concern for the use of video data in relation to PEA that are also relevant for video data in non-protest studies; she highlights issues of quality of footage, video data sources, selection and description bias. Whilst it may be possible for researchers to sample their way out of poor quality (depending on available data), verifying source of data is rarely obtainable which Earl suggests "opens up the possibility of answering new questions, such as who seeks to document and share performances of protest" (ibid. p. 264). Whilst this constitutes a separate examination, it does raise the question of how footage is edited and who 'benefits' from the video viewpoint, i.e., which actors are painted in a worse light through the editing and through part of the interaction that is captured. Additionally, both Earl (2024) and Grimm (2024) raise the issue of AI and deep fake technology; how to sort real from fake. At present, the VDA literature is yet to address such questions.

The way incidents – whether protest or violence-related – are captured and described also presents a risk of description bias. Earl argues that "there are many times when the same set of events are understood and reacted to in fundamentally different ways" (ibid.). Nassauer and Legewie (2021; 2022) counter this sentiment by arguing that video footage can be reviewed and verified by other researchers which adds to the validity of analysis but also video methods in general. Earl goes on to highlight that "assessing emotions, interactions (…) and performances (…), standpoint and interpretation are still very much part of the research process" (Earl, 2024, p. 264). This leads directly to the issue of displays of universal emotions and interpretations of these. Bonilla-Silva (2019), for example, highlights that

> "(…) participants in face recognition trials are quicker to recognize anger when displayed on the faces of Black men and women than on the faces of White men and women. When asked to categorize happy expressions, respondents recognized this emotion more quickly in Black male and White female faces than in Black women's faces" (ibid., pp. 11-12).

This raises the question of whether researchers can use video analysis to examine the impact of emotional displays in studies on human interaction at a universal or generalisable level. At the moment, the VDA literature has not addressed this concern. However, ways to mitigate or address the issue of the universality of emotions should be considered as the methodology develops.

Grimm (2024), approaching the vPEA method from a less critical angle, argues that video data can be used to understand the symbolic performances and artifacts in mobilisation and protests, but raises ethical concerns relating to anonymisation, privacy, security for participants, and researcher well-being in relation to coding and reviewing sensitive visuals. Grimm also describes how publicly available data and analysis thereof can be used to identify and target the depicted – particularly where the depicted partake in criminal behaviour. This suggests the importance of

protecting participants. These critical ethical concerns are discussed in detail in Chapter 4 on ethics.

In agreement with Felson's (2009), Cooney's (2009), and Wieviorka's (2011; 2014) critique of Collins' (2008) theory of violence, Malthaner (2024) argues that a video approach to protests and social movements ignores or forgets the theoretical tradition of the field and maintains that the focus on micro-interactions is shaped by the "analytical temporality" (p. 274) of the video footage. He goes on to argue that;

> "[t]o theori[s]e and explore collective dynamics, patterns of interaction, and intersubjective experiences constructed during large-scale protest events as they unfold over several days, we might need to develop a different conceptual and methodological toolkit" (ibid.).

Malthaner thus suggests that there is a need for reconciling method and theory, or micro and macro, to ensure an understanding of the different phases of collective action – or for studies of violence to ensure an understanding of the different phases of conflict turning violent. However, at least in terms of violence, and as emphasised previously, the video studies approach does not aim to ignore the macro-dimensions leading to violence threatening situations, but rather to explain the micro-dynamics of how violence emerges in these situations. Following Herrity et al. (2021), it is suggestible that the focus on the moments and actions captured on screen can obscure the messy reality of prison life; "In order to fully understand and theorise about penalties, and places and processes of punishment and social control" – to which disorder could be added – they argue that "we need to account for these multifarious sensorial experiences and their effects" (p. xxiii). It is to grasp some of these less tangible and less observable confluences to violence, that some VDA studies employ mixed method approaches.

As such, whilst video research methods allow for novel insights and new research opportunities, issues relating to both the knowledge that it produces and how this knowledge is produced requires attention. Similarly, as the methodology develops, researchers need to find ways to mitigate some of the urgent ethical issues in relation to protection of participants, particularly where data is sourced from public video data bases - again, reflections on this are further detailed in Chapter 4. Lastly, as for validity concerns, Legewie and Nassauer (2023) suggest that to address aspects of representation of participants and validity of interpretation as well as to establish links to empirical insights, VDA scholars should strive for mixed methods approaches, combining visual data with other types of data.

By way of addressing validity in VDA studies, the present project employs focus group interviews (with prison officers and former prisoners) wherein participants have been shown and asked to discuss interpretations of the clips used in the video analysis. The aim has been to add to the validity of interpretations of interactions observed in the clips by discussing these with participants familiar with the setting.

The contention is that, whilst Nassauer and Legewie (2022) advocate for triangulation with different data for increased validity or for reviewing of data amongst different researchers, validity may also be obtainable through discussions of data with those depicted or those familiar with the depicted settings.

The literature review has so far dealt with the emerging VDA methodology, outlining its origin and the expanding field of video studies taking an interactional approach to violence and criminal conduct. As Collins' (2008) theory of violence and the VDA method are explored in the context of prison, the remaining sections outline relevant aspects of the prison violence literature to highlight the context to which the theory and method is being tested.

2.5 Conflicts and violent situations in prison

Whilst a micro-sociological or interactionist approach to violence seeks to explain why violence occurs with a focus on the moments (hours, minutes, and seconds), emotional expressions, and interactions before, during, and after encounters turn violent, scholars acknowledge the importance of the role that social and structural contexts and spaces play in allowing violent situations to occur (Collins, 2008; Crewe et al., 2014; Nassauer, 2018a; 2018b; Nassauer and Legewie, 2021; 2022). As the above VDA literature overview shows, most video violence studies look at violence in public or semi-public settings, e.g., NTE and public transportation settings. Unlike the NTE or other public or semi-public spaces, where fight participants may not have pre-established social ties, and where victimisation may have fewer repercussions (physically and institutionally), the prison space is a vastly different context. The following sections address existing key theories on prison violence (and prison disorder in general) to highlight the context from which the video data is derived as well as causes for conflict in the prison milieu.

When looking at the prison setting, violence is often likened to disorder or there is an assumption that order equals minimisation of violence (Bottoms, 1999) and it therefore seems important to distinguish interpersonal violence from disorder to situate the violence examined in the present thesis, namely interpersonal violence. In conceptualising the soundscape of prison life, Herrity (2024) suggests that violence serves many functions "depending on whether it [is] perpetrated where it [can] be seen and heard or concealed from prying eyes and ears" (p. 35). Some violence may threaten "the safety of all on the wing" (ibid. p. 74), thus becoming disorder, whilst (many) other instances of violence work "to uphold or maintain order, rather than seeking to undermine it" (ibid., p. 112). What this suggests is that interpersonal violence need not equal disorder or disruption and that it can serve to maintain order by e.g., "restoring social breaches" (ibid.). This means is that under certain circumstances, violence is deployed to support an existing order. Accordingly, exhibition of violent behaviours does not necessarily threaten order, but extend along a continuum between breaching and maintaining order (ibid.).

Presumably where violence becomes disorder is where more people are involved. That is, however, outwith the scope of the present work; the violent incidents examined in this thesis are generally small scale (between few people) and entail elements of 'stagedness' and performativity, therefore few - if any of them - constitute threats to the overall order of the prison, though some may raise questions about the effectiveness of the staff's responses or claims to be able to superintend the cause of the incidents.

2.5.1 Situational explanations and solutions

The literature review on the video studies emphasises the 'micro-sociological' focus on situational dynamics and situations of violence, i.e., the focus is on the interactions and reactions that make up the situation (Collins, 2008; Nassauer, 2016; 2018), whereas 'situational' in the criminological and prison literature has a somewhat different meaning. Therefore, it seems appropriate to highlight how a situational approach is understood within the criminological and prison literature. The purpose of this clarification is to later discuss the implications of the micro-sociological conceptualisation of situation and how it may be useful in reimagining tactics for violence prevention in the prison setting (Chapter 7).

Situational in the 'criminological sense' can broadly be understood as the relationship between place and opportunity (for crime) as well as motives, justifications, and emotions that lead to offending (Garland, 1996). As such, it is an understanding of crime that draws on "the interaction of motivational and situational variables" (Clarke, 2000, p. 97), or "a dynamic view of human action, one that stresses the fundamental variability of behaviour according to immediate circumstances" (Wortley, 2002, p. 3). In other words, the criminologist's perceptions of situational takes into account routine, built environment, and scope for opportunity reduction. In contrast, the micro-sociological, Collinsian, understanding of situation refers to the micro-dynamics of interactions between individuals in encounters, i.e., the immediate foreground of the situational (Collins, 2008; Nassauer and Legewie, 2021). But similarly to the micro-sociological or interactional understanding of situation, the 'criminological'-situational approach problematises the focus on character and personality - or individual variables (e.g., age, race, offence committed, adjustment to prison) - as the explanatory factors of violent behaviour (Steinke, 1991).

In a prison setting, the focus on behaviour stems from the need to categorise prisoners for the purpose of housing and programmes during incarceration, and whilst it is a means of violence *reduction*, it does not work as violence *prevention* (Steinke, 1991). Steinke argued that the focus on behaviour, ignores the impact of environment, e.g., that the way in which prisoners adjust to prison does not solely depend on background variables but rather on how they experience their environment and their socialisation with co-prisoners (ibid.). Individual factors, thus,

do not necessarily mean behaviour or background factors, but rather prisoners' response to imprisonment, e.g., grievances, inter-prisoner issues, and further elements as those highlighted in Sykes' deprivation model (1958) which can result in hostile attitudes towards both staff and co-prisoners. Systemic explanations entail grievances relating to, for example, perceived poor prison management and lack of control over how sentences are served.

Since Steinke presented her views, a shift in paradigm, taking the above into account has however taken place; Cooke et al. (2008), looking at the history of violence in Scottish prisons over three decades from the 1980s and onwards, contend that the disruptions of the 1980s by widespread prisoner unrest entailed a "radical shift in thinking about prison violence" (p.1065) from a focus on the individual variables/pathologies of prisoners to the influence of situational factors. In their work, which is "a systematic approach to understanding situational risk factors" (p. 1066), they explain situational factors as encompassing "physical environment and resources, staff factors (e.g., number, availability, and competencies), the availability of appropriate case management, and the quality-of-life experiences." (p. 1067). Although this change in approach saw "a significant reassessment in the way that the SPS viewed the prisoner" (p. 1073), it did not mean that all disruptive or 'risk' prisoners were contained in the main stream setting, hence the continued existence of the small units as "complementary regimes", some of which presented "an opportunity for innovation" (p. 1074), e.g., the Barlinnie Special Unit, described in the introductory section (1.0).

While Cooke et al. identified five situational risk factors, namely "history of violence, physical environment, organizational factors, staff features, and prisoner management" (ibid., p. 1070), the prison specific 'situational literature' often focuses on a specific aspect of situational explanations for violence, e.g., where assaults happen (Sparks and Bottoms 1995; Sparks et al., 1996), activities that allow for prisoners to assault one another (or staff) (McNeeley, 2022), and security measures (McCorkle et al., 1995). However, Gadon et al. (2006) suggest that situational understandings of institutional violence go beyond the aforementioned aspects. They argue that;

> "risk factors in prison settings involve factors related to the security level, high traffic locations and areas where there is low staff presence, prisoner mix, staff experience, certain days of the week, and management approaches and relationships between different staff groups" (p. 530).

In reviewing 48 situational studies of institutional violence in both prison and psychiatric settings, they suggest that a range of 'situational variables' are to be considered. For prisons these include 'prison structure' (meaning "supervision and security level, population mix, and prison size" (ibid., p. 524)), and 'staff characteristics' (length of service/experience, gender, and age); increased security is often linked to higher levels of violence due to the impact of stricter restrictions as

well as conditions. Also, less experienced and younger officers are said to lack confidence and therefore resort more quickly to unnecessary harsh responses (in terms of control and physical restraint) and/or the display of confrontational attitudes, or they simply lack the ability to assess a situation correctly (Cooke, 1992; Cooke et al., 2008; Davies and Burgess, 1988; Kratcoski, 1988; Wilson and Brookes, 2021).

Gadon et al. (2006) also point to “temporal aspects” (p. 525), relating to both where and how prisoners spend their time and also to time of year, month, and day, and to ‘location’, i.e., where assaults are more likely to happen, depending on the nature of different activities happening in specific locations. Finally, also ‘crowding’ plays a role, in that it relates to “effects of both social and spatial density”, i.e., the number of prisoners sharing a space and the constellation of the prisoner population, both of which are currently immediate concerns within the Prison Services as explained in the introductory section in terms of the widespread use of double occupancy in cells intended for one person, and in terms of the increasing complexity of the prison population which refers to primarily mental health issues.

As for temporal aspects, studies show that assaults and violence are more likely to happen over weekends due to lack of activities in rehabilitation programmes or work. Thus, the availability of programmes in prison (e.g., education, work, workshops) also plays a role in levels of violence (Cooke et al., 2008). As for locations, violence, assaults, and homicides are more likely to take place in less supervised areas of the prison (ibid.). Lastly, Gadon et al. (2006), point to ‘management’, meaning effectiveness and supportiveness of prison management as well as use of control (coercive and remunerative); poor management is often linked to higher rates of violence, especially where management attempt to curb violence through control, threats, and physical restraints, causing further frustration amongst prisoners (ibid.). The aspects considered situational in a criminological or prison sociological sense thus differ significantly from the micro-sociological understanding. Whilst some of the variables discussed above speak to environment and organisation, some elements could arguably be understood as social factors which may impact how situations unfold or are dealt with which may in turn lead to violence. These factors are, in particular, staff experience and relationships with prisoners as well as the social composition of prisoners - these aspects are outlined further in section 2.5.5.

In reviewing approaches to prevention of disorder in two high-security prisons, Bottoms et al. (1990) highlight the differences between situational and social approaches. Situational crime prevention, they argue, involves “opportunity-reduction and manipulation of the immediate environment” (p. 84), e.g., restricting access to knives, whilst ‘social’ refers to “changes in social relationships or sociali[s]ation to achieve (…) intended crime-preventative effects” (ibid.), e.g., fostering good relations between prisoners and staff. In this way, the ‘situational variables’, like staff and prisoner characteristics, as pointed out by Gadon et al. (2006), may lend themselves to social approaches to prevention of disorder (including violence). As for reducing

opportunities and manipulating the environment Bottoms et al. (1990) highlight measures such as target hardening and removal, restriction of movement, surveillance, and environmental management. As an example, they mention the impact that the removal of the cash economy has had, suggesting it has contributed to a reduction in racketeering which often contributes to conflict or violence. They acknowledge that different economies may arise - e.g., "tobacco, chocolate bars, etc." (p. 88) - however, the lack of cash will limit racketeering as almost anything is less desirable than cash. Although this may have been the case in the late 20th century, recent studies emphasise the drug economy as a main contributor to violence (Gooch and Treadwell, 2020; forthcoming). The challenges surrounding drugs are further described in section 2.5.3.

The situational prevention measures outlined here primarily address larger scale and general disorder but may also be used to target specific issues of disorder (Wortley and Summers, 2005). Wortley and Summers highlight examples, explaining how bullying in one prison had been addressed through efforts to identify bullies (perpetrators) and to improve induction processes whereby prisoners received 'induction packs' to prevent them from having to 'borrow' from established prisoners, often resulting in debts - an aspect also elaborated 2.5.3. Moreover, the prison introduced a PIN phone system to avoid theft or forced handovers of phone cards. Noise from windows was addressed through monitors alerting staff of noise levels and in-cell TVs were introduced to reduce boredom. Finally, scalding of staff was addressed by swapping open containers for sealed flasks (ibid.). These interventions represent a more specific use of situational prevention of disorder but still address change of environment rather than issues at an interactional level as the micro-sociological approach would suggest - such efforts are however rare in approaches to crime prevention in general, and prison violence in particular. One such effort does however exist - and will be addressed in the following section (2.5.2).

But first, Bottoms et al. (1990) raise an important point, namely that prisons have employed aspects of both situational and social practices to reduce or prevent disorder. They also stress that "most day-to-day disorder (…) is of an interpersonal kind" (p. 86), and whilst this suggests that target hardening measures (i.e., increasing security) may be less relevant in the prison setting, it could also point to the importance of addressing disorder through an approach that takes into consideration day-to-day interactions.

2.5.2 Approaching prison violence interactionally

The situational understandings and measures, as described above, primarily address disorder at a larger scale or aspects of disorder that are not necessarily interpersonal violence (e.g., stealing and other non-violent acts of bullying or shouting from windows). However, Bottoms (1999) suggests that, when looking specifically at interpersonal violence, the emphasis should be on the context of

“everyday social order” (p. 212). Furthermore, he explains that prison literature on interpersonal violence insists that it can only be understood through an approach that combines individual characteristics of prisoners, the nature of the prison environment, and the interplay between the two, i.e., an interactional approach understood as the ‘interaction’ between prisoners and their environment. Bottoms’ definition of ‘interactional’, namely, “the continual dynamic process of interaction between the prisoners, the staff, and the environment they both inhabit” (p. 212), however, places the emphasis on the actual interactions *between* prisoners and *between* prisoners and staff which take place in the prison environment. As such, he argues that “[r]esearchers speak of ‘interactionist’ approaches, but they have rarely addressed the minutiae of the average prison day, or considered in detail how violence can arise within this social order” (ibid.).

The most extensive work addressing interactions and dynamics that give rise to violence in prisons is that of Edgar et al. (2003a). Through a symbolic interactionist approach and two research projects examining victimisation and conflict respectively, their study uses a combination of open-ended, creative interviewing, document analysis, “life history; personal experience and self-story construction; and participant observation”, by which they capture actions, emotions, and voices to explain the make-up of violent conflict. Edgar et al.’s findings support key motivations, reasons, and contexts for interpersonal violence such as prisoner hierarchies, clashes over material items (e.g., drugs), personal grievances, and power dynamics and relationships between prisoners and staff, as identified in much other literature on prison violence. Also, and similarly to many studies, threats, banter, and insults are identified as features of conflict (both violent and non-violent). Where Edgar et al.’s focus differs is in the attention paid to the effects of behaviours such as threats, verbal abuse, and challenges; they identify behaviours that work as catalysts for conflict, and these are “accusations, threats, verbal challenges, personal invasions, insults, commands, undermining behaviours, verbal abuse, invitations, hostile gestures, harassment, rumour spreading, [and] deception” (ibid., p. 114).

The catalysts which often spur violence include accusations, threats, challenges (as these test a prisoners’ willingness to stand up for themself or use force), undermining behaviour (often requiring someone to re-establish their honour which requires use of force), and personal invasions which often go hand in hand with hostile gestures causing escalation - the latter corresponding with Levine et al.’s (2011) work on escalatory and de-escalatory bodily behaviours. Although not all catalysts lead directly to violence and do not necessarily unfold in the micro-moments before violence occurs, Edgar et al.’s perspective comes close to the Collinsian approach by focusing on how situations and moods develop or change on the basis of behaviour exhibited by different individuals. Further to the interactionist argument, Edgar et al. (2003a) argue that the interpretations of the catalysts (behaviours) play a key role in violence as to the outcome of conflicts. They suggest that words and

behaviours are used to interpret intentions, and even where actions are intended to deter from violence, they may be interpreted wrongfully and instead serve to instigate it. This again highlights the importance of focusing on situations.

Although Edgar et al. advocate for an approach that takes into consideration a situational or interactional (in the Collinsian sense) aspect, they also emphasise contextual factors of conflict, namely interests, relationships, purposes, and social contexts. Interests refer to goods (e.g., drugs or phone access but also cover values such as honour and loyalty), relationships to level of intimacy or level of friendship between prisoners, social contexts to the constraints of prisoners' choices by the prison setting, and finally purposes refer to rationales for using violence (e.g., punishments or demonstrating toughness) (p. 102). Arguably, catalysts and interpretations can be seen as interactional aspects, whilst interests, relationships, purposes, and social contexts are contextual aspects. According to Edgar et al., taken together, the six aspects are what make up conflict (ibid.). Edgar et al. also point to the consequences of conflict, namely, victimisation, bullying, safety issues, and battles over power. These themes are found in the vast majority of research seeking to understand why prison violence happens and thus the following draws on relevant literature to expand on why conflict occurs in the prison setting.

2.5.3 Origins of conflict in the prison setting

Starting from the point of competing interests, Edgar et al. (2003a) see clashes over material goods as a key pathway to conflict. This is, of course, not a new observation; Sykes (1958) linked victimisation (not necessarily violent victimisation) to material deprivation arguing that prisoners may exploit one another to improve life in prison. Edgar et al. (2003a) highlight letters, phone time, and drugs amongst the key goods sparking conflict. Further items that are often part of the inmate economy which can lead to victimisation include tobacco, food, weapons, ('homemade') alcohol, and furniture (Copes et al., 2013a). Edgar et al., (2003a) argue that as a result of material deprivation, prisoners are willing to "stretch their budgets" (p. 105) in order to obtain goods, which in turn can lead to debts and disputes over deals. Thus, deprivation goes beyond the material level and not all victimisation stems from disputes over material possessions. Edgar et al. further propose that where conflict arises over material goods or possessions, the use of violence is not necessarily linked to the material aspect, but to "non-material values and needs" (p. 104), suggesting that when prisoners feel that they are being exploited, wronged, or intimidated, violence becomes a necessity to ensure personal safety. The latter phenomenon speaks to purposes of violence which will be discussed shortly. It is however necessary first to expand upon the implications of the inmate economy to understand why it leads to victimisation and violence.

In emphasising the recent changes to the inmate economy, at least in the UK, Gooch and Treadwell (forthcoming) observed that;

> "[p]risoners could, depending on their personal resources and 'privilege' level, legitimately order 'canteen' items such as food, writing materials, and tobacco (later, when the prison went 'smoke-free', e-cigarettes and 'caps'). Clothing, trainers, CDs and games consoles could be ordered from catalogues, but required a sufficient amount of money in their 'spends' account and, for items such as PlayStations, to an 'Enhanced' regime of the Incentives and Earned Privileges Scheme (IEP). This scheme also determined how much a prisoner could spend each week" (p. 63).

It is important to note that the prisons in their study are cashless, which means that every purchase goes through the 'canteen', a system through which prisoners can order the above items on a weekly basis. The spending amounts depend on a prisoner's IEP regime (but cash from outside prison can also be put into spending accounts to be used when buying canteen items). As a result of the cashless system, however, prisoners use canteen items to repay, trade, or settle debts. Gooch and Treadwell note that "[e]xchanging material goods [is] typically accompanied with the expectation of repayment (with interest)" (ibid.).

As such, whilst canteen items are legal, the exchange of these items fall under the informal, illicit economy. Further to the illicit economy is contraband, i.e., items prohibited by law which include "drugs, alcohol, weapons, mobile telephones, SIM cards, mobile telephone chargers" (ibid.). Through the use of phones, online banking, banking apps, and social media, an additional layer of the economy has been created. Gooch and Treadwell (forthcoming) stress that these 'outside' bank accounts reduce the risks of being found out by prison staff and that family members often are involved in the movement of money. This, however, extends victimisation outside of the prisons and implicates family members who are then at risk of intimidation, exploitation, and threat.

Gooch and Treadwell (ibid.) also highlight the changes in the drug economy which is perhaps the most prominent aspect of the illicit prison economy. Whilst all aspects of the illicit economy can lead to disputes, debts, victimisation, and exploitation (ibid.; Crewe, 2005; Edgar et al., 2003a), drugs additionally pose serious health risks. Whilst heroin and cannabis have long been part of prison life and a cause for concern, the introduction of psychoactive substances (PS), often referred to as Spice or Mamba, presents new challenges, causing its users to seizure or go into cardiac arrest (Gooch and Treadwell, forthcoming). From a victimisation point of view, the challenge presents itself in the PS effects which include "confusion, lethargy, reduced inhibitions, slowed reactions and reduced cognitive functioning" (Gooch and Treadwell, 2020, p. 1274), which in turn leave users in a vulnerable state. Gooch and Treadwell describe how prisoners under the influence are made to perform activities aimed at humiliating and degrading them – in some cases, the humiliations are filmed and uploaded online via use of contraband phones, which means that the humiliation is extended beyond the prison walls (ibid.). PS users may also be made to test new batches, often as a form of punishment; it is a punishment because different batches of the drug may present different effects depending on strength,

thus the users do not know how the reaction will present itself, again leaving them in a vulnerable state, allowing others to humiliate and degrade (ibid.). As Chapter 6 will show, PS also presents new challenges for officers dealing with violent situations due to the unpredictability in behaviour as described in the introductory section. And the use of PS creates challenges for the analysis of specific violent situations as bodily expressions of emotion and interactional dynamics may be altered by them.

Edgar et al. (2003a), note that "conflicts (…) entail both interpersonal and social-structural dimensions" (p. 154), thus social contexts inform "how prisoners' choices [are] constrained by the prison setting" (ibid.), which in itself is cause for tension. The tension stems from deprivation of "liberty, goods, and services; personal autonomy; personal security; and heterosexual relationships*"* (Bottoms, 1999, p. 245) as theorised by Sykes (1958). Thus, competition is generated over limited resources but prisoners are forced to interact with each other due to restricted autonomy and lack of privacy and thus unable to escape situations where they may be at risk or avoid interactions that would otherwise be avoidable outside of the prison setting (Edgar et al., 2003a). Likewise, the emotional toll of being imprisoned is also likely to aggravate tension. Therefore, from a situational standpoint, whatever the social or structural reasons for conflict, prison creates a setting in which individuals are forced to interact and confront any tension rising. Some of these situations may require contestation of dominance and dealing with conflict as it arises through physical force (ibid.; Crewe et al, 2014; Gooch and Treadwell, forthcoming).

2.5.4 Purposes of violence - Protection, masculinity, and its implications

Edgar et al. (2003a) explore rationales for use of force (between prisoners) and highlight six factors, namely punishment, retaliation, display of toughness, defence of one's honour, and settling of differences. Similarly to Crewe et al. (2014), they note that these factors often overlap and that violence for these purposes are not only aimed at the opponent but at demonstrating to the wider prison community the implications of certain behaviours. Punishments, for example, are used to discipline those who violate prison norms but also work to deter others from exhibiting undesirable behaviour. Similarly, retaliation (hurting someone who has previously used injurious force) and self-defence may signal toughness and willingness to defend oneself to the opponent and to other prisoners (ibid.). Parallel observations are made in the literature on masculinity and its implications in relation to prison violence; Toch (1998), for example, notes that prisoners "subscribe to a normative system that holds that under certain circumstances a prisoner must respond with physical force" (p. 168), which means that prisoners use force as a way of protecting themselves from future victimisation (theft, abuse, violence). In short, they use force to deter victimisation, because fear or vulnerability attracts exploitation (ibid.).

Trammell (2012), in her qualitative study on prison violence and the inmate code, based on more than 70 interviews with former prisoners, even found that prisoners believe violence to be a means of *maintaining* order - in line with Herrity's (2024) observations - although they acknowledging that the strategy is necessitated by or born out of the controlled context of the prison milieu and its limited possibilities of conflict resolution. The inmate code further prescribes that certain situations may require prisoners to defend their honour and take care of their problems, meaning that masculinity is demonstrated through willingness to fight. Toch suggests that those showing hesitation or apprehension to contest their manliness become targets for predation, indicating a dominator/victim dynamic as described by Collins (2008).

Perhaps one of the most important aspects of displays of masculinity in prisons is the willingness and ability to defend oneself when "insulted, publicly challenged or pressured to act forcefully by other prisoners" (Ricciardelli et al., 2015, p. 500). Ricciardelli et al. thus suggest that willingness to fight is both a response to risk as well as a way of negating risk and therefore can be understood as a strategic response to risk. At the same time, however, it reinforces 'masculine ideals' of assertiveness and toughness which in turn results in violence upholding dominant power relations and forcing prisoners to put up fronts.

As a result of the normative system of hypermasculinity, Michalski (2017), in examining the links between status, masculinity, and violence, suggests that the challenge for new prisoners is to demonstrate "their ability to even fit in with the dominant culture and acquire membership status, much like the rookie athlete, fraternity pledge or new gang member who must endure various tests or hazing rituals" (p. 47). And like Toch (1998), Michalski further suggests that prisoners who fail to contest dominance or masculinity often become alienated; these prisoners are often marginalised and viewed as weak - a notion supported by several other studies examining the role of masculinity in the prison setting (e.g., Bandyopadhyay, 2006; Crewe, 2005; Jewkes, 2005; 2012; Ricciardelli et al., 2015). The contestation of dominance does not end at the initiation stage, rather prisoners have to continuously defend their honour. The contestation, however, is not always manifested through violence but may equally encompass verbal aspects such a banter, jokes, and bravado that works to "impress [the] audience" (Michalski, 2017, p. 49), i.e., keep up a front, even though verbal contestations may escalate into violence, depending on their interpretation (Edgar et al., 2003a). Through willingness to contest their dominance, prisoners thus conform to the group norms, i.e., the inmate code which is interlinked with "norms of hegemonic masculinity" (Michalski, 2017, p. 50) and serves to earn them a certain level of respect.

The notion of contesting dominance in the prison setting links to Collins' (2008) notion of emotional dominance, in the sense that participants in a fight need to demonstrate willingness to fight in order to take the lead. The only difference is that Collins speaks of single episodes of fights, while in the prison context, prisoners

must be willing to contest dominance in situations that call for it (Crewe et al., 2014) - also those that are not necessarily violence threatening. The willingness to defend oneself plays an important role as an explanatory factor of violence, highlighting implications of exhibition of masculinity, thus connecting the displays of aggression, assertiveness, and dominance to the purposes of violent displays. As identified above and pointed out by several scholars (e.g., Crewe et al., 2014; Gooch and Treadwell, forthcoming; Toch, 1998), violence (in the prison setting) is regarded as a key solution to resolving conflict – a belief particularly prevalent amongst young offenders (Gooch and Treadwell, forthcoming).

Of particular interest to the present study is the situational lens applied to violence by Edgar et al. (2003a), explaining it as a way of settling differences or resolving conflict. This view has implications for the present video analysis in that it is argued that displays of violence are often agreed upon prior to any acts of violence and often entail the presence of bystanders. Also, according to Edgar and colleagues, such fights rarely have a clear winner. This type of violence bears resemblance to Collins' (2008) conceptualisation of staged fights which are likewise announced, thus allowing for an audience to attend (an aspect further unpacked in Chapter 5). Finally, Edgar et al. (2003a) point to prisoner relationships as an aspect of conflict, emphasising that tensions can arise when individuals who do not choose to live together are forced to live together. However, the situational approach that Edgar and colleagues use to explain conflict also considers the intimacy of prisoner relationships and suggests that distance in relationships can lead to misinterpretations or misunderstandings which in turn can escalate conflict situations into violence. Whilst Edgar et al. (2003a) explore prisoner-on-prisoner relationships, one crucial aspect of prison violence which they do not touch upon is prisoners' relationships with officers and subsequently also what leads to conflict and violence involving officers. This is explored in the following section.

2.5.5 Staff-prisoner relationships - Conflict, violence, and respect

Sykes (1958) emphasises that the collective adaption to deprivation creates solidarity between prisoners as well as a culture that works as a way for prisoners to adapt to prison life and a code by which certain values are emphasised (such as the aspects outlined in the previous section). But solidarity between prisoners may also create an oppositional attitude towards the prison and those working in the prison system, herein also the officers, and may even turn into resistance - especially where prisoners experience perceived disrespect or unwarranted behaviour - in the form of e.g., violence, protests or drug misuse (O'Mara, 2024). Moreover, Sykes suggests that because prisoners are already experiencing the deprivation of freedom, autonomy, and resources as unjust, order cannot solely be coerced or enforced through physical means but requires prisoners to perceive the treatment by staff as reasonable.

In their meticulous comparison study of two high-security prisons, Sparks et al. (1996) emphasise the role that legitimacy plays in upholding order. They suggest that coercion alone is not enough to ensure long term order;

> "an orderly situation is any long-standing pattern of social relations characteri[s]ed by a minimum level of respect for persons) in which the expectations that participants have of one another are commonly met, though not necessarily without contestation. Order can also, in part, be defined negatively as the absence of violence, overt conflict or the imminent threat of the chaotic breakdown of social routines*"* (ibid., p. 119).

This means that order is not only the absence of violence and conflict but also encompasses compliance with rules which in turn requires prisoners to perceive the system as well as treatment by staff as reasonable – or respectful.

More recent studies also point to the importance of respect, specifically in interactions between prisoners and officers (Hulley et al., 2012; Liebling, 2011; Treadwell and Gooch, 2022). Hulley et al. (2012) note that respect is often emphasised as a key value and prisoners are quick to bring it up in discussions "about what matters in prison" (p. 6). As will be evident from Chapter 6, similar reflections were shared by the ex-prisoner focus group participants from an early point in the interview. Whilst some definitions or understandings of respect refer to dignity, worth, "courtesy, reasonableness and fairness" (ibid., p. 5), Hulley et al., state that;

> "[h]er Majesty's Chief Inspectorate of Prisons (HMCIP) evaluates prisons against four key criteria, one of which is respect: the treatment of prisoners 'with respect for their human dignity'. In practice, this is interpreted in terms of the quality of conditions (for example the physical environment, access to amenities, and the quality of food and health services) and the quality of staff–prisoner relationships. These are defined somewhat narrowly, in terms of courtesy, the use of first (or preferred) names, and the effectiveness of the personal officer scheme" (ibid.).

Similar statements from the Scottish Prison Inspectorate (HMIPS) were not available; although a few publications (Standard 5, 2018; HMIPS, 2024), speak of respect (although without clearly defining it) in terms of prisoner-staff communication. Hulley et al., (2012) highlight that scholarly understandings of respect in prison are equally narrow, referring primarily to "courteous and considerate staff-prisoner relationships" (p. 5), while the concept of respect is in fact more nuanced, going beyond respect in relation to status and respect on the basis of basic human rights.

As also observed by Sparks et al. (1996) with regard to fairness; prisoner's perceptions of respect have two dimensions, namely a communicative or interpersonal dimension and a procedural justice-related dimension. The interpersonal dimension entails prisoners perceiving staff to be respectful where prisoners feel that they are listened to, and staff exhibiting care and empathy in their interactions with prisoners, speaking politely and "in a non-aggressive manner"

(Hulley et al., 2012, p. 9) - such factors indicate how staff judge the prisoners morally. The procedural justice dimension of respect entails prisoners being listened to and their needs being dealt with (ibid.). Sparks and Bottoms (1995) pose the question of whether legitimacy and respect equals “pleasing the prisoners” (p. 58). They suggest that; “paying attention to prisoners' critiques of prison regimes has to be judged as being not simply about 'pleasing the prisoners'; rather, such critiques may be pointing to moral issues*”* (p. 59). As both Sparks and Bottoms (ibid.) as well as Hulley et al. (2012) argue, demands or queries are not about far-fetched aspects like “luxury accommodation or waiter-service at all meals [which] will be easily rebuffed by prison management” (Sparks and Bottoms, 1995, p. 58), but about “a willingness and ability among staff to assist and support prisoners in relation to their daily needs and requests” (Hulley et al, 2012, p. 11). Arguably, this then means that where prisoners are treated badly, they are more likely to behave badly - reinstating Cooke’s argument (1992) that “difficult prisoners are only difficult in certain settings” (p. 24).

In extension of prisoner-staff relationships and respect, Liebling (2011) highlights the distinction between *good* and *right* relationships between staff and prisoners. Liebling describes two poles of prisoner-staff relationships, namely too distant - i.e., making use of primarily formal communication and punishment, such as restricting privileges - and too informal, meaning officers and prisoners are close, *“*lacking boundaries of professional distance” (p. 491). Liebling suggests, that both such relationships may be described as ‘good’ by prisoners, either because they barely see officers on the wing or because they perceive officers to be relaxed with rules. She further highlights that *right* prisoner-staff relationships are a balance between distance and informality; “respectful, but incorporat[ing] a ‘quiet flow of power’” (ibid.). This is an important reflection as more power is often assumed to be negative, whereas less power is seen as less legitimate, as also noted in other studies treating this *false assumption* (e.g., Sparks et al., 1996). This means that whilst prisoners may not see the prison system or the officers as fair, nor their acts as reasonable all the time, prison staff, demonstrating fairness and respect both in daily interactions but also through procedural justice, may be able to negotiate a system that is generally perceived as reasonable (ibid.).

The above reflections also point to the importance of the perceptions of respect in encounters between staff and prisoners; Liebling argues that “[t]he best officers are prepared to use authority, but are good at using it” (2011, p. 491). Moreover, Liebling and Price (2001) argue that these officers are not afraid to use authority, are committed, discerning, and confident. Also, good officers are described as caring, patient, and comfortable in their relationships with prisoners, while at the same time unafraid of interacting with them and aware of boundaries as well as comfortable setting them. These traits signify fairness and respect which helps to keep order in general (Hulley et al., 2012; Liebling, 2011; Sparks et al.,1996; Sykes,1958) but they also point to how order is kept at an interactional level. Whilst Liebling and Price

(2001) do not specifically speak to situations of violence, aspects such as “unafraid to use force” and to enforce “rules” and “confidence” (p. 50) can be linked to situational dynamics that serve to prevent violence and are similar to traits identified by Nassauer (2016) in situations where police deal with potential violent protesters. As Chapter 5 will show, although such dynamics are not always observable via YouTube data, this project explored similar themes for the purpose of extracting (related) tactics to be employed by officers during conflict situations with prisoners.

The sections above have considered contexts of conflict and violence in prison settings, highlighting personal characteristics of the people held and those working in prison as well as their experiences and motivations for use of violence. These aspects are important for the understanding of the individuals involved, their relationships with other fight participants, and the impact of the prison setting which may all influence how violence unfolds. Whilst the contexts may provide explanations for the occurrence of conflict, Edgar et al. (2003a) hint at the idea – similarly to VDA scholars - that social and structural contexts do not necessarily explain the emergence of violence; where they explain how violence occurs, they draw on Collinsian-like situational or interactionist aspects, emphasising the importance of interactions.

2.6 Expanding the interactionist approach to interpersonal prison violence through video data

Much of the literature examining prison violence relies on traditional data collection methods like interviews, participant observation, or surveys to account for motivations for or levels of violence as well as analysis of social and structural contexts. Whilst such factors, as mentioned above, explain why conflicts occur, the micro-sociological or interactional approach explains the mechanisms that turn conflict violent; thus, to understand why violence occurs, it is necessary to look at the interactional processes of violent encounters. Whilst the VDA method has been applied to violence in public spaces (Levine et al., 2011; Liebst et al., 2018; 2019a; 2019b; 2019c; 2024) and protest violence (Bramsen, 2017; 2018; Nassauer, 2015; 2016; 2018a), VDA has not been used in studies of prison violence, thus the present thesis is the first study utilising video data and employing a micro-sociological approach to studying prison violence.

2.6.1 Research questions

The research seeks to explore how and to which extent Visual Data Analysis adds value to the understanding of the course, context, and consequences of violent incidents in men’s prisons. There are two sub-themes within this;

> a. Theoretically; what are the uses and limitations of Collins’ theory of violence in studying and conceptualising prison violence?

b. Methodologically; to what extent does the use of video footage shed light on the impact of different actors in minimising or amplifying the scale of violent interactions?

3.0 Research design and methodology

The aim of the present project is to evaluate the quality, useability, and limitations of available online data depicting violence in prisons as well as to explore the applicability of Collins' theory of violence (2008) to the prison context. The theory and research method (VDA) that followed Collins' theory, has not formerly been applied to a prison setting and this is thus the first study of its kind. The data has been sampled from YouTube and the exploratory approach allows for reflections on availability, quality, and useability of video data sampled from YouTube. The video research design draws heavily on practical guidelines for exactly this type of research design developed Nassauer and Legewie (2019; 2021; 2022). These guidelines constitute the only purely methodological piece of literature to guide video research and build on both early visual studies (Collins, 2008; Kluseman, 2009; Levine et al., 2011) and interactionist approaches to understanding social life (Collins, 2008; Goffman, 1967). The video research design in the present project also draws inspiration from other VDA studies, many of which provide detailed reflections on methodological choices (e.g., Bramsen, 2017; Mosselman et al., 2018; Nassauer, 2015).

The focus group structure draws on a less widely used approach, namely co-viewing - primarily used in studies of meaning-making of film and TV (Bennett and Knight, 2021) - in which the video clips constitute the central point of discussions with themes emerging from video analysis as guidance for the interview guides. Here, the videos are not dramatised depictions of prison life, but real-life incidents recorded in prison spaces. Thus, this chapter discusses the VDA-approach along with the data and collection of both video and focus group data, the sampling processes for both kinds of data, and the limitations relating to both the video analysis and focus group methods.

3.1 Introducing the VDA-approach

VDA is, as detailed above, a novel research method exploring "situational dynamics and behaviour using video or other visual data to understand how people act and interact" (Nassauer and Legewie, 2021, p. 138). Visual data enables meticulous observation of "a person's movements, fields of vision, uses of space, interactions, exchanges of glances, and gestures, facial expressions, and body posture" (ibid.). The latter three are the key aspects of attention for the present thesis. Building on Collins (2008) and Goffman (1967), this method and its data allow for an examination and thus understanding of interactional processes that are not necessarily part of everyday life. If patterns can be identified across situations of similar nature it aids the understanding of social phenomena (Nassauer and Legewie, 2021). VDA is a method that focuses on the depicted, i.e., what can be observed in photo and video data, and draws on visual studies, multimodal, ethnographic, and experimental behavioural studies. The data used in VDA research

is drawn from the large pool of footage generated from CCTV, smartphone, and body-worn cameras (BWCs), often capturing violent interactions up close (ibid.).

There are three types of content to be examined in the visual material, namely, "(a) facial expressions and body posture, (b) interactions, and (c) context (…)" (ibid. p. 145). The second analytical dimension, the interactions observed, refers to movement and action, i.e., the actions participants perform (hugging, hitting, touching) and the roles they take on (fight participant, bystander, victim). This dimension speaks to the ways in which different actors react to the environment they are in and how their reactions shape the course of the interactions - e.g., how, in the context of violence, displays of escalatory behaviour such as hitting, pushing, kicking (Levine et al., 2011) may exacerbate aggression. Within interactions, gestures and verbal communication (where footage audio allows) are also considered (Nassauer and Legewie, 2019). Finally, context which refers to the circumstances and space in which a social interaction unfolds is also considered. Context does not only mean the factors leading to conflict or a violent incident but can also be understood as the physical space - i.e., 'setting', understood as a socio-spatial arrangement that is conducive to certain kinds of interaction rather than others (ibid.).

VDA is best suited to examine "interactions, emotions, and other aspects of situational dynamics" (Nassauer and Legewie, 2019, p. 4) - as the literature review outlining existing studies would also suggest. Nassauer and Legewie describe how researchers may take either a deductive or inductive approach, working either qualitatively or quantitatively with video data, capturing either fine-grained or broad actions. Equally, concepts and indicators can be conceptualised deductively or inductively - or through theoretical abduction. Alternatively, an exploratory approach can be taken. Though, as VDA is a developing methodology, sampling, coding, and conceptualisation are often developed through "an iterative process" (ibid., p. 6).

The present thesis uses an exploratory approach to sampling of footage, but borrows certain elements from existing theory and studies to build the analysis. As explained above, the situational dynamics of violence defined by Collins (2008) serve as the foundation for the analysis as well as for the video data collection. This means that the sampling criteria was initially designed to maximise the capture of the situational dynamics defined by Collins (2008), e.g., favouring clips with longer lead ups before to situations turn violent, while also allowing for an exploration of additional dynamics and potential patterns. However, whilst the data is vast, the quality is often poor and therefore, sampling clips favouring long build-ups or adequate aftermath was not feasible. Instead, the quality of footage served as the primary criterion - these aspects will be further elaborated in section 3.3, which presents the data and sampling criteria. Even with the footage quality being the primary criterion, it allowed for enough flexibility to adopt an exploratory approach to both sampling and conceptualisation, allowing for non-theoretical or non-pre-determined dynamics to emerge from the data.

Along with sampling comes choice of data source; for the vast majority of VDA studies, the video data stem from third-party sources - so-called ‘ready-made data’ (Nassauer and Legewie, 2022) - for example CCTV from the police or local authorities (e.g., Levine et al., 2011; Liebst et al., 2018; Nassauer, 2018a). Footage may be taken from online sources where access negotiations are made superfluous, thus allowing for time efficient sampling, and where footage fitting the research focus and sampling criteria may be more readily available. However, as Nassauer and Legewie (2019), emphasise, readily available data may “have limited analytical potential” (p. 6) because the research focus and sampling criteria does not dictate what is captured. As highlighted by Nassauer and Legewie, researchers should also consider the quality of the footage - or optimal capture. Optimal capture means “the degree to which the data material provides information on all aspects of a situation that are relevant to a given research question” (ibid., p. 8) and refers to data enabling “the researcher to establish a seamless sequence of relevant factors, and provide compelling evidence for systematic links between those factors and the outcome under investigation (if such links exists)” (ibid.), i.e., allowing for a seamless sequence of interaction. Optimal capture also refers to the quality of the footage, i.e., features such as resolution, zoom, audio availability, and camera angle (ibid.).

Another aspect of third-party material or readily available data to consider is the capture of natural behaviour; Nassauer and Legewie (2022) define natural behaviour as behaviour in which participants act in the same manner regardless of whether the situation is captured or not. Thus, the most significant challenge is reactivity, i.e., the possibility of participants adapting their behaviour because they know they are being filmed. Researchers can assess whether reactivity is an issue from three factors, namely; (1) if the depicted are unaware that they are being filmed, (2) if they are aware, do they adapt their behaviour - e.g., facial expressions may happen subconsciously which can indicate natural reactions - and, (3) if participants clearly react to the camera or recording device. It should be noted here that those who film with handheld devices in a given space are likely to be known in these spaces, thus causing lower levels of reactivity.

Equally, if recording in a particular space is common (e.g., through CCTV), then reactivity is likely low (ibid.). Once data is collected, researchers reconstruct events with a focus on the dynamics under investigation; if the study is quantitative, researchers might apply statistical analysis as to frequency of recorded behaviour or dynamics, diagrams of movement or “a matrix of time and movements” (ibid., p. 12). A qualitative approach often consists of a step-by-step transcription of a video sequence detailing the movements, which is then transformed into comprehensible, seamless reconstruction, drawing out relevant details of emotion, movement, and context (here referring to physical setting and social factors). It is important to note that through the reconstruction of incidents, researchers have already initiated an analysis of situational dynamics, i.e., making connections between actions, actors, and processes or outcomes (ibid., p. 15).

Finally, Nassauer and Legewie (2022) and Legewie and Nassauer (2023) argue that triangulation improves the validity of the VDA approach, referring to triangulation of data sources, types of video footage, as well as data types. This means that researchers should seek to draw data from more than one source, use different types of video footage, i.e., CCTV, BWC, and mobile phone footage, and make use of other types of data that is not video footage, e.g., interview data - from participants who have experienced the depicted events - to provide insight into contexts or for their interpretations of events, thus letting participants review the collected and analysed data (ibid., p. 9). The present research follows several elements of this approach, namely, making use of different types of video footage (although not of the same event), namely CCTV and mobile device footage, as well as focus group data - herein also co-viewing data - thus employing a mixed methods approach.

Similarly to Bramsen's studies (2017; 2018), which also included semi-structured interviews with participants who had been part of situations similar to those depicted in the footage analysed, the focus groups in this study - consisting of prison officers and former prisoners - were presented with the sampled clips and asked for their interpretations of situational dynamics and displays of emotion to increase validity of the analysis. As the forthcoming section will explain, the focus groups were initially meant to be made up of officers and prisoners depicted in footage obtained through SPS, but data collection was changed because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Further elaboration and justification for choice of methods follows in the forthcoming sections on research design and data presentation. Thus, the following sections outline the original research plan and the final research design, drawing out reflections as to the set-up, data, sampling criteria, and data presentation based on the recommendations for VDA research design detailed above.

3.2 Initial research design - Covid-19 challenges and research re-design

The initial research plan involved video data access from the Scottish Prison Service and semi-structured interviews with prison officers and prisoners triangulated with incident reports pertaining to the clips. The initial proposal and, the later board paper, stipulated 15 recordings and two interviews per recording, inviting a co-viewing aspect where both officers and prisoners would interpret not just the situational dynamics, but also shed light on causes and context for similar incidents. The triangulation with incident reports would provide further insights into lead-up, social ties, causes, and aftermath - i.e., information that is not necessarily gained from the video data alone (Nassauer and Legewie, 2021). This research plan also stipulated that interviews would be held with individuals depicted in the clips. In discussions with the prison service, however, it was declared that CCTV recordings would likely not be of incidents that had happened recently, but from archival records, thus ruling out interviews with the depicted individuals.

This had pros and cons; on the one hand it meant less of an ethical minefield, on the other hand, older recordings would likely be of lesser quality, limiting the possibilities of examining e.g., facial expressions which require a high resolution (Nassauer and Legewie, 2019) and potentially also bodily expressions of emotion and posture. Thus, a key sampling criterion was set to mitigate the issue of data that did not allow for examination of facial expressions; footage which allowed for examination of facial expressions would be a bonus but not a criterion. A further sampling criterion relating to the ability to establish comprehensive sequences of actions and emotions was to exclude footage where the fighters are out of view for more than 15 seconds - equally, clips lasting less than 30 seconds would be excluded as they were expected to not allow for enough insight into post ct/f behaviours. Moreover, to enhance legibility, the number of active participants would also limited - the highest number of active participants comes to seven in the sample. These criteria were to be revised based on available data and exploratory observation - likewise additional criteria were to be applied after familiarisation with available data.

To supplement the video data, interviews with prisoners and prison officers were to go ahead after the video analysis. The purpose of this was to compare video interpretations (between researcher and participants) and to gain insight into general dynamics that lead conflict toward violence, officer intervention strategies, training potential, and prompt reflections on the advantages and disadvantages of CCTV surveillance. Thus, the semi-structured interviews were divided into two parts. The first part centred around a case study element, in which participants would be shown a clip along with key points from the researcher's interpretation to direct attention towards situational dynamics, behaviours, and expressions of emotion. The second part was intended to enquire into general reflections on situational dynamics and behaviours driving conflicts as well as reasons for conflict and violence, experiences of officer intervention, and security measures.

As part of the triangulation of methods to ensure a high level of validity, incident reports of the analysed clips were to be included in the research design (though dependent on data access); the incident reports would serve as a reference point for the observations made in the video data - hence the need for the reports to match the sampled clips. The reports would also serve as an insight into how incidents are recorded, and the level of detail recollected to assess how well details of an incident are remembered. This would further provide insight into the validity of such reports - based on the notion that violent incidents are stressful, and participants have a distorted recollection of events (Collins, 2008).

Discussions about access were ongoing with the Scottish Prison Service when the Covid-19 pandemic occurred. This shifted SPS priorities and their ability to grant access to researchers and necessitated a major change of plan. An adaptation of the original research scenario was thus drafted to accommodate the uncertainty of access to data because of the pandemic. The below section outlines the

reconstruction of the original design into a fully digital research scenario to align with the then social distancing and institutional restrictions - it also describes how the digital research design differs from the original research plan.

While the methods remained the same, the data had to be derived from other sources. Nassauer and Legewie (2019) recommend using video footage derived from online platforms such as YouTube. Consequently, the video data was to be sampled from video sharing platforms and therefore required some changes to the sample criteria - this aspect is clarified below. This research scenario also entailed interviews, though with former prisoners and former or retired prison officers as interview participants - thus not those involved or depicted in the incidents. The latter adaptation was however not a major setback due to the time span between the accessible reports and the moment of the interviews as mentioned above. Some changes were to be made to the interview questions although this alteration would allow for the themes to remain the same.

Including incident reports would not be possible in the revised research scenario and to mitigate the lack of an additional layer of information, interviewees would be shown a couple of video clips (instead of a single clip) to gain a fuller understanding of how interviewees who have participated in prison violence would perceive or interpret the clips. As in the original research scenario, the aim was to collect 15 video clips and conduct approximately 30 interviews. Contact with interviewees would happen through gatekeepers, social media platforms, and organisations working with former prisoners and prison officers. At the time, a few potential gatekeepers had been identified, and contact had been established with some. Interviews were to be conducted online - thus ensuring a fully digital research scenario.

When first exploring the footage depicting prison violence, it was found that much of the footage was from CCTV, whilst some incidents were filmed with mobile devices - or by documentary film crews. Thus quality, angle, and audio varied greatly. As a consequence, a first criterion was that bodily behaviour must be examinable. If video footage was of a quality that did not allow for analysis of facial expressions, it would still be included. The rest of the criteria remained the same as for the original research scenario. The video data for this scenario would be collected from various online media sharing platforms including YouTube and LiveLeaks (LiveLeaks was disbanded sometime after this scenario had been presented as part of the first-year board paper and panel, namely in the summer of 2021). These sources contain many hours of video material showing violent incidents in prisons, mostly from CCTV recordings. As such, data collection would be less time consuming - at least according to Nassauer and Legewie (2021; 2022). It should be noted that data from these sources vary in auditive quality, influencing the ability to hear the fight participants and the crowds. Also, a portion of videos are edited and therefore do not show the full incident. Finally, the origin of source (including the country of origin) is

difficult to verify, thus the selection process had to be vigorous to ensure that the footage was of a sufficient quality falling under the sampling criteria.

As mentioned, the interviews in this scenario would be conducted with former prisoners and former or retired prison officers. While the overall themes of the interviews remained the same, an additional theme was added, namely enquiring into interviewees' thoughts on the violence in prison having left the environment - thus a focus on their own experiences in hindsight. As touched upon, in this scenario interviewees would be presented with a few video clips - selected from the sample of 16 clips - to examine their observations and compare them with the ones of the researcher. All interviews would be conducted online via Zoom, unless Covid-19 restrictions were to change, allowing for face-to-face interviews. The choice to include former prisoners and officers in this scenario was made to mitigate the issues of access restrictions and to allow for a fully online project, thus complying with the then Covid-19 restrictions.

3.2.1 Final research setup

As the following section will show, the final research design involves further adaptions as well as the adoption of aspects from both the original and Covid-adapted research designs as part of the research was carried out during later stages of the Covid-19 pandemic and other aspects after the return to 'normal'.

As the uncertainties of Covid-19 on data collection continued after the board review in early 2021 with the second lockdown on-going, the focus during this time was on analysis of video data where collection of data had started in Spring of 2021, but also on identifying and contacting potential focus group participants. The search for participants was conducted through social media, primarily via X (formerly Twitter). Contact was established with a couple of ex-prisoners (based around the UK) who at the time of contact were working in the areas of crime prevention and youth projects - efforts were also made to contact former prison officers.

Whilst both some ex-prisoners and ex-officers were engaging in initial conversation and showing interest, conversations halted when attempts were made to set up the interviews or focus groups - this may have been fuelled by the inability to engage with people in person, thus adding to the impact of Covid-19 on the project. As these efforts did not bear fruit, conversations with the supervisors took place about other ways to recruit officer and ex-prisoner participants for interviews or focus groups (e.g., through supervisors' networks) as well as reconsiderations about access to prisons. However, whilst Covid was easing throughout 2021 and into 2022 in most places, this was not the case for prisons, thus the supervisors advised awaiting the easing of Covid conditions in prisons before attempting any application to the prison services. During this time, the recruitment efforts via both social media and academic networks continued but repeatedly stalled despite attempts to follow up on

gatekeepers and potential participants. This was an intensely frustrating and deeply demotivating time resulting in active considerations to cease the research altogether.

Due to the effects of Covid-19 on prisons, such as temporary restructuring of how prisons were run, e.g., early releases of short-term prisoners and changes to visit policies, prolonged lock-up, and the introduction of phones to prisoners to mention a few (Maycock, 2022; Morrison and Graham, 2022), the project's supervisors advised only seeking access to interviewing prison officers as prisons were unlikely to engage with research requests that did not directly address Covid related aspects of prison life. This approach was meant to ease the application process as the project would not be seeking access to sensitive data (i.e. video footage and interviews/focus groups with prisoners). As an effort to make the project applicable and appealing to the Scottish Prison Service, a decision was made to recruit officers who worked for SPS and ex-prisoners who had served their sentences in Scottish prisons; this would make practical implications of the research SPS-focused, even if the video material depicts English and American prison settings.

In the autumn of 2022, one of the project's supervisors reached out to the governor and deputy governor of a Scottish prison to gauge interest in the project and to discuss the potential for undertaking the focus groups with their officers. Subsequently, an application to SPS seeking permission to conduct focus groups was submitted in May 2023 after conversations and initial interest and pre-approval from the governor. This entailed that video data and prisoner focus group data had to be collected otherwise, thus drawing on the Covid back-up plan to employ data from online sources, namely YouTube (as LiveLeaks was no longer available), and establishing connections with ex-prisoners having served their sentences in Scotland. Contact with organisations working with former prisoners as well as through academic networks were again attempted during this time but did not result in participant recruitment despite repeatedly following up with academic contacts and repeated emails and phone calls to the different organisations; the ex-prisoner participant recruitment had to resort to convenience sampling drawing on one of the supervisor's contacts. One focus group went ahead in late October 2023 in which three participants were meant to part-take, but one participant cancelled on the day of the interview and despite wanting to participate in a one-on-one interview at a later point, the participant stopped responding.

The difficulties of recruiting focus group participants resulted in a total of three focus groups. The FGDs were conducted during September and October 2023 and contained a co-viewing aspect as well as questions addressing general reflections on patterns of prison violence. As such, the aims or prospects of the FGDs remained the same, namely to view the sampled clips with the participants to extract their interpretations for the purpose of comparing them with the author's own readings of the clips as well as to discuss wider contexts of conflict turning violent (with a view to

reflect on the interplay between context and situational dynamics). The recruitment criteria and process are further detailed and described in section 3.6.

Not having access to prisons as planned in the original research design has been a challenge to the present study at several levels. First, in respect to access to CCTV and incident reports which could have served as triangulation of methods and secondly in terms of the missed opportunity to recruit prisoner focus groups amongst actual or incarcerated prisoners and, as a consequence, lack of opportunity to discuss with these groups incidents they had actually been a part of - had SPS allowed for use of newer clips. On the one hand, these aspects have inarguably had an impact on the substantiality of findings. On the other, it could be argued, that since the prisoner focus group participants were not personally involved in the incidents of the video material they were invited to discuss, nor under the care of the prison service, they were able to speak without filter, i.e., without any risk of disclosing sensitive personal information or incriminating themselves, and may therefore have given a more honest account of attitudes, perceptions, and interpretations.

Finally, the video sampling was also approached exploratorily. As the following section will outline in more detail, the video sample was downsized to correspond with the number of focus groups (a larger sample would have required more groups or longer duration of FGDs) as it was thought important for the analysis to allow for all clips to be viewed and discussed by the FGDs. As such, it should be noted that the findings may not be generalisable due to the lack of breadth of both video and focus group sample but are indicative as to the kinds of dynamics that minimise or amplify the course and outcomes of violent incidents in prisons. These circumstances echo those of Mosselman et al.'s study from 2018. In terms of generalisability they flagged that due to time constraints, as the result of trialling different less useful data, the sampling resulted in footage showing more severe cases, thus disabling the ability to assess generalisability of the selected cases. They argue that the aim was not to present results that were representative of Dutch robberies, but rather to establish the effect of different weapons in relation to victim submission, and the selection bias was not considered to be problematic (Mosselman et al., 2018). In the present research, the aim is not to establish whether the footage depicts representable situations but rather what can be learned from the situations and thus video selection has been based on adequate quality allowing for an exploration of situational dynamics as well as of the usability of available footage depicting prison violence.

3.3 Video data presentation and sampling

This section presents the visual data and outlines the sampling process. First, the data is presented along with the sampling criteria, followed by the sampling process,

and finally, challenges pertaining to the sampling process are detailed in order to further the discussion of YouTube as a data source.

The visual data sample consists of eight video recordings (see Table 1) ranging from roughly 50 seconds to 3.5 minutes and includes up to seven active participants (actors), including dominators, victims, and bystanders. Initially, 16 clips were sampled and transcribed, however, as the research design shifted from individual semi-structured interviews to focus groups, the number of videos were cut down to accommodate an appropriate focus group duration (maximum 2 hours) and to allow for groups of both officers and prisoners to review the same clips. However, as only one ex-prisoner group went ahead, some clips were only viewed and discussed by one focus group. The eight videos chosen from the initial sample of 16 were based on two criteria; the first being an equal number of clips showing prisoner-on-prisoner violence and violence involving officers, and the second optimal capture, i.e., clips of an adequate quality, representing natural behaviour with actors being in the frame.

The initial 16 video sample, collected and reviewed over approximately 6 weeks, consisted of recordings from TV documentaries, CCTV, BWC, and mobile device footage. TV documentary footage, while providing key insights into the causes and contexts of the violent incidents, turned out to be unsuitable for the analysis of how violent incidents unfold and the dynamics that lead to minimising or amplifying the scale of the violence. These clips were heavily edited and switched between fights, interviews with onlookers (taking place post-incident), and between different angles of the incidents. The latter was useful in observing onlooker and audience behaviour but resulted in disrupted observation and challenges of transcription of fight-participant behaviour and did not allow for a full, real-time sequence of violent incidents. Furthermore, when switching between angles and/or interviews with onlookers, fight-participants had changed positions suggesting that short sequences which could have provided crucial details of shifts in dynamics, had been edited out. The initial reasoning for including these recordings was to examine the insight that such footage could provide as the HD quality film allowed for facial analysis. Clips found on YouTube, have often also been edited in such a way that only the ‘action-packed’ part is included, which means that the clip starts just before a fight breaks out (sometimes after) and ends when the fight ends. While some recordings show very few seconds before violence erupts, some do show build-up with some analytical potential (Clips 1, 5, and 7).

As there are not currently any set guidelines for sampling video data, the sampling approach was, as mentioned, also exploratory. Whilst existing studies outline a form of sampling criteria, these seemingly also follow an exploratory method with only a few criteria as to e.g., the content of the footage (see Bramsen 2018). The best attempt at sampling guidelines is found in the recommendations of Nassauer and Legewie (2019) - also described in section 3.1 - which include optimal capture, natural behaviour, and, of course, focus of study as key features of sampling.

However, more practical steps as for example how to achieve optimal capture are somewhat neglected in existing VDA literature and seemingly dependent on what type and quality of footage the researcher has access to. Nonetheless, the three aforementioned features create the foundation for the sampling in the present project.

Footage, of course, show individuals performing violent acts as defined in the coding scheme (Table 2) and includes prisoner-officer as well as inter-prisoner violence. The focus of the sampled clips is the impact of emotional displays and situational dynamics, as defined primarily by Collins (2008) - but also Nassauer (2018b), and Levine et al. (2011) - on minimisation or amplification of violent incidents. The focus of the incidents in which prisoners and officers interact is the examination of the techniques used to minimise violence as well as the behaviours exhibited by officers that serve to escalate. This enables an analysis of the dynamics leading to escalation and de-escalation when prison officers interfere and/or intervene.

For a better overview of dynamics, bodily behaviour, and expressions, footage with a lower number of active participants have been favoured but no set number was pre-determined – as flagged, the highest number of active participants in the sample is seven. ‘Active’ refers to participants, i.e., perpetrators, victims, and bystanders, who are physically involved and not only verbally. The decision pertaining to fewer participants was also made to ensure a higher quality of transcription; transcriptions are rather dense and contain a lot of information associated with bodily movements. The more participants, the more information to be noted, and the higher the probability that crucial dynamics may be left out simply because too much is happening at once and dynamics are at risk of not being picked up on despite several reviews. Onlookers play an important role as verbal engagement can create an atmosphere that either escalates or de-escalates violent interaction (Collins, 2008; Levine et al., 2011). Therefore, including footage containing onlookers is essential as it may impact the outcome of violent interaction (Liebst et al., 2018). This means that some clips show a large number of people (who may verbally interfere), but only a small number who actively (or physically) participate.

The sample includes a mix of CCTV (4 clips) and mobile device (4 clips) footage. The variation in footage provides different features, including audio/no audio, static/mobile camera, quality, and possibility to decode facial expressions. An initial assumption that CCTV does not allow for audio did not hold up as one of the four CCTV clips features audio. Another assumption during the initial sampling stages was that phone footage is of better visual and auditory quality, but for all four phone-recorded clips the audio cuts out or lacks quality to make out speech during short sequences which means that analysis of verbal clues of emotion expression is slightly disrupted. Across the sample of both CCTV and mobile phone footage, the recordings are grainy and do not allow for decoding or examination of facial expressions. The analysis therefore relies primarily on bodily expressions of emotion

as well as verbal clues as defined by Nassauer (2018a) to identify emotions and their impact on situational dynamics. Footage of a quality that did not allow for examination of bodily behaviour was excluded as this falls outside the research focus.

As recordings sampled from YouTube may show footage in which active participants are out of view (or out of the frame), a choice was made to dispel footage in which perpetrators or victims are out of view for long enough to distort the sequence of interaction which may be crucial to the outcome or course of an incident and could be missed. This would lead to faulty analysis, thus producing unreliable results. Longer clips were favoured to allow for maximum capture of dynamics in the lead-up to violence occurring, to examine the dynamics of overcoming the ct/f barrier or to gain insight into stopping points (Collins, 2008) and aftermath (e.g., how bystanders may interact with victims and dominators post-violence (Copes et al., 2013b; Levine et al., 2011). Again, no set duration was defined as this would strongly limit the data pool, particularly when also considering optimal capture. The figure below presents an overview of the video sample including length, footage features, number of active participants, and camera as well as geographic location. When presenting the recommendations for future studies, the technical features mentioned here will be considered.

Table 1: Video sample overview

Clip no.	Length	Participants	Location	Footage type and features	Camera placement
1	1 min 56 sec	1 dominator, 1 victim (both prisoners)	US, cell	Phone camera, slightly grainy, audio available	Phone camera placed on bed but is picked up later
2	1 min 30 sec	3 dominators, 1 victim (all prisoners)	US, shower room	Phone camera; audio, and grainy visuals, moving with the fight	Held by a member of the audience
3	2 min 12 sec	1 dominator, 1 victim (both prisoners)	UK, day/TV room	Phone camera, grainy, audio available	Held by member of audience
4	1 min 4 sec	1 dominator, 1 victim (both prisoners)	UK, day room	Phone camera, somewhat grainy	Held by member of audience
5	2 min 9 sec	3 dominators (prisoners), 2 victims (officers)	US, *pod (independent section with a number of cells within)*	CCTV, slightly grainy and no audio	Far corner of pod
6	50 sec	1 dominator (officer), 1 prisoner (victim)	US, pod *(independent section with a number of cells within)*	CCTV, no audio, slightly grainy	Camera placed at some distance from the actors (on a wall in the middle of the pod)
7	3 min 49 sec	1 dominator, 1 victim, 5 officers	US, cell/holding cell	CCTV, audio, visuals grainy (facial expressions not visible)	Far corner of cell
8	1 min 14 sec	1 prisoner (dominator), 4 officers (victims)	UK, cell wing	No audio, slightly grainy	CCTV footage filmed with phone on monitor

3.4 Recorded observations - video transcription and analysis

Having described the adaptation of the research design, the sampling approach, and the video data, this section details the analytical approach, i.e., how video clips have been transcribed and analysed. It is followed by a discussion of the limitations of online video sampling and potential pitfalls of the VDA approach.

A video recording should be understood as an observation that can be watched multiple times, in slow motion, and frame-by-frame. This is also its greatest advantage as it ensures that a higher amount of detail is detected, even though, in most video recordings, an event is only observable from one angle (Nassauer and Legewie, 2021). As the recordings are treated like observations, the full incidents are transcribed (and found in the appendix), i.e., an observation note is created for each clip. The observation note, or transcription, describes the incident chronologically; the transcription of each incident thus captures the incident as a whole, instead of noting only certain features (Mosselman et al., 2018). Mosselman et al. suggest not describing violent incidents movement by movement but rather by transcribing the incident and bodily behaviour as it is interpreted to create comprehensible storylines, e.g., 'person X aggressively raises their hand and prepares to punch person Y by clenching their fist'.

Transcripts describing incidents movement by movement, detailing bodily behaviour and/or expressions of emotion, as well as potential contextual details, become dense and difficult to follow, thus Mosselman et al. recommend that the written transcriptions, or storylines, should have as little complexity as possible - a recommendation followed in the present thesis. As such, details of perpetrator and victim characteristics and interpretations of bodily postures are kept to a minimum. Evidently, the complexity is minimised as the interpreted storyline will not need detailed coding because the described interactions, displays of emotions, and actors have been interpreted - thus also incorporating the first step of analysis. On a practical level, this means that the transcriptions of the videos in this thesis were approached with light-touch coding based on situational dynamics and actors as defined by Collins (see Table 2 below). This means that no elaborate coding scheme was developed and primary coding was based on predetermined elements (see Table 2 below) and behaviours of escalation and conciliation as theorised by Levine et al. (2011) and Nassauer (2018a). In turn, findings or observations of non-predetermined dynamics were also highlighted, thus allowing for a write up of story lines based on the *interpretations* of the video observations.

The footage transcriptions, serving as observation notes, use descriptive coding of bodily movements and expressions of emotion (coding will be elaborated upon in the following section). The aim is to produce descriptions of each violent incident observed, for the purpose of analysing the behaviour and disseminating the

information derived from the footage. As bodily postures and movements are included as focus points in the present thesis, these are recounted in detail in the footage transcriptions. Moreover, the current study employs footage descriptions as a way of ensuring transparent dissemination, but it should be noted that the video analysis is based on the video and not the transcription of the recorded incident.

For the purpose of analysis, research methods have been developed to record observations, one of them being Systematic Social Observation (SSO). It is systematic because "(...) observation and recording are done according to explicit procedures which permit replication and (...) rules are followed which permit the use of the logic of scientific inference" (Reiss 1971, p. 4, cit.in Mastrofski et. al., 2010, p. 226). As a result, a set of behavioural elements are predetermined when observing an event that unfolds naturally, e.g., in studies employing video data. The main strength of the SSO-method is that the researcher will know which clues, dynamics, and behaviours to look for in large amounts of data. While this may leave little room for noticing elements of interaction beyond the predetermined in live observations (ibid.), visual data has the advantage that it can be reviewed, thus once the SSO-components have been noted down, the researcher can re-consult data without the predetermined features in mind – as was the case during the transcription of the present video data.

Moreover, it may be beneficial for the researcher to transcribe a given recording and then review it, keeping only one component in mind at a time to capture as many details as possible (Nassauer and Legewie, 2021). It must be noted that SSO is often used in research in which software is used for recording behaviours to ensure reliability and validity (Mastrofski et al., 2010). It may, however, also be applied to visual data analysis in which the recording and observation of behaviour is done manually by the researcher. While a set of predetermined elements constitute an initial SSO foundation, the analysis reveals further elements and patterns which are added subsequently thus using a combination of a deductive and inductive approach to build the sampling criteria. For the predetermined elements, the thesis - as noted in the literature review - draws on definitions of fight actors or participants and dynamics central to violent interactions as defined by Collins (2008). He distinguishes several interactional elements observed in violent incidents. These elements are also used for coding and create the basis for SSO-components, i.e., the dynamics to be noted in the transcriptions.

Below is an overview of the predetermined elements used for both sampling and analysis of the clips. It must be noted that the dynamics are archetypes of behaviour and variations or deviations must be described to ensure the legitimacy of transcription and of data analysis. These descriptions create the foundation for 'testing' Collins' violence theory in the prison setting.

Table 2: Predetermined elements of violent interaction for sampling video data

Term	Description
Dominator	A person who commits a violent act, such as hitting, punching, shoving, dragging, slamming someone against something, stomping on someone, and kicking.
Victim	A person who is the target of a violent act (*without performing violent counteracts)* - the analysis of the video data suggests that the victim terminology as defined by Collins does not fully correspond with the behaviour as 'victims' do fight back at times. To simplify storylines and ensure better clarity, the term victim is being used, but where applicable, it is described how the behaviour deviates.
Bystander	A person who physically intervenes during a violent incident. *(Bystanders can display escalatory or conciliatory behaviour) (Levine et al., 2011).*
Crowd/audience	Persons (non-physical involvement) who primarily observes violent interaction but may verbally engage.
Confrontational tension/fear (ct/f)	*Applicable to perpetrator/victim;* showing signs of overcoming or fleeing the confrontational tension and fear barrier. Repetitive violent actions or fleeing attempts.
Entrainment	*Applicable to perpetrator/victim; s*igns of entrainment; perpetrator and victim engaging in a successful interaction in which there is flow and rhythm in movements, and in which they pay attention to each other's movements.
Stopping point	Fight ending *(by fight participants themselves (knock out, exhaustion) or by bystander/officer intervention)*

The terms *dominator* and *victim* are derived from Collins (2008) who argues that the roles that individuals take on are determined by the situational field. Thus, in violent encounters "[s]uccessful violence battens on confrontational tension/fear as one side appropriates the emotional rhythm as dominator and the other gets caught in it as victim" (p. 19), which means that the person(s) who through emotional dominance controls the course of the fight – the one performing the majority of the violent acts - is the dominator, while the person defending themself or attempting to fight back is the victim. Most often the victim performs fewer violent acts or is less successful in executing violent acts. It should be noted, however, that the terminology is not always the most suitable to describe the actors as the emotional dynamics may shift

throughout incidents and, as a consequence, the terminology aspect will be a point of analysis when discussing the applicability of Collins' theory.

As discussed, Collins (2008) also highlights the importance of bystanders and audiences but does not make a distinction between the two, while the present thesis does distinguish between them (based on the analysed video material) in the following way; bystanders are members of the audience who physically (and verbally) intervene, either to escalate or de-escalate, whereas audiences are acts as onlookers; this means that they do not interfere physically but may shout encouraging (escalatory) remarks or verbally interfere to de-escalate or end violence. These conceptualisations of audience members build, in part, on Levine et al. (2011) whose study examines how third-party behaviour impacts the course of violent incidents and codes three categories of actors, namely perpetrator, victim, and third parties which include bystanders, crowds, and police officers (p. 408). Moreover, they identify two types of behaviours, namely escalatory and conciliatory (as outlined in section 2.3.3) which the present analysis also employs.

While Collins does not offer great detail on how to recognise these elements, Nassauer (2018a), in her study of robberies, developed a detailed guide (coding scheme) describing each expression of emotion and how to recognise them both facially and bodily (p. 148), building on both Collins and Ekman et al. (1972). Ekman began researching facial expressions and body movement in the 1950s and by studying slow-motion video clips of depressed clients who claimed not to be depressed, he discovered facial micro-expressions, revealing negative feelings that the patients were attempting to hide. Eventually, his research turned into an online training tool, providing resources for the public to learn to detect facial expressions (also micro-expressions) - training that has also been used in workshops for police (Paul Ekman Group). Due to the quality of the present YouTube data, not allowing for analysis of facial expressions, this training tool was not utilised for the analysis of video data in this thesis.

In the study on how robberies succeed or fail, Nassauer (2018a) details how to read *universal emotions* - a concept coined by Ekman et al. (1972) - namely, anger, contempt, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise as well as emotional energy; high and low. She describes how these emotional states can be read through facial expressions and body language and even describes how they can be distinguished from one another. The analysis of this thesis has made use of Nassauer's coding scheme to describe body language when transcribing the video clips – particularly in descriptions of high and low emotional energy as well as fear and anger. It should be noted that surprise, disgust, and contempt are not described by Nassauer in terms of body language and are thus not in use in the analysis of the video data as the resolution did not allow for close examination of facial expressions - a key limitation of the online sampling approach which will be further discussed in

the following section which presents the limitations pertaining to the use of video footage as data and the measures taken to mitigate these.

3.5 Limitations - Online video data

As the researcher is picking and choosing video data based on the conceptualisation of the research questions, there is a possibility of some level of sample selection bias. This may lead to a sample in which the predetermined dynamics are exaggerated, leaving little room to explore other possible dynamics as well as the effects of more subtle clues. As the forthcoming empirical chapters will show, the quality, duration, and limited range (e.g., stationary CCTV cameras) of the video material of the present study has at times limited the potential for a fully unpacked Collinsian analysis of incidents. This may have had either of two effects on the video data sampling; either sample selection bias has been minimised or, alternatively, the video data is skewed towards the predetermined elements – the latter suggesting that YouTube data, CCTV, and mobile phone footage has limited analytical potential for the study of violent interactions. Unpacking Collinsian dynamics may have been aided by choosing longer clips but at the time of sampling, however, longer clips stemmed from documentaries and prison-based reality shows and as this type of footage, as previously explained, is cut and edited it does not allow for natural sequences of interaction and the depicted individuals may have been instructed to behave in certain ways, thus displaying unnatural behaviour. Therefore, longer videos meeting the sampling criteria were not available.

It is likely that researchers are inclined to choose action-packed recordings as they may appear more interesting at first sight. To mitigate this challenge and minimise the level of sample selection bias, recordings of incidents in which lesser force and less movement - as well as lower levels of engagement from crowds - have been included. When first viewing the sampled data, some incidents may seem severe, however, the focus group discussions downplayed the severity of the incidents. Also, the four clips showing prisoner-on-prisoner violence contained features indicating that the fights had been staged, which again suggests that the level of severity was controlled. The phenomenon of staged violence will be unpacked later in this section, when discussing the challenges of sampling data that captures ‘natural behaviour’.

Another pitfall when sampling footage from YouTube is that captions may be misleading, promising great action and giving detail of the context. As such, when sampling footage from YouTube, the researcher must be careful not to be misled by video captions as they may lead to assumptions about how incidents unfold, resulting in incorrect analysis. Oftentimes, video captions are intended to catch the eye and interest of the viewer but do not correspond with the content of the footage; while footage from online sources may be more action-packed, the titles will still often lead the viewer on by promising more action than what is to be observed.

Finally, the video captions (and descriptions) may provide contextual clues such as pre-existing social ties, actor characteristics, and reasons for conflict but the researcher must be wary not to let these clues guide the analysis. Also, videos are not necessarily uploaded by those who have filmed them, which may lead to incorrect interpretations of the context - a dilemma which also has ethical implications (discussed in Chapter 4 on ethics). Moreover, researchers must be careful not to impose specific meaning onto the observed behaviour; when reviewing and analysing video clips, there may be a tendency to search for specific meaning or to deliberate the reasons for the violence which can impact how the footage is analysed, i.e., creating a biased analysis even if video data, in theory, allows for objective observations (Nassauer and Legewie, 2021). As Hodgson (2023, p. 169) puts it in his work on pareidolia; “our hold on visual reality is conditioned by various emotional and perceptual states, which, in turn, depend on an interaction with the affordances existing in the world”. In other words, there is a risk that this researcher’s focus on Collins and the VDA method could lead to reading dynamics into situations that simply are not there. Thus, researchers must also reflect on whether their observations are objective or find ways to mitigate such bias. In this study, interpretations of visual material were routinely discussed with supervisors, to ensure that they were justified. Other researchers advocate co-viewing methods (Morrison, 1999) or interviews (Bramsen, 2017; 2018) with those familiar with the settings or situations depicted in the video clips, to test and challenge researcher interpretations for a more rigorous analysis. This was the rationale behind the choice to include focus group discussions with the co-viewing element in the present work.

All of the above-described aspects indicate that video data only allow insight into parts of the context of an incident. And until VDA and online video data research has gained a stronger, more acknowledged, better established and well-tested methodology, the researcher is left to work on an exploratory basis, balancing the ‘take what you can get’-terms of data collection with a critical eye for the aforementioned pitfalls of the sampling process.

As Nassauer and Legewie (2022) and Grimm (2024) note, one of the pitfalls or limitations of *ready-made data* is that the researcher has no control over what is being filmed, how it is being filmed (from which angle and with which type of camera), nor the quality of the footage. Equally, clips vary in featured sound (no sound/fractured sound/full sound), frames, and durations (Nassauer and Legewie, 2022). Nassauer and Legewie further raise the point that “data stems from a possibly unclear data-generating process” (ibid., p. 129) which may result in bias. This refers to how well the data represents reality, i.e., “the [data] pool is distorted in some systemic way and does not represent the ‘real’ universe of cases” (ibid.). This bias may also entail that naturally occurring violence is not captured. However, naturally occurring violence should not be confused with naturally occurring behaviour; as Nassauer and Legewie (2019; 2022) put forward; natural behaviour refers to minimal reactivity to the camera, whereas naturally occurring violence refers to violence that

is not staged. Whilst the violence in some of the analysed clips may be staged or pre-arranged (as the focus groups have pointed out, see Chapter 5), the behaviour occurring in situations of staged violence is still authentic, a feature that can be determined by looking at the expressions of emotion as certain reactions are difficult to control (Ekman et al. 1972; Nassauer and Legewie, 2019). The behaviour observed in most of the present sample does not suggest that the recordings suffer from reactivity apart from in one clip (which is discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.1.1). Instead, the number of staged violence clips uploaded to YouTube may suggest that severe violence, which may include use of weapons such as shanks, or severe beatings, e.g., several persons beating up a single victim, is either not recorded or not uploaded - a point also raised by FGD-participants.

In terms of focus group interpretations of the videos, it is evident from the overview of video clips (see Fig. 1), that several of them are from prisons in the US, and it should therefore be noted that spaces of the prison, officers' violence prevention and protection training, and officer/prisoner relations may differ from a Scottish context. The focus group participants speak from a Scottish point of view, which may again differ from how the above aspects are experienced in English prisons. Particularly when discussing officer interventions, the officers compared their training, experiences, and environments to the depicted intervention dynamics, reflecting on how officers should be handling the viewed situations. For obvious reasons they could not comment on the training that US officers receive. However, when discussing the clips depicting situations in US prisons, the focus on situational dynamics and body language suggested familiarity with expressions of emotion.

A final note on the video data limitation; data source and availability of footage undeniably go hand in hand; as touched upon, in relation to prison violence, certain situations are not filmed whilst others are only captured by certain cameras, thus differing in technical features. Nassauer and Legewie (2019) acknowledge that choosing a data source "holds specific challenges" (ibid., p. 6). Data source does not only refer to online video platforms but also includes footage from "courts, police, security camera providers [or] other researchers" (ibid.). Regardless of the source, however, they suggest that researchers should consider feasibility and openness of source. Feasibility refers to the type of data available, its advantages and disadvantages, and as discussed in the paragraphs above, its analytical potential.

The other aspect, openness of source, refers to whether video data can be made available to readers and reviewers, i.e., if the source allows for sharing of the video material (ibid). Videos uploaded to online video sharing platforms are in the public domain and whilst they can be shared, they cannot be downloaded – the latter being a potential limitation if videos are later removed as was the case with one of the clips in the present sample. At the same time, this particular limitation also puts a limit to one of the benefits of the methods, namely the possibility for researchers to review footage for analytical purposes or use clips as part of co-viewing interviews, again as

was the case in the present thesis. As videos of violence essentially violate YouTube's community guidelines, videos are routinely reviewed through both automated systems and human reviewers (YouTube.com). However, since a large amount of footage remains online, it may imply that the violence is not deemed severe enough for removal. Finally, users uploading material may simply choose to remove footage for a number of reasons.

The above sections have served as an introduction to setting up visual data studies and presented the amendments to the research design made in order to accommodate and mitigate restrictions and challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. It has described the sampling and coding processes, along with a discussion of the limitations of the method, data, and sampling process as well as the measures taken to mitigate or accommodate them. The following sections describe the focus group methodology and the recruitment process. It also presents the setup and purpose of the interview guides.

3.6 Focus groups and co-viewing - Aims and objectives

As suggested by Nassauer and Legewie (2019; 2021), triangulation of data increases validity of VDA studies as it has the potential to confirm interpretation of events, add missing information, and may contribute to the interpretation of the analysed visuals (2021). Particularly interviews are useful in "providing evidence on the meaning of the actions" (ibid., p. 160). Bramsen (2017; 2018), in studying how situational conditions lead to violence (or not) during the Arab Uprising, conducted interviews with demonstration participants; they were shown both photos and videos and asked to reflect on what was happening to gain insight into the interpretations by those involved or familiar with the situations. Similarly, in another study which sought to define violence through video editing methods, participants were recruited on the basis of having "characteristics or experiences that might give added insight into how violence is defined" (Morrison, 1999, p. 2).

Since it was not possible to sample video data from the prisons and conduct interviews with prisoners and officers involved in the analysed video data as stipulated in the initial research design, this project, in accordance with the above approaches, recruited prison officers and former prisoners as focus group participants in order to test the researcher's interpretations of the situational dynamics. Prison officers and former prisoners are arguably participants with experiences suitable to provide added insight into to the situations depicted in the video data. The aim of the focus groups was thus to test the initial reading of the incidents, i.e., compare this author's interpretation of events with the interpretation of participants with lived experience of the subject of analysis. Moreover, the FGD aided in shedding light on not only the above-mentioned contextual factors of the prison setting which may lead to conflict turning violent - insights corresponding with

existing theories - but also on behaviours that serve to escalate or de-escalate violent incidents, which have practical implications for prison officer training.

The following sections describe the focus group set-up, the sampling criteria and recruitment process as well as the rationale for the choice of focus group discussions and co-viewing.

3.6.1 Recruitment and participants

As outlined in section 3.2, the initial research design stipulated focus groups and/or interviews with current prisoners. However, due to disruptions to prison life and operations during Covid-19 (Gormley et al. 2022), a choice was made to seek prisoner-participants who had served their sentences in Scottish prisons, i.e., ex-prisoners, rather than currently incarcerated participants. Initial contact was facilitated through academic networks and with minimal criteria, the only one being that sentences were served in Scottish prisons. As such, no criteria as to length of sentence nor type of prison was set.

With regard to officer-participants, the basic criteria were that they had to work in the Scottish Prison Service in male prisons or prisons with male populations. Following months of negotiations, access was granted to one such prison in Scotland - as previously described. The prison management agreed to circulate the research invitation; the focus group invitation was transmitted to staff at the prison for the purpose of officer-participants to sign up voluntarily. It turned out that the participants were chosen on the basis of length of service and experience. This became evident from an email sent to the eight chosen officers on which this researcher was cc'd, but it was unclear from where this choice of officers originated. Whilst not ideal, post-Covid restrictions had rendered access difficult to negotiate and so the focus groups proceeded on this basis. As access was granted rather late in the process that there was no possibility of expanding the limited opportunities afforded.

Thus, two groups of prison officers were formed, constituted by officers from a Scottish prison housing both long- and short-term male prisoners with mixed security classifications. Both prison officer FG interviews took place on the same day and were supposed to include four participants per group. However, due to staff shortages, only the first group was full - the second group had two participants. Thus, the first group, FGPO1, consisted of four officers having served between 12 and 27 years and worked in different areas of the prison as well as with different categories of prisoners - i.e., mixed experiences working with young offenders, adult mainstream populations, vulnerable populations, and segregation units. The second prisoner officer group, FGPO2, consisted of two officers who had worked in the Scottish Prison Service for 35 and 38 years respectively, also in different areas and with different types of male prisoners.

A total of three focus groups went ahead. The third group, FGPR, was made up of two former prisoners who had served together, although with different sentence lengths - also in Scottish prisons which was a criterion. A third ex-prisoner was meant to take part but as previously explained, he cancelled on the day of the interview and did not respond to further communication about an alternative date. This focus group was somewhat unique; as described above, initial contact with one of the participants was facilitated through academic networks, meaning they were familiar with the different aspects and processes of research which could have been a potential concern in terms of response bias (Copes et al., 2013a). FGPR did show some deeper understanding of, as well as interest in, the co-viewing aims than the officer groups which may have impacted how the clips were viewed and discussed, but conversation frequently got side-tracked through anecdotes and other chit-chat, indicating less of a concern about pleasing the researcher (ibid.). Therefore, this aspect is not considered to be of concern.

Having outlined the recruitment process, the following sections cover the focus group discussion structure and limitations pertaining to conducting the focus group interviews.

3.7 FGD structure - Screening and discussion

The FGDs consisted of two parts; one part focused on the co-viewing aspect and entailed viewing a clip followed by a brief explanation of this researcher's interpretation in order to direct participants towards a discussion of expressions of emotion, body language, and verbal clues, where available, and to test this author's reading of the situational dynamics. The screening of the sampled clips and discussion part of the FGD's took up a significant amount of time, although leaving just enough time for questions to spark a more general discussion about some of the key dynamics such as the role of bystanders, rules and regulations, and actions and reactions. The second part covered themes such as ex-prisoners' experiences of officer interventions in violent incidents, officers' experiences of intervening in prisoner-on-prisoner incidents, and the use of CCTV recordings in the prisons.

Finally, prison officer-participants were asked if they thought video material like the type they had seen, would be helpful in training new officers, and ex-prisoner-participants were asked to reflect on what it would mean to them had their fights been recorded and uploaded to YouTube and social media. As the discussions unfolded, not all interview questions were asked as many, particularly sub-questions, were either answered through discussions - or rendered irrelevant as some discussions went in other directions - all interview guide themes were however covered. Moreover, questions were not necessarily asked in the order listed but according to points or themes raised by the participants. At times, attempts were made to bring discussions back on track or onwards by returning to the interview guide structure. Challenges encountered as to discussions of particularly the

situational dynamics are outlined in the next section (3.8) on FGD limitations. Finally, the interview guides for the officer and ex-prisoner focus groups varied to some degree in terms of the questions asked but the overarching themes were the same for both.

The primary aim of the focus groups was to discuss interpretations of the video clips and thus, the co-viewing became the key feature; the focus groups were each presented with four and three clips respectively (as previously explained, one clip from the sample had been taken off YouTube and was therefore not available for viewing); the ex-prisoner FGD were first presented with clips showing prisoner-on-prisoner violence whereas officers were first shown clips of violence involving officers to ensure that ex-prisoner participants had enough time to discuss prisoner-on-prisoner dynamics and officer-participants enough time to discuss violence involving officer dynamics. As expected, officers had more to say about clips depicting incidents involving officers, and likewise the ex-prisoner FGD took longer to discuss the prisoner fights or violence clips.

As the works of both Morrison (1999) and Bramsen (2018) suggest, co-viewing allows for discussions of interpretations of the viewed material, directing participants towards certain aspects, dynamics, (Bramsen, 2018), or definitions (Morrison, 1999). For Bramsen, who examined the Arab Uprising using footage of incidents and interviewing demonstration participants, the co-viewing aspect aided the interpretations of the analysed material and helped to identify or expand the understanding of the dynamics observed, while also providing insights into the unfolding of similar events. The present project draws inspiration from Bramsen (2018) in emphasising the co-viewing element of the FGDs. It was used to direct participants towards discussions and interpretations of situational dynamics, body language, and wider contexts in alignment with the focus of enquiry - and thus also away from speculations on the reasons why violent incidents happen as well as reasons for prison violence more generally.

The clips were divided into the same two main categories as the video analysis, namely prisoner-on-prisoner violence (three clips) and violence involving officers (four clips). Both officer groups were presented with two of the clips showing violence involving officers, and two and one of prisoner-on-prisoner violence, respectively. The ex-prisoner group viewed two clips from each of the two categories. The screening structure was based on the Bennett and Knight's (2021) 'prisoners on prison films' study in which participants viewed a film, immediately followed by a group discussion to elicit immediate responses to the viewed material and to generate themes to be picked up in later FGDs (ibid.). Like Bennett and Knight, who audio recorded participants' verbal reactions during the screenings, this project's FGD also had audio recording running during the screening of the clips to record any immediate reactions to the clips; these reactions primarily consisted of a few laughs, some jokes, and brief clarifications and did not possess analytical value -

at least not in respect to the focus of inquiry. Apart from testing the researcher's analysis, the intent was also to test whether situational analysis makes sense to those who have experienced violence as well as to discuss and generate various readings of the situational dynamics. The participants were often in agreement as to interpretations of both dynamics and possible contexts, and only in a few instances did the interpretations vary between the officer and prisoner groups viewing the same clips. Thus, the focus groups provided a space to discuss complex phenomena, and the conversations did to some degree tackle complicated ideas (Cyr, 2015), e.g., articulating observations of and reflections on escalatory and de-escalatory behaviour.

In sum, the FGDs revolved around the co-viewing of video material which served to test this researchers' interpretations of the clips and to shed light on general patterns of situational dynamics, and expressions of emotion. It also served to generate reflections on the types of behaviours or body language (exhibited by both prisoners and officers) causing escalation or conciliation, and, finally also to elucidate the role of bystanders in fights in the prison setting. Testing interpretations on participants with lived experiences of the topic of research added to the interpretations of the incidents and provided new perspectives or alternative explanations, adding validity to the method and analysis (Nassauer and Legewie, 2021; 2022).

3.8 Limitations - The challenges of focusing on situational dynamics

The primary challenge of the FGD was steering the focus of participants towards situational dynamics without asking these questions in a leading manner. The information sheets, which were provided for recruitment as well as on the day of the FGDs, described the focus on situational dynamics. This written clarification of focus served to direct discussions away from context. Equally, the FGD structure and focus (as well as how the FGDs fit into the research) were explained at the start of each FGD for the same purpose. The ex-prisoner focus group, FGPR, showed a deeper understanding of the co-viewing aspect, thus the two participants were more responsive to questions regarding situational dynamics - and anecdotes relevant to this focus often followed. FGPO2, on the other hand, often disregarded questions, attempting to draw out reflections on dynamics by discussing potential contextual explanations instead. FGPO1, whilst also discussing potential contexts, did reflect on aspects of situational dynamics. The implication here is, that the reflections on situational dynamics became fragmented within the discussions. Elements of situational dynamics were also, at times, raised or discussed after the groups had progressed onto reflections of violence in the prison setting. The experiences of the FG sessions suggest that context is key to understanding violence in the eyes of the participants and clues pertaining to body language, verbal communication, and the role of each actor is not in the foreground when reflecting on violence.

As reflections on situational dynamics, body language, and verbal cues did crop up as the discussions moved on from the clips into general observations, it became clear that both officers and prisoners were aware of their importance. Particularly both officer groups reflected on how they pay attention to ‘shifts’ in atmosphere’ or ‘mood’, which may suggest that the descriptions of such elements may differ but still refer to the same things. Equally, FGPR’s understanding of the purpose of the co-viewing, as briefly explained above, may stem from one of the participants' familiarity with research processes. Nevertheless, like the two officer groups, FGPR would also return to themes like verbal clues and body language at a later stage, relating their own anecdotes and observations to the clips as if they had processed the viewed material as the conversation progressed.

Lastly, whilst the discussions were rounded off properly, the awareness of time constraints did at times limit the reflections or off-topic discussions. Moreover, the time constraints prevented an off record debrief with the participants. Particularly, the officer FGDs had somewhat rushed endings as officers had to return to or start work (towards the end of the first FGD another member of staff entered the room as the 90 minutes agreed per FGD were up). This also meant that a discussion of pseudonyms was omitted; it was initially the plan to ask the officers to choose pseudonyms to use in the transcriptions and quote-extraction. Whilst this could have been done at the start of the FGD, the atmosphere did not seem right; before the first FGD, waiting for all officers to arrive, some of the present officers expressed that they were not quite sure what they were participating in, whilst others questioned the project, the researcher, and her credentials. Thus, the atmosphere did not lend itself to a question like; ‘If you could choose a pseudonym, what would it be?’. In hindsight, such a question could perhaps have served to break the ice. Officers are instead named as PO (prison officer) followed by a number, based on the order in which they introduced themselves. As officers had not been asked, a choice was made not to put the question to participants of FGPR either and they are referred to as FP (former prisoner) and likewise followed by a number.

Despite the officers not knowing what to expect and being more comfortable discussing reasons for and contexts of the viewed incidents, discussions on effects of body language and verbal clues did add to the examination and analysis of the video clips, whilst the more general discussions provided useful insights into dynamics that escalate and de-escalate conflict and violence between prison officers and prisoners. The reflections on conflict between officers and prisoners revolved around behaviours that either fuel conflict, aggression, and violence - or help to decompress tense situations. Such insights could prove useful for further research into escalation and conciliation dynamics with possible real-life implications.

Having outlined and discussed recruitment procedures, interview guides, and challenges and limitations of the FG approach, the following chapter discusses the

ethical considerations of both VDA as a method, of video data, and of the co-viewing FGD methods.

4.0 Ethics - Online video data, focus groups, and co-viewing

As the use of video-based data becomes increasingly popular within the social sciences (Nassauer and Legewie, 2022; della Porta et al., 2024), the literature on ethical considerations and guidelines is growing proportionately. In this chapter, the ethical challenges, and considerations with regard to online sampled video footage depicting violent incidents is discussed. Also, the focus group discussions that include co-viewing of the footage are reflected upon, and this chapter thus covers both ethical aspects of violent online material and potentially sensitive topics dealt with by participants (prison officers and former prisoners) who may have experienced similar situations.

On a practical note, the project went through ethics reviews both through the University of Edinburgh and the Scottish Prison Service. The initial ethics review was submitted early 2020 but took into account a 'plan b', namely the fully online version in consideration of the Covid-19 restrictions at the time described in section 3.2. A second, altered submission representing the details of the final research design was submitted in Spring 2022, encompassing reflections on focus groups with current prison officers and former prisoners. As for SPS, there was no formal ethics review, but ethical reflections were outlined extensively as part of the research proposal.

4.1 Visual research ethics

Visual research ethics include a range of concerns relating to "research design, data collection, analysis and dissemination, legal and regulatory frameworks, as well as wider issues of privacy, power and inequality, representation and respect" (Clark, 2020, p. 683). While the 'established' research methods within the social sciences have clear and widely accepted guidelines, novel methods such as visual data research encompass more complicated approaches and researchers must develop situated ethics on a 'value that outweighs harm'-basis, while also following legal guidelines for visual data, i.e., ownership and storage (ibid.; Legewie and Nassauer, 2018). The ethical considerations discussed by Nassauer and Legewie (2019; 2022) and Legewie and Nassauer (2018) pertain to public and semi-public spaces and are thus not directly translatable to the prison setting, but they do act as a guide to this project's ethical considerations as no other scholars have elaborated VDA and online video ethics as extensively and thoroughly as Nassauer and Legewie (2019; 2022) and Legewie and Nassauer (2018).

The five cornerstones of ethical research practice derive from "beneficence, respect for people, justice, and respect for law and public interest" (Legewie and Nassauer, 2018, para. 9). The British Sociological Association (BSA) (BSA, 2017) urges researchers to consider the extent to which collection of data and dissemination can

cause harm or threaten the privacy of those depicted. This raises questions about storage and handling of video material as well as dissemination of information based on the analysed video material. Additionally, the laws and guidelines are fuzzy, especially when it comes to criminal conduct, as criminal behaviour is not protected by privacy laws (ibid.).

The following sections describe the key challenges of sampling and working with video data derived from online sources such as YouTube and how these challenges have been mitigated and weighed against “unique opportunities”, referring to the kinds of insights obtainable through the specific data, not otherwise attainable (Legewie and Nassauer, 2018, para. 8). Thus, to address the cornerstones of ethical research and ensure that research participants are respected, informed consent, privacy and anonymity, and avoiding doing harm must be considered.

4.1.1 Informed consent

Informed consent allows participants to consider and evaluate their participation in a given study (Nassauer and Legewie, 2022), including the possible risks of participation. Informed consent is the most prominent ethical challenge in video data research where video footage is sampled from online, public sources such as YouTube; oftentimes, the depicted are not aware that they are being recorded, and if they are, they may not expect the footage to end up in a public domain, nor have they given consent (Nassauer and Legewie, 2022). This means that obtaining consent from the individual(s) depicted is likely not possible and, depending on the source of video material, it can also prove difficult to obtain consent from the owner of the footage (Legewie and Nassauer, 2018) as it requires contacting the YouTube - or other online platforms - users.

A notable issue is the researched or depicted sharing visuals on YouTube or textual material on Twitter, with an intended audience. Whilst this material is public, the researched may have an intended audience, which is not necessarily the researcher and thus, under ‘normal’ circumstances, would not consent to give access (BSA, 2017; Legewie and Nassauer, 2018; Nassauer and Legewie, 2022). BSA’s key suggestion is dialogue with the researched - however, in most cases this will prove difficult, particularly in digital or online-based research where the observable data (content) has already been produced, e.g., social media posts or video material (BSA, 2017; Nassauer and Legewie, 2022). It is unlikely that researchers are able to obtain consent from social media and video sharing platform users, and even if they are, it is even more unlikely that consent from those depicted can be obtained, especially if recordings are made in public spaces where the individual who is recording is not acquainted with the identity of the depicted.

Legewie and Nassauer (2018) draw a connection between ethnographic studies and digital research (whether visual or textual data), arguing that consent is not

obtainable where observation takes place amongst large amounts of people. They further highlight;

> “[i]f the person who uploaded a video is not the person depicted in it, or there are several people or even a crowd visible in the video, getting consent from everyone is next to impossible. Law requires abiding by online platform providers' terms of service, but if access to the platform is unrestricted, then the law does not require consent” (Legewie and Nassauer, 2018, para. 15).

The views on ethical practice differ, with one side arguing that information put online is consent in itself, and the other side that collected information concerning communication and behaviour needs consent, meaning that private information online is confidential (ASA (American Sociological Association), 1999; Legewie and Nassauer, 2018). The BSA (2017), though, highlights that “[i]mages depicting illegal activities [...] do not have the privilege of confidentiality” (p.10).

Also, Legewie and Nassauer (2018) note that;

> “[e]ven though informed consent is required by law for many social science projects and is a key component of official ethics guidelines, it is neither necessary nor sufficient for a study to be considered ethical […]. Laws and guidelines are somewhat ambiguous and do allow for ample exceptions” (para. 16).

When video data is sampled from YouTube, “maximum visibility can be expected to be either the users' explicit goal or an accepted fact” (Legewie and Nassauer, 2018, para. 27). As such, when considering the need for consent, expectations and extent of online traffic must be considered. This means that researchers should consider access and restrictions, if there are any, when assessing the need for obtaining informed consent.

Thus, there is no consensus across existing literature when it comes to interpretation of public and private in the online domain, whether researchers are looking at text or visual data (Pauwels, 2015), but scholars and ethics boards alike do stress the need for minimising harm to participants (ibid.). Legewie and Nassauer (2018) further suggest that researchers should take into consideration the fact that obtaining informed consent is near impossible when sampling from online sources and instead of informed consent, researchers should consider other ways of minimising harm. In order to do that, Nassauer and Legewie (2022) suggest that consent is weighed against other ethical aspects, e.g., privacy and anonymity.

4.1.2 Privacy and anonymity

The most obvious way to minimise harm is to ensure privacy and anonymity - this refers to not sharing any recognisable traits, including snapshots from the clips or links to videos. Instead, drawings or sketches are acceptable depictions for use in an

analysis to visualise certain situational moments or micro-dynamics. These representations ensure that “personal characteristics of people as well as of places are indiscernible” and make the study less problematic (Legewie and Nassauer, 2018, para. 36). This approach was part of early drafts of the findings chapter but were eventually removed as such depictions did not add significant value to the presentation of data.

Privacy and anonymity are perhaps the ethical concerns most widely discussed in relation to the use of online data (Harris, 2016). Harris suggests that one way of looking at the online spaces, to decide whether is it ethically justified to use it for research, is to consider the online community’s ethos; ”[w]e thus considered the ethos of the site we were studying which is to “Broadcast Yourself” (part of the YouTube logo in its early, pre-Google days) in our ethical decision-making” (ibid., p. 68). Naturally, it has to be considered that users uploading to YouTube are not necessarily intending for their material to be used in research, which emphasises the assumption that users upload videos with an intended audience in mind. Whilst there are no restrictions as such stating that researchers cannot use uploaded material for research, Harris highlights the “potential for alienation that might arise from the indiscriminate use of material found online, material that has been provided in one context and taken up in another” (ibid.). What this means is that researchers may fail to consider the privacy implications for those depicted because of the lack of direct contact with such ‘participants’ and because the visuals are seen as data sources from a research perspective. These points emphasise the importance of considering how privacy and anonymity can be maintained, even where data is freely available.

The BSA (no date) also points to expectations and perceptions of public and private spaces as ethical aspects of concern, suggesting that people may be acting in public but do not intend for strangers to observe them, or for observations to be used in research, and that this creates “a mismatch between the expectations of the researcher and ‘the researched’ regarding the public/private distinction.” (p. 6). Nassauer and Legewie (2022), however, argue that there are certain spaces, like restaurants etc. (i.e., semi-public spaces) where people can expect a reasonable amount of privacy, while privacy in other spaces, e.g., a street, which is seen as a public space, cannot be expected. Furthermore, citing ASA (1999), Nassauer and Legewie explain that privacy can be expected where information is not made available or public with personal identifiers (2022). As Bramsen, (2017), della Porta et al. (2024), and Nassauer (2018a) all point out, footage of events ranging from protests to inter-personal fights are recorded in public spaces, thus those involved and those not involved, but present, must expect a certain degree of probability of being recorded.

When considering anonymity and privacy, Nassauer and Legewie (2022), suggest assessing direct and indirect personal identifiers which refers to the type of information available about the individuals. Direct identifiers include name, address,

phone number, and email, and with the increase in good quality footage, a person's face may also be considered a direct identifier. Indirect identifiers refer to "gender expression, skin tone, age, voice, […] size of city or town, a specific neighbourhood, […] or other details of personal characteristics" (ibid., pp. 87-88). They hold that, depending on footage quality, some videos may allow for identification of both direct and indirect personal identifiers. They also raise the point that footage can be compared with other data (e.g., news reports) which in combination may provide personal identifiers. As such, researchers should carefully consider storage and sharing aspects and related potential harms, even if videos are sampled from an online open source.

Pauwels (2015) also highlights the difficulty in balancing anonymity and privacy in visual data research, stating that this type of data loses its "communicative strength" (p. 259) when turned into numbers and words or otherwise edited to protect the depicted's anonymity. Whilst there is no straightforward solution or way to go about using visuals while also preserving anonymity - apart from obtaining informed consent, of course - Pauwels maintains that transforming images (into another medium) is the most obvious if not only solution (p. 260). Pauwels also suggests an assessment of the "in-context ethical expectations" (p. 268), referring to the level of privacy and anonymity that individuals can expect in different online spaces. Furthermore, he suggests that researchers distinguish between the ethics of accessing information and of using that information, and again the solution is to transform the visuals to another type of data. Whilst visuals, naturally, are at the forefront of video analysis, they need not necessarily be part of the final presentation of the research, a possibility that may minimise the issue of securing anonymity and privacy in the dissemination of research findings - for transparency the video transcriptions of the present study are however in the appendix and video clips are provided to examiners separately for assessment purposes.

4.1.3 Minimising harm - Addressing ethical concerns

The following section describes the steps taken to ensure minimisation of harm through privacy and anonymity in the present study due to unobtainable informed consent for the visual data. Within the discussion, so-called unique opportunities (Legewie and Nassauer, 2018) are also weighed against the lack of informed consent.

Researchers must consider the benefits of refraining, and whether it is ethical to refrain, from certain studies if consent cannot be obtained (Legewie and Nassauer 2018). Nassauer and Legewie (2022) suggest that researchers weigh the ethical concerns against unique research opportunities; video footage provides insights into human interaction, capturing rare, naturally occurring behaviour, thus video data qualifies as data with unique analytical potential. Therefore, not engaging in research where consent is unobtainable is equally problematic (Legewie and Nassauer, 2018;

Nassauer and Legewie, 2022). They argue that only video footage can provide raw insight into situational dynamics that are not biased recollections of incidents. Traditional methods such as interviews or observations that rely on actors or researchers recollecting details retrospectively do not provide reliable data because interviewees do not recall all details (especially not from stressful situations) - nor do researchers when conducting direct observations (Nassauer and Legewie, 2022). Moreover, direct observation would require a lot of standing around and waiting for something to happen, especially in order to observe incriminating or violent behaviour - which in itself raises ethical concerns. Nassauer and Legewie (2022) point out that, in the latter half of the 2010s, live streams of criminal or violent behaviour became increasingly common, making available events that are otherwise difficult to capture naturally, and may therefore enhance our understanding of the situational dynamics occurring during such events.

While the number of VDA studies researching violence is growing, little is known about what happens during violent incidents - and even less so in the prison setting. Research using video footage that is readily available (such as YouTube or social media data) offers opportunities to study situations and incidents that are otherwise difficult - if not impossible - to access through traditional research methods. Insights provided by analysis of such data serve to enhance the understanding of situational dynamics or practices of dealing with violence which could help develop measures to minimise violent incidents.

As for the present thesis - which, to this researcher's knowledge, is the first of its kind to utilise video footage to examine violence in the prison setting - the video data has allowed for insights into bystander and audience dynamics during violent incidents in prisons. It has also provided an understanding of how officers manage violence when victimised or when intervening in prisoner-on prisoner violence. It has equally contributed with valuable information about officers' intervention strategies, i.e., information which could not have been obtained through traditional research methods. The latter could prove useful both for the purpose of developing training guidelines (Koerner and Staller, 2022) and in actual training of prison officers as it supplies detailed information about the types of behaviour to employ to minimise violence in the prison setting, and the types to be avoided in order not to escalate a conflict situation. The potential of this information weighs heavily in terms of beneficence and constitute the basis of the guidelines derived from the analysis of intervention strategies observed in the present study. These are presented and discussed in Chapter 7.

Another unique perspective of ready-made video data is that it allows for capture of natural behaviour. As described in the research design (section 3.1), natural behaviour refers to the depicted behaviour occurring in the same way it would, had it not been filmed. As also pointed out previously, ready-made video data rarely suffers from reactivity because those filming are known to the spaces in which they film.

Similarly, whilst aware of CCTV cameras, people rarely change their behaviour in their presence (Pauwels, 2015). Thus, mobile device and CCTV footage offers unique opportunities to examine hard to capture or difficult to observe interactions. To sum up the practical side, also mentioned in the research design section, online video research is also cost effective; sampling from online sources allows for a less time-consuming data collection process because footage is readily available. This source of sampling circumvents the need for recruitment, lengthy approval processes as well as monetary incentives, and other costs related to data gathering and recruitment - in short, data collection requires less funding.

Although the literature on ethical guidelines for both online and video research is growing, the BSA (2017) emphasises that digital research does not conform to research ethics designed for other methods, although such research scenarios should not be ruled out. At the same time, it is not possible to provide guidelines to encompass the varied contexts for visual research (p. 11); at present, "[e]ach research situation is unique and it will not be possible simply to apply a standard template in order to guarantee ethical practice" (ibid.) nor do the existing guidelines provide straightforward solutions but rather suggestions for researchers to consider when working with online and visual data (Legewie and Nassauer, 2018; Nassauer and Legewie, 2022; Pauwels, 2015).

A key principle in generating guidelines is to minimise harm to participants (Nassauer and Legewie, 2022; Papademas, 2009). Participants should not feel that they have been harmed, i.e., that their privacy has been compromised nor that negative consequences follow from their participation, whether or not they are aware that their content - written posts on social media or uploaded video material or content in which they are featured - is being used in research. Papademas (2009) heavily emphasises informed consent, privacy, and sensitivity through truthful representation of research participants, arguing that researchers should ensure that there is no disclosure of embarrassing private facts to ensure minimal risk - especially considering the disclosing nature of research using visuals. Whilst these aspects relate primarily to participatory visual research, e.g., photo-elicitation and video-diaries (Harley and Langdon, 2018), they link to universal aspects of ethical research which are applicable to VDA practices.

Bramsen (2017), della Porta et al. (2024), Legewie and Nassauer (2018), and Nassauer and Legewie (2021; 2022) advocate for making raw video data available for readers and reviewers for the purpose of enhancing validity, where ethically appropriate. Nassauer and Legewie (2022) contend that sharing of links enhances transparency, "improves traceability, reproducibility, accountability, and openness of scientific process and findings" (p. 96). Video research, particularly where video data is sampled from open online sources, allows for "exceptionally transparent research because videos comprise the primary data" which is being analysed (ibid.). Video data can potentially be shared where researchers choose to exclusively include

footage from official news outlets to ensure that the clips have received some form of consent to be shown - most likely via police or other law enforcement - and/or where it is indicated that footage has been used for prosecution purposes (Legewie and Nassauer, 2018). Equally, footage can be shared within a research team to enhance validity.

Pauwels (2015) emphasises that certain research subjects may require extra consideration when it comes to privacy and anonymity, e.g., prisoners. Similarly, Mobley et al., (2008) and McDermott (2013) suggest that because prisons do not count as public places and, additionally, house a vulnerable population, extra care must be taken when weighing consent against other aspects. For CCTV recordings of prison violence being made public, consent will have been granted by the prison administrators. In the sample, however, one video, a phone recording of a CCTV-video, seems to be leaked footage, meaning that it does not stem from a court case or another outlet that allows for videos to be made public. The phone footage videos are also likely to have been filmed with contraband phones, i.e., phones which the prisoners are not allowed to have, although it should be noted that during the Covid-19 pandemic some prisons did allow mobile phones (Scottish Government, 2020). Drawing further attention to certain videos by publishing them, and thus encouraging further viewings (by stakeholders, prison staff, police), may increase the risk of legal and individual repercussions for both prisons, prisoners, and officers, which goes against the principle of minimising harm to participants. Moreover, Gooch and Treadwell (2020) point to the fact that prisoners on occasion film each other to extend humiliation beyond the prison walls; for example when prisoners who use drugs are testing new substances, other prisoners may film the reactions and upload them to social media or video sharing platforms for the humiliation to reach outside of the prison setting - one video in the sample suggests a scenario of this type.

The above taken into consideration, a choice has been made not to share or publish links to the sampled videos in the dissemination of the findings (these are, as previously explained, only shared with the examiners, for assessment purposes - and are provided separately). When it is not possible to obtain any form of consent from the depicted, no argument supports the publication of links taken from a non-public space, such as prisons, holding vulnerable research subjects. Arguably, the video data sampled for this study does depict illegal activities (violence), albeit in a rather unique context (prison) - in which many reasons for violence exist, for example self-defence, officer intervention, and ‘play-fighting’ (i.e., staged violence) - thus, these displays of violence may not necessarily lead to (or be intended to lead to) serious consequences causing ground for prosecution. Nonetheless, handling (i.e., viewing, storing, but, primarily, sharing) the present study’s video data could cause harm to participants as the footage depicts illegal activities.

Whilst the video clips of the present study were shown to the prison officers and ex-prisoners during the focus group interviews, and links were shared with the contact

at the prison where the officer focus group sessions took place, steps were taken to ensure that prisoners were not recognised by staff via the sampling process by avoiding clips from Scottish prisons, only including English or North American prisons. Still, one officer actually knew about one of the clips and recognised its origin (as it had been circulating amongst prison staff at the time when it happened), but the officer was not familiar with the prisoners involved as the clip originates from a prison in England. This reflects the above discussion of online privacy well - and suggests that even where precautions are taken to minimise harm and ensure privacy when collecting videos from online, freely available sources, these concerns cannot be fully mitigated. That the officer was familiar with one of the clips also, however, speaks to the wide circulation and dissemination of such material, thus strengthening the case for researching it.

A final note on sharing of the sampled videos; whilst these are shared separately with examiners for assessment purposes, full clips or frames from the videos are not crucial for the dissemination of research findings, and whilst readers may not have access to the visuals, the detailed story lines provide a clear description of the violent incidents. Story lines are rarely provided (apart from Bramsen, 2017; Mosselman et al., 2018; Nassauer, 2018a) in peer-reviewed VDA literature, but they are included in the present thesis to give the readers a detailed overview of each incident as the storyline also evidences researcher interpretation and provides transparency to the analytical process, and thus enhances the validity of the research.

4.3 Focus groups - Discussing sensitive matters

In the following sections, further ethical considerations and issues and the measures taken to mitigate or minimise them, are discussed. The first part describes ethical concerns in regard to the sensitive topics discussed in the focus group interviews. The second part presents a brief discussion of ethical reflections relating to the co-viewing aspect. In the last part, reflections on the process of accessing and recruiting participants and prisons are presented. In this section, also the focus group interview process is outlined. Mitigation or minimisation of ethical concerns are addressed throughout along with considerations pertaining to these ethical concerns relate to both prison officers and former prisoners as research participants.

4.3.1 Co-viewing - A way around difficult recollection

The general theme of the FGDs is, of course, experiences of dealing with or being involved in violent incidents in the prison setting, and as a consequence touching on sensitive topics is inevitable. The purpose of focus group interviews is to enable a discussion amongst participants that resembles a natural conversation which otherwise may prove difficult to create when working with sensitive topics (Wellings et al., 2000). Research on sensitive topics, according to Wellings et al.;

> “requires disclosure of behaviours or attitudes which would normally be kept private and personal, which might result in offence or lead to social censure or disapproval, and/or which might cause the respondent discomfort to express” (ibid., 256).

Other interview methods such as semi-structured or one-on-one interviews may be a more traditional approach when researching sensitive topics as such self-disclosure is usually shared in interview situations where privacy and confidentiality are ensured, which is not the case for FGDs. However, FGDs on sensitive topics can reveal contradictions and/or insights that may not be revealed through other methods. Discussing sensitive topics in a focus group places further responsibility on the moderator to manage when to enquire further into opinions and beliefs whilst still ensuring participants are at ease (ibid.). Wellings et al., suggest considering the order of topics and the pace of progression, starting at a neutral point and working towards more sensitive matters. They further describe different ways to handle discussions of sensitive topics in focus group settings, explaining how studies can utilise “stimulus material”, such as posters, booklets, or excerpts from films as a way of generating initial discussions (ibid., p. 257).

This project’s FGDs started with a viewing of the video clips followed by a discussion of each clip. The three groups - two prison officer group and one former prisoner group - were presented with three and four clips respectively as one clip, as previously mentioned, had been removed from YouTube. The officer FGs discussed experiences of intervening into prisoner-on-prisoner violence and of violence involving officers, including observations on clues that escalate or de-escalate conflict and violence along with reflections on officer training and its applicability to real-life situations, i.e., how violence prevention and officer training prepares officers to deal with and handle violent situations. The ex-prisoner FGs covered general discussions of catalysts for violent interaction, crowd dynamics during fights, and views on officer intervention. This structure of the FGDs allowed for an approach that did not ask participants to directly disclose details of their own involvement in incidents, but instead to draw on experiences to discuss general views. The structure made it possible to bypass direct questions about violent situations that the participants had experienced, and, thus, also to avoid asking participants to recall uncomfortable experiences. The focus on the clips and general observations also worked to take focus away from specific incidents which focus group participants had been involved in and instead apply experiences to discuss how and when violence occurs - the subject of examination of the interactional approach.

As to the point of recalling uncomfortable experiences; whilst participants had the option to take breaks, withdraw from participation (even withdraw consent at a later stage) should they become uncomfortable, both the prison officer- and former prisoner-participants spoke comfortably throughout the sessions and disclosed details about experiences they had had and observations they had made without

hesitation. Wellings et al. (2000) note that FGDs on sensitive topics need stringent moderation where potential disagreements may arise; it should be noted here that the prison officers had worked together for long periods of time (in some cases whole decades) and seemed comfortable voicing their opinions in each other's company. Similarly, the former prisoners had served parts of their sentences together and had remained friends post-release, which resulted in a friendly atmosphere where conversation often went off-track as the participants reminisced about various memories of prisoners and officers they had encountered during their time in prison. Although the participants engaged in a friendly conversation which, at times, seemed to disregard the focus group setting and the presence of the interviewer/researcher, no intimate or personal details not fit for a research setting were disclosed or discussed.

Thus, the focus group participants did not seem to hold back on expressing their opinions or thoughts and openly discussed experiences, observations, and views. Where difference in opinion occurred, participants allowed space for these differences and discussed amongst themselves without the need for interviewer moderation. As such, this researcher's main role as interviewer was to bring respondents back to the relevant topics, when conversations went astray.

4.3.2 A brief note on traditional ethical concerns of prison research

Managing relationships, especially where the research requires participation from both prisoners and prison officers, can represent a challenge. Oftentimes, prison officers are less cooperative due to suspicion of the researcher as an outsider seeking to 'reveal' information about prison conditions or treatment of prisoners (Beyens et al., 2015). Equally, officers may be under the impression that the researcher is 'choosing sides', i.e., the researcher is in favour of the prisoners which may equally impact their willingness to cooperate (Martos-Garcia et al., 2022). The present project emphasises transparency into both research aims and process which means that the nature and purpose of the interviews - i.e., the FGDs being conducted with both prison officers and former prisoners - was disclosed to both participant groups. As described above, both ex-prisoner and officer participants were cooperative; the ex-prisoner participants spoke openly about experiences of being in prison, as well as about the officers, and co-prisoners. Likewise, the officers spoke openly about their experiences of working in the prison - one group was particularly open and explicit about the challenges of their role and of dealing with prisoners. The other officer group initially held back, particularly around the severity of prison violence in their prison but later opened up about the challenges of staff shortages and its effects on violence.

The prison officers and former prisoners were not from the same institution - thus prison management and prison officers were not acting as gate keepers, thereby

minimising the ‘us and them’-divide. Also, caution has been taken to ensure that views of all groups are represented to as equal an extent as the sample permits.

Two final ethical issues are coercion and disclosure of crime and/or well-being concerns - even if such disclosures sometimes happen for the purpose of testing the researcher’s confidentiality or genuineness (Patenaude, 2004; Roberts and Indermaur 2008; Thorne, 1980). Coercion refers to prisoners participating in research under the impression that they may gain favours (from e.g., parole boards or other actors able to grant them benefits) or because they are picked out by officers or management to participate. Issues relating to coercion as well as disclosure of crimes and/or well-being concerns were circumvented in the present project as prisoner-participants were all former prisoners, thus no longer in the care of correctional facilities. This means that correctional staff were not involved in the recruitment and that the obligation for the researcher to report concerns to the Prison Service was irrelevant. Consequently, the compulsion for prisoner-participants to test the researcher’s confidentiality through false claims or by revealing details of offences was eliminated. However, as detailed previously, the officers had been chosen to participate by their line managers, suggesting they had not themselves chosen to take part but still spoke candidly about their experiences, disclosing both issues and problems they faced, which suggests that they did not feel compelled to ‘please’ prison management through their participation in the focus groups.

4.4 Researcher well-being

This final section of the ethics discussion outlines some of the challenges of researching an emotionally challenging topic. Researchers go to great lengths to discuss impact of prison research and other sensitive or emotionally challenging topics. Liebling (1999), e.g., notes that prison research is intense, emotional, and risk-laden, while Jewkes (2014) calls for researchers to pay more attention to, and bring in, honest discussions of the emotional aspects of prison research (Beyens et al., 2015). Similarly, della Porta et al. (2024) describe how researchers may be exposed to disturbing material when reviewing and coding video material of violent interactions. Where material is particularly challenging, they suggest that members of the research team work in a rotation order to ensure that the most severe video material is equally distributed between them in the video material. Naturally, this is not an option for a PhD project.

During the sampling and reviewing process, some clips, especially some showing officers restraining prisoners, were particularly uncomfortable to watch due to the degree of force in use and/or prisoners being depicted in compromised positions (e.g., clothing having been removed). Also, verbal reactions from prisoners, such as yelling out in pain, begging for officers to stop, or attempting to reason with officers whilst in pain, were challenging to watch but in the end, these clips were excluded, not because of what they depicted, but because they did not show the interaction

prior to the restraint. The uncomfortable element was the restriction of autonomy and the indignity with which the prisoners were handled. Whilst these clips made an impression, they did not as such cause an emotional response and their immediate emotional impact did not last long. As explained in the limitations section 3.5 - and as will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5 - most footage of prisoner-on-prisoner violence depicts staged violence with a low level of severity. Therefore, footage of high-level severity incidents - which would include slashing, use of boiling water, or prisoners being 'pulped'[1] - were not found during the sampling process. Also, as very little time was spent in the prison space, and access was largely negotiated via one of the supervisors, and later through official access procedures via the SPS, this researcher did not experience "emotional challenges" as Beyens et al. (2015, p. 712) put it, of hostility, machismo, or other stressful situations or behaviour that female researchers report as being emotionally testing in prison research (ibid.).

Perhaps the most challenging aspect of this research - as outlined in Chapter 3 – was the extensive delays to the focus group data collection caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. As prisons were closed down, at least to the public and to researchers, for the better part of three years following the first lockdown, the delays to data collection resulted in challenges, not only on a practical level, but also on a personal level. Although it is somewhat uncomfortable to outline the impact on a personal level, this researcher believes that it highlights crucial aspects of doing research under unusual circumstances, such as a pandemic. The consequences of the unpredictability of the project's progress - namely an extensive wait to tie up various loose ends, such as the focus groups, co-viewing of the video analysis, and practical implications (i.e., one of the key contributions) - were thesis-fatigue and burnout, slowing down the completion of the thesis.

A final challenge has been doing research in an emerging methodological field with a limited amount of existing research and literature - and in a setting (prison) which the method is yet to explore. Arguably even more so with the limited amount of data. The consequence of the above factors was a lack of confidence in the findings and their significance. Nevertheless, in exploring the 'useability' of the data and working out the links between data - some theory and practice became increasingly clear, which increased confidence in the work; the data did allow for an exploration of the type of video data available to study violence in the prison space. And at the same time, it did enable an exploration of how video data contributes to the understanding of situational dynamics of violent encounters. The findings turned out to possess a potential for the development of practical implications for uses of video data and micro-situational analysis in prison officer training, a discovery which also worked to regain confidence in the project. These implications or suggestions for future officer training are detailed in Chapter 7, section 7.3.

[1] A term used by focus group participants to describe a severe beating – 'being beaten to the pulp'.

5.0 Prisoner-on-prisoner violence – Staged fights, trivial matters, and tension release

The overall aims of the thesis are to test the applicability of Collins' theory of violence (2008) in a prison context and to examine the uses and limitations of video data in enhancing the understanding of prison violence. This chapter explores violence between prisoners and examines how encounters turn violent. It describes which pathways are in use, how violence between prisoners is escalated and de-escalated, and the role of audiences and bystanders during the course of fights. Thus, the aim of this chapter is threefold; first, to examine the extent to which Collins' (2008) theory of violence assists in expanding the understanding of situational dynamics and emotional expressions in violence amongst prisoners, and to clarify what these dynamics bring to the conceptualisation of staged prison violence. Secondly, to explore the impact of bystander behaviour - herein regulation of fights and impact of crowd engagement on severity - and thirdly, to identify which aspects of prison violence YouTube sampled data can shed light on.

As detailed in the literature review, Collins (2008) identifies situational dynamics such as pathways, audience dynamics, and the impact of displays of dominance, fear, and tension on how violence begins and unfolds, but his work only vaguely defines how to spot such dynamics in visual data. Thus, in addition to situational dynamics (Collins, 2008) and displays of emotion as defined by Nassauer (2018a), the analysis of the video clips draws on Levine et al.'s (2011) conceptualisation of escalation and de-escalation (conciliation) to examine how aggression may lead to violence and how micro-regulations impact the course of potentially violent incidents/situations. It also employs Edgar et al.'s (2003a) catalysts of conflict to define and describe actions of conciliation and escalation. Adopting definitions of bodily behaviour as defined by Levine et al. (2011), the analysis uses video recordings of aggressive interactions resulting in violence to analyse the bodily behaviour of third parties, i.e., bystanders, and to explain how aggressive actors react to conciliatory and escalatory behaviour. While the Levine et al. study did not have access to verbal accounts, some of the recordings in the present study do contain some or all of the audio, which means that the effect of verbal communication, i.e., tone of voice and wording, in escalating or conciliating violent incidents can be examined.

Although not using video data, Edgar et al. (2003a; 2003b) similarly identify behavioural catalysts that spark conflict and often lead to conflict turning violent as outlined in the literature review. Edgar et al. (2003a; 2003b) argue that the identified catalysts are tactics that will often exacerbate conflict or tension which in turn increases the risk of a violent outcome. The catalysts defined by Edgar et al. are thus useful for articulating some of the dynamics observed in the video data. Those of particular applicability to the present sample are accusations, threats, hostile

gestures, insults, invasion of personal space, and intimidation, because these are observable in the video material as the following video analysis shows.

For each clip, there is a presentation of the methodological or technical reflections pertaining to the video quality and features for the purpose of assessing the analytical potential, herein also possible limitations to the interpretation of incidents, e.g., lack of audio or inability to read facial expressions of emotions. This is followed by a description of observable situational dynamics, thus a primary interpretation of the incident. Finally, interpretations from the focus group discussions of the clips in question are examined in order to identify the strengths and limitations of Collins' (2008) theory of violence, herein the situational dynamics and expressions of emotion through bodily behaviour which are part of displays of aggression that impact the course of conflict. This part of the analysis also serves to validate - or challenge - the initial interpretation of the incident, and thus to substantiate the findings.

To enhance the reader's understanding of the methodological evaluations, situational analysis, and focus group reflections, each clip has been rewritten as a condensed, interpretative storyline for the purpose of legibility and comprehensibility, following Mosselman et al.'s (2018) recommendation. Each transcript (clip) has been given a number and key details are presented in the heading; this includes the number and type of actors (e.g., 2 dominators, 1 victim), setting (e.g., cell or day room), type of footage (e.g., CCTV), and finally the country from which the footage originates.

5.1 Violence between prisoners – Staged beatings and fights

In this section, footage depicting violent incidents between prisoners is explored; first beatings and how these may be shaped by emotional asymmetry (Collins 2020; Weenink, 2014; 2015). *Emotional asymmetry* refers to "interaction rituals where the focus of attention and the rhythm are set by one side, who dominates the encounter over other persons, who are passively caught up in it" (Collins, 2020, p. 170). Secondly, staged fights and the dynamics of violent incidents as performances are examined. The incidents in the clips presented in this chapter share some similarities, including crowd and bystander dynamics and characteristics of being staged. As outlined in the literature review (Chapter 2), Collins (2008) highlights the importance of crowds and bystanders, putting forward the claim that a higher degree of audience engagement increases the level of severity which in turn contributes to prolonged fights - thus, less engaged audiences may serve to minimise severity and shorten fights. To supplement the analysis of bystander behaviour and intervention, the analysis draws on Levine et al. (2011) and Copes et al. (2013b). Both point out that bystanders play a significant role in policing fights or violent incidents, aiding

either escalation of de-escalation - a reflection supporting Collins' (2008) observations.

5.1.1 Staged beatings and emotional asymmetry

Clip 1

1 dominator, 1 victim, cell, phone camera, US.

> A prisoner (the dominator) places the camera on a bunk bed and hangs a towel on a string in front of the cell door to cover its window. He briefly looks in a mirror hanging on the wall as he bounces up and down before taking off his shirt. He rotates his upper body from side to side as he talks (inaudibly) to the other prisoner (the victim) who jumps off the upper bunk bed to wrap his hands in a piece of cloth before taking a few steps towards the dominator. The prisoners face each other in a boxing match-like stance and briefly fist-bump before the dominator proceeds to punch the victim. The victim attempts to fight back but quickly gives up and positions his hands in front of his face to protect himself from the punches. The dominator beats the victim around for some time and then pushes him onto the bed while repeating "bitch ass [n-word]". The dominator stumbles onto the victim but regains his balance and continues beating his opponent. He then orders the victim to stand up, saying "get yo' ass up". The victim stands up and the dominator resumes the beating. After a short while, the dominator lifts up the victim and throws him onto the ground, then continues punching and stomping. Following imperceptible speech from the dominator, the victim gets up but falls onto the bed - the dominator resumes the beating, again repeating "bitch ass [n-word]". He then orders the victim to get up for the third time and resumes the beating. Again, the victim lands on the bed – the dominator looks at the camera and challenges the victim to show his face (to the camera). If he does not, the beating will continue, threatens the dominator. The dominator then grabs the camera and films the victim whose face is now swollen. The dominator repeats the "bitch ass [n-word]" again as he puts down the camera (Video 1, ll. 1-51, US, phone camera).

5.1.1.1 Video technical implications

While Collins (2008), Klusemann (2009; 2010), and Nassauer (2016; 2018a) recommend reading of facial expressions of emotion to further determine the fight participants' emotional state, the quality of the video does not allow for such analysis due to grainy image quality. While it is possible to make out the bodily poses and movements, decoding of facial expressions is inhibited. The recording includes some audible verbal accounts, which offer clues to the emotional energy, including threats and orders directed at the victim, but which do not provide insight into the causes of the beating.

The recording shows a significant sequence of build-up - compared to other clips in the sample - including the careful curation of the physical space prior to the situation turning violent. The clip is cut as the dominator puts the phone down, thus only allowing for limited insight into the aftermath, which means that it cannot be verified if the dominator continues the beating as he threatens to do. While it is clear that the start of the recording is the start of the incident, it is not clear if the end of the recording represents the end of the violence, suggesting that perhaps the aftermath has been edited out or that the fight has been staged for the purpose of recording. It is unknown if the moment where the video ends has been chosen by the dominator or the YouTube-user - the latter being a common limitation of online video platform data.

5.1.1.2 Situational dynamics and expressions of emotion

As described, the beating is carefully curated; the dominator covers the window in the cell door and gets ready to fight by stretching his upper body and jumping up and down as if to warm up, and while the victim wraps his hands in cloth, the dominator gets into position. The dominator's behaviour, i.e., the cell set-up prior to the beating, indicates that the beating is planned - further substantiated by the fighters touching hands (like fighters before a boxing match).

Whilst the facial expressions cannot be deciphered due to the quality of the footage, the dominator's *bodily* display of emotions does suggest that he is experiencing forward panic as he overcomes the c/t-barrier immediately after ‘touching gloves’. The ability to overcome the barrier may also stem from a familiarity with circumventing it, and thus a certain experience and amount of skill in fighting (Collins, 2008, pp. 207-212); this is seen as he launches into repeated violence actions right after the first punch. However, the captured build-up only shows a few seconds, a feature which may alter the interpretation of the observable dynamics. In this recording, it can therefore not be verified for how long the beating has been in planning, nor for how long the tension has been building.

Nevertheless, the observable dynamics do suggest forward panic as explained above - or self-entrainment (ibid., 2020) as the dominator launches into the beating, suggesting that tension has been building and finally is released with the first punch. These dynamics are consistent with notions of *asymmetrical entrainment* (Collins, 2020; Weenink, 2014; 2015). The dominator, who exhibits high emotional energy by strong physical presence and by taking control of the interaction (Nassauer, 2018a), quickly gains emotional dominance as he retaliates and repeatedly punches the victim while repeating “bitch ass [n-word]”. The victim, after just one brief attempt to fight back, starts to exhibit low emotional energy, making himself smaller by bowing his head. In other words, he becomes *passive* (Nassauer, 2018a) and only keeps his arms raised to protect his face from the punches. Seemingly, the passivity exhibited by the victim fuels the aggression of the dominator; “by giving up resistance, the victim widen[s] the emotional asymmetry, that in turn encourag[es] the attacker[] to

intensify their violence" (Weenink, 2014, p. 244). The passivity of the victim may also be an attempt at managing the display of emotions (Crewe et al., 2014). Crewe et al. note that prisoners exercise restraint of or manage their emotional displays, and as such, the passivity and calmness could be a display to avoid making the beating worse - although here, it exacerbates the aggression of the dominator.

The dominator repeatedly beats the victim until the victim falls onto the bed and the dominator stops his "own violence movements" (Collins, 2020, p. 172). The dominator, however, continues to exhibit high emotional energy as he threatens and, in a loud voice, gives the victim the ultimatum to show his face to the camera, or the beating will continue - further suggesting high emotional energy (Nassauer, 2018a).

This incident shows that, while the fight may be staged, as indicated by the curation of the scene and the ritualistic hand-touching prior to the violent interaction, the emotional states of the fighters, before and during the fight, influence the severity (the victim's face is visibly swollen). The severity may also be attributed to the weak victim pathway which can be observed;

> "(…) when the confrontational tension builds high, followed by a sudden collapse so that an opponent who initially seems threatening or frustrating turns out to be helpless, unleashing in the other a transformation of fear and tension into ferocious attack" (Collins, 2008, p. 9).

The victim immediately takes on a passive role exhibiting low emotional energy, i.e., acting helpless, which allows the dominator to launch into repeated acts of violence, turning the tension and fear into an attack. Perhaps the incident cannot be described as 'ferocious', because there are pauses and verbal exchanges throughout, but the dominator does land a few punches, and the victim does come away with a swollen face.

Although there is no physical audience, the curation of the scene and focus on the camera throughout the fight suggests that the fight is deliberately being played out in front of the phone as if a physical audience is substituted with an intended one. This has two implications; firstly, it speaks to Gooch and Treadwell's (2020) observation that phone recordings are sometimes used for the purpose of humiliation; this becomes particularly clear where the dominator challenges the victim to show his face. Secondly, it suggests, "that encounters that produce emotion and connection do not require the existence of a known, or even a human 'other' participant" (Henry 2024, p. 455). In this way, the fight is being played out in front of an intended audience that provides the dominator with an emotional momentum, similar to what physical audiences do when their emotional energy aids fighters in overcoming the ct/f-barrier.

5.1.1.3 Focus group interpretations

At the time of the focus groups, approximately a year and a half after sampling the video material, this video was no longer available on YouTube via its original link (preserved) nor via other YouTube accounts. This highlights one of the pitfalls of online visual data; whilst Nassauer and Legewie (2021) advocate for making links available for the purpose of transparency and for other researchers to be able to reanalyse data in order to strengthen the integrity of the method, videos depicting violence are routinely removed due to the nature of the content, as it goes against community guidelines (YouTube.com). In some cases, this prevents others from accessing the clips after a certain amount of time. Between the time of the focus groups taking place and that of the submission of this thesis, Clip 2 (below) had also been removed from YouTube. Nevertheless, the 6 other clips were and are still available and that raises the question of the frequency with which footage not following the guidelines is reviewed, and thus how long clips may be available for other researchers to view where studies are being replicated. Downloading and sharing the videos might be an option, albeit one that raises ethical issues as detailed in Chapter 4.

5.1.2 Staged fights and audiences

Clip 2

3 dominators, 1 victim, shower room, phone camera, US.

> In a big shower room with a row of toilets on one side and showers on the other, a group of prisoners is gathered; the camera shifts to two of the prisoners who are getting ready to fight. The dominator appears tense as he shifts his weight from one foot to the other, holding a wooden stick in his hand, before taking a ready to fight-stance. The victim is seemingly relaxed, as he walks towards the person filming and then back to face the dominator with his hands folded behind his back. As a bystander starts shouting for them to start fighting, repeatedly exclaiming “do it”, as he gestures quickly and firmly in the direction of the victim, the dominator takes a few quick steps towards the victim and starts hitting him - the audience along with the bystander still repeating the words “do it”. The beating goes on for some time during which the victim attempts to ward off the hits; he runs towards the dominator as he holds his hands up to protect himself from being hit with the stick. The dominator grabs him and for a moment they scuffle, but the victim eventually lets go of the dominator when the latter drops the stick. It is picked up by the bystander, who turns dominator (second dominator) and steps in and starts to beat the victim. Meanwhile the first dominator attempts a few punches at the victim’s face, which he wards off, only for the next punch - also by the first dominator - to land in his face. The audience yells “bitch” and then the victim attempts an escape. As the victim reaches the crowd, he is pushed back to the words of an onlooker exclaiming “get back in there”, while the

second dominator slaps him on the back of his head. In the meantime, a third bystander turned dominator has gotten hold of the stick and again the victim is beaten with it, causing him to yell out in pain and the group of onlookers to yell “hey, hey, hey” as to indicate that the beating needs to stop (Video 2, ll. 53-107, US, phone camera).

5.1.2.1 Video technical implications

It is unclear if, but unlikely that, acts of violence have taken place prior to the start of the clip as the victim appears relaxed and the dominator appears to be getting ready to beat the victim. The recording offers some audible verbal accounts from the audience, while verbal accounts from the fighters are inaudible; the audience’s verbal accounts provide significant clues to the atmosphere they are creating. This is crucial because, once the camera starts to film the two fighters, the audience is out of view until the first bystander interferes, which means that the analysis must rely on the verbal clues to examine how the crowd dynamics impact the course of the fight. The recording is filmed with a mobile phone, and the person filming is able to capture the major part of the violent action as the camera is being moved to follow the opponents around the shower room - a feature not possible with CCTV. The limitation, however, as touched upon earlier, is that the person filming is recording only the action, i.e., the beating, leaving out shots of the audience, thus not allowing for an observation of the audience’s display of bodily or facial expressions of emotion. Finally, the camera is not close enough to the fighters to allow for an examination of *their* facial expressions of emotion either, and therefore the analysis of their dynamics and emotion expressions rely on an examination of bodily and verbal expressions. As the bystanders call for the beating to end, the recording stops and the aftermath is not available for analysis.

5.1.2.2 Situational dynamics and expressions of emotion

At the start of the recording, both the first dominator and the victim are reluctant to fight despite being set up to do so. This speaks to Collins’ argument that violence is difficult to perform and that emotions are key to overcoming the ct/f barrier. It is only with the insisting cheers and orders to “do it”, that the dominator starts beating the victim after a moment. The dominator also has the advantage of a weapon, the stick, for as Mosselman et al. (2018) point out; weapons allow for more dominant stances, making it easier to stay in character and thus gain emotional dominance. So, with the help of the stick, which the dominator holds in his hand, and the cheering from the crowd, he overcomes the ct/f barrier and starts beating the victim. At the same time, the stick also makes it more difficult for the victim to fight back as it creates a distance between the fight participants, and coming closer to the dominator means getting hit with the stick. In this way, the victim becomes a weaker opponent allowing the dominator to become more confident in performing violence actions. This means that the notion of asymmetrical entrainment is applicable also in this example.

The crowd's encouraging shouts play a crucial role in helping the dominator to circumvent the barrier of emotional tension and fear. While the victim is struggling to fight back, the dominator is neither exhibiting fear nor low emotional energy, which suggests that his emotional attention is also influenced by the audience. The victim's posture is relaxed as the recording starts, his arms resting behind his lower back, although he later attempts to fight back as he runs towards the dominator with his arms raised above his head, actually succeeding in getting the dominator to drop the stick.

The crowd is verbally encouraging the dominator throughout, causing an escalation of the beating, mainly by shouting "do it" and through quick and firm gestures, the latter reflecting Edgar et al.'s (2003a) work. Then, as the initial dominator drops the stick, the bystander immediately starts to display escalatory behaviour (Levine et al., 2011) as he picks it up and starts to hit the victim. The crowd also pushes back the victim to prevent him from escaping the beating and calls out at him in abusive terms; this suggests a set of agreed-upon regulations, while at the same time indicating that the audience has created their own emotional zone - effervescence (Collins, 2008, p. 182) - in which they pump each other up with enthusiasm resulting in the violence becoming more serious as more individuals join in.

Collins argues that fights are rarely competent and that fighters are rarely evenly matched, thus whilst fair fights do occur, most violence is not fair (2008, p. 237). In this clip, the opponents are appropriately matched, with similar build and fighting skills, but the fight quickly turns into a beating qua the dominator's use of a weapon, which makes it almost impossible for the victim to defend himself. Moreover, the audience hinders the victim from escaping, and a bystander joins in to beat the victim, making the fight inherently unfair. Nonetheless, the fight is to some extent regulated or policed; at the end of the recording, the audience dictates the end of the beating as the victim yells out in pain, though it is not clear whether the end of the recording at this point also marks the end of the violence.

5.1.2.3 Focus group interpretations

Both FGPO2 and FGPR viewed Clip 2; whilst both focus groups focused largely on contexts and causes, some commentary as to situational dynamics can be extracted. FGPO2 primarily discussed causes for the incident, pointing to a form of punishment or payback. FGPR, on the other hand, saw the incident as a form of set-up or entertainment. Speaking more generally about fights as entertainment, one of the FG-participants said;

> "[t]here were also incidents where people willingly went and played body shots (…) just for entertainment, it's that aggression and macho behaviour that's always gonnae (overlapping chat) … to me that aggression wasn't there… this was victimisation, they were picking on that guy, it was all there for the camera. The guy with the pole probably didn't even have an issue with the guy… as I said, he's just been told to go for it and it's

> the people in control that are… so I agree, if it was regulated it would be a fair fight … and when it became a fair fight, somebody else got involved. So genuinely, they were just making sure this guy was a victim. (…) there might be a reason why they picked him to be the guy in there, but I donnae think they're actually targeting him for a reason other than entertainment value… it's entertainment, they enjoy … it's what makes them feel powerful probably because they can control the whole situation" (FGPR).

The respondent was drawing on his own experiences here but also indicating the situational dynamics in which the two fighters appear to be disinterested and need to be urged into action by the crowd, some of whom seem to be directing the course of events. This speaks to Collins' argument that video material can be used in analysis of the dynamics of staged incidents. The officers in FGPO2 reflected on the severity of the fight, and one officer stated that the dominators "(..) could have went ahead and absolutely pulped him (…)", indicating that the severity would have been at a higher level, had the clip shown a punishment situation. FGPR also reflected on the level of severity, emphasising that if the incident had been a form of punishment "there would be more force, more violence". One of the ex-prisoner participants later commented that;

> "Even if he, air quotes, deserved that (…) If he'd done something (…) and they'd want to do him, they should have just done him" (FGPR).

As such, their interpretation of the dynamics suggests that there are no rules to ensure fairness, but that the infliction of violence is, nevertheless, limited or policed to some degree. Rather than entering a tunnel of violence or experiencing a forward panic, the fighters engage in an audience-guided fight which is neither a free for all nor a savage beating. Whilst the audience demanded action and even took part in it, bystanders intervened to bring things to a close when it threatened to become too severe.

In section 5.1.2.2, the situational analysis suggests that the incident is policed; FGPR reflected on aspects of regulation/policing and fairness in the following way;

> "FP1: If it was regulated, he would have dropped the stick... but they are not forcing them to have a fight.
> FP2: There wasn't enough violence or force for it to be… (…) so that was to me a set-up that's the entertainment… they want to watch something…
> FP1: He looks like a junkie…
> FP2: They victimise him… people in the jail would give them legal high or get them high and then send them into the hall to beat them up... that generally happens, so that to me is like an Americanised version of that... they've got the whole (inaudible) or shower room or whatever it is, controlled…
> FP1: (…) it's maybe not a square go but he's no maybe up for it… he's not got a choice, he cannae get away.
> FP2: To me… the fact that the guy had a weapon couldn't have been a square go… No, it was a situation that was curated, and they made sure they could continue" (FGPR).

These reflections suggest, contrary to the situational analysis, that the lack of fairness indicates lack of regulation but presence of control; “for that to be regulated, it assumes that there is a rule set and that doesnae seem to have a rule set. That’s controlled, not regulated” (FGPR). As such, had rules and regulations been applied, the incident would have been fair, i.e., no weapon (the stick) - and no others involved. Lastly, the participants briefly mentioned the role of the audience, suggesting that there was a ringleader amongst them and that the incident was highly curated for the purpose of entertainment - potentially for the camera. Similar to Clip 1, these dynamics also speak to Henry’s (2024) observation that interactions are not confined to the physical aspect, indicated by the entertainment elements; and thus, it also speaks to Gooch and Treadwell’s (2020) reflections on humiliation and phone recordings, namely that recorded incidents of humiliation make it outside of the prison.

The FGPR participants returned to the clip later in the interview and suggested that the incident did not represent punishment as punishments are more severe than what is depicted in the clip;

> “FP1: (...) which is why that first one [referring to Clip 2] doesn’t speak to me like punishment. Seems mere [more] victimising, bullying… cat and mouse…
> FP2: Aye, it’s just a game to them… it’s like playing a console, they’re setting them up to feel empowered and to me that’s overgrown bully syndrome… they’re standing there, they’re in control of that…
> FP1: That’s just bullying for a laugh, terrorising … it’s not to say there’s no reason for it” (FGPR).

When discussing this clip, FGPR argued that the dominators had picked a victim to bully; the victim being unable to escape also supports the interpretation that the dominators are in control. One of the participants further commented that the dominators’ actions could be seen as a game set up to empower them - a contemplation which supports Edgar’s (2014) observation that prisoners use “violence to project a tough image to others, not involved in the dispute.” (p. 15). Moreover, the focus group participants deliberated on whether the victim was under the influence of drugs; the ex-prisoners explained that, if on drugs, the victim was likely being targeted, perhaps on the basis of failing to pay back money. Ireland (2001) speaks of the same phenomenon, stating that drug users often are targeted for bullying, and he is echoed by Edgar (2014) who argues that lifestyle may expose a prisoner to higher risk of assault. Gooch and Treadwell emphasise how the new drug economy in prisons, i.e., psychoactive substances (PS), has developed, observing that PS are unpredictable and that the effect varies. As such, dealers recruit testers, “known as Spice Pigs or Mamba Muppets” (2020, p. 1274), and put them in a vulnerable position, not knowing what the drug will do to them.

Overall, the focus group discussions emphasise the importance of viewer positionality in that what appears brutal to outsiders seems policed to those familiar

with the prison context. From this perspective, they read the body language, set-up, and verbal clues as being indicative of complete emotional asymmetry, or 'bullying' in their terms. What these views highlight are the limitations of a purely situational analysis; without an understanding of the wider context and social dynamics, it is difficult to derive great insight into violent dynamics from the clip. Whether the participants are known to each other, and whether such actions are isolated incidents or part of a wider pattern, along with knowledge of the precise role of illicit substances, are key to a fuller understanding.

As will be discussed later in this chapter, the positionality of the analyst affects the interpretation of the clips and raises questions about the approach to video analysis and thus also about VDA as a method. Either way, the FGD reflections suggest that a situational reading of this clip needs to factor in an appreciation of prison culture.

Clip 3

1 dominator, 1 victim, day/TV room, phone camera, UK.

> In a day room with chairs, desks, and a TV, two prisoners are fighting; one (dominator) is repeatedly hitting the other (victim). The victim is slightly hunched over with both arms raised to his head to shield it from the hits – both participants are shirtless. An audience made up of prisoners is surrounding the fighters, watching as the fight unfolds – one bystander exclaiming "go on" while the fight moves from one end of the room to the other. The victim attempts to fight back, but the dominator grabs him by the chest and pushes him against the wall, while a bystander is heard saying "let go" to get the dominator to let go of the victim. Another prisoner walks in between the fighters and places a hand on each of their shoulders as to pull them apart, but the dominator keeps pushing the victim against the wall. Again an onlooker says "break up" and the dominator lets go of his opponent. Yet another bystander becomes visible and gestures with one hand at the two fighters. The two fighters get ready to fight again; they have now moved backwards, away from each other, both of them with one foot placed in front of the other, facing sideways with arms raised to their chests and fists clenched in a boxing-match-like position. The victim attempts a punch at the dominator but misses. He then tries to grab the dominator around the waist, but the dominator starts punching him repeatedly. They briefly step away from one another - two onlookers repeating "go on" - before the dominator starts to punch the victim repeatedly again.
>
> Once more, the fighters have moved away from each other and, while they get ready for another 'round', a shirtless onlooker appears in the doorway at the background of the scene to watch the fight.
> The dominator attempts a punch at the victim but is pushed backwards and ends up on a table with the victim repeatedly hitting (at) him; the bystanders

move closer, one of them excitedly asking “what are you doing?”. Now, two of the bystanders pull the victim off the dominator, while a third bystander appears. He is standing between the fighters as one of the onlookers says “[…], step back a bit mate”. As the bystander steps away, the fighters get into the ‘ready-to-fight’-position. The victim manages to hit the dominator in the face a few times, while the onlookers keep repeating “go on”. The bystander steps in again and gestures at the fighters to move away from each other. Once again, the fighters get in position to fight; the dominator resumes the beating of the victim who attempts to dodge the strikes. At this point, the bystander steps in again and gestures at the fighters to step back. This pattern continues for a moment until an onlooker exclaims “finish it then, boys”. The dominator continues to beat the victim who seems increasingly tired with uncoordinated movements.

As the fight moves towards one corner of the room, the person filming the incident tells the fighters to move back to the middle of the room. He then goes on to say “someone has to go down here, boys”. Two bystanders are moving towards the victim as they gesture and talk at him (intelligible). One of the bystanders steps in and places a hand on the victim’s shoulder (Video 3, ll. 109-170, UK, phone camera).

5.1.2.4 Video technical implications

The clip starts in medias res; the fight has already been initiated, and the camera focuses primarily on the fighters and only captures short sequences of the audience lined up against the wall on the opposite side of the person filming, which means that the decoding of the audience’s bodily behaviour is restricted. Moreover, the short sequences are impacted by grainy footage, also obscuring the possibility to decode the audience’s facial expressions of emotion. The same is the case for the decoding of the fighters' facial expressions and, at times, also their bodily expressions of emotion. In this incident, verbal accounts are therefore, once more, crucial in examining audience and bystander dynamics, as they are providing substantial clues to the course of the incident. For this reason, the focus is on audience and bystander impact on supporting or limiting violence. The clip does not show the conclusion to the violence, i.e., whether the victim goes down as instructed to or not.

5.1.2.5 Situational dynamics and expressions of emotion

As the recording starts, the fight is already unfolding; both participants are shirtless which indicates that they are ready to fight. Shirtlessness is often seen as a way of contesting dominance and as a way to provoke the opponent, whilst also signalling ‘readiness’ to fight (Copes et al., 2013a). Because the fight starts prior to the beginning of the video recording, it cannot be verified when and how the fighters overcome the ct/f barrier, but the presence and behaviour exhibited by the crowd suggest that the fighters use the audience-oriented and rule-based violence pathway to mitigate the ct/f barrier (Collins, 2008). The audience is closely watching the fight unfold with a couple of bystanders taking the lead in guiding it, telling the dominator

and his opponent to “go on” and further where to stand and when to start or stop fighting. It may also be the case that the ct/f barrier is mitigated as the fighters focus their emotional energy on the ritual, i.e., performing violence in front of an audience. Collins, in discussing fighting schools and fighting manners, notes that;

> “a chief effect of fight training schools is to overcome confrontational tension/fear. They provide a pathway around this obstacle to violence because the focus of attention is so much on other aspects than the confrontation itself: on the etiquette, the limits of time and place, the starting and stopping points. Above all, the focus is on the social membership shared by fighters by virtue of these rituals; and on the elite social standing of those who enact the ritualism. There is much micro-interactional concern for appearing properly before an audience, and thereby rising above the audience*”* (2008, p. 211).

The clear regulation of the fight by the bystanders suggests that it is either meant as entertainment, or as a way of teaching the prisoners to fight (and to overcome the ct/f barrier) in a set-up in which severity is limited; the bystanders physically intervene when the fight becomes too serious, while the audience verbally interferes. Despite the limited severity, there is apparent entrainment between the dominator and the victim. While the dominator seemingly has gained emotional dominance at the start of the recording, the victim becomes agitated, showing signs of “hot anger” (Dael et al., 2012, p. 1090). Hot anger is “a response to the appraisal of an event as an obstruction to reaching a goal or satisfying a need, in combination with the appraisal of high control and power to remove the obstruction*”* (ibid., p. 1097), often manifested via forward body inclination. In this clip, the victim does exactly that; he leans forward and charges at the dominator who is briefly overpowered, forced backwards, and pushed onto a table. This, however, causes the bystanders to step in and pull the victim away and make the fighters get into position for the fight to continue, all of which may indicate mutual focus or entrainment. This element of mutual focus or entrainment is rarely observed across the sample in which asymmetrical entrainment is more often observed (Clip 4, below - and also Clips 5 and 8 in Chapter 6).

Towards the end of the recording, the bystanders are becoming increasingly impatient, telling the fighters to “finish it off” and that “someone has to go down”, again suggesting a predominantly regulated fight with clear limitations. Nevertheless, the recording does not capture the audience’s desired end to the fight, which raises the question of whether the recording is edited, so that the end of the fight has been cut from the uploaded footage, or whether the incident ends as the bystander steps in to talk to both fighters.

5.1.2.6 Focus group interpretations

Both FGPO1 and FGPR viewed Clip 3, focusing partially on reasons for the fight, partially on regulation and control. FGPO1 described the fight as fair and staged, i.e., well-organised. When discussing the regulation of the fight, FGPR particularly highlighted the fairness of the fight; they commented - as the below quote shows -

that the fairness, represented by regulations and control, indicated a 'stagedness' of the fight. They further deliberated on the rules of the "square go" (FGPR), saying that both participants had a skillset and looked like boxers. Also, and importantly, one of the FG-participants stated that neither fight-participant could be seen as a victim, considering how the fighters used their 'fighting skills' to navigate the fight, i.e., not launching into an attack but controlling how and when they moved - in short, their composure (with the guidance of the bystanders);

> "FP2: Aye, I'd agree, it's very regulated, very controlled… seemed fair… naebody was letting naebody take advantage… the participants, I wouldn't see any of them as a victim regardless of…
> FP1: I mean, just look at them, (…) it was just a couple of people trying to have a square go. (…) it's two different folk, they're splitting them up (…) aye, things get hyped up in prison (…)
> FP2: They both have skillsets... they're both boxers" (FGPR).

Equally, FGPO1 commented on the fairness, also hinting at the staged aspects; the officers, echoing FGPR, suggested that the prisoners looked like boxers and that the fight was not a spur of the moment-fight. Moreover, they held that the fight was staged due to the bystanders' interference which the officers saw as a way of working out who was going to win. The heavy regulation of the fight by the intervening bystanders was according to FGPO1 an indication of the fight being staged, hence well-organised and fair, which consequently indicates that spur of the moment-fights are more severe and less fair. This calls the above analysis into question; as discussed for Clip 2, the positionality of the viewer matters significantly; here, the view on what a fair fight looks like differs from the researcher's analysis. To those familiar with the prison setting, the incident seems fair as the set-up is one against one and the audience steps in when the bystanders and fighters become 'hyped'.

Nevertheless, whilst the fight may be a fair one, the dominator does exhibit better fighting skills compared to the victim and the same applies for emotional dominance - as argued in section 5.1.2.5 above. This, however, puts the applicability of Collins' dominator/victim-terminology into question; his emphasis on the weaker opponent may have influenced this researchers' initial analysis, and whilst dynamics such as the weak victim pathway around the ct/f barrier may be present in ad hoc fights in public settings, where audiences are less likely to have pre-existing social ties (Collins, 2008), the victim/dominator dynamic differs in the prison context where audiences *do* have pre-existing ties, thus leading them to 'take sides'. This dynamic often encourages audiences to hype up the fighters (ibid.). As such, Collins' victim/dominator definition and distinction may be less applicable in the prison setting where fight-participants often are more skilled, and where - as several clips shows - fights often are staged.

Both FGPO1 and FGPR pointed to contextual factors (see section 2.5.4) and cultures of fighting as contributing factors in the occurrence of fights, but also fighting skills and familiarity with rules or regulations are elements to consider; the emotional dynamics of the fighters in Clip 3 are measured, suggesting an absence of the entrainment, panic, or asymmetry witnessed in the other clips. This supports the (thesis') assumption that it is possible to read emotions and emotional dynamics from the visual data, and that those familiar with the setting are able to pinpoint key dynamics that may help explain how emotional dynamics unfold, which allows for either confirmation or questioning of the researcher's interpretation.

Clip 4

1 dominator, 1 victim, day room, mobile device, UK.

> Two prisoners are fighting, their hands wrapped in paper or cloth while onlookers are lined up by the walls around them; the prisoners take turns at attempting hits while the onlookers cheer them on. Both fighters seem to struggle for control as the attempted hits have little impact. Suddenly, one of the prisoners (dominator) takes the lead; he displays a wide smile and steps forward to start punching his opponent (victim) repeatedly as the onlookers exclaim "oi" and excitedly watch the fighters, some of them displaying big smiles. The fighters briefly take turns hitting each other, before the dominator pushes the victim against the wall and the onlookers cheer, some voices exclaiming "grab him". The victim attempts to retaliate by punching at the dominator but the latter ducks and avoids the punches. He then steps back, away from the victim, while an onlooker exclaims "woohoo".
> The two prisoners move towards each other and start punching each other again; the victim then charges at the dominator who steps to the side and thus causes the victim to run into the wall and the crowd to exclaim "wooh".
> Again, the prisoners face each other, ready to fight: the victim seeks to punch the dominator with both hands, while also trying to kick him, but briefly loses his balance and stumbles backwards. The dominator then proceeds to punch the victim repeatedly. The victim attempts another charge at the dominator who moves to the side, once more causing the victim to run into the wall and this time also to fall to the ground as the crowd cheers, some of them repeatedly shouting "stop" (Video 4, ll. 172-198, UK, phone camera).

5.1.2.7 Video technical implications

The fight has already been initiated when the recording starts; the footage quality, despite being mostly grainy, allows for brief glimpses of facial expressions. Thus, it is possible to make out the smiles of the dominator and some of the onlookers by show of teeth. Some of the verbal accounts are audible, mostly from those close to the camera, although at times it is not clear at whom the exclamations or comments are directed, nor from whom they come. The recording is stopped as the fight ends with

the victim falling to the ground, thus not allowing for insights into the aftermath – as is the case with all the clips analysed in this chapter.

5.1.2.8 Situational dynamics and expressions of emotion

The recording starts in media res, the prisoners already fighting. Both fight participants seem to be holding back, and at the beginning, the attempted punches have little impact, but the cheering from the crowd causes the fight to intensify. The dominator displays a big smile and then approaches the victim to start punching him repeatedly. This display of emotions supports Collins' observation and argument that "[a]udiences that cheer or otherwise support and encourage the combatants tend to promote serious fights" (2008; p. 236), meaning that the level of engagement exhibited by the crowd plays a crucial role in exacerbating or limiting the violent interactions. The shift in emotional energy wins the dominator the emotional dominance; he becomes more entrained and his punches more impactful, inducing the victim to attempt to fight back, although his attempts become less coordinated and less impactful with time. The smile displayed by the dominator indicates joy or satisfaction and perhaps amusement. The victim, on the other hand, is displaying low emotional energy and fear, which is indicated by his struggle for control along with hesitant and shrinking movements (Nassauer, 2018a), suggesting that emotional asymmetry is setting in. The dominator maintains the emotional dominance throughout the fight, his dominance being supported and maintained by the lack of fight skills exhibited by the victim. In this way, the criminological definition of a situation seems more apt here than that employed by Collins. In focusing on the wider context and environment, analysts could note that some of the actions of the 'victim' suggest that drugs may be a factor.

While the audience is engaging mostly through exclamations of excitement, the fight still seems to be 'audience-oriented and rule-based' as the audience cheers the dominator on when he beats the victim. At the same time, the dominator is 'ordered' by the crowd to step away at certain points; he is told to step back from the victim after each couple of seconds of fighting before 'being allowed' to continue. This reveals a pattern wherein small pauses are observed in between 'rounds' of fighting. It suggests that the regulations are unspoken - contrary to Clip 3, in which the bystanders both verbally and physically directed the fight - and that rules may be pre-determined. Moreover, the clip also allows for brief moments of visible facial expressions exhibited by the audience members. The excitement expressed by the audience's cheering and encouraging remarks heard in the background together with their smiles further indicate that the incident is one of entertainment, the excitement increasing with the escalation of the fight.

5.1.2.9 Focus group interpretations

Only FGPO2 viewed this clip; the officers deliberated on the reasons for the fight in the following way; "a dispute between young offenders… they would say 'right,

boxing gloves on' and then punch each other solid for fifteen minutes and then that was it. So … and that seemed civilised (laughs)" (FGPO2). One of the officers goes on to say that had it been a 'proper fight', the participants would have been "grappling to the ground (…). To me that looked a bit like (…) MMA [mixed martial arts] type of stuff" (FGPO2). Their reading of the situational dynamics here, in other words, hints at an absence of severity; the fight is simply too controlled to be an ad-hoc dispute.

Also, one officer noticed that the dominator at one point pulls himself back and composes himself (FGPO2), an observation described in the section above as small pauses between 'rounds', thus the officer seemingly did not recognise the audience's influence on the prisoner's behaviour - an interpretation differing from that of the researcher. della Porta et al. (2024) describes the usefulness of using multiple researchers to code to enhance reliability in the analysis but since that is not a possibility in a PhD project, FG participant interpretations, in this study, represent an extra pair of eyes, as in this example, where differences in interpretation are based on the level of familiarity with the prison setting.

Despite prompting discussion, the officers did not reflect extensively on this clip; the discussion primarily revolved around general experiences of violence as well as officers' observations in relation to fights between prisoners, but their reflections do support the researcher's analysis that the fight is staged. They compared the clip to MMA-fighting and referred to 'real fights', i.e., a serious dispute (FGPO2), as being less coordinated, thus echoing Collins (2008). Furthermore, they pointed out that had the fight been 'real', then the dominator would have taken advantage of the victim, when the victim was pushed against the wall or ran into it. Instead, the dominator stepped away and composed himself, a feature which the officers interpreted as part of a coordinated fight (FGPO2). The notion of coordination and composure supports the point raised in the situational analysis; namely that the fight is regulated. Whilst the rules or regulations may not be verbalised, the participants follow a specific pattern - again hinting at the staged nature of the fight.

5.2 Staged fights - Third-parties, motivations, and low severity

The approach adopted for the focus group interviews were, as previously described, to prompt the participants to reflect on situational dynamics, body language, and verbal clues. At times, however, they struggled to depart from the contextual clues - or frequently mentioned the lack thereof. As is evidenced from the sections above, the focus group participants - officers and ex-prisoners alike - explained potential reasons for the incidents but primarily drew on experiences and anecdotes to discuss and highlight how certain violent situations tie into certain contexts, thus suggesting that context plays a crucial role in the course and outcome of a violent incident. The emphasis on context departs somewhat from Collins' grand argument

that violence can be explained by interactional processes, an argument which removes individual motivations as well as social and cultural contexts from the equation (2008). However, the FGD participants' emphasis on social and cultural contexts, when discussing interpretations of the clips, suggests that situational aspects in the criminological sense, as outlined in Chapter 2, impact the way in which situational dynamics in the Collinsian sense play out.

Situationally, however (in Collins' understanding of the concept), the above analyses suggest that audiences and bystanders play a crucial role in amplifying fights and aid fighters in overcoming the ct/f barrier; where audiences cheered, the violence actions would intensify. Additionally, the audio-visual data provided insights into the communication between fighters, bystanders, and audiences, and showed how bystanders impact regulation and control of fights. This was observed where bystanders physically stepped in to separate fighters or where they, through verbal cues, ordered fighters to either separate or to start fighting. These aspects of audience impact are, clearly, in line with Collins' (2008) observations. Whilst bystanders may also intervene to de-escalate fights, by physically separating or pulling fighters apart (Levine et al., 2011), such behaviours were not directly observable in the prisoner-on-prisoner clips; rather than intervening to de-escalate, bystanders were observed to regulate or police the *severity* of the fights through verbal and physical interventions.

Very few existing studies discuss the impact of third parties, although Edgar (2014) and Edgar et al. (2003a; 2003b) note that prisoners find third parties to be amongst the catalysts triggering disputes and fights, but they do not elaborate further on this topic. Drawing on Black (1983) and Phillips and Cooney (2005), Slade argues that both the relational and social distance of third parties plays a role in "the possibility of violence" (2016, p. 939). This means, as also suggested by Collins (2008) and VDA scholars (Bloch et al., 2018; Liebst et al., 2018), that the social relationship between third parties and potential fight participants influences the outcome of a conflict. Although not looking at prison violence specifically, Black (1983) argues that the presence of third parties can prolong violent incidents if the third parties are supporting the fighters - an observation also put forward by Phillips and Cooney (2005) as well as by Collins (2008). The present data only tentatively speaks to the prolonging of fights where bystanders and audiences encourage fighters to continue, but it does suggest that third parties play a role in the level of severity allowed. The 'bystander effect' generally refers to the response of random members of the public, but those referred to in the present analysis are part of the social setup and known to each other.

The bystander involvement also indicates that the sampled clips are of staged or pre-planned nature, especially where fights resemble boxing matches - an observation supported by the focus group interpretations. The focus groups (FGPO1 and FGPR) who discussed Clip 3, showing a staged fight in a UK prison, explained

that organised fights are more common in young offender institutions (YOIs), and one officer even mentioned that he knew about the clip and where it happened. This suggests that such material circulates amongst staff and may shape expectations of how certain prisoners behave. Another officer explained that prisoners at the time "were going through that stage where there were organised fights between inmates to put (…) up on YouTube" (FGPO1), further stressing that certain incidents are orchestrated and speak to the need to reconsider the parameters of a situational encounter (Henry, 2024). When reflecting on the causes or context of the fight, the focus group participants indicated that some groups of prisoners are more likely to organise fights;

> "PO2: Equally, you've got to remember like… most guys that end up in prison they came from violent lives... like out in the community, they grow up… so to you and I…
> PO3: Gypsies, that's it.
> PO2: They grow up like that and that's their life. So, you put them into prison with like-minded people (laughs) that's no gonnae change. Anyhow, it's going to make things worse.
> PO4: Looks like boxers, the way they're fighting… they knew how to box, especially the taller guy knew how to box, they weren't just two guys fighting" (FGPO1).

FGPR also refers to the Traveller community when reflecting on staged fights;

> "(…) these guys could be from the travel communities, they could be solving disputes, they could be … guys that just like a fight, they've been at the gym, they need to release some testosterone … that was absolutely regulated, that was controlled (…)" (FGPR).

FGPR also reflected on reputations and their importance, in this case by highlighting that prisoners from the Traveller community come from "violent lives", an aspect which is amplified when in prison - as also described by FGPO1. This social background factor may explain their skilled fighting techniques as well as their inclination to adhere to rules. Being used to adhering to rules of fighting, corresponds with Collins' notion of fight schools as outlined previously; because fighters have more experience and the focus is on the etiquette, on social norms of fighting, and on the group membership, it becomes easier for them to overcome the ct/f barrier (2008, p. 209). The fact that the respondents refer to the Traveller community without prompting or obvious markers of identity also points towards the preconceptions and stereotypes that participants bring to any situation of conflict. These can increase the likelihood of an aggressive response (Nassauer, 2022b). Being prejudiced towards an individual in respect to the degree of aggressiveness to expect, more than likely generates extra vigilance and sharper responses due to suspicion, fear, and perhaps intolerance, creating a downward spiral into escalation - similar to patterns seen in police encounters with black potential suspects (Richardson, 2015; Willits and Makin, 2017).

Returning to audiences and the entertainment aspect, one of the former prisoner participants continued;

> "Again, it could also be because these guys like to fight… it didnae really look like they were trying to solve a dispute… they were just fighting for the fun of it" (FGPR).

Their reflections do however also suggest that fights, even when staged for entertainment, may contain elements of tension;

> "FP1: Real fights are sometimes instigated by other people for entertainment…
> FP2: It's a real, genuine tension…
> FP1: People are quite happy to go cause they wanna see someone getting harmed. Somebody's real fight might be somebody else's entertainment" (FGPR).

And later - elaborating on the audience's role in fights seen as entertainment – one of the ex-prisoner participants stated that;

> "[t]he audience are always just there for a bit of entertainment, like you watch something because you enjoy it, right, so anybody that is gonnae stand around and watch a fight, are intrigued, excited, enthusiastic or they just want some excitement" (FGPR).

Corroborating existing studies (Edgar et al., 2003a; Tew et al., 2015), the ex-prisoner participants, here, relate relief of tension in fights over trivial matter to entertainment, for audiences. Whilst all the focus groups discussed different catalysts or precursors to violence between prisoners, FGPR, in particular, discussed how small things can fester and get hyped up, e.g., who gets which dinner plate or who has won a football match. FGPO2 also mentioned prisoners fighting over seemingly trivial matters, e.g., tea bags. Explaining fights over trivial matters as a way of releasing tension is also suggested by Edgar et al. (2003a). On the other hand, Crewe et al. (2014) claim that prisoners channel "their feelings into culturally acceptable forms, for example, 'smashing up' their cells or engaging in outbursts of anger on the wings" (p. 66). Whilst Crewe et al. do not speak of violence against other prisoners, staged fights could be seen a means of emotional release for prisoners.

The ex-prisoner participants highlighted that fights may also happen as a way of saving face, to keep up a reputation, or to display aggression and machismo, especially when they occur in front of an audience (FGPR). Similar reflections were shared by the officers (FGPO1) and correspond with observations that violence is a way for prisoners to maintain a reputation of toughness (e.g., Brookman et al., 2011; Crewe et al., 2014; Edgar et al., 2003a; 2003b; Jewkes, 2005), and thus serves as a form of self-help (Black, 1983). Peer-pressure plays a key role here; Collins (2008, p. 231) argues that disrespect is used as a way of provoking an opponent to fight, because the opponent has to defend their honour, and in a social setting, a sense of excitement is created along with the expectation that fighters will defend their honour to save face (ibid., pp. 232-233; Goffman, 1967). This is a point also addressed by FGPO1, suggesting there is an expectation to fight when conflicts arise due to the presence of an audience;

> "the pressure that the audience can (…) have… they can amplify a situation, they can make it worse, make it impossible to back down from because there are other people there… so now you look like a foolish shit if you don't follow through" (FGPO1).

The respondents went on to raise a point relating more broadly to the notion of saving face (Goffman, 1967), namely that, regardless of the motivations - whether fights occur over "something stupid" (FGPR) or serious - prisoners have to participate to defend their honour;

> "FP2: Aye, you've got to save face.
> FP1: It gets hyped up and then you fight over something stupid" (FGPR).

As evident from the focus group reflections above, the participants discussed notions of macho behaviour and of contesting dominance, both in relation to the clips and later in discussions of general motivations for participating in fights. The ex-prisoner participants emphasised the importance of 'saving face' in conflicts over trivial matters (FGPR). Edgar (2014; 2015) observes a similar pattern, arguing that fights over trivial matters are often power contests. He describes how clashes over material things, for example, turn into "a test of who will dominate whom. In response, each person insults, challenges, verbally abuses or physically intimidates the other." (p. 19). This corresponds with Collins' (2008) notion of bluster and with what Levine et al. (2011) refer to as escalatory behaviour. As such, the fight is not about the object, but about defending honour and self-respect (Edgar et al., 2003a), in other words, contesting dominance.

Although fights over trivial matters are related to relief of tension, it was also highlighted by FGPR that genuine tension may build, but the role of audiences and bystanders, i.e., third-parties, must not be underestimated. Bystanders may instigate fights between others for their own entertainment; the audiences 'hype up' the fights over trivial matters, resulting in fighters having to defend their honour, i.e., saving face, thus echoing Edgar's (2014) point that prisoners engage in these fights to avoid humiliation. Collins - in line with Edgar et al. (2003a) - acknowledges that disrespect and defending one's honour is a key catalyst for violent conflict and posits that violence as a means of defending honour or saving face essentially plays into a cycle of legitimising and justifying violent responses to perceived disrespect (2008, pp. 231-234). He insists, however, that, even in such cases, it is the situational dynamics that determine whether this type of *face work* (Goffman, 1967) actually results in violence or not. Additional footage and analysis are needed to test this claim fully.

Edgar (2014) argues that escalatory features, i.e., hostile gestures, challenges, and threats, are indicative of a dispute becoming a power contest, thus making respect the motivational factor. This means that respect can only be gained if lost by the opponent. He also argues that the above-mentioned tactics, used by prisoners when disputes occur, have an escalatory effect (ibid.). This is in correspondence with

Collins' argument that disrespect is used to provoke an opponent (2008, p. 231). Collins argues that staged fights are often used as a space to contest dominance because this type of fights is less severe and therefore low risk for fighters (2008). As the findings also show (sections 5.1 and 5.2.), the fighters easily overcome the ct/f barrier, exactly because the chances of getting hurt are small. Ex-prisoner participants, in particular, suggested that 'entertainment' fights may also be used to resolve inter-prisoner issues (FGPR). Finally, Wortley (2002), who draws on Edgar and O'Donnell (1998), argues that fights over trivial matters often occur spontaneously. Similarly, Bowker (1985, cited in Wortley, 2002), suggests that expressive fights, i.e., fights occurring as a reaction to built-up tension, happen spontaneously, whereas instrumental assaults, which represent calculated exploitation or definable gain, require planning. Given the staged nature of the fights discussed here, there is limited insight into when and how trivial matters escalate in the normal run of things.

Another aspect of fights for entertainment - also brought up by FGPR in relation to Clip 2 - relates to drugs and bullying. As Gooch and Treadwell (2020; forthcoming) observe; prisoners upload videos to extend the humiliation of other prisoners to a wider audience (outside of prison). In this way, uploading videos serve as a form of entertainment as well - and at the expense of others. Little research has looked into the more recent uses of phones in prisons besides for keeping in touch with the outside world and for entertainment (e.g., use of social media and YouTube), i.e., social reclamation (Schlosser and Feldman, 2022). But Gooch and Treadwell's (2020; forthcoming) observations suggest a new use for phones in prisons, which may impact what violence looks like and what it is used for and thus adds a new dimension to both violence for entertainment and to bullying, which is yet to be explored. It potentially also alters the situational dynamics (Henry, 2021). Further analysis of incidents between prisoners caught on CCTV as opposed to those filmed on phones could help unveil the role of phones in such events.

Finally, through the focus group discussions, it became clear that positionality of the viewer is crucial to interpretation and analysis; what may seem brutal to outsiders seems controlled or regulated to those who have experienced it. Moreover, the FGDs pointing to the staged element of the viewed fights raises the question of whether the dynamics observed here also apply in non-staged incidents in the prison setting. However, videos depicting more severe types of fights and incidents of violence with weapons in the prison setting are not available on YouTube and are thus outwith the scope of the present analysis. Some incidents of severe violence may be available through prisons' own CCTV recordings and therefore requires access via the prisons to be examined; Crewe et al. (2014) highlight that different spaces of the prison allow for specific displays of emotion, whether these are aggressive or not. In a similar vein, as mentioned by one of the officers, fights involving weapons and punishments often happen away from staff and cameras, thus suggesting that only certain types of spaces allow for certain types of violent

interactions. If incidents of a more severe character are not represented in the video data, it creates a possible challenge or limitation for online video data research on prison violence. This insight stresses the importance of the physical setting for violent conflicts and its impact on the dynamics of engagement (Crewe et al., 2014); although all clips discussed in this chapter represent staged fights (at least to some extent), dynamics and expression of emotions still matter, and bystander involvement is key to understanding and possibly preventing violence of all types in the prison setting.

6.0 Violence involving officers - High emotional energy, catalysts, and potential for learning

Similarly to the previous chapter, the analysis of the clips in the present chapter draws on Collins' (2008) theory of violence - in this instance to test its applicability to situations of violence involving officers. Apart from drawing on Collins (2008; 2020) to examine situational dynamics of the incidents, the chapter employs the works of Nassauer (2016; 2018a), Levine et al. (2011), and Edgar et al. (2003a) to identify and describe emotional displays and reactions as well as their implications. Where relevant, the chapter also brings in literature that speaks to prison specific contexts to highlight links to existing explanations of prison violence. The chapter's first part follows an identical set-up to the previous empirical chapter, first examining the four clips (rewritten as story lines) methodologically/technically, then analysing the situational dynamics, before presenting the focus group reflections for each clip.

Drawing on the focus group reflections, general patterns of escalatory behaviour are detailed in the second part - as are also challenges of dealing with violent and/or aggressive prisoners and discussions of how well training prepares officers for violent encounters. The purpose of this section is to explore the utility of the interactionist approach as well as that of the video data method in incidents depicting violence involving prison officers. The section draws on sources having pioneered the use of an interactional approach (Koerner and Staller, 2022) and a situational video analysis approach undertaken to develop practical guidelines for violence reduction in policing (Nassauer, 2015). Although these studies are set in a policing context, their recommendations and methodological approaches are highly applicable to the prison context as will be made clear in section 6.3. Thus, this chapter explores how violent interactions involving officers unfold by studying the bodily expressions of emotion exhibited by both prisoners and officers. The aim is to examine the officers' display of either escalatory or conciliatory behaviour and how their behaviour minimises or amplifies aggression and violence exhibited by prisoners towards officers. The findings have created the foundation for the practical recommendations for prison officer training which are presented as the concluding part of Chapter 7.

6.1 Prison officers - Victimisation and intervention

The following presents the analysis of the four clips depicting violence involving officers; the first part examines how officers respond or react to being targeted by prisoners and explores the dynamics leading to officers using violence against prisoners. The second part examines incidents in which officers respond to violent episodes between prisoners and how these responses are received by the prisoners.

6.1.1 Beating and beaten officers

Clip 5

3 prisoners (dominators), 2 officers, pod (independent section with a number of cells within), CCTV, US.

> In a large pod with two floors of cells, a prison officer (Officer 1) is leading a prisoner into the pod from a corridor, while another officer (Officer 2) is holding the door open. As they enter, a group of prisoners form a circle around Officer 2, who is keeping the door open, while one prisoner attempts to push open the door as the officer lets go and it starts to close. A few more prisoners run towards the unfolding incident, while two excited onlookers slide down the railing from the landing between the floors. As one of the prisoners (dominator) attempts to grab Officer 2, the bystanders hold him back and Officer 2 places his hand on the chest of the dominator in an attempt to create space between himself and the dominator. Meanwhile, Officer 1 is trying to unlock the door while Officer 2 is talking to and gesturing at the prisoners. Then several prisoners start beating both officers. For a moment, the officers attempt to fight off the prisoners as they move closer to a door which is located on the other side of the pod and leads to a hallway. The officers struggle to fight off the prisoners and in that attempt both officers fall to the ground. Officer 1 tries once more to open the door, while Officer 2 struggles to protect himself from the beatings of the prisoners. After some time, Officer 1 manages to open the door and both officers run out of the pod and into the corridor. A short while after the officers' escape, a large group of officers comes running into the pod through the corridor where the two officers escaped, and, as the prisoners get onto the ground, the officers immediately start handcuffing the prisoners (Video 5, ll. 200-260, US, CCTV).

6.1.1.1 Video technical implications

The clip starts as the officers and prisoner enter the pod; in the pod, the camera is placed at the far corner, hindering the decoding of facial expressions. At the end of the incident, when the officers move through the corridor, other cameras are filming them, allowing for a continuous sequence of their reaction to the attack. This means that the clip is edited to show the officers but does not disrupt the sequence of interactions between officers and prisoners. The cameras also show a number of officers getting ready to enter the pod. While the camera in the pod would have continued to film the prisoners after the officers' escape, it is not shown in the recording, and insight into the prisoners' reaction to the officers' escape is therefore inhibited. The time interval between the officers leaving the pod and the large group of officers entering it is also not revealed, and the clip ends as the prisoners are being handcuffed on the floor. The footage features no audio, so any insight into tone of voice, noise levels, and verbal clues to escalation is lost. A full situational analysis is thus precluded here.

6.1.1.2 Situational dynamics and expressions of emotion

The recording starts as the prisoner enters the pod escorted by the officer (Officer 1); the prisoners inside the pod quickly encircle the other officer (2) and attempt to keep/push the door open, making it obvious that they are provoking the officers. Shortly afterwards, the initial dominator attempts to attack Officer 2 but is grabbed by the bystanders who proceed to hold him back. This conciliatory behaviour suggests that the bystanders are hesitant to join in at first. While the bystanders hold back the dominator, Officer 2 quickly places his hands on the dominator's chest to create space. Despite the lack of verbal accounts, it is evident that the officer reacts to the prisoner's aggressive behaviour and attempts at violence by defending himself, but in doing so, he uses escalatory behaviour - invasion of personal space - which further sets off the dominator. Also, the bystanders, who initially displayed conciliatory behaviour by trying to hold back the dominator, are quick to join the dominator after the officer places the hand on his chest. This suggests that the bystanders have either been swept up in the effervescence or emotional energy created by the dominator or alternatively that their actions are provoked by the officer's handling of the dominator. These dynamics speak to Collins' (2008) notion of carousing solidarity, wherein audiences become swept up in high emotional energy and experience solidarity, compelling them to join in. The actions or behaviour exhibited by the officer also corresponds with Levine et al.'s (2011) notions of escalatory behaviour and highlights how displays of certain behaviours can escalate tension.

The invasion of personal space - or display of escalatory behaviour - sets off the dominator and the group of bystanders (turned dominators) as they start to beat both officers. The officers struggle to fight back, exhibiting fear and low emotional energy (Nassauer, 2018a), indicated by the way they try to regain footing and fumble to open the door at the opposite end of the pod. The officers quickly give up fighting back, and between their attempts to open the door, they shield their heads and faces from the hits which is a clear indication of emotional asymmetry (Weenink, 2014; Collins, 2020). Once this emotional asymmetry is established, it causes the beating to intensify but does not quite send the prisoners into a frenzy. After the officers manage to escape, they are filmed in the corridor as they kneel to the ground and lean on to the wall, seemingly trying to catch their breath. This is a further indication of the level of fear and stress they have experienced during the attack. Whilst the beating appears intensive, there is no attempt to continue the violence against higher odds; the prisoners immediately comply as the large group of armed officers enters the pod.

The violence lasts less than 30 seconds from the first punch to the officers' escape, although it may have continued for longer had they not managed to open the door. From the short violent interaction, it is clear that the officers are caught up in emotional tension and fear but seemingly not able to circumvent the barrier given

their continuous attempts to escape. Possibly their fear stems from being outnumbered and therefore, the officers must remove themselves from the scene in order to avoid further escalation, suggesting that the weak victim pathway is in play here.

6.1.1.3 Focus group interpretations

FGPO1 and FGPR both viewed Clip 5 and especially FGPR commented on some of the situational dynamics and expressions of emotion at display. Both groups discussed the issue of 'putting hands on a prisoner', referring to the sequence in which the officer places his hand on the prisoner. One officer in FGPO1 emphasised that; "[t]he officer in question, the first one placed his hand on the prisoner to get a bit of space which is then an incentive to the rest of them (…)". They then moved on to discuss how officers need to show that they are in control when stand-offs happen or when intimidated by prisoners (FGPO1) - contemplations which are supported by Nassauer's observations (2015). These reflections suggest that the officer's action further escalates the situation as the prisoners perceive it as a provocation. Both the officers and ex-prisoners identified it as a sign of escalatory bodily behaviour, which parallels the above analysis of situational dynamics and expressions of emotions (Collins, 2008; Levine et al., 2011; Nassauer, 2018a). In this sense, the officer's action was unwarranted and clearly escalatory rather than defensive.

FGPR also reflected on the officer's loss of control over the situation;

> "(...) if you've got to get out of there, trying to get your keys out and get them in the door (…) you're waiting for your pal to come through, it's not a good situation to be in. I don't care how cool, calm, and collected you are, you're walking into that room and all these boys (…) you're gonna get done. You're getting hurt" (FGPR).

Drawing on their experience, the focus group participants took note of how the second officer conceded the emotional momentum by seeking escape rather than asserting his authority. This may have helped the prisoners overcome the ct/f barrier as the officer came off as a weaker victim, conforming to the notion of the weak victim pathway around the barrier (Collins, 2008, pp. 156-157).

Discussing the officer placing his hand on the prisoner's chest, the other FGPR respondent noticed that the officer showed fear as he fumbled with the keys;

> "So the guy, the young one… he looks like a young laddie, he's getting assaulted right (inaudible) it's a bad move right, cause they could have just done him, he could have come in to try and help but by the time people came over, he'd already shown fear by trying to get his keys out but then try to show bravery again, you know… it's defeat" (FGPR).

These considerations support the notion of emotional asymmetry as outlined in section 5.3.1.2 as the prisoners perform repeated actions of violence against the

officers, while the latter show signs of weakness and low emotional energy in their struggle to unlock the door. The second ex-prisoner participant (FP2) reflected further on the reasons for the other prisoners (dominators) to join in and went on to say;

> "[t]o me it looks like he's [dominator] (…) trying to overpower him… he's trying to show he's the boss. And here's three other guys (prisoners), [who] shouldn't have done that (referring to trying to keep the door open) they were probably trying to be good mates to him (dominator) but they did and that's how it all transpires because of him (dominator). This other guy here (other officer) (…) you might be the soundest screw in here but right now it's you vs us now and if I have to hit you, I will… that barrier comes up as soon as there is any conflict" (FGPR).

This quote speaks to the effects of social contexts on the playout of the situational dynamics; the culture of the prison - here the us vs. them-relationship between prisoners and officers - dictates how the situation unfolds. The same participant, a short while later, added to his interpretation, explaining the need for officers to have each other's backs for the purpose of security and safety, acknowledging that their job is a dangerous one, and, once more, that in certain situations it becomes "us vs. them" (FGPR). He continued;

> "[i]t isn't [dangerous] all the time, yes, it is sorta overall, but people are still oot for themselves and doing their own thing… but in a situation like that, the staff could have and should have handled that differently. (FP1 talks over, inaudible). He [officer 1] should have had his [officer 2] back, (…) he's [officer 2] just getting a pasting cause somebody is being a bully. (…) they could have been pulling the guy out for something but we don't know, there's never a reason for an officer to do like that (putting a hand on a prisoner)" (FGPR).

Speaking to the 'us vs. them'-aspect, the participant also suggested that the prisoners, already upon entering the room, were trying to show support to the prisoner being led in by the officers. The two quotes taken together, the participant also spoke to the effect of the unwarranted behaviour by the officer placing his hand on the prisoner's chest, suggesting that it is a sure way to induce escalation, which results in a clear divide between prisoners and officers and further prompts the prisoners to 'fight back'. FP2 also commented on Officer 1's behaviour, i.e., lack of intervention to help the officer who was being targeted; as the video analysis suggests, both officers exhibit fear which may explain why the officer refrains from 'coming to the rescue'.

Whilst the analysis of situational dynamics and expressions of emotion points to the bystanders getting swept up in the dominator's emotional energy, the above quotes suggest that their involvement is precipitated by social pressure after the dominator is 'wronged' by the officer, thus escalating the incident further. The focus group reflections on unwarranted behaviour thus clearly corroborate the video analysis. The quotes also suggest a certain personal animosity between the officers and the

prisoners. In the *BBC prison experiment*, calling the *Stanford prison experiment* assumption of interplay between authority and tyranny into question, Haslam and Reicher (2012) put forward the idea that power relations create hierarchies which in turn create a collective identity. The sense of collective identity has significant implications for behaviour, particularly when experiencing injustices - such as the officer putting his hand on the prisoner - which may lead to resistance similar to what is seen in this incident. The example demonstrates, in line with Collins' (2008) key argument, that violence is not inevitable, and that actions and interactions in the moment generate the emotional momentum required for conflict. What this clip seems to capture is a tipping point, where the actions of the officer could either de-escalate the incident or, as is the case here, push it towards further conflict.

Clip 6

1 prisoner, 1 officer, pod (independent section with a number of cells within), CCTV, US.

> In a pod, a large group of prisoners are gathered around an officer (dominator) and a prisoner (victim). The prisoner gestures rapidly at the significantly taller officer and takes a step forward while addressing the officer verbally (inaudible), the gesturing becoming quick and firm. The officer grabs the prisoner by the neck and pushes him backwards, causing the prisoner to stumble. The prisoner quickly regains his footing and charges at the officer as he attempts to simultaneously kick and hit him, but the officer swiftly gets hold of the prisoner and lifts him up from the ground, though only to throw him onto the floor and repeat the action. The group of prisoners moves closer to the unfolding incident, almost forming a circle around the two opponents. The officer is standing over the prisoner, bending down as if to check on the prisoner, but he quickly stops his motions. Instead, he grabs a piece of tissue from the ground next to the prisoner and again quickly lets go of it – as if to pretend he was checking on the prisoner - before four other officers appear. Two of the officers gesture at the group of prisoners to move away. The other two talk to the prisoner involved in the incident whilst the first officer walks away (Video 6, ll. 262-282, US, CCTV).

6.1.1.4 Methodological reflections

The clip starts prior to any acts of violence but, considering the rapid gesturing and the fact that an audience has gathered, it is clear that conflict has begun to escalate prior to the start of the recording. The video has no audio which means it cannot be verified if the prisoner and the officer raise their voices – a sign of anger and high emotional energy (Nassauer, 2018a). The footage quality is grainy, and consequently, examination or decoding of facial expressions of both the prisoner and the officer as well as the audience of prisoners is hampered. Nor are there any clues to the causes of the incident or the audience engagement. Additionally, the footage

seems somewhat slowed down - although this may just be a feature of the CCTV quality - as it shows the actions in unnatural, jerky, or choppy movements (i.e., not smooth, natural-looking movements). Nevertheless, this does not inhibit the analysis of the course of the incident. As such, the analysis relies solely on bodily expressions of emotion, and while the audience seems to have turned their attention towards the incident, the way in which they engage cannot be gauged. Finally, the clip shows a short build-up before violence breaks out and ends as the officer involved walks away, thus also giving insight into a few moments of the aftermath. Without the verbal accounts, however, the aftermath does not possess great analytical potential.

6.1.1.5 Situational dynamics and expressions of emotion

As the recording starts, the prisoner is gesturing at the officer with quick and firm movements, suggesting anger and high emotional energy (Nassauer, 2018a). As he steps forward towards the officer, the gesturing increases in speed and firmness and causes the officer to grab him and push him away, suggesting that the aggressive gesturing combined with an invasion of personal space agitates the officer, who tries to deter the prisoner from further aggression by pushing him away. This behaviour corresponds with Edgar et al.'s (2003a) definition of a conflict catalyst. The display of escalatory behaviour causes further escalation; the prisoner retaliates and displays hot anger as he leans forward and runs towards the officer while attempting a kick and a punch simultaneously. This time, the officer reacts by grabbing the prisoner and throwing him onto the floor, before picking him up again and leaving him to land on the floor once more.

It is seemingly easy for the officer to overcome the ct/f barrier and gain emotional dominance as the prisoner is displaying fear through incoordination and lack of control over bodily movements, suggesting that the officer uses the weak victim pathway to circumvent the ct/f barrier (Collins, 2008). Moreover, the prisoner seems unable to fight back or defend himself after landing on the floor the first time. The officer lifting him up only to drop him to the floor again may be an indication that he is temporarily unable to stop his own violence movements, i.e., experiencing a moment of self-entrainment (Collins, 2020), even though he may not be experiencing a frenzy.

Alternatively, the officer's behaviour may be interpreted as an expression of forward panic, where tension builds up to be suddenly released (Collins, 2008, pp. 85-89) as he comes face to face with the prisoner and in that very moment uses excessive force. According to Collins, forward panic usually happens when tension has been prolonged (ibid.). However, because the build-up is not shown in full, it is unclear for how long the prisoner and officer have been face-to-face, although the large group of bystanders could suggest that the conflict has been underway for some amount of time, allowing them time to gather. The actions (or rather inactions) of the bystanders are significant in this clip, where - unlike in the previous one - they do not intervene

in defence of the victim. This may be due to the officer having established emotional dominance at an early stage, or simply because the prisoner in question is not liked.

When the officer becomes aware of the prisoners surrounding the scene as he stands over the prisoner, he grabs a piece of paper as if to divert the attention away from his violence actions, but the other officers arrive, and he walks away. This suggests that he may have entered the tunnel of violence (Collins, 2009) and only becomes aware of the situation once he exits it, i.e., when 'interrupted' by the arrival of the other officers.

6.1.1.6 Focus group interpretations

FGPO2 viewed Clip 6 and started by making a note of the lack of audio, saying that it becomes difficult to read the incident as the missing audio rules out the possibility of ascertaining the actors' mood and reasons for aggression. One of the officers mentioned that the use of force by the officer seemed excessive but briefly after went on to say that it may have been necessary to deter the other prisoners from getting involved and could be a sign of taking control. The second officer reflected on the force used by the officer on display in this way;

> "[m]y interpretation was that the prisoner had gone for the member of staff and yeah, perhaps it could be seen as... he's gone a bit over the top in terms of the way he tries to restrain him but equally, if he felt his personal body space etc. was under threat (…) my perception is… at the time he tried… cause he never went in there after he'd done what he'd done (referring to the officers coming into the room and thus 'stopping' his violence actions)" (FGPO2).

Whilst the officers' primary focus is on the lack of context due to video-technical limitations, their reflections highlight the role of situational context; in this case that the use of force may be determined by potential perception of danger causing an excessive reaction; unlike in Clip 5, the prisoner is clearly attacking the officer and may therefore be seen to be 'asking for it'. A key difference in the earlier clip was that the bystanding prisoners held the initial aggressor back, thus making the officer's actions seem disproportionate. Moreover, contrary to Clip 5 which demonstrated how prisoners may seize on signs of weakness, Clip 6 may show an experienced officer seeking to assert his control, thus his use of force could be a need to assert authority or dominance to prevent other prisoners from getting involved.

The limits of VDA are brought to the fore here. Whilst insights into the emotional dynamics between prisoner and officer are gained, it is hard to read the actions of the wider group of prisoners without further contextual information. From the information at hand, it is difficult to determine whether the bystanders are deterred from getting involved due to the decisive actions of the officer which grant him emotional dominance, or whether other factors are involved. The victim may for

example be disliked, isolated, or widely recognised as being under the influence of drugs - and thus beyond reasoning with.

6.2 Officer intervention

Clip 7

1 dominator, 1 victim, 5 officers (male and female), cell/holding cell, CCTV, US.

> Several prisoners are scattered around the room of a small holding cell, some of them sitting or lying on benches while one is asleep on the floor (victim) and another one (dominator) leans against the wall while speaking on a stationary phone placed in the cell. He is explaining his whereabouts but seemingly he is wrong as the victim on the floor interferes and corrects him in a sleepy voice. The dominator becomes visibly agitated as he quickly moves towards the victim who is still lying on the floor. The dominator immediately launches into a beating of the victim, who gets up in an attempt to defend himself from the punches. The rest of the prisoners are now directing their attention to the fight. The dominator and the victim scuffle around the cell as the beating continues, while the group of onlookers reluctantly move out of the way to make space for the fighters. One onlooker is merely watching the fight and does not move. After a brief moment of scuffling, loud, firm voices are heard yelling “get down” and “get on the ground” followed by the appearance of a number of prison officers entering the cell; upon entry, they immediately tase the victim which causes him to fall to the ground as the officers in loud, firm voices repeat the order to get down. The officers repeatedly tell the remaining prisoners to sit down, still in loud voices. Then the officers start gesturing firmly at the prisoners to guide them to sit down, while verbally giving the same order – still using loud voices. More officers appear and start guiding the onlookers out of the cell with confident movements. The dominator repeatedly tries to explain to the officers that it was not his intention to cause trouble. As he starts moving around - several officers firmly tell him to stay still. As he does not comply, three officers grab hold of him, one of them repeatedly ordering him to sit down, then asking “what is your problem?”. The dominator, unable to escape the restraint, grows increasingly agitated, arguing with the officers who in turn threaten to tase him if he does not comply. A female officer points the taser at the dominator's back. The victim, who had already been tased, has started to move on the floor. The dominator keeps talking, still more agitated as the officers keep repeating the words “be quiet”. One officer gestures at the victim who is still on the floor, while others tell him to “stay there and shut up”. Four officers take the dominator out of the cell, while two officers lean over the victim to grab him as he starts arguing with them (Video 7, ll. 284-343, US, CCTV).

6.2.2.1 Video technical implications

The clip, captured with CCTV, has some audible parts, allowing for details such as tone of voice and part of the verbal accounts which provide significant insight into the emotional states of the different actors. As for the majority of the sampled clips, footage quality does not allow for reading of facial expressions and, at times, certain actors are out of view or blocked by others, limiting the reading of their bodily expressions of emotion. As such, the verbal accounts play a crucial role in the interpretation of the clip. Unlike most of the sampled recordings, Clip 7 starts prior to the escalation of violence, thus also providing insight into the reason behind the conflict. The audible part of the verbal accounts serves to further verify the context, e.g., how the dominator argues with the officers while displaying anger and high emotional energy as he attempts to escape restraint. The audio also enables a distinction between officers' and prisoners' speech and offers insight into the officers' way of addressing the prisoners. Although the clip does start prior to any acts of violence, it is unclear whether the dominator has had previous interactions with the victim and onlookers or other individuals (e.g., officers) which may have sparked prior agitation. The clip ends after the dominator has been removed with the officers standing over the tased victim, thus allowing for insight into the part of the aftermath which shows how the officers handle the onlookers, the dominator, and the victim.

6.2.2.2 Situational dynamics and expressions of emotions

The fight breaks out between two prisoners; the dominator quickly becomes aggressive as the victim corrects him, and he instantly proceeds to punch the victim who, still on the floor, seems to be only waking up, his sleepy voice taken into consideration. From the recording it is not clear whether there has been any prior interaction between the two or whether the instant agitation stems from other previous events or interactions - once more emphasising the challenges of edited or online video footage. The dominator has the advantage of the victim being on the ground and seemingly just waking up, which enables the dominator to use the weak victim pathway to circumvent the ct/f barrier (Collins, 2008), although he does not seem to gain the emotional dominance as the victim attempts to defend himself and they scuffle till the officers arrive and tase the victim.

Already before arriving at the cell, the officers are using loud, firm voices, ordering the prisoners to get down. As they enter, they immediately tase the victim who falls to the floor. The officers exhibit high emotional energy, moving firmly and giving orders to the prisoners in loud voices; while the onlookers are quick to comply and let themselves be escorted out, the dominator initially apologises for causing trouble but quickly grows agitated and becomes aggressive as the officers try to restrain him, suggesting that the invasion of personal space has an escalatory effect (Edgar et al., 2003). The officers, as they too become more agitated, yell at the dominator to stay still, while three of them grab him as he refuses to comply. This causes further agitation of the dominator who starts to argue with the officers who in return shout at

or talk over the dominator, displaying high emotional energy (Nassauer, 2018a). Also, one officer threatens to tase the dominator as she points the taser at his back. The dominator continues to argue with the officers while they shout at him to be quiet.

Towards the end of the recording, the victim starts to move on the floor and the officers are quick to tell him to “stay there and shut up” - again indicating a display of high emotional energy. Meanwhile, the dominator is escorted out of the cell, and, as soon as he has been removed, the victim starts to argue with the officers.

It is worth noting that it remains unclear whether the officers are acting out of blind panic or targeting a known troublemaker, when entering the cell. It is telling that they do not tase the dominator and suggests that the first violence action is the result of a forward panic or perhaps an attempt to establish control. Collins, in outlining practical suggestions of his 2008 theory of violence, suggests that police officers are aware of de-escalation tactics, but these may be forgotten when responding in larger numbers as forward panic sets in (2008, p. 464). Equally, prison officers know how they should intervene and interact but may overreact in stressful situations, which is likely to be the case in the one depicted here.

6.2.2.3 Focus group interpretations

FGPO1 and FGPR viewed this clip; the discussions mostly centred around the tasing of the victim and how the officers dealt with the dominator, but some reflections on the high emotional energy are found in both FGDs; one of the officers in FGPO1 reflected on the officer shouting multiple, different orders;

> “[a]ye, three voices… so one female told them to sit down, one also told them to get back in the corner, then another told them to get over in that corner - so there’s three conflicting, different instructions that the guys had to deal with” (FGPO1).

Equally, one FGPR-participant described the officers’ entry as “gung-ho” before moving on to discuss general reactions to officers shouting, in relation to which both ex-prisoner participants emphasised that it is not always possible to make out which orders are being given. And further that, when fighting, little attention is paid to the surroundings, including an officer giving orders, all of which may be explained by high emotional energy or entrainment. The point that fighters pay little attention to their surroundings supports Collins’ (2013) notion of the tunnel of violence in which those experiencing it find themselves in a place where time, space, sound, and self is distorted. An aspect further complicated or possibly exacerbated in this incident by the unclear communication and disrespectful tone employed by the officers.

An alternative explanation of the non-compliance exhibited by the dominant prisoner, could be the officers’ display of high emotional energy, primarily expressed by the

shouting out of their orders as noted by both focus groups to view the clip. One of the officers also raised the question of intoxication, saying that;

> "the guy in the striped shirt (dominator) looks intoxicated, right… cause he was staggering about, even the punches (…) I don't know if that's a drunk tank that they've stuck him in or whatever else, but when they came in, and the guy's (officer) already said… he was told to sit down once… one instruction, two instructions (…)" (FGPO1).[2]

Apart from stressing the lack of clarity in communication, the focus groups' reflections on the incident point to high emotional energy combined with the prisoner's possible intoxication - and, as a consequence, lack of inhibition - causing further escalation. FGPO1 stressed that they were "giving him far too many (…) opportunities… once they were there. He should have been restrained straight away and put in cuffs, it took them far too long to cuff him", suggesting that the officers failed to act in a decisive manner - in other words, failed to establish dominance.

Later in the discussion, FGPO1 highlighted the challenges of working with less experienced staff; new recruits often deal with prisoners in unnecessarily strict ways in attempts to control situations, particularly of potential conflict. As pointed out in the introductory chapter, several scholars agree that lack of experience in staff entails increased risk of aggression and violence (Cooke, 1992; Cooke et al., 2008; Davies and Burgess, 1988; Kratcoski, 1988; Wilson and Brookes, 2021). Crewe et al. (2014) similarly note that new officers must learn to control their feelings and displays thereof, thus "movement and emotions" (p. 60) should be managed depending on the situations that officers encounter. Likewise, Hulley et al. (2012) suggest that "interpersonal disrespect [is] more often an outcome of staff lacking confidence and experience in using their authority" (p. 13). As seen in Clip 5, failure to establish control and acting in a way that can be seen as disproportionate may lead to escalation as may equally the aggressive take-charge attitude that the officers display in this clip and which does serve to escalate the situation. Employing footage of violent incidents could therefore be a useful tool in the training of new officers; since it is not easy to prepare for all types of situations, viewing footage of many different incidents, and different types of officer behaviour in them, could help new officers to deepen their understanding of the impact of emotional display in conflict situations.

Clip 8

1 prisoner, 4 officers, corridor/day room, CCTV-footage (filmed with phone), UK

> In a large hallway with cells along the walls, an officer is running towards a cell with an open door. In the hallway is also a pool table with a number of

2 Classical understandings of violence and intoxication links the two by lack of self-constraint (Collins, 2008, p. 279) which Collins' does not deny but he maintains that drunken fights happen rarely and are equally likely to abort (ibid., p. 285).

prisoners playing or standing around watching the pool players. As the officer (Officer 1) reaches the cell and steps inside, he suddenly stumbles backwards as a prisoner emerges from the cell. The prisoner attempts to grab another officer (Officer 2) who has arrived at the cell, then tries to kick him while Officer 1 regains his balance. The prisoner attempts to fight both officers who fight back, Officer 2 falling to the ground. As he gets up, Officer 1 steps in between his colleague and the prisoner. Officers 1 and 2 get into a 'ready to fight'-position - legs hip-width apart, arms held in front of their upper bodies, fists clenched – and attempt to fight the prisoner; Officer 1 tries to kick and hit simultaneously, while Officer 2 goes for a punch but neither of them manages to actually hit the prisoner. Suddenly, a third officer comes running towards the prisoner and grabs him around the neck. The prisoner tries to fight off the officer and they struggle briefly. A fourth officer arrives at the scene and the officers try to restrain the prisoner and get him to lay on the ground. The prisoner, however, resists and the officers struggle to restrain him. A fifth officer arrive to help out, yet they still struggle to keep the prisoner pinned to the ground (Video 8, ll. 345-380, UK, CCTV recording/CCTV monitor filmed on phone).

6.2.2.4 Video technical implications

The clip starts a few moments prior to the acts of violence with the officers running towards the cell. The clip is a CCTV recording, although the recording is filmed by phone from a monitor/laptop. As such, there is no sound from the actual clip, but the person filming with their phone can be heard in the background. The incident is filmed from a high, stationary angle in the hallway, meaning the clip does not show what happens inside the cell. The participants move towards the CCTV but can only be seen from one angle. Moreover, the action is briefly out of view as the phone (filming the CCTV monitor) is moved, although not long enough to interfere with the understanding of how events unfold. Finally, the quality of the footage does not allow for reading of facial expressions, thus the analysis relies solely on bodily expressions of emotion. The clip ends as the officers try to restrain the prisoner and therefore allows insight into the officers' intervention and attempts at de-escalation (eventually resulting in restraint of the prisoner).

6.2.2.5 Situational dynamics and expressions of emotion

The context is unknown as the clips starts with the first officer running towards the cell; the viewer does not see what the trigger is, although it is obvious that something caused the officer - and shortly after two of his colleagues - to run towards the cell. The emotional energy is high, the prisoner attacks the officers who in turn fight him back. The prisoner has gained emotional dominance while fighting the two officers. Officer 2 falls to the ground. The third officer to arrive, however, is seemingly also in a state of forward panic as he runs up to, grabs, and struggles with the prisoner. The situation tenses further as the prisoner continues to resist despite five officers trying

to restrain him by the end of the clip. This suggests that he remains in a state of forward panic – or that he is in a state of intoxication causing the incompliance.

The officers taking turns at fighting the prisoner do not exhibit skilled fighting techniques - an indication that they are caught up in tension and fear (Collins, 2008). As Nassauer (2018a) claims, fear is often visible through shrinking body posture and struggle for control as well as hectic movements. The latter describes the officers' fighting technique well. The prisoner initiates the violence, i.e., he is the first to perform violent acts. His actions quickly gain him the emotional dominance contrary to the officers displaying unskilled fighting techniques and somewhat hectic movements. The prisoner moves firmly and confidently and takes initiatives in the interaction, all of which are signs of high emotional energy. The third officer attempts to gain momentum but fails as the prisoner is already entrained.

6.2.2.6 Focus group interpretations

This clip was only viewed by FGPO2; they first commented on the prisoners who were standing around (surrounding the pool table), noting that they seemed to view the incident as entertainment (FGPO2). The officers then pointed to the lack of context, i.e., the reason for the officers to enter the cell. They briefly deliberated on potential possibilities before one of them commented on the fight itself, which he referred to as a struggle;

> "the actual struggle and the fight, quite realistic maybe, maybe they told him do to something or go somewhere and he's using it… looks like he's (prisoner) trying to strike the guy (officer), initial struggle is always a shambles and then he's being restrained and taken down to the ground" (FGPO2).

Watching the clip, the officers noted that when the violence broke out, there was a struggle for control which could indicate an attempt to overcome the ct/f-barrier and to gain emotional dominance as these dynamics are defined by struggle for control of own bodily movements, fear, and hectic movements, thus corresponding with Nassauer's (2018a) definition of low emotional energy and/or fear. Additionally, both FG-participants noticed that the first officer (Officer 1) in the clip was trying to "box" the prisoner (as if in a boxing match) before pointing out that the officer should have used control and restraint techniques to avoid escalation (FGPO2). This again suggests that the officer acts in a state of forward panic as outlined in the section above and, equally, that all of the officers' acts of violence and escalatory behaviour further fuels the situation. Again, a suggestion that failure to assert control, and display of fear (by officers), can lead prisoners to prolong a conflict. These reflections also offer a reminder of Collins' argument that training techniques can be forgotten in the heat of an incident.

6.3 Challenges and lessons to be learned - Officer intervention

As described in the first part of the introduction chapter, a significant number of assaults on officers (26%) take place during staff intervention into prisoner-on-prisoner violence or incidents of "disruptive behaviour" (SPS, 2023c, p. 26), and the above analysis has shown that the micro-dynamics of officer behaviour during intervention is determining for their outcome; officers displaying escalatory behaviour, both verbally and bodily, increase aggression in prisoners and also impact the severity of violent actions negatively. It has also shown that, when officers display low emotional energy - or weakness - prisoners are more likely to attempt an attack. This finding corresponds with Collins' notion of weak victims as one of the pathways around the ct/f barrier (2008). Seemingly, the stress of a situation, in which officers are attacked, provokes either a fight or flight response which leads to either displays of low emotional energy where officers fail to establish emotional dominance, or to a state of forward panic where officers attack, or to a state of fear in which officers attempt to fight back. All states may be an aspect of the situational dynamics present where fighting skills are poor or uncoordinated, suggesting the presence of tension and fear as Collins sees as integral to any situation of violence. The analysis has also revealed that incidents in which officers display poor fighting skills, low emotional energy, or in other ways fail to establish control (emotional dominance) result in prolonged conflict as the prisoners are able to take advantage to gain the emotional dominance. Moreover, the clips depicting violence involving officers often show a more severe level of violence, particularly where officers are victimised. This may suggest that such incidents occur spontaneously, i.e., they are not staged and lack the control of severity seen in the prisoner-on-prisoner clips (Chapter 5).

As emphasised before in this thesis, no previous studies have examined prison violence through video data or through an interactionist approach. Some studies have looked into the factors causing conflict to escalate in the prison setting at a situational level, e.g., Edgar et al. (2003) who identified situational conflict catalysts – catalysts that have also been useful in articulating some of the dynamics in the video analysis of the present study. As VDA scholars (Bramsen 2017; 2018; Collins, 2008; Nassauer, 2015; 2018a; 2018b; Nassauer and Legewie, 2021) claim, the micro-sociological or interactionist approach is useful for understanding the micro-dynamics, namely the facial or bodily expressions of emotion, which lead to escalation of conflict, and the understanding of such dynamics may serve to inform practical guidelines for dealing with violent interactions (Koerner and Staller, 2022; Nassauer, 2015). This claim is corroborated by the findings of the present study which as previously explained (in section 5.1.2) have shown that emotions and emotional dynamics can be identified from the visual data and further, specific to this study, that methods involving interpretations by actors familiar to the context adds to

the validity by pinpointing key dynamics to explain these emotional dynamics and thus either confirm or challenge the researcher's interpretation.

Seeing as VDA can still be considered a novel methodological approach, the literature on practical implications (within violence studies) is limited, to say the least, and currently centres around policing as detailed in the literature review (Chapter 2). Nassauer (2015) is seemingly the first to present practical suggestions for VDA research. In the study in which she explores crowd policing in protests in the US and Germany, she argues that there is a need to examine interactions and emotional dynamics to gain insight into the emergence of violence. Her study presents several practical suggestions on how to minimise or avoid violence in protests derived from her findings (elaborated in Chapter 7, section 7.3). Similarly, Koerner and Staller call for further research into the situational parameters of policing, using data that can shed light on conflict interactions (2022).

Parallel to the lack of research on violent interactions involving police officers, not much is known about the applicability of the training that *prison* officers receive. Literature on prison officer training, and their views on the effectiveness of training is next to non-existent, especially in a British context (Morrison, 2019). Some literature speaks to experiences of being a prison officer and managing relationships with prisoners (e.g., Hulley et al., 2012; Liebling and Price, 2001) and some to the work of officers in relation to the role of keeping order (Morrison and Maycock, 2021), but studies looking at training are very limited. Morrison and Maycock did however examine officers' *perception* of the training, investigating how it prepares them for the job and how they experience different scenarios once they start their job. In regard to this, the officer FGD explained that much of what is learned about real-life scenarios is learned on the job and that training at the college does not prepare the officers sufficiently (FGPO2). Another study examined the emotional labour of working with challenging prisoners (Soerensen and Johnsen, 2021). Both studies (Morrison and Maycock, 2021; Sorensen and Johnsen, 2021) focus on areas of professionalism in general, perceptions of the officer role, and managing professionalism, but do not specifically explain details of the training, nor the officer's evaluation of it.

With little existing literature to go on and with the aim to get officer respondents to reflect on the use of video data in training contexts, the present project set out to examine officers' perceptions of the challenges of dealing with violent or aggressive prisoners on a practical level and explore their views on how the training had prepared them to deal with violent situations, herein also on the dynamics and behaviours that serve to escalate and de-escalate conflicts. The aim of this approach was to link the dynamics observed in the video data to the officers' experiences to examine the potential of video analysis for violence prevention training. The following sections thus recount and discuss the officers' observations and reflections on challenges such as drugs, escalatory dynamics, and catalysts, and on using

conciliatory practices. This part of the analysis has led to the set of preliminary, practical recommendations for officer training to be detailed in Chapter 7.

6.3.1 Psychoactive substances and managing violent prisoners

As discussed in Chapter 5 in relation to Clip 2, where FG respondents suggested that the victim was likely bullied due to drug use, drugs and drug use play a key role in violence between prisoners. One officer commented that drugs are "the biggest precursor to the violence" (FGPO1). However, the reflections on the impact of drug use in the prison setting was primarily discussed in relation to the handling of prisoners when they become violent whilst under the influence. Therefore, the challenges of drugs and particularly psychoactive substances are discussed in this chapter in relation to violence involving officers.

Both prison officer focus groups pointed out drugs as a key issue – which as touched upon in the introduction chapter is widely acknowledged by the SPS and other actors within the prison system as an increasing challenge impacting levels of violence in prisons negatively (MWSCOT.ORG., 2022; SPS, 2024). The recurrent mention of the issue by also the officers is a reminder that each 'situation' occurs within a wider context which shapes how participants may act. FGPO2 explained how drugs may lead to violence;

> "(…) it's… fights in the gym, staged, managed (…) but that's the first, I've seen in the 35 years I've been here. You know (…) I've seen a lot of other stuff so… orchestrated through drugs and the violence… whether it be a payback from an odd payment, somebody that's been mugged for their drugs, somebody that's been on them and became noncompliant all these various different things but the common denominator tends to be drugs" (FGPO2).

Moreover, both officer focus groups stressed how drugs, and particularly psychoactive substances (also known as spice), contribute to volatile behaviour and increased severity - especially in situations that require officer intervention;

> "PO1: The biggest problem we recently… (inaudible) is the psychoactive substances they take which cause them to go into a situation where they get slightly... not slightly, they get more violent with that whole thing and that's when the gloves come off and you're left with the aftermath of certain types and that can get brutal very quickly.
> PO3: There's nae reasoning with them at all... everything's gone...
> PO4: As soon as substances are involved, there's no reasoning with them" (FGPO1).

Viewed through this prism, officer actions in Clips 6-8 become more comprehensible. If they felt (or knew) that the prisoners were under the influence, that might explain the lack of dialogue and heightened emotional energy on display.

The officers were asked how prisoners react to being restrained but, rather than discussing control and restraint, the question prompted further reflections on

prisoners' reactions and behaviour when under the influence of drugs along with a discussion of how different substances provoke different reactions;

> "PO1: … depends if they're on drugs and that as well… (…)
> PO2: (…) If there's drug use, jheez (exhales) that's a completely different (inaudible) somebody that's compliant one minute, incompliant the next, compliant, then switch again (…) then the next minute they're unconscious… so there's so many different stages that they can go through when they're on a substance… and you don't even know what it is. If the medical team come along you've just got to say they're unresponsive, they're non-compliant whatever it happens to be.
> PO1: That's probably one of the worst things that's happened, spice, in the last… since your time [directed at PO2].
> PO2: Aye… psychoactive substances.
> PO1: (…) it's been worse than heroin, marijuana (…)
> PO2: Cause you don't know… they don't know what they're on either. (inaudible) you know as a payback, rather than pay money they will say, "okay I'll take… I'll be the guineapig for the next batch that comes in" and they'll take and they'll become a laugh and a joke out in the exercise yard because somebody's lying on the floor twitchin', he'll get taken away (…) it could be straight away he's okay or it could be three days down the line or a week down the line, some people don't actually recover from it… I've seen that as well… there was an individual, he took an illicit substance and was absolutely off his face for days on end and he never actually came back to being the guy he was before the instance happened, eh. So it's…
> Int: So that's becoming more…?
> PO2: Huge. Massive.
> PO1: And there's no … there's no logical thinking behind it… it's just like [PO2] says, it's like here you go, here's a new batch do you want to try it? Just take some and see what happens" (FGPO2).

These reflections suggest that not only do drugs cause conflict, but substance use also contributes to volatile and unpredictable behaviour which may result in increased severity of the prisoners' violent behaviour. As for situational dynamics, the influence of drugs may alter behaviour, reactions, and thus interactions, by e.g., overruling bodily responses to the ct/f barrier or exaggerating forward panic. Equally, it could be difficult to recognise in visual data material, depending on footage quality, as could be the case in Clips 2 and 7, where situational dynamics and interactional processes may be impacted by drug use. In these two clips, it is unclear if the prisoners are intoxicated or under the influence of drugs, which means that the bodily displays may differ from what they would look like under 'normal' circumstances. At the same time, knowing or fearing that drugs are involved may also, as discussed, prompt officers to act in particular ways. Thus, the rise in drug use and drug (or PS) related incidents in prisons represents a whole new spectrum of challenges and considerations, not only for staff but also for prison researchers.

6.3.2 Using video data to understand escalation and de-escalation

The focus groups pinpointed specific behaviours perceived as escalatory - especially when exhibited by prison officers - namely, invasion of personal space, use of force,

and shouting. The FGPR-participants reflected on behaviour that may be interpreted as unwarranted, not only speaking of physical actions but also in terms of general treatment of prisoners. In particular, they highlighted issues arising from routines being disrupted for no 'reasonable' reason;

> "FP1: If you get a set of officers who have never worked that wing before, particularly … even just one person who's got that kinda really (…) [officer name] was put on … she got put on a shift for an afternoon in a different hall and the five trusted prisoners, who're doing the cleaning up and stuff…
> FP2: Aye, she locked them up during the day (…)
> FP1: … 10 folks start banging on their doors… they're fucking arguing and fighting with staff and that… one of them can just destroy the whole thing with the whole balance and someone's got to deal with that and [the officer] just fucked off somewhere else" (FGPR).

They further drew attention to officers with "doggish attitudes" (FGPR*),* meaning officers who interfere with existing routines (as the quote above describes) or who fail to treat prisoners with dignity and respect. As also pointed out in Chapter 1 and 2 (section 2.5.5), being treated with respect and fairness is a key factor in minimising and preventing violence (Hulley et al., 2012; Liebling et al., 2011; Sparks, 2002; Sparks et al. 1996; Treadwell and Gooch, 2022; Wilson and Brookes, 2021). Perceived disrespect in the management of and communication with prisoners may therefore cause disruption of order and spark escalatory behaviour;

> "FP2: It's the whole thing about the dog squad and the decent squad.… you already knew one shift would be alright, one shift would be (inaudible). You still had your routine, you still had a sense of what it was like and there's different choices you can make… I made a choice to sit with like-minded people to try to make the best of… to keep myself busy to then get home, no get in trouble, no get in shit but other people didnae make those choices.
> FP1: As long as the screws let you do what you wanna do… the bad screws are the ones that kinda impede problems and every action, even if you're allowed to do and supposed to do. (inaudible) their own kinda rules and that can spark (…) serious problems" (FGPR).

The ex-prisoners discuss how 'the dog squad' is more likely to cause frustration which in turn can lead to victimisation of staff (FGPR). Victimisation may be in the form of violence, as the quote above suggests, or by means of protest, an example of which is 'potting' (O'Mara, 2024) - the act "of assaulting prison staff with shit and urine" (p. 2) - which is becoming increasingly common in prisons in England and Wales and used as an act of resistance or to express anger, i.e., as a way of expressing oppression as a response to feelings of powerlessness and perceived injustice (ibid.). O'Mara's explanation of the phenomenon links to the comments by FGPR which are supported by existing empirical findings, e.g., Liebling and Price (2001), that prison officers' attitudes and behaviour significantly impact the prison environment, both positively and negatively; fairness, respect, and humanity influence prisoner behaviour positively and contribute to order (ibid.).

Elaborating on the impact or danger of breakdowns in the prison order, one of the former prisoners, when discussing Clip 5, stated that when or if prisoners know they will be punished, they may as well get something out of it (FGPR). As the prisoners in a violent altercation know they will be punished, they may choose to amplify aggression and/or violence.

FGPR also discussed the lack of decency and social skills as well as an overall lack of training of officers, attributing these factors to the prison officer culture and thus a need for a culture change in prisons to help a shift away from the them vs. us-mentality. The FGPR participants are not the only 'insiders' to have flagged the importance of prisoner-staff relations and the significance of being met with decency. An example of a culture in which the 'them vs. us'-mentality was erased is the Barlinnie experiment, mentioned in Chapter 1. In Sparks' (2002) account of his time as a researcher within the Barlinnie Special Unit, one of the residents, pondering how the 'Unit' had altered his views, relationships, and thoughts about the future, attributed the impact to staff "behaving as normal human beings (...) with normal human respect (and) courtesy" and to not being treated "as some kind of lesser human being" (ibid., p. 569).

Although achievements of small-scale experiments may serve as inspiration, there is in all likeliness a difference to what can be accomplished in the mainstream prison system and returning to the need for a broad change in culture, Morrison and Maycock (2021) have pointed out, that the prison officer culture, i.e., the way officers think of - and consequently treat – prisoners, is learned post-training, when officers start working in prisons, thus raising the question of where a needed dismantling of the current culture starts. That, however, is not within the scope of this thesis. In a situational scope, though, as discussed in the above analysis, unwarranted behaviour is not only exhibited through physical or bodily means, such as invasion of personal space (e.g., Clip 5), but also manifests in the way officers communicate with prisoners.

Following Nassauer's (2015) work on police officers, prison officers, too, would benefit from being conscious of how their own behaviour and expressions of emotion are perceived by prisoners, whilst also taking prisoners' behaviours and emotional expressions into account; FGPO1, in particular, highlighted that detecting potential signs of escalation and escalatory behaviour exhibited by prisoners is one of the most important officer tasks and something that officers learn once they are working in the prison space. Elements of this are taught in control and restraint training but the details and subtle aspects of it are learned on the job (FGPO1). Restraint and control training was not further detailed by the officers.

In the discussion of escalatory and conciliatory behaviours - echoing Nassauer (2015) and Koerner and Staller (2022) - the officers stressed the importance of being clear, when communicating with prisoners, and ensuring that no promises are made,

noting that prisoners may become angry if issues or promises are not followed up on. Moreover, the officers saw 'mood matching' as something to avoid, meaning that an officer must stay calm when prisoners become angry to avoid escalation. Reflecting further on the causes of escalation or escalatory behaviour exhibited by officers, one officer-participant stressed that some officers' way of dealing with agitated or aggressive prisoners can be directly inflammatory;

> "[y]ou have staff that follow them right up and it keeps going, keeps going. (…) you got to bring them back down to you and it doesnae always work… if you just keep calm, (…) just talk, never go up the levels. Let them go up the levels, looking at you and then they come back down. But you try not to follow them up there. (…) when you're dealing with aggressive prisoners, tone and body language is everything (…) mood matching and that's just never good, man. It's just aggression… it escalates" (FGPO1).

The quote shows similarities to Collins' emphasis on emotional dynamics; 'mood matching' as an escalatory factor is described by the officers as situations where they are being yelled or sworn at by prisoners, and, instead of responding calmly, they yell and swear back at the prisoners (FGPO1). Existing literature recognises similar behaviours leading to the use of violence; Kratcoski (1988) found that assaults on staff often follow threats or heated verbal exchanges. Similarly, McNeeley (2021) found that verbal aggression, i.e., insults, cursing, and yelling (in other words escalatory verbal communication (Edgar et al., 2003a; Levine et al., 2011), is often exhibited by prisoners prior to becoming violent. Interestingly, McNeeley (2021) found that physical force by staff was likely to reduce the chance of prisoners completing an assault. She does however acknowledge that use of force may also escalate tension and aggressive behaviour in some situations, as Edgar (2014; 2015), Edgar et al. (2003a), and Wolfgang (1957) also suggest.

As the situational analysis and focus group reflections suggest, the officer in Clip 5 merely placed his hand on the prisoner's chest, presumably to create some distance. So, although the officer did not carry out an aggressive act, it nonetheless had an escalatory effect as it was perceived as unwarranted - and in this case unwarranted *physical* - behaviour by the prisoner. This example speaks quite clearly to the potential of using video data as a training tool to aid the understanding of the subtleties of intention and perception of behaviour and communication and their impact.

Supporting existing findings of other studies as the above mentioned, it was also evident from the present study that escalatory verbal cues such as threats or orders and use of loud voices serve to both stir aggression in prisoners and escalate conflict into violence - not just between prisoners, but especially in interactions between officers and prisoners. As the FG reflections show, is not only *what* is being said but also *how* things are being said which determines the course of events. Thus, the reflection of one of the officers in FGPO2 on the importance of communication as a tool to avoid aggression;

> "it takes a long, long time (…) to get your respect from them, you've got to present yourself, you've got to walk your section with forty odd [prisoners] and you still got to be top-dog. But you're trying to, you know, to sell ice to eskimos a lot of the time (laughs)… it does take a lot of skill to do that, you know, and verbal communication is huge, it's not like I'm 6 feet 6, 4 foot wide, (…), it's not about that, it's about being able to talk to them, communicate and also at a level that they will understand as well… you know" (FGPO2).

Revisiting the Barlinnie 'experience' of the Special Unit, the officer's statement that "verbal communication is huge" mirrors ex-Barlinnie prisoner Boyle's reflection on the reasons for the Unit's success, namely that dialogue was "the single most important factor" (Boyle, 1984, cit.in Wilson and Brookes, 2021, p. 37). Elaborating on dialogue - and respect - the other officer in FGPO2 said;

> "It's also about the way you talk to prisoners (…) you know being an officer on a landing, you cannae just speak to them, order them about, you have to have some sort of way of speaking to prisoners that they can accept…" (FGPO2).

This again speaks to the importance of respect and dignity when interacting with prisoners (Hulley et al., 2012; Sparks, 2002) and managing emotions (Crewe et al., 2014) to avoid conflict and aggression. It also emphasises the importance of being 'streetwise' and displaying confidence to disrupt the emotional momentum needed for violence (Collins, 2008, p. 465). As detailed in relation to Clip 7, over-reactions despite accomplished training in de-escalation techniques occur when individuals are under the pressure of confrontational tension and fear, causing them to act in a forward panic. Grossman ((2004), cited in Collins, 2008, p. 466) has made similar observations and recommends the use of a particular breathing cycle to slow the heart rate and control adrenaline levels to deal more adequately with triggering situations. In the heat of a tense moment, this may however be a difficult strategy to observe.

Discussing details of dealing with aggressive behaviour, the officers in FGPO1 stated that officers should be conscious not to reward prisoners' aggressive behaviour (e.g., doing something for a prisoner who acts up). In the same line, officers should make sure to return to the prisoner at a later point to discuss an aggressive episode, in order to prevent aggressive behaviour from going unnoticed (FGPO1). Letting prisoners calm down and allowing them to think about a conflict encounter can be useful;

> "'I'll give you a chance to think about it' (…)' 'I'll move on, give you a chance to think about it'. They'll sit and think and go through the logic paths and then turn around and say 'alright, cool, it's fine'. And what we usually find is that the prisoner who's had the issue wants to have a conversation afterwards, 9 times out of 10 they're like 'are we alright, are we cool?'" (FGPO1).

Such episodes were absent from the sample. As evident from the video analysis, video clips depicting conflict between officers and prisoners represent only those turning violent, again, because clips on YouTube are meant for entertainment.

Another behavioural attribute which serves to de-escalate or simply avoid escalation or keep good order is confidence. Similarly to Nassauer (2015), Koerner and Staller (2022) highlight the importance of confident demeanours, when dealing with violent or conflictual situations but acknowledge that demeanour can be impacted by the stress of violent conflict; where officers engage in use of force, the stress of such a situation may change officers' demeanour (Collins, 2008; Jenkins et al., 2023).

The officers, too, talked about the importance of confidence and demeanour and its effect in encounters with prisoners, whether violent or not. Here, one officer highlights the importance of staying calm;

> "[w]hat you'll find in oor setting is, and we've all done it, we've had to go into a section where there is forty prisoners or sometimes more, had to go in there and say to them "right, this is what's happening". Depending on the numbers that are oot, it'll either land pretty well (…) or it won't and the next thing you know, they'll be surrounding round about you and (…) a lot of the time it's about intimidation, it's about standoff, you think something's gonna happen… certainly from a prisoner's point of view, you've gotta then step up a gear and say I'm controlling this situation and it goes the way I want it or doesn't and sometimes you don't have the control over how it goes after that and you try to maintain … it's like a… it's hard to describe" (FGPO1).

And another officer added that being comfortable setting boundaries and being confident in one's skills is crucial when dealing with violence (FGPO1).

Apart from hinting at the advantages of recognising one's own limitations, the officers' reflections, in line with Nassauer (2018a), suggest that confidence – which covers both emotional dominance in non-violent interactions and 'staying in character' during violent incidents - serves as a way of maintaining order, and thus prevents the use of force. The above quote links particularly to Nassauer's (2015) notion of police officers perceiving themselves to be in control. However, *both* officers' reflections suggest that, while it is important to be confident in one's ability, it is equally important to be able to read situations to prevent them from turning violent or otherwise escalating. Specific to settings like the prison, the officers also speak of knowing who they are dealing with. This, again, highlights the significance of the contexts within which situations arise and the importance of prisoner-staff relations. It may not always be possible to read situations, and the micro-dynamics may also change, as Collins suggests they do - and as evidenced by FG discussions in relation to drugs - but video analysis of clips detailing circumstances like the ones described by the officers could enhance the understanding of the dynamics that either prevent or escalate such situations. Since clips of non-violent encounters between officers and prisoners are close to non-existent on YouTube, as explained

above, this type of data would need to be sourced directly from prison CCTV, as was initially envisioned for this project.

7.0 Collins, YouTube data, and implications for prison violence

This chapter addresses the research questions whilst also summarising the key contributions of the thesis, namely, the testing of Collins' theory to prison violence and the utility of video data sampled from online sources. The previous two chapters have outlined and discussed the analysis of the video data and focus group reflections, identifying aspects of Collins' theory of violence (2008) that aid the understanding of violence between prisoners and between officers and prisoners. It has also been detailed how video data aids investigation into interactional aspects of prison violence. The initial intention of the thesis was to triangulate video data with interview and incident report data for fuller insights into how incidents unfolded, with all data obtained through the SPS with the aim of interviewing those involved in the sampled incidents. However, as outlined in Chapter 3 (section 3.2), the research had to be redesigned to overcome the challenges of Covid-19, resulting in video data sampled from YouTube and co-viewing focus groups with officers and ex-prisoners familiar with the prison setting but not depicted in the sampled clips. Although the aim of the project did not change, i.e., testing Collins' theory and the utility of video data in understanding how violence unfolds in prison, the means of research and volume of data did change. Instead, the thesis has tested the Collinsian approach using video data sampled online, thus allowing for a contribution to the discussion of online, ready-made or readily available visuals as already touched upon in Chapter 4 on ethics, involving suggestions for further use of online visuals in violence research. Despite the challenges brought on by Covid-19, the thesis contributes to both the testing of theoretical insights of Collins and to furthering the VDA methodology in a hitherto unresearched setting, namely the prison.

So, this chapter concludes the thesis with, first, a discussion of the applicability of Collins' (2008) theory of violence, demonstrating how interactional processes play out in the prison setting and how the focus on these dynamics can aid the understanding of violent interaction between prisoners and between prison officers and prisoners, with particular emphasis on the impact of different actors' behaviour in amplifying and minimising violence. Secondly, the chapter presents a discussion of the benefits and limitations of utilising YouTube data depicting prison violence along with reflections - or practical suggestions - for further research in violence by use of VDA. The third and final section presents the practical suggestions for prison officer training. This last section draws on existing efforts of applying micro-sociological insights to violence prevention strategies in the field of policing (Koerner and Staller, 2022; Nassauer, 2015), but the suggestions build on insights from the present video data as well as focus group reflections on dealing with violent incidents, whilst also bringing in the officer focus groups' contemplations on the possible use of video data in officer training.

7.1 Testing the applicability of a Collinsian approach to prison violence

A key aim of the present thesis has been to test Collins' theory and key components of violence to violent incidents in prisons for the purpose of providing insight into prison violence and exploring the applicability of the theory in that setting. Whilst Collins' work is persuasive and contains rich insights into violence, the situational dynamics and bodily displays of emotion seen in the present video data do bring up some questions about the applicability of the theory in the field of prison violence. As such, this section discusses key findings in relation to Collins' theory of violence, reflecting on the utility of video data for examining the situational dynamics and expressions of emotion put forth by Collins and Collins-inspired scholars in the prison setting.

7.1.1 Weak victims, emotional asymmetry, and dominator/victim dynamics

As seen in the findings' chapters, the footage does afford some support of Collins; as emphasised throughout both empirical chapters (Chapters 5 and 6), the recordings often start post build-up, i.e., when conflict has turned violent, thereby preventing a full analysis of the dynamics leading up to the violence. These dynamics include pathways to overcoming the ct/f barrier and establishing emotional dominance. Particularly, when analysing the pathways around the ct/f barrier, the focus has been on the behavioural clues exhibited by fight participants once they start performing acts of violence which indicate the different pathways. Forward panic, for example, involves a dominator performing repeated acts of violence or performing violence in a frenzy, whereas the weak victim pathway allows for the dominator to lead the interaction, going into a 'one-sided flow' that sees the victim exhibiting incompetent violence actions. However, as also detailed in the descriptions of the findings, where such dynamics occur, they only last for a few seconds. Thus, forward panic dynamics can be difficult to detect because the footage does not show the full incident (including the full build-up). Where dynamics resembling forward panic are present (Clips 6 and 7), i.e., a build-up of tension which is released into violence, the officers do not launch into frenzied attacks but rather respond with few acts which could be seen as an overreaction. This raises the question of whether the officers are in fact in "[a] panic (…) zone (…) where the emotional impulses are overwhelming" (Collins, 2008, p. 121). If so, the tension is likely at a lower level, or builds up over a shorter time span, which does not allow the officers to enter into even the mouth of the tunnel of violence. Lastly, the described limitations of the data prevent a full analysis of this pathway and more research with data of particular relevance to this dynamic is needed to fully comprehend this behavioural mechanism.

As for dynamics related to the weak victim pathway, which are present in the sample (Clips 5, 6, and 7), Collins (2008) claims that the dominator has the momentum when using the weak victim pathway and is therefore able to lead the interaction. However, as observed in prisoner-on-prisoner and prisoner-officer incidents alike, the roles of dominator and victim are not always clear cut, nor are the dynamics of the weak victim pathway. Although Collins suggests that the victim does respond, this response is not elaborated upon, but he nevertheless suggests a clear distinction between dominator and victim. What is observable in the present data is that 'victims' attempt to fight back and even though they do not manage to shift the emotional dominance to their advantage, some do manage to fight back in a skilled manner, whilst others do it less competently. This dynamic may suggest that the level of entrainment experienced by both dominators and victims is weak, a dynamic especially characterising the staged fights between prisoners. The majority of the remaining data as well as the focus group discussions have thus revealed that Collins' definition or distinction of victim and dominator may be applicable in ad hoc fights of more severe character in public settings but less so in staged fights in the prison context in which participants are more skilled in fighting. The incidents involving both prisoners and officers show stronger entrainment, but these come closer to resembling the ad hoc fights described by Collins (2008), wherein conflict escalates into violence, and shared emotions of anger and hostility are present (Collins, 2013).

Contrary to what Collins (2008) argues, the prisoner-on-prisoner clips show evidence that fight participants do not create a rhythm or mode of interaction which is difficult to break, but rather that the rhythm *can* be interrupted in as much as the bystanders are able to regulate the fights with ease. Even in the clips depicting violence involving officers, fear and tension is exhibited throughout, arguably preventing the rhythm from being established. Moreover, Collins (2008; 2013) argues that violent rituals are one-sided and asymmetrical; the clips, however, show evidence of a different dynamic wherein violent encounters resemble a sequence of actions and reactions, although not quite the unbreakable sequences that Bramsen (2017) observed. This suggests that the incidents are not one-sided but rather that victims attempt to shift the emotional dominance, even if unsuccessfully so. This may be a prison-specific dynamic, where prisoners need to fight back to confirm their masculinity, and where giving into the role of victim goes against prescribed rules for inmate behaviour with the consequence of losing face. What this suggests is that situational contexts are impactful and play a role in the way in which situational dynamics unfold. This means that to form a full picture of how different kinds of fights (e.g., staged or ad hoc) in different kinds of prison spaces play out, it is necessary to take the circumstances into consideration - which furthers the argument for triangulation of video data with incident reports or with interviews with those depicted.

7.1.2 Audiences and bystanders - Recorded videos as entertainment

Incidents depicting prisoner-on-prisoner violence consisted of staged fights filmed by the prisoners themselves - a phenomenon which may also alter traditional dominator/victim dynamics. In these incidents, the bystander and audience dynamics are at the forefront and the audiences aid the fighters in overcoming the ct/f barrier. The footage depicted several incidents of the staged fights pathway (Clips 1-4, i.e., the prisoner-on-prisoner content). As described in the literature review (section 2.1), staged fights entail audiences who work to regulate the fight. Although the footage does not reveal whether audiences appear as the fights start or have assembled prior to fight initiation, the violence is heavily policed by them. In the clips with audiences - three prisoner-on-prisoner violence clips (Clips 2, 3, and 4) and one violence involving officers clip (Clip 5) - the fighters are urged to fight by enthusiastic audiences and, although some of the fighters display hesitation, they quickly overcome the barrier. Apart from aiding the fighters to overcome the ct/f barrier, the audiences - and bystanders in particular - regulate the fights but also serve to escalate them. Collins (2008) argues that regulation of fights aims to even out the unfairness towards the end whilst also ensuring that fighters stick to pre-determined rules - therein lies the ‘fairness’. Such dynamics are not always observed in the present data in which the policing of fights on some occasions favours the dominators. This speaks to the specific context of the prison, but further research on this is required to reach a clearer conclusion.

Although the bystanders in the present sample at times were seen stepping in to separate opponents when fights became too severe, and such interventions may serve to momentarily even out ‘emotional inequalities’ (Collins, 2008), fighters were then again urged to continue fighting. Seemingly, the encouragements of the audiences primarily helped the dominators maintain the emotional dominance. As detailed in the literature review, violence - or at least conflict - in prison is often linked to bullying, and as Collins (2008) suggests, incidents of bullying or unfair fights often involve a single victim against several dominators. Although the clips depict one-on-one fights between prisoners, the bystanders arguably take the side of the dominator - in Clip 2, some bystanders eventually turn into dominators as they join in with the beating of the victim creating a dynamic which emotionally supports the dominator. In these clips, the severity is not at a high level and the victims do not come away with serious injuries, which would arguably be the case where bullying leads to violent victimisation (Edgar et al., 2003a). Combined, these dynamics suggest that the depicted violence is for entertainment purposes, at least for the audiences and bystanders as well as for some of the fighters. As Kerbs and Jolley (2007) claim, violence can be particularly joyful for audiences as they experience “collective arousal” (p. 20) as well as feelings of connection or belonging to the group, similar to the dynamics observed by Collins (2008) in respect to staged fights.

As outlined in the literature review, Collins also observes violence as entertainment but suggests that it is a crowd response to a celebration, e.g., seen in connection to sports events, and entails fights breaking out amongst the crowd. Such dynamics were not observed in the sample, but the notion of crowd effervescence (the emotional atmosphere amongst the audience being elevated) was clearly observed, again suggesting that the clips depict violence for the purpose of entertainment. Kerbs and Jolley (2007) highlight that some fighters experience joy from participating in fights through pleasurable physiological responses, such as excitement, adrenaline kicks, and boosts of energy - thus contrasting Collins' (2008) notion that violence is shaped by tension and fear, even where fight participants fall into a mutual rhythm (entrainment). The notion of violence as fun also ties in with some of the critique of Collins raised by Cooney (2009), Felson (2009), and Malešević (2022); as noted in the literature review (section 2.2), the three scholars question Collins' claim that violence is difficult to perform. However, as established by the findings, both dominators and victims exhibit hesitation which suggests emotional states of fear and tension, even when the fights are staged.

A similar notion was put forth by the ex-prisoner FG participants, who further proposed that fighters are set up to fight by other prisoners with more power or status, implying that such a dynamic is a form of bullying. As explained previously, prisoners record and upload videos to extend humiliation beyond the prison (Gooch and Treadwell, 2020). Such incidents are therefore most likely intended as entertainment for the audiences, whilst at the same time serving as a form of bullying or humiliation of the fight participants. In a Collinsian sense, such incidents are staged, thus encompassing regulations by which the audience aids the participants to fight. However, the clues provided by the focus group discussion on staged fights provide crucial information about the dynamics observed and the role that audiences play in such incidents. It also brings further light to the wider contexts in which such fights occur which dictate the way in which bystanders regulate this type of violent interaction. Thus, the reflections of the FG participants imply a limitation to Collins' method which - without triangulation of data as used in the present study - may lack the necessary socio-cultural contexts needed for a more accurate interpretation of dynamics observed in the staged-violence clips in which socio-cultural clues have implications for the way in which such incidents play out - clues not obtainable solely via visual data.

On a practical note, Kerbs and Jolley (2007) suggest that if violence is seen as something enjoyable, then intervention strategies need to focus on removing the enjoyable aspects, i.e., targeting the bystanders who are watching violent incidents, rather than only the bullies or instigators. Equally, they claim that "pro-victim bystanders can be trained to intervene on behalf of the victim" (ibid., p. 25). In the prison setting, the former suggestion may be achievable by breaking up crowds rather than fighters. Arguably, where officers could learn to recognise the dynamics of staged fights (lower severity, bystander intervention, regulation) and the roles of

both fighters and audiences, officer intervention could benefit from focusing on removal or separation of the audience to prevent them from providing the fighters with the momentum to perform violence actions. Breaking up bystander groups or audiences may also be a less difficult task because audiences are unlikely to be caught up in tension and fear to the same degree as prisoners in a fight. Where carousing solidarity occurs, audiences may however be more difficult to target effectively; Clip 5, for example, illustrates how rapidly otherwise compliant prisoners may turn on officers. Bystander intervention amongst co-prisoners is less likely to be an option considering that use of physical force has specific purposes for prisoners, such as contesting of dominance, which is likely to exclude compliance to intervention by co-prisoners.

7.1.3 Escalation, emotional dominance, and the prison officer

Collins touches only in limited detail upon the role of the police in smaller scale violence interactions, primarily relating behaviour in violent incidents involving the police to the forward panic pathway. He argues that it is a pathway often seen when police are chasing a potential perpetrator. In relation to the violence as entertainment pathway, he points to the role of police officers, suggesting that it can be difficult for officers to contain the crowd due to size, solidarity, and high emotional energy (Collins, 2008). In such incidents, the police officers' attempts at policing the crowds result in counter acts (both violence and gesturing) from the crowd which (again) may turn into an escalation-loop (Collins, 2013). Although crowd violence dynamics were not observed between officers and prisoners in the present sample, the notion of the escalation loop hints at the impact of escalatory acts on the degree of violence in a conflict. The violence involving officers clips clearly showed the impact of escalatory behaviour. Corroborating studies on escalatory behaviour (Edgar et al., 2003a; Levine et al., 2011; Nassauer, 2018a), the present video analysis showed that where officers used aggressive gesturing, loud voices, or acts of violence, prisoners would respond with violence (Clips 5 and 8), or attempts thereof (Clip 7), or similar escalatory gesturing resulting in officer use of violence (Clip 6). Although this may suggest escalation loops like those observed by Collins, the violence does not last long, arguably because those involved have no interest in prolonging the fights.

In his practical suggestions, Collins (2008) emphasises that police officers are trained in de-escalation techniques and thus familiar with bodily behaviour that serves to escalate conflict and/or violence - prison officers receive similar training (Polaschek, 2023; Ryan et al., 2021). Collins' point that training, however, may be forgotten in the heat of an incident was confirmed in the FG discussions with the officers when they reflected on different appropriate responses in the variety of incidents they were shown. The discussions suggested that officers *are* aware of the right techniques but unable to put them into use when they experience tension, fear, and stress.

Similarly, the video analysis showed the effect of tension and fear on officers when victimised by prisoners; Clips 5 and 8 depicted uses of violence against prison officers and their responses to it. In both clips, the officers are seen struggling to control their bodily movements - and in Clip 8, where the officers attempt to fight the prisoner, their fighting skills come across as incompetent. These dynamics also suggest that the stress and tension of violent episodes make it difficult for the officers to emotionally dominate, i.e., take or regain control, thus also making it more difficult to adhere to training techniques. Moreover, in the clips where prisoners initiate the violence, officers seemingly struggle to then take control, and their struggle to do so allows the prisoners to maintain the emotional dominance. At the same time as supporting Collins' idea of how emotional dominance works, these dynamics also suggest that it would be useful for officers to learn how to shift the emotional dominance in such situations. As Nassauer (2018a) found, in relation to emotional dominance in robberies, robbers - to complete a robbery - have to display certain behaviours that allow them to maintain the emotional dominance, such as moving firmly, taking up space, and making themselves large. Whilst such movements may be difficult to display when in a stressful situation, and although such displays may not always work (Bramsen, 2017), training officers to focus on techniques relevant to these 'efficient' behaviours and demeanours could help them to display confidence in tense, violence threatening and violent interactions, and thus gain or keep the emotional dominance. Again, video footage can be useful for such training, helping to pinpoint when to display emotionally dominant bodily behaviour and also to examine its effect.

This becomes even more relevant if the assumption is that prisoners, when interacting with others, are ready to defend themselves through physical force and also may have learned to dominate emotionally and not just to fight with skilled techniques, as Collins' (2008) notion of fight schools suggests. The notion of emotional dominance also entails that the willingness to fight is determining in order to take the lead. As described in the literature review (2.5.4), the normative patterns of masculinity (Michalski, 2017) requires prisoners to be willing to contest their dominance or defend their honour in order to gain or keep the respect from co-prisoners - as such, a strategic response to risk (Ricciardelli et al., 2015) – and, under some circumstances, to respond with physical force (Toch, 1998; Trammell, 2012) for a number of reasons, e.g., protection (Toch, 1988), lack of alternative solutions to conflict resolution (Crewe, 2014; Trammell, 2012), or saving face (Goffman, 1967). Taking the lead by willingness to fight may explain why prisoners, when conflict between them and staff turns violent, are more successful in gaining the dominance in such situations, even when outnumbered by officers as Clip 8 showed. This is amongst the reasons why the FGDs emphasised the importance of cultivating relationships and knowing how to speak to people so as to manage emotions.

7.1.4 Critique, pathways, and useful pointers

The critique of Collins (outlined in section 2.2) highlights the role of context, reasons, and triggers as missing, and whilst these aspects are important in efforts to understand the circumstances under which violence can occur as well as in efforts to minimise or prevent violence, the premise when working with Collins' theory of violence - and video data in general - is that the focus is not on addressing *how* violence occurs but rather on *what* makes conflictual encounters violent. Although the critique to various degrees accepts that this is a premise in Collins' work, it also points to issues of vagueness in his conceptualisations (Felson, 2009; Laitin, 2008; Nassauer, 2022a) and questions the broad applicability of the pathway dynamics across all kinds of violence (Bramsen, 2018; Cooney, 2009; Felson, 2009). Although Collins draws on some visual evidence to develop his theory of violence, it is not always obvious when visuals - nor what kind of visuals - are at the forefront of defining situational dynamics, and his arguments are often backed by non-visual data, including incident reports, studies or theorisings of other scholars, and anecdotes, which may result in a portrayal of the situational dynamics as exaggerated examples or as caricatures of what they actually look like. Using actual video footage - and longer clips as suggested by Bramsen (2018) - may provide insights into variations of dynamics and into the different ways that displays of interactional processes vary across different settings. The studies drawn on by the present thesis to define bodily displays of emotion (Levine et al., 2011; Nassauer 2018a) do exactly that; they identify behaviours and displays of emotions using visual data.

As for the pathways, Collins' (2008) argument is that violence is difficult to perform as it goes against the normal rhythm of interaction and therefore requires either forward panic, a weak victim, or the encouragement of an audience. This argument is again questioned by Cooney (2009) as well as Felson (2009), both of whom, as mentioned above, hold that such dynamics are not broadly applicable to all types of violent encounters. The examples used by Collins to develop his argument are high tension situations in which a forward panic response is more likely. Bramsen (2018) on the other hand, taking a more technical visual data stance, suggests that the video data employed by Collins in his examination of violent situations only last a few seconds and therefore does not possess the potential to show how fights unfold, nor how different actors' behaviour and displays of emotion change the dynamics. As established previously (section 7.1.1.), while dynamics resembling forward panic are observed in the sample, the dominators do not go into frenzied attacks, and the victims do attempt to shift the emotional dominance by fighting back, albeit not successfully. Whilst these dynamics suggest that violence requires a situationally weak victim, there is no clear indication of the forward panic pathway dynamics which Collins observes. Following Bramsen's (2018) lead, there is a need for longer videos allowing for further analysis of dynamics of violent incidents in the prison

context - with access to prison CCTV, as stipulated in the initial research design, such data would have been obtainable.

The audience pathway was however clearly evident from the video analysis, even if the dynamics related to this pathway were observed in staged fights and therefore may differ from ad hoc fights between prisoners - and from fights which are not for entertainment purposes. The clips depicting prisoner-on-prisoner best lend themselves to the analysis of audience dynamics, illuminating the role of both bystanders and audiences, and how these actors work to regulate but also escalate violence. Collins, unlike the present analysis, does not distinguish between bystanders and audiences, but the distinction is pivotal because audiences and bystanders play different roles; an audience can create an atmosphere and encourage effervescence, whereas bystanders, by physically intervening, are able to regulate fights by means of de-escalation, by guidance, or by ordering fighters to continue or stop fighting. Thus, bystanders set the rules for staged fights, whereas audiences create the energy around it. In the present sample, three of the four prisoner-on-prisoner clips have audiences, whilst one does not (Clip 1). In the latter, however, the camera is carefully set up (by the dominator) at an angle to properly capture the beating, suggesting that the recording was meant to be shared. This indicates that the dominator had an (intended) audience which may have helped him overcome the ct/f barrier and suggests that interactional dynamics do not necessarily require face-to-face interaction to work - an observation which echoes Henry (2021; 2024).

Although the present thesis has drawn on other VDA work to explain and analyse situational dynamics, and in particular bodily displays of emotion and escalatory dynamics, due to the vagueness with which they are articulated in Collins' work, his key ideas have guided the enquiry into the dynamics relevant to understanding how conflict turns violent. Particularly the roles of emotional dominance, of fear and tension, and that of audiences have illuminated areas that could prove useful to include in future design or adjustment of officer training and in rethinking how violence is tackled in the prison setting. Whilst only certain aspects of Collins' theory are observable and useful in relation to prison violence, the methodology and new way of approaching the understanding of violence, namely interactionally, could make way for new approaches to prevention or minimisation strategies using video footage to study relevant dynamics. Although situational prevention measures are being used in the prison setting (as highlighted in section 2.5.1), the interactionist perspective offers a way of looking at how conflictual encounters turn violent, which can help build an understanding of which dynamics and emotional displays to refrain from in order to avoid violence.

7.1.5 Summing up the Collinsian insights into prison violence

The present study has clearly shown the potential of Collins' theory of violence in understanding hitherto undiscovered situational aspects of prison violence. First and foremost, the study has shown that situational dynamics and expressions of emotion offer insight into the immediate circumstances of both staged and ad hoc violence, even if the empirical chapters suggests that contextual factors, including prisoner-prisoner and prisoner-officer relationships, reasons for use of force (prison(er) culture/inmate code), officer intervention, and communication strategies, impact the way in which situational dynamics play out.

Collins theorises several well-defined pathways to violence, sets out clear cut roles of fight participants, and a set of emotions dominating fight participants while in a fight, but although his theory takes into consideration a vast range of violent situations, from bar fights to wars, looking at violence in a particular context may result in variations of stereo-typed dynamics. Although Collins acknowledges that some individuals are familiar with use of violence, and thus have learned to overcome the ct/f barrier, and although he is also cognisant of the fact that some may experience excitement from it, he maintains that violence is incompetent as it is ruled by fear and tension, and that fighters fall into a rhythm of dominator and victim. The data from prison fights, however, particularly between prisoners, suggests that the roles of dominator and victim are less clear cut, and actors may attempt to shift these roles during violent interaction. The same applies for the roles of bystanders, in relation to which the data, contrary to Collins, invites a distinction between onlookers and intervening bystanders, i.e., those who contribute only verbally and those who intervene physically.

Several of Collins' areas of focus reveal crucial aspects of unfolding violence which can serve as helpful pointers for real-life violence prevention or minimisation in the prison context; these include the role of audiences, and thus possible intervention into bystander groups, and the importance of emotional dominance in keeping or gaining charge of a conflict or violent situation, which in respect to possible implications points towards officers developing further skills to establish control. Despite the sizeable value of Collins' contribution to understanding violence, now also evidenced in the prison setting, the present study has relied heavily on other scholarly sources to illuminate some of the areas that Collins theory is not fit to explain adequately (primarily Levine et al. (2011) and Nassauer (2016; 2018a). Thus, taking an approach with more weight on escalation and bodily expressions of emotion could prove useful in future video data studies in the area of violence prevention, intervention, and minimisation.

7.2 Working with VDA and online prison violence visuals

The sections in the literature review (Chapter 2, section 2.2) outlining the critique of Collins and the interactionist and micro-sociological approach to violence revealed the main point of critique, namely that an interactionist approach alone does not aid the understanding of violence (Felson, 2009; Wieviorka, 2011; 2014). As explained previously, the interactionist approach and video data alone cannot explain *why conflict* occurs but does allow for insights into the emotional dynamics and interactions that *turn conflict violent* and the dynamics that escalate or de-escalate violent incidents and thus holds a significant potential for intervention strategies. Whilst video data opens up for novel insights into interactions otherwise difficult to access or rare to observe, the technical features of different types of footage play a crucial role in what is captured, and that impacts the scope of the research. A crucial step in building VDA research design is thus to consider the uses and limitations of the video data. Therefore, the following section presents the methodological and video technological implications of YouTube data depicting prison violence with suggestions for the setup of research design for (any)future VDA work using online visuals.

1. **Consider the potential empirical insights of available data**

Different kinds of footage capture different kinds of situations. The sampling process has shown that prisoner-on-prisoner fights primarily are filmed with mobile phones and by prisoners themselves. It has also shown that violence involving officers is captured primarily on CCTV, though some on body worn camera - a type of footage not included in the sampling. Footage of violence involving officers also often show longer build-ups, which may allow for in-depth studies of dynamics contributing to conflict turning violent. Prisoner-on-prisoner violence, on the other hand, often starts at the moment of the first act of violence, or very few seconds before, and at times, it is not possible to tell if other acts of violence have already taken place prior to the start of the clip. This means that build-up dynamics are not observable and this footage characteristic limits insight into the exact dynamics that turn conflictual encounters between prisoners violent. The data presented here - once again – supports Bramsen's (2018) suggestion that longer clips are more useful for analysing the unfolding dynamics of a violent situation.

The mobile phone recordings have allowed for data that was audio-visual, providing insight into both bodily expressions and verbal indicators of emotion. The verbal clues, in particular, have aided the analysis of bystander and audience dynamics in that they displayed particular elements of emotional energy (e.g., shouting and/or cheering) and rules or regulation (e.g., bystanders giving orders). Bystanders were, however, out of the frame for periods of time, when they were not intervening. Bystanders moving in and out of the frame, being rarely visible until they intervene, entails that the footage neither allows for examination of their bodily expressions of

emotion nor of interactions between them prior to intervention. Whilst the video analysis suggested some (seemingly unspoken) coordination between bystanders – a phenomenon examined and described by Bloch et al. (2018) in a study of violence in public settings in both escalation and policing interactions - the angle of the phone footage in the sample did not allow for further examination of such dynamics. Existing video-based bystander studies have traditionally used CCTV footage (Bloch et al. 2018; Ejbye-Ernst, 2023; Ejbye-Ernst et al. 2022a; 2022b; Liebst et al., 2018; 2019a; 2019b; 2019c). CCTV often allows for a view of a larger space compared to mobile footage which enables analysis of bystander interaction away from the violent interaction. Mobile device footage, on the other hand, is often filmed closer to the action and thus to the fight participants - as was the case in this thesis' sample – meaning that only the intervening bystanders are in the frame, while the rest of the audience is not, thus disabling analysis of crowd-dynamics. The mobile device footage, however, features audio which revealed the verbal impact of the audience that does not physically intervene allowing for the distinction between bystander and onlooker.

2. **Consider the uses and limitations of video technical features**

Different types of footage involve different technical features, which have implications for the analytical potential. Although CCTV has the advantage of capturing larger spaces, in which most actors are within the frame for the duration of the clip, and such footage at times also capture the audio, the disadvantages include grainy footage or footage which captures movement unnaturally (e.g., as in stop motion or choppy), footage which may be filmed from too far a distance to capture facial and/or bodily expressions - here, researchers are urged to consider whether such footage should be included - and footage in which audio in most cases is missing. As Nassauer (2018a) asserts, and as evidenced in this thesis as well, verbal clues play a significant role in analyses of interactional dynamics and expressions of emotion. The audio in the sample provided useful clues to the mood of fight participants, which is crucial for an understanding of the dynamics leading to escalation. Verbal communication was of particular significance in clips depicting violence involving officers, illustrating how officers communicated with prisoners in high-tension situations, and demonstrating the significance of audio for understanding interactional processes of escalation.

As for the quality across the sample, the footage was often either too grainy, filmed from too far a distance, or the cameras were shaken/moved too quickly - the latter increasing graininess, particularly when viewed frame-by-frame or in slow motion. As highlighted in both empirical chapters, this meant that none of the recordings allowed for full examinations and analyses of facial expressions. In some cases, audience members' faces were briefly visible but due to camera movement, it was not possible to capture meaningful sequences of facial expressions - only snippets of different actors' facial expressions. The phone footage, and particularly the audio feature, did

however, as mentioned, aid the analysis of expressed emotions and emotional energy. Some footage failed to keep fight participants in the frame, which constituted another limitation and as a consequence, footage in which dominators and/or victims were out of view long enough to disrupt the flow of events was excluded from the sample as detailed in section 3.3.

With regard to the clips depicting prisoner-on-prisoner violence, an upside of the clips filmed by phone, was the camera being able to 'follow the action', seldom leaving the fighters out of view, despite the audience and bystanders oftentimes being out of the frame - a characteristic of this type of data also emphasising the importance of featured audio. As described in detail in Chapter 5, it is rarely possible to tell if the clips depicting prisoner-on-prisoner violence start at beginning of a fight or if fights have been initiated prior to the recordings. This characteristic emphasises one of the key pitfalls of sampling video data from online platforms, where clips are uploaded for the purpose of entertainment and lack of insight into build-up and aftermath limits the analysis of situational dynamics that turn conflict violent as well as post-fight dynamics. Thus, mobile phone footage advantages include access to audio to a significant extent, good footage quality (especially as smartphone technology advances), and close-up footage which may allow for examination of facial expressions. However, while mobile footage may be of a better quality, the camera is often moved quickly and therefore makes frame-by-frame examination of e.g., facial expressions difficult. Other disadvantages include footage capturing only the individuals performing the violent acts, which may inhibit examination of interactions between bystanders or audience members.

The clips showing violence involving officers are all CCTV recordings with varying degrees of audio as well as differences in visual quality, some clips being filmed from a great distance, others from a closer angle. Clips filmed from a distance may inhibit reading of facial expressions and, depending on quality, also hamper clear views of movement. Such clips were not included in the sample, although CCTV footage filmed from afar may allow for a better or fuller view of participants and incidents as the frame covers a larger space. Additionally, as CCTV cameras are stationary, the viewer may also be prevented from observing bodily behaviour and in particular facial expressions when fight participants are facing away from the camera. As previously detailed in Section 3.5 on video data limitations; CCTV clips where fight participants are out of the view for long enough to disrupt the sequence of events, thus preventing analysis of the micro-dynamics leading to escalation, are omitted from the sample - as was the case for clips by phone as described above.

Amongst the scholars who have sampled video data from YouTube - i.e., Nassauer (2015) and Bramsen (2017) - Bramsen is the only one to mention footage quality as a potential challenge. She seemingly mitigates this through her sampling criteria, suggesting that good quality footage does exist in certain types of settings or for certain situations of violence. At the time of the video sampling for the present

project, starting Spring 2021, the quality of phone and CCTV footage in the video sample did, as previously explained, not allow for decoding of facial expressions. Moreover, a substantial amount of available footage stemmed from documentaries or prison reality shows, i.e., scripted TV programmes, in which footage is edited and/or set up for entertainment purposes, thus not capturing natural behaviour, and also more often than not omitting full sequences of fights or switching between fight sequences and interviews and/or other settings. Consequently, there is a risk that the interpretation of dynamics and interactions is distorted. Such footage falls outside the sampling criteria of the present study and was therefore excluded. A scour of YouTube for violence in prison settings in the summer of 2024, approximately 3 years after the video data collection, suggests a progress in footage quality, although a substantial number of videos filmed by prisoners (in UK prisons) are videos showing various non-violent aspects of prison life, such as prisoners singing in their cells, engaging in minor verbal disputes, and breaking out of their cells. Despite the search for clips depicting violence, search results bring up related non-violent material or, as mentioned previously, footage which does not truthfully correspond to the video captions. This type of content is of course also outwith the scope of this thesis, although it has potential for video studies of other aspects of prison life, but nevertheless suggests that contraband phones now feature improved camera quality allowing for better quality captures compared to the technologies in use when the present video data was sampled.

3. **Consider the impact of the camera presence on exhibited behaviour**

Nassauer and Legewie (2019; 2021) and Legewie and Nassauer (2018) argue that online video platforms constitute an immense data pool and that the videos document “real-life social situations and interactions” (Nassauer and Legewie (2021, p. 1). As outlined in detail in the research design section 3.1, in which the VDA approach was presented, the aim of using video data is to “capture human behavio[u]r, interactions, emotions, or relationships in unprecedented detail” (ibid., p. 2). Nassauer and Legewie highlight that video footage captures these elements in a sequential manner with an unprecedented amount of detail, but they also acknowledge that visual data analysis lacks a coherent or streamlined framework[3] and that many studies use different analytical approaches (ibid.) - herein also sampling criteria.

As already extensively described, Nassauer and Legewie (2022) point towards two key criteria for sampling, namely natural behaviour and optimal capture. In respect to natural behaviour - i.e., behaviour not altered by the presence of the camera - both the officer and ex-prisoner FG-participants noted that the prisoner-on-prisoner fights displayed elements of being staged, which means that they were not ad-hoc fights

3 Nassauer and Legewie later developed a thorough guide to building a VDA research design (2022), this is referenced in the research design chapter (Chapter 3).

rising out of conflict but rather set up for entertainment. Whilst this does not suggest that the behaviour exhibited in these situations was not natural (for that situation), it does mean that certain types of violence are not captured on video. For as the officers noted, violence in the presence of others is meant to be caught or seen. This means that violence for the purpose of punishment - in officer 'terms', slashings or stabbings - is perpetrated in other spaces, away from staff, and therefore not captured by surveillance cameras (FGPO1) or mobile phones and thus not available through platforms like YouTube.

As for optimal capture - referring to how well the data captures relevant aspects of the analytical focus (Nassauer and Legewie 2022) - the present video data makes for a somewhat limited scope for analytical focus. As described above, both build-up and aftermath are often left out of the footage, particularly footage depicting prisoner-on-prisoner violence, which means that the footage does not allow for examination of the dynamics and interactions that lead to violence - an aspect of importance stressed by Collins (2008), Bramsen (2017), and Nassauer (2018a). Examining the dynamics that lead up to violence can provide insight into the behaviours and expressions of emotion to avoid in order for conflict to *not* lead to violence, which can be useful for practical violence prevention guidance (Nassauer, 2015; 2018a).

When sampling data from YouTube, the prevalence of action-packed footage on video sharing platforms is arguably one of the major limitations. This was also the case with the majority of the clips in the present sample. Having access only to the action-packed sequence limits the ability to explore potentially crucial clues to the dynamics and expressions of emotion that turn conflict violent and shape the violent interaction sequence. Nassauer and Legewie (2019) explain that videos online may depict "more extreme cases than (…) the norm" (p. 8) and urge researchers to consider why these visuals have been uploaded. At the other end of the spectrum, another sampling challenge consists in videos with little to no violent action being uploaded under misleading titles. When sampling the present set of videos, many videos were posted under titles promising severe violence, which was, however, as mentioned above, rarely the case.

A final limitation of online video data is that videos are not accessible on a permanent basis; two of the sampled clips were removed from YouTube between the time of the sampling and the time of thesis submission. Apart from being removed for legal or regulatory reasons, or for being against community guidelines, videos may also be removed by users (who have uploaded the videos). The suggestion is therefore to transcribe the videos soon after sampling, as downloading and storing videos presents ethical issues of both going against YouTube guidelines and storing data where consent has not been obtained, as detailed in section 4.1. Despite the depiction of violence (which per se is a community guideline violation), YouTube holds a broad range of footage of different violent situations in the prison setting, readily available for researchers to sample, suggesting that a certain level of severity

is tolerated by the platform; some of these videos, rather than being removed, become age-restricted and requires viewers to have a YouTube profile to access the content.

Whilst YouTube offers hundreds of hours of video recordings, documenting real-life interactions and situations and whilst "it becomes ever easier to find visual data relevant to a given research project [as] data are only a mouse-click away, (…) thus access is often very time-efficient" (Nassauer and Legewie, 2019, p. 6), the reality is that the quality of footage comes with a vast array of limitations and challenges, despite the latest technological improvements. As for sampling footage of violent incidents in the prison setting, the quality may have improved, but finding videos that show actual, naturally occurring violence remains a task that involves reviewing a considerable amount of clips - not just to find relevant data, but also to gain an understanding of the data limitations in order to set up useful sampling criteria.

Although certain kinds of violent situations may be more prevalent on online video sharing platforms, it still allows for sampling of videos depicting violence in prisons. What is more difficult to come across are videos that show non-violent conflict. However, with the increase in prisoners filming different aspects of prison life - basically creating 'Prison TikTok' (Gutierrez et al., 2023; Schlosser and Feldman, 2022) - still more content is becoming available, and the sheer amount of material enhances the possibilities of gaining insight into non-violent conflict. In a Collinsian terminology; why and when conflict does not flare into violence. So, in conclusion, how clichéd it may sound; further research is needed in order to develop robust sampling criteria for this novel research approach involving YouTube data.

7.2.1 Key lessons from a video-based approach to prison violence

VDA, despite being a novel research method, has already proven useful in studies of micro-dynamics of violence in several areas, (e.g., protest policing, robberies, violence in the night time economy), expanding the understanding of especially escalatory behaviours and trigger points. The present study is, however, the first to apply VDA to the non-public setting of prisons and prison violence. The purpose has been to analyse the situational micro-dynamics and behaviours - especially gestures, facial expressions, and body postures - of interactional processes involved in violent incidents, more precisely how prisoners (including bystanders) and officers act, react, and interact in situations of conflict. In this respect the method has proven favourable in not only furthering the understanding of these interactional processes but also in identifying patterns across the depicted situations pertaining to escalation of conflict. The data has specifically provided significant insight into bystander and audience dynamics and valuable information about officer intervention strategies, both of which would not have been obtainable by traditional research methods. The identification and understanding of these dynamics have served to inform the practical guidelines for officer training presented in the following section (7.3).

At a general level, the VDA method can be said to enable insight into natural behaviour in real-life situations, in the present case prison violence, as it unfolds. The method provides extra validity as the raw video data can be shared, within a research team, with other researchers, or more broadly with stakeholders or readers (to the extent that ethical considerations allow it), thus enhancing transparency, accountability, and traceability. Also, video data enables non-biased insights as the method is not dependent on recollections as is the case with traditional methods such as interviews or direct observation. Use of video data is however not without challenges and limitations, and particularly in relation to the specific nature of the video data used in the present study - ready-made online data sourced from YouTube - specific advantages and limitations apply; amongst the advantages are that material is abundant, sampling processes are time-, and consequently, cost-efficient, and data can be reviewed. Paradoxically, some of the advantages also constitute the pitfalls and disadvantages of the method. One example is sample selection bias which is a risk because researchers get to pick and choose and may be biased towards content of high relevance to the predetermined elements of research questions, i.e., to a higher level than the natural prevalence of studied incidents or topics - in the present case, action-packed content. This has been sought avoided in the present sampling process by using optimal capture and natural behaviour as sampling criteria.

While the present study, like much VDA research, is of exploratory character, the sampling criteria have, as previously detailed (section 3.3), been guided by the recommendations of Nassauer and Legewie (2022) prioritising optimal capture and natural behaviour. The former proved less than simple; optimal capture depends on the type and quality of footage, and as detailed in the methodological chapter (Chapter 3), the quality of the relevant footage varied extensively. Also, the variations in quality depended on the types of footage (CCTV or mobile phones, or mobile recordings of CCTV), and were more than often reason for excluding material when quality limited the analytical potential. As for representing natural behaviour, other challenges materialised; a considerable number of clips containing incidents of prison violence are, as touched upon in the above sections (and described in section 3.5), edited and stem from documentaries or TV shows showing more action-oriented content than real-life situations and due to editing often leave out sequences important to analysis. This phenomenon is directly linked to the next challenge, which is reasons for uploading data, e.g., entertainment and humiliation. At a general level, another disadvantage is that researchers have no control over what is being recorded, which entails that the data may not contain the necessary analytical potential (Nassauer and Legewie, 2022).

All the above considerations relate to feasibility - or analytical potential - which is one of two main aspects to count in when sampling online video data, the other being openness of source (Nassauer and Legewie, 2019). Specifically in relation to YouTube data, openness of source represents both challenges and advantages.

Amongst the challenges are that material cannot be downloaded, as explained in chapter 3 (section 3.3) and risk being removed, which then rules out one of the advantages of online sources, namely that it can be revisited and reviewed over and over, a risk turned real also in the present study.

Also, ethical concerns related to privacy, anonymity, and avoiding harm constitute a set of challenges different from other types of data. The nature of the source used in the present study - an open online platform - particularly raises questions of informed consent which is impossible to obtain as detailed in section 4.1.1. One concern related to informed consent is that the material may be public but not necessarily intended for a researcher audience, but since the law does not require consent when access to the source is not restricted, the researcher is left to develop situated ethics, complying with legal guidelines for ownership and storage, amongst others. As for anonymity and privacy, described in detail in section 4.1.2, the main task is to avoid sharing recognisable traits, e.g., by sharing links to analysed video material. Ensuring anonymity and privacy may be partially obtainable by distinguishing between accessing and using information - but still requires transformation of visuals into other forms for dissemination purposes. Another layer of ethical concerns is the vulnerable population that the prisoners depicted in the present study represent. Details of this aspect are found in section 4.1.3 on minimising harm, but to sum up briefly, three steps were taken in the present research process to ensure minimisation of harm; the clips were not recognisable to focus group participants, the clips are only shared with focus group participants and examiners, and visuals are transformed into storylines for dissemination purposes (and of course also for providing detailed information about the depicted incidents, for evidencing researcher interpretations, and to provide transparency to the analytical process). All of the above-mentioned aspects have to be weighed against the overarching principles of beneficence and unique opportunity (Nassauer and Legewie (2018) which is crucial when determining if a project should go ahead despite lack of informed consent; in the present study, these ethical aspects have been addressed and assessed with the conclusion that the analytical potential of the data, particularly in respect to practical implications for officer training, has outweighed any potential harm.

In conclusion, the VDA method represents new opportunities, but researchers need to consider the implications of different video technical features for analysis; specifically in the context of the present study, the findings show a need for longer video sequences, e.g., through prison CCTV, to include build-ups and further context to enable examination of the dynamics of violence initiation. The clips in the present study showing violence between prisoners predominantly start in medias res - but the advantages of having access to longer build-up apply for violence involving officer videos, too. CCTV footage would also enable the inclusion of data from non-violent encounters, which could further understandings of conciliatory behaviour and help develop good practices for intervention. Finally, triangulation by incident reports

would substantiate analysis of contextual circumstances, although only relevant if access is given to material involving FG participants - a set-up planned with in the initial research design of the present study. As explained in section 3.2.1, co-viewing video data was included as replacement for triangulation with incident reports.

VDA scholars acknowledge that video data has its limitations and that the methodology and data does not allow for explanations of why violence occurs but does provide "an intimate understanding" (Nassauer, 2022a, p. 56) of the micro-dynamics that turn conflict violent and therefore has potential practical or real-life implications (Collins, 2008; Nassauer, 2022a; 2022b; Nassauer and Legewie, 2023).

7.3 Practical implications - Video data and prison officer training

In this final section, the current use of VDA for situational violence prevention is briefly described and followed by a presentation of the practical implications derived from the findings of the present study. The section first distils practical suggestions for violence reduction in protest policing (Nassauer, 2015) and for training of police in relation to violence threatening encounters (Koerner and Staller, 2022), both of which have served as inspiration for the suggestions of the present researcher presented below. Whilst drawing inspiration from these studies, the practical suggestions are based on interactional dynamics and displays of emotions observed in the video sample. To emphasise this project's practical implications, quotes from the focus groups are presented and discussed, particularly the data from the prison officer FGs as they were asked to reflect on possible ways of integrating videos into violence prevention training. This leads to a presentation of one of this thesis' key contributions which is the practical recommendations - i.e., preliminary guidelines - for officer training based on or involving video data.

Seeing as VDA can still be considered a novel methodological approach, the literature on practical implications (within violence studies) is limited, to say the least, and currently centres around policing. Nassauer (2015) is the first to present practical suggestions; in her study on crowd policing in protests in the US and Germany, she argues that there is a need to examine interactions and emotional dynamics to gain insight into the emergence of violence. The study produces four practical suggestions for avoiding protest violence, which encompass clear and extensive communication, effective management, respect of territorial boundaries, and awareness of escalatory actions (ibid.).

Firstly, Nassauer stresses that clear and thorough communication is needed to avoid false interpretations of actions on both sides (in her case protesters and police), but this requires both technology and willingness to communicate. In a protest setting, equipment is therefore needed to communicate, and both sides need to state their intentions and also to communicate these intentions peacefully in order to decrease perceived danger of intentions and actions which in turn will decrease the likelihood

of violence. It should be noted here that the assumption is that both sides wish to abort violence, although some activists may wish to antagonise the police, just like some officers, as also seen in the FGDs, may hold stereotypes about particular groups or individuals which colour their perceptions and consequently influence their behaviour. The importance of communication was also highlighted by the prison officers (e.g., FGPO1); the officers, when watching the clips or referring to them in discussions of escalation and de-escalation, pointed out how the depicted officers could have avoided escalation had they displayed a different behaviour. In particular, they suggested avoiding loud voices and ordering prisoners around (as seen in Clip 7) as such behaviours are known to cause escalation.

Secondly, Nassauer highlights the importance of police officers' sense of being in charge - an equivalent to emotional dominance (Collins, 2008) - or staying in character to gain and maintain emotional dominance (Nassauer, 2018a). Police officers need the "skills to achieve their work objectives while perceiving themselves in control" (Nassauer, 2015, p. 12). Perceiving themselves as being in control diminishes the likelihood of officers resorting to the use of force, thus allowing them to manage situations effectively. Likewise, as detailed in section 6.1.1; where prison officers fail to display confidence, the prisoners quickly gain control of the situations, making it harder for officers to manage them because, once prisoners are in control, the dynamics cannot shift in favour of the officers. Also, as seen in Clip 8, actions by officers that are seen as escalatory can result in conflict. Perhaps, rather than perceiving themselves as being in control, i.e., asserting power, as Nassauer suggests, which may accelerate escalation, officers need the skills to display confident body postures and controlled bodily movements. This is where VDA could be useful and applicable to prison staff training to enhance their understanding of what such body postures look like as well as their effect. Thirdly, crossing boundaries increases the probability of changes in emotional dynamics; police and protesters need defined spaces prior to a protest, and those spaces should be respected equally by both sides during a protest. Arguably, this prescription only applies to relatively compliant protestors. Others may view the imposition of such zones as an affront (Gorringe et al., 2011). Irrespective of this, a violation of territorial boundaries may alter the emotional dynamics and increase the inclination towards violence. Whilst these implications do not all translate directly to the prison setting, some of them do speak to key aspects of escalation in that context, e.g., crossing territorial boundaries in terms of officers invading prisoners' personal space which has a similar escalatory effect. This was seen in Clip 5, where an officer stepped close to a prisoner and placed his hand on the prisoner's chest, resulting in violent retaliation from the prisoner. Thus, avoiding actions that could be interpreted as escalatory - i.e., the fourth practical suggestion of Nassauer (2015) - is particularly crucial where verbal communication is not possible; in the protest setting this may refer to police not wearing riot gear or deploying horses. Within the spectrum of the present study, it may be linked to the importance of avoiding unwarranted behaviour as clearly emphasised in statements of both ex-prisoner and officer FG participants.

Another study in policing equally presents, albeit implicitly, certain practical suggestions in relation to violent encounters; Koerner and Staller (2022), in their examination of German police officers' perception of training in relation to violent conflict, argue that education and training of police officers should take into consideration knowledge production based on situational parameters of violent encounters. The authors stress the potential of video data for studying situational parameters, highlighting that body worn video camera footage would have been a relevant source of data in their study. However, "in Germany material from body-worn cameras has not yet been considered as a source for systematically generating operational knowledge on qualitative aspects of violent encounters" (ibid., p. 3) and "the use of self-recorded video data by the police is currently limited to legal purposes" (ibid.). Their study instead draws on semi-structured interviews focusing on experiences of conflict situations, wherein officers are asked to describe situations in detail and explain how well police training has prepared them to deal with the described. While the study, as explained, does not explicitly present practical implications, it reveals elements of practical usage as discussed below.

Koerner and Staller distinguish three main types of violent encounters, namely physical, verbal, and physical involving weapons, emphasising that whilst attacks with weapons are physical, they have different effects as use of weapons is not comparable with direct contact between an officer and a violent individual (ibid., p. 7). As for sense of preparedness, 17 of the 29 officers interviewed, reported that the training did not prepare them. Whilst some of the officers reported that they felt prepared for front line action or physical techniques, mental preparations were lacking significantly. Officers also reported the value of certain techniques used in situations they had experienced but acknowledged that some techniques did not work in real life. Similarly to the FGPO participants, Koerner and Staller describe how the officers felt a significant difference between training and being in the field, "suggesting a lack of realism in police training" (ibid., p. 11). They further explain that police training is "oriented towards traditional codes of the martial arts, therefore not being very 'street-like'" (ibid., p. 12). Eruptions of violence involve fast decision-making, ability to handle chaos and deal with complexity, and require skills for de-escalation, thus suggesting that training requires the incorporation of awareness and quick decision-making skills "as well as […] the ability to de-escalate situations in an atmosphere of aggression, or [take] physical action" (ibid., p. 14).

The study highlights that police officer training, in the German context at least, is focused on repetitive techniques based on martial arts or fixed methods that lack functionality in real conflict situations. Koerner and Staller argue that the training is based on a linear approach to problem solving, which works in theory, whereas "reality is messy" and requires real-life applicable methods rather than "a well scripted choreography" (ibid., p. 13). Another issue flagged in their study is that reports or evaluations primarily look at physical violence, thus incorrectly suggesting that violent encounters are only physical, while on a micro-level "violence in policing

encompasses a broad range of types" (ibid.). The authors suggest that conflict dynamics often involve verbal cues – as pointed out years before them by Nassauer (2015; 2016; 2018a) - e.g., verbal confrontations, which, at times, result in physical violence, again bringing communication to the forefront of contextual preludes to violent encounters. Echoing Nassauer (2015) once more, Koerner and Staller highlight the importance of confident demeanours, when dealing with violent or conflictual situations, but acknowledge that demeanour can be impacted by the stress of violent conflict and may change once engaging in use of force, as also emphasised by Jenkins et al. (2020). Similar dynamics were observed in Clips 5 and 8 in the present study, where officers were forced to defend themselves against attacks from prisoners. The officers displayed poor fighting skills and struggled to control their movements, thus losing control of the situation as previously explained (section 6.1). Finally, Koerner and Staller (2022) call for further research into the situational parameters of policing, using data that can shed light on conflict interactions - which is what the present thesis has explored, only in the context of prison violence.

Parallel to the lack of research on violent interactions involving the police and their training in this area, not much is known about the applicability of the training that *prison* officers receive (Morrison, 2019). Like Koerner and Staller's study, this thesis draws on interviews with (prison) officers and uses focus group discussions to provide insight into views and experiences of training and dealing with violent or aggressive prisoners, but it is complemented by video data that generate essential insights into the workings of real-life dynamics of intervention. Apart from being asked about the relevance and efficacy of their training, the officers were also invited to reflect upon the possible use of video material for training purposes; their reflections support the practical, indicative implications of the present study and particularly the applicability of the video data method for training. From a combination of insights derived from the studies of both Nassauer (2015) and Koerner and Staller (2022), and not least from the evidence of the visual data of the present study and the interpretation of this data by the focus groups, these indicative, practical implications for officer training are as follows:

1. Officers should communicate clearly and calmly with prisoners to help prevent escalation of conflict into violence (or aggression).

FGPO1, in particular, highlighted potential signs of escalation and escalatory behaviour exhibited by prisoners and stressed that communication skills constitute one of the most important aspects of the rapport between officers and prisoners and further that officers primarily learn these skills while working in the prison space – with some aspects also taught in control and restraint training. Restraint and control training was, as previously mentioned, not further detailed by the officers.

In the discussion of escalatory and conciliatory behaviours - supporting the findings of Nassauer (2015) and Koerner and Staller (2022) - the officers stressed the importance of communication in the following way;

> "PO3: Talking – talking is everything.
> PO4: Communication is everything.
> PO3: The best way to deal with a situation: sit down … if the guy comes in 'aaargh'. Sit down, say 'go on, take a seat, son'. See when somebody's standing and you're sitting they find it very difficult… unless they wanna punch you, they find it very difficult to and they'll sit down… simple as that and that can bring a situation right down." (FGPO1).

This echoes Collins' injection to break an interactional ritual that might lead to violence; by staying calm and not responding with aggressiveness, the conflictual ritual is broken which in turn may serve to abort violence. As highlighted in Chapter 6 (section 6.2.3) where the officers discussed the importance of communication, they explained that letting prisoners calm down and think about a conflict encounter was a crucial step in preventing escalation; most often a cooling off period results in the prisoner wanting to enter into dialogue about it later, and that type of communication 'after the storm' is in itself conciliatory. Such efforts were, however, not observable in the sample due to the limits of the scope of videos. What was observable, on the other hand, was 'mood matching' causing escalation as seen in Clip 7. When it came to dynamics that cause escalation, the officers identified verbal clues that drive escalation and they include, as the quotes in section 6.2.3 show, yelling or swearing back at agitated prisoners. Furthermore, the officers stressed that threats, orders, and loud voices are aspects of communication that fuel escalation, further noting that tone of voice and body language impact the course of conflictual situations significantly. In light of the officers' reflections, it is apparent that video footage can help prepare officers for potentially conflictual encounters by showcasing the impact of their emotional displays in real-life incidents.

2. In situations of conflict, officers should refrain from actions that prisoners may perceive as escalatory.

Nassauer (2015) pointed out that protesters see certain behaviours or actions by police officers as escalatory, e.g., appearing in riot gear or crossing territorial boundaries. Similarly, the focus groups pinpointed behaviours perceived as escalatory, especially when exhibited by prison officers, namely, invasion of personal space, use of force, and - as mentioned above - shouting.

When discussing Clip 5, where an officer steps forward and places his hand on the prisoner, the officers stressed that the prisoner viewed it as an incentive to use violence. The prisoner may have perceived the invasion of personal space as unwarranted behaviour; thus, the dynamics shift, and the situation escalates into violence. This again highlights both the impact of officers' behaviour in conflictual encounters and the importance of considering the effects of certain behaviours.

In situations of prisoner-on-prisoner violence, i.e., situations that have already escalated into violence, an alternative approach to avoid *further* escalation could be to target the audience as suggested by Kerbs and Jolley (2007). Removing audiences, as discussed previously, could work to wind down the fighters as the collective arousal (ibid.) or emotional energy or crowd effervescence (Collins, 2008) of the audience would disappear. Where audience members are not experiencing carousing solidarity (ibid.), as seen in Clip 7, removing them could be a way to minimise the risk for intervening officers whilst simultaneously taking away the emotional energy that feeds the fighters.

3. Officers should appear confident and in control when dealing with aggressive or violent prisoners.

This suggestion does not mean that officers should appear aggressive and exhibit take-charge attitudes - as that could increase frustration amongst prisoners (Hulley et al., 2012) - but relates to confidence and demeanour. As detailed in section 6.3.2, the officers described how vital it is to be composed and calm in situations of conflict, although acknowledging the difficulty of staying in control when conflictual situations become tense. One officer emphasised the importance of being comfortable setting boundaries and trusting in one's skills while also recognising their limitations - in short, to be able to read a situation appropriately;

> "(…) I would feel comfortable in saying "stop that" and I know I'll get a level of compliance and that. If it's an area where I'm not used to working, I don't know who the prisoners are then I wouldn't put myself at risk and get involved in something that could seriously backfire. So you've got to be… sorta your perception of your own level of skill in dealing..." (FGPO1).

The quote speaks to Nassauer's (2015) notion of police officers perceiving themselves as being in control, which also includes the importance of reading a situation adequately and not putting oneself in a position where things could spiral. Moreover, it speaks to Collins' idea that situational dynamics determine whether violence occurs or not. This means that flashpoints can be averted through emotional management (Crewe et al., 2014) - and thus by learning which type of displays of emotion is required for different situations - a skill they claim to be particularly challenging for new officers.

In line with Nassauer's (2018a) work, the officer FG discussions revealed that confident demeanours and behaviour are recognised by officers as a means to maintain order - and consequently to prevent the use of force - in potentially violent encounters. Their contemplations echo the findings of the present video analysis – and those of Collins' work albeit in a violence-avoiding sense; by gaining or establishing emotional dominance in violence threatening encounters, before use of force becomes necessary, officers may be able to divert situations away from violent outbreaks.

4. In a training setting, videos can be used to unpack how officers deal with violent or aggressive prisoners. This may be useful for incoming officers in order to enhance the praxis aspect of their training, i.e., to bring the techniques learnt at the college closer to real-life situations.

The prison officers were specifically asked to reflect on the possible use of video footage for training purposes, incorporating videos like the ones they were shown in the FGDs. This question, apart from its direct meaning, also served to steer the discussions away from the focus on context and instead concentrate on details noticed during their own or other officers' interactions with prisoners in relation to the types of behaviour that fuel or defuse conflict and violence. They were finally also asked to describe the adequacy of their training in relation to conflictual or violent encounters with prisoners.

The question on use of video material in contexts of training elicited positive responses in the focus groups, with officers stating that they would be happy for footage of themselves to be used for training purposes. FGPO1 made a point of wanting to see the use of body worn cameras (parallel to considerations of Koerner and Staller, 2022), as was introduced for police in England (and Wales), and noted that it may help officers to consider how they are communicating and interacting with prisoners (FGPO1). The other officer group suggested that if the inclusion of videos in training was to be considered, videos would have to be from similar correctional contexts, thus clips should be from UK prisons, further adding that the clips depicting prison violence in the US seemed vastly different - especially in terms of officer intervention (FGPO2). However, different cultures of interaction and violence revealed in videos from outside the UK could be of particular value when employees from other countries and cultures join the SPS.

FGPO1 held that much of what they had learned, had been learned on the job, whilst FGPO2 reflected on what the training provides;

> "PO1: (sharp exhale) I've no idea.. I… listen, some of the things I've heard you get taught at the college (…) it's just exaggeration… I don't know… some of the stuff I hear, I think it's rubbish… I don't think it's helpful. [PO2] will probably have a better idea.
> PO2: Aye.. (…) I think that the college, it gives you a grounding… it gives you a (…) basic toolkit to say yeah you can do that, you've been trained but you're by no means an expert in any of it..." (FGPO2).

These comments point to the difference between training and reality. Moreover, in considering what training teaches officers about intervening into violent episodes, one of the officers of FGPO2 said;

> "I don't think there is anything really prescriptive for an incident cause you've got to take so many things into [consideration]; are there weapons, how many people are involved, how many staff do you have, where is the instance taking place.. you've really got to, you know, look at each individual in its own sorta merit… I can do that or wait a minute, I'm

> exiting this section. You know, your alarm bell, you get staff in and then you get a sorta plan to go deal with this situation even if that's two individuals fighting (…) you just gotta hit your bell, you're not gonna get involved two to one, three to one, on your own (…) you've got to be careful with that" (FGPO2).

The implication here is that a greater appreciation of real-life dynamics could help officers to make the right choices. Whilst it may be difficult to sense an ambiance via video, video studies into interventions could prove useful in demonstrating prison officer behaviour that helps to keep conflicts under control and aid officers' mental preparedness and ability to assess risk.

Another skill not easily learnt or passed on in training, but rather developed once in the prison reality, is what the officers refer to as "situational awareness" (FGPO2) when navigating spaces where prisoners are present. In the focus groups, this aspect was discussed in relation to emergence of violence;

> "(laughs) this is gonna sounds kinda cliché but you can almost feel it (…) If you walk into a flat and you think something… you might not have been told but I don't know if it's the reaction to the staff or the prisoners but a lot of the time you kinda know… again if it's your own flat you would know right away (…) as soon as you unlock the doors in the morning, you would know that there's something up. You might not be told anything but you would know (…) when you've been here for a while" (FGPO2).

The officers reflected on sensing ambience, i.e., situational awareness, explaining that it is not a skill that is or can be taught through officer training - rather it is learnt in the prison. This suggests that not all aspects of the job can be taught at the college as some require familiarisation with the spaces and the people (prisoners), in short, hands-on experience. However, the videos did prompt discussions of different practices of dealing with violence threatening situations. Such discussions could also be useful in a training setting, e.g., as workshops drawing on long-serving officers' experiences and reflections to give incoming officers insight into what communication, de-escalation, and control and restraint techniques look like in real-life violence threatening situations. The reflections on training suggest that officers in fact do receive training in all of these areas, but incorporating videos may provide an extra layer to training in terms of a useful practice-oriented perspective and may be helpful in sparking conversations about differences between training and real-life situations, in short to build a bridge between theory and practice.

As this thesis, to the researcher's knowledge, is the first video study into prison violence, further research is needed for the above suggestions to be fully expanded and implemented in the training of officers. Future research should ideally have access to footage which includes conflicts that *do not* result in violence in the prison setting for the purpose of identifying and detailing de-escalatory or conciliatory behavioural dynamics. Also, footage of a quality allowing for both audio recognition

and analysis of facial expressions would enhance potential results. As such, and as emphasised previously, the above suggestions should be seen as indicative.

In closing, the overall aims of the thesis have been to test the applicability of Collins' theory of violence (2008) to the prison setting and to examine the value of the VDA method for expanding the understanding of prison violence. The findings have revealed that a Collinsian approach to studying prison violence aids identification of interactional elements of escalation and de-escalation which has real-life implications; from these findings, practical suggestions for officer training by use of VDA emerged, thus creating the foundation of an additional contribution to the field of prison violence intervention and prevention. Finally, by exploring VDA in a new context, the study has also contributed to a furthering of the method by enabling an identification of aspects to be considered in future VDA research using online sourced video data.

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Appendix - Raw video transcript

Video 1: US, cell, phone camera, sound, 1 min 56 sec

As the clip starts, the camera is adjusted. Prisoner 1 placing the camera on a bed then walking to the other end of the cell as he takes off his shirt. A piece of string is placed in front of the door to the cell and used a laundry line; as Prisoner 1 approaches the door, he pulls a towel from one end of the string towards the door – possibly to cover the window in the door - he then turns around, briefly looks to the side where a mirror is hanging. As he bounces slightly up and down, he throws his shirt towards the beds where the camera is placed. He slightly rotates his upper body to each side while rubbing his hands together. Meanwhile, Prisoner 2 appears as he jumps off the upper bunk bed; also shirtless, he appears to be binding his knuckles in pieces of cloth (unintelligible conversation). Prisoner 2 takes a few steps towards Prisoner 1, and both take on a boxing-like stance. Quickly, Prisoner 1 starts hitting Prisoner 2, both letting out grunts. Prisoner 2 attempts a few punches as well but is pushed in the direction of the camera onto the bed where Prisoner 1 resumes the punches as he repeats “bitch ass [n-word]”. Briefly, the camera films Prisoner 2’s back as he is sat in front of it but then Prisoner 1 tells him “get yo’ ass up” as he has backs away from the bed. As Prisoner 2 stands up, the beating resumes while Prisoner 1 once again repeats “bitch ass [n-word]”. Prisoner 2 briefly moves out of the frame and Prisoner 1 continues punching Prisoner 2, who is trying to cover his face and head. The fight moves to the far end of the cell with Prisoner 1 still throwing punches at Prisoner 2 before moving towards the bed and the camera. Briefly, Prisoner 2 is out of sight (Prisoner 1 speaks imperceptibly), then he is picked up by Prisoner 1 and thrown onto the ground. Prisoner 1 is briefly kneeling after throwing Prisoner 2 on the ground and as he gets back up, he continues punching Prisoner 2 who is still on the ground. Prisoner 1 then stomps on Prisoner 2 a few times (unintelligible conversation), causing Prisoner 2 to push himself off the ground but as he gets up, Prisoner 1 kicks him in the back and he falls onto the bed, where Prisoner 1 kicks him again before he resumes the beating – Prisoner 1 again repeats “bitch ass [n-word]”. For a brief moment, both prisoners are out of view (unintelligible conversation). Then Prisoner 1 again demands that Prisoner 2 gets up and pulls his trousers up (which have been pulled down somewhat during the fight). Prisoner 1 stands in front of Prisoner 2 in a tense stance, arms along his sides slightly away from the body and hands curled into fists (facial expressions not observable). As

Prisoner 2 gets up and pulls up his trousers, Prisoner 1 backs away, staying in the same tense pose, then steps forwards, lifting his arms and fists as he moves towards Prisoner 2 and resumes the beating – still repeating “bitch ass [n-word]”. Prisoner 2 grunts as the punches hit him and he leans forward with raised arms to protect his head. Prisoner 1 again moves away but stays in the same stance as he tells Prisoner 2 “come on [n-word]”. Meanwhile Prisoner 2 has turned to face Prisoner 1, half his body is in the camera view and his left hand is curled into a fist. Suddenly, Prisoner 1 takes a few quick steps towards Prisoner 2 and attempts a kick, causing Prisoner 2 to fall back onto the bed, again Prisoner 1 leans over him while punching. Prisoner 1 again walks to the door demanding Prisoner 2 gets up. As Prisoner 1 turns around to face Prisoner 2, he looks at the camera whilst talking (unintelligible) – then he tells Prisoner 2 to show his face, gesturing in the direction of the camera. Prisoner 2 moves forward a bit and briefly turns his head – both prisoners can be heard panting – Prisoner 1 threatens to beat Prisoner 2 again if he does not show his face to the camera. Prisoner 1 then grabs the camera and films Prisoner 2, who appears to have a swelling in the face, telling him to tell the camera what he did. Prisoner 2 holds his left fist in front of his mouth and does not speak. Prisoner 2 again says “bitch ass [n-word]” as he puts the phone/camera down.

Video 2: US, shower/toilet room, phone camera, sound, 1 min 30 sec

Two prisoners are facing each other in a shower room; one dressed in white shorts and a white top (Prisoner 1) is facing towards the camera. He is positioned in a stance that indicates readiness to fight as he has one foot in front of the other, slightly bent arms down the sides, and upper body leaning slightly forward as he looks at the other prisoners dressed in long white trousers and a white t-shirt (Prisoner 2). Prisoner 2 is facing away from the camera in a relaxed pose, hands placed behind his lower back, holding on to his wrist, and feet shoulder-width apart. As Prisoner 1 shifts the weight from one foot to another, it becomes visible that he is holding a wooden stick that he moves from one hand to the other. He then grabs onto it with both hands as he starts to swing it around while continuing to take a few steps back and forth. Meanwhile, Prisoner 2 turns to face the camera, takes a few steps, rubbing his chin with his left hand. The onlookers shout encouragingly to start fighting. As Prisoner 2 turns his back towards Prisoner 1 and walks further towards

the fight; Prisoner 1 starts walking towards him – the clip briefly cuts and the two prisoners are now facing one another and two onlookers have appeared in the background. Prisoner 1 gestures at Prisoner 2 with his left arm, holding the stick in the right. An onlooker passes through the frame and Prisoner 2 has his arm placed on his back as a third prisoner (Prisoner 3) appears, gesturing at them while loudly addressing Prisoner 1 saying “do it”, moving his arm in a sweeping motion towards Prisoner 2. As Prisoner 3 repeats “do it”, Prisoner 1 takes a few quick steps forward and starts hitting Prisoner 2 who attempts to ward off the hits by raising his arms and legs, he then takes a step onto a ledge between two toilets and steps back down as Prisoner 1 continues hitting him with the stick. Prisoner 3 steps onto the ledge and gestures towards Prisoner 2 with punching-like movements. Prisoner 2 moves towards the end of the room and two onlookers, who are sat on the toilets appear. Prisoner 3 moves towards Prisoner 2, who is facing Prisoner 1. Prisoner 1 is walking firmly towards Prisoner 2, arms active by the side of the body, still holding the stick. As Prisoner 2 walks towards Prisoner 1 who resumes the beating with the stick and Prisoner 2 attempts to ward off the hits by lifting his arms and legs to avoid hits to the stomach and face. Prisoner 2 then attempts to run at Prisoner 1 guarding his face with arms stretched above his head, trying to grab the stick. Briefly, the two prisoners are out of view and as the camera catches them again, Prisoner 2 has grabbed Prisoner 1 around the neck and they scuffle in a hugging position. Prisoner 1 then throws the stick which is picked up by Prisoner 3. He quickly takes it in his hand and starts beating Prisoner 2 on the leg while Prisoner 2 is still scuffling with Prisoner 1. As Prisoner 1 lets go of Prisoner 2, Prisoner 3 holds on to Prisoner 2‘s shirt for a brief moment. Prisoner 3 then gestures aggressively at Prisoner 1 with the stick to get back to beating Prisoner 2. Meanwhile, Prisoner 2 takes a few steps past Prisoner 3, who attempts to grab his shirt, and as Prisoner 2 gets close to Prisoner 1, Prisoner 1 takes a step backwards, raises his arm and as he steps forward, and attempts a punch at Prisoner 2 who leans backwards and raises his arms to avoid the punch. Prisoner 1 attempts punches, alternating arms as Prisoner 2 moves backwards, away from the two others. As Prisoner 3 gestures at Prisoner 2, getting his attention, Prisoner 1 punches Prisoner 2 in the face and Prisoners 1 and 3 move closer to Prisoner 2. Prisoner 2 then takes some steps forward attempting punches at Prisoner 1’s face, then walks away towards the camera and as he walks away from Prisoner 1 and 2, Prisoner 3 raises his arms, holding the stick, and swings it at

Prisoner 2's head and hits Prisoner 2, causing him to grab his head. As Prisoner 2 tries to walk away, towards the person filming, a fourth prisoner (Prisoner 4) grabs him by the shoulder and pushes him towards Prisoner 1 and 3, more prisoners reach out to push him towards Prisoner 1 and 3 while one slaps Prisoner 2 in the back of the head. Prisoner 2 moves past his opponents, and Prisoner 3, who has now taken his shirt off resumes beating him with a stick as Prisoner 2 yells "auuu" and the on-looking prisoners yell "hey, hey, hey" as to say now is enough.

Video 3: UK, day room, phone camera, sound, 2 min 12 seconds

In a room (day/common room) with a TV, a desk, and some chairs, one prisoner (Prisoner 1), is repeatedly hitting another prisoner (Prisoner 2) who is attempting to protect his face and head with both arms raised in front of him being slightly hunched over – both are shirtless. A third prisoner (Prisoner 3) is watching the fight unfold. A voice is heard cheering "go on" as the two move towards the left side of the room. Prisoner 2 then attempts to fight back by trying to hit his opponent. Prisoner 2 grabs Prisoner 1 around the chest, lowering his head under Prisoner 1's left arm as he pushes him against the wall. Prisoner 1 attempts to push Prisoner 2 away placing his right hand on top of Prisoner 2's head – an onlooker says: "let go". Suddenly another prisoner (Prisoner 3) walks into the frame and puts a hand on each of the fighters' shoulder, seemingly trying to pull them apart. Prisoner 2 continues to push Prisoner 1 against the wall. Prisoner 3 forces his body in between the two fighters as a voice is heard repeatedly saying: "break up" – the two let go of one another. Another prisoner (Prisoner 4) walks into the frame as he gestures at the two opponents who are getting ready to resume their fight; both have moved backwards a little and are standing with feet wide apart and one foot in front of the other as they face each other at a sideways angle, arms bent and raised to chest level. They move closer to each other in a boxing match-like manoeuvre as Prisoner 2 attempts a punch - he misses as Prisoner 1 bends down. Prisoner 1 grabs Prisoner 2 around the waist but quickly stands up straight and resumes repeated quick punches at Prisoner 1, who once again is hunched over, arms in front of his face and head as he tries to avoid the punches, while also trying to push Prisoner 1 away. They briefly untangle; Prisoner 2 tries to punch Prisoner 1 in the chest but Prisoner 1 grabs around Prisoner 2's neck but quickly lets go to resume the beating. Prisoner 3 and 4 and

other onlookers repeat “go on”. Prisoner 1 then steps back and returns to a boxing match-like position; Prisoner 2 follows suit as they face each other with some distance between.

A door has opened behind the two fighting prisoners and another shirtless prisoner appears in the doorway, watching the two opponents get ready to continue their fight.

Prisoner 2 then charges at Prisoner 1 as he attempts to punch him in the face. Prisoner 2 tries to grab Prisoner 1, pushing Prisoner 1 backwards while attempting punches at the chest. Prisoner 2 manages to push Prisoner 1 backwards towards the far wall and onto a table - Prisoner 1 is sat on the table while Prisoner 2 hits him. This causes the onlookers and Prisoner 3 and 4 to move closer, clamouring – one other prisoner asking, “what are you doing?” in an excited tone of voice before Prisoner 3 and 4 pull Prisoner 2 away. An onlooker speaks excitedly (exact words unintelligible – unintelligible conversation continues for a short while).

Another prisoner (Prisoner 5) stands between the opponents – Prisoner 2 is briefly out of view while an onlooker says “[name], step back a bit mate”. As Prisoner 5 moves out of view, the opponents position themselves, ready to continue their fight. Prisoner 1 manages to stroke Prisoner 2 in the face a few times before Prisoner 2 attempts to fight back. The onlookers repeat “go on” in the background.

Prisoner 5 again moves into view, gesturing at the fighters to move away from each other – the shirtless onlooker is still watching from the doorway. Once more they position themselves ready to fight, and Prisoner 1 starts to beat Prisoner 2, who attempts to dodge the strokes by raising both arms in front of his face. He also leans back while attempting to hit Prisoner 1. Prisoner 5 again steps in as Prisoner 1 beats Prisoner 2 – this pattern of fighting, bystander interference, and resuming continues for some time; As the next round is about to begin, an onlooker says, “finish it then, boys”. As Prisoner 1 continues to beat Prisoner 2, who seems tired and increasingly losing coordination, the person holding the camera tells the fighters to move back to the middle as they are moving towards one corner of the room, but Prisoner 1 again attacks Prisoner 2, causing Prisoner 2 to move back and around the corner almost out of view. Prisoner 5 then steps in, gesturing at Prisoner 1 to move back (further into the middle of the room). The person filming then says, “come into the middle and just have it out, someone has to go down here, boys”. Prisoner 2 is out of view and

two onlookers move towards him as they gesture and speak intangibly – as Prisoner 5 is standing in front of Prisoner 2, he raises his arm and places it on Prisoner 2's shoulder. Prisoner 5 also reaches his hand out towards Prisoner 3 as the clip ends.

Clip 4: UK, room/corridor,1 min 4 sec, phone camera, sound

In a room with a red floor, white walls, and no window, two prisoners are fighting in the foreground, while several other prisoners lean against the wall watching the fight. As they move from one side to the other, taking turns attempting hits and punches, the onlookers cheer them on.

As the camera follows the fight, more onlookers appear, all lined up against the wall. The scene is briefly out of focus and as it refocuses, Prisoner 1 has taken the lead, repeatedly punching at Prisoner 2, while the onlookers cheer "oi". The two fighters take turns at punching at each other; Prisoner 2 attempts a few kicks at his opponent while the onlookers continue their cheering and encouraging remarks.

Then Prisoner 1 slams Prisoner 2 against the wall and attempts to punch him, while Prisoner 2 tries to hit him back – an onlooker yells "grab him". Then, Prisoner 2 retaliates, charging at Prisoner 1, who has backed away, and as Prisoner 2 reaches he attempts a few punches at Prisoner 1 before stepping away from his opponent – an onlooker exclaims "woohoo". As Prisoner 1 moves towards Prisoner 2, the two start punching each other before space is created between them and Prisoner 2 again tries to run towards Prisoner 1. But Prisoner 1 steps away and Prisoner 2 runs into the wall – the onlookers exclaim "woooh".

As the two opponents again face each other, they are both signalling that they are ready to fight; one with arms tensed along the sides and hands curled into fists while the other holds his fists in front of his upper body. As Prisoner 1 steps towards Prisoner 2 and attempts a punch, Prisoner 2 attempts both punching and hitting at the same time, raising both arms and his left leg towards his opponent, causing him to briefly stumble backwards, while Prisoner 1 continues to punch.
Prisoner 2 is against the wall as Prisoner 1 plants several punches on his upper body and face – the onlookers are clamouring, and as Prisoner 2 falls to the ground, some onlookers step closer, repeating "stop".

Clip 5: US, pod, CCTV, no sound, 2 min 9 sec

In a large common area, with cells along the walls in two levels and two exits, one leading to a hallway and the other leading to a small room, further leading to another pod and another hallway, a prisoner (Prisoner 1) walks into the common area, while an officer (Officer 1) is keeping the door open by leaning against it. Three other prisoners (inside the common area) are walking in a row towards the open door, while another officer (Officer 2) stands in front of the door. On the other side of the room, a prisoner is walking up the stairs to the landing, while yet another prisoner, already on the landing, is walking towards the stairs. Prisoner 1 walks through the door into the common area/pod. As the officer turns to close the door, the three prisoners have reached the doorway and surround the officer. The prisoner, who was furthest away (Prisoner 2), runs towards the door and is seemingly trying to push it open. Prisoner 3, who is behind the officer, also tries pushing the door with one hand – Officer 1 places his hand on Prisoner 1's chest to push him away. Prisoners 1, 3 and 4 are still forming a circle around Officer 1 as Officer 2 approaches. Meanwhile, a group of three additional prisoners come running (Prisoner 5, 6, and 7) and the two prisoners (onlookers) make their way down the stairs, sliding down the railing. Prisoners 4 and 5 attempt to hold back Prisoner 2 as he tries to grab Officer 1. Officer 2 steps in gesturing with one arm and manages to create space between the group of prisoners and Officer 1.

Prisoners 5, 6, and 7 are standing next to the officers, then Prisoner 6 moves past the others and towards Officer 2, but Officer 1 steps in and raises both hands and places them on Prisoner 6's chest – Prisoner 6 has taken off his shirt as he moved towards the group. Prisoner 1 and 3 each gesture with one arm in the direction of Prisoner 6 and the officers. Officer 1 pushes Prisoner 6 away, causing another Prisoner (7) to attack Officer 1 by punching at the officer's chest and both officers move backwards. The group has moved towards the other door that leads to an adjoining room, and Officer 1 is fiddling with keys as he attempts to open it. Prisoner 7 then steps forward and takes a swing at Officer 1 but Officer 2 predicts it and reaches his arms towards Prisoner 7 to push him away but Prisoners 2 and 6 join in and all three prisoners stand over the officers as they punch at them. Both officers

are struggling to get up as Officer 1 is being punched and kicked by Prisoners 6 and 7 while Prisoner 2 is kicking Officer 2. As Officer 2 gets back up, Prisoner 6 attempts to punch him in the face, but Officer 2 takes a few steps forward then turns around to face Prisoner 6 who once again takes a swing at Officer 2's face. The onlookers have moved back, and three additional prisoners have appeared, watching the incident unfold from a distance. Meanwhile, Officer 1 has gotten up and is unlocking the door. Prisoner 6 continues to punch Officer 2 and as the officer steps back Prisoner 2 punches the hunched over officer in the face. As Officer 1 opens the door, Prisoner 6 runs towards him and punches him in the back of the head, causing him to stumble slightly as he runs into the adjoining room. Officer 2, now at the other door (leading to the hallway), runs after Officer 1 with Prisoners 1 and 6 following him. As Officer 2 reaches the door, Prisoner 6 attempts to grab him and throws a punch towards the officer's chest but the officer manages to move past.

The camera switches and shows the adjoining room. From this small corridor more rooms can be accessed, **and** an entrance to another pod can be seen where a group of prisoners are watching the incident through the glass window. Both officers are now walking into this small corridor, Officer 1 touching both hands to his head and eventually kneeling to the floor, Officer 2 following him. Officer 2 briefly raises his arm to his face as he turns around, now facing the camera - Officer 1 is getting back up from the floor and a third officer opens a door from an adjoining corridor. Four officers walk through the door.

The camera switches to a third corridor where several officers are walking through. Officer 2 is seen again in this corridor, kneeling, then getting back up to turn around. As he sits down again, Officer 1 sits down next to him while more officers run past them.

The camera switches back to showing the small corridor, the prisoners in the other pod still watching and one officer keeping the door open through which the big group of officers are running. Before the officers spill into the pod where the incident took place, they gather and as the door opens to the pod all the prisoners lie on the ground with some being handcuffed.

Video 6: US, pod/day room, CCTV, no sound, 50 sec

In a large pod with cells along the walls and a landing to the right, a large group of prisoners is standing around. One prisoner is standing in front of an officer, gesturing as he speaks (no sound). The officer who is significantly taller than the prisoner is bending slightly forwards. The prisoner takes a step towards the officer, gestures quickly and firmly with his right arm and hand, indicating anger and high emotional energy, causing the officer to push him away by the neck. The prisoner stumbles backwards, almost falling over, but quickly gets back on his feet and charges at the officer, attempting to punch and kick him, but the officer quickly grabs hold of him in. Then, the officer lifts the prisoner up before throwing him on the ground. Once again he lifts up the prisoner and slams him back down onto floor. The officer is still holding on to the prisoner, who is laying on the ground, and steps one foot onto the other side of the prisoner. Meanwhile, some of the prisoners (onlookers), who have been observing the scene unfold, move towards the officer and prisoner, creating a circle around them but they quickly scatter. The officer, bends down and grabs the prisoner, and lifts him slightly then grabs the arms of the prisoner who is laying on his front side both arms behind his back. The officer then grabs a white piece of cloth and takes small steps around the prisoner. As the officer drops the cloth, four more officers enter, and the other prisoners move back. Two officers gesture at the prisoners to get back while the other two walk towards the prisoner on the floor, the officer who fought the prisoner standing next to them.

Video 7: US, intake/holding cell, CCTV, sound, 3 min 49 sec

In a square holding cell, six men are seen; Prisoner 1 in a striped shirt is standing with one leg on a bench and one hand resting on a grid, while Prisoner 2, in a white shirt, sits on the bench next to him. Prisoner 3, wearing red shorts, is lying down on his back further away on the bench, Prisoner 4, in black shorts, is lying on the side on the floor. On the bench on the left wall, Prisoner 5, in a chequered shirt is laying down. Prisoner 6, wearing all black, is lying down on his side on the floor by the right-side wall. Prisoner 2 is stirring, still sitting down, while Prisoner 6 turns around and sits up to face the rest of the prisoners in the cell, he pulls his legs towards his chest and leans against the wall. Meanwhile Prisoner 1 is talking on a phone in the cell, telling the person he is talking to the name of the prison he is in. Prisoner 6 has

proceeded to lie down on the floor facing away from the wall and as he hears Prisoner 1 on the phone saying the name of the prison, he interjects (speech unintelligible) causing Prisoner 1 to turn around and speak in an aggressive tone (unintelligible). Prisoner 1 takes a few steps and bends down, still talking to Prisoner 6 who stays on the floor in a curled-up position while they talk. Prisoner 1 is agitated; he takes a step back, then steps forwards, attempting a punch at Prisoner 6, who now sits by the wall. As Prisoner 6 stands up, Prisoner 1 punches him several times in the side and stomach. Prisoner 4 sits up and moves to the far-left corner of the cell. Prisoner 1 and Prisoner 6 move around, grunting, with Prisoner 1 still punching Prisoner 6. Prisoner 6 attempts to get away, and as his opponent grabs hold of his shirt, Prisoner 6 takes off his shirt and they scuffle. Prisoner 6 then starts kicking Prisoner 1 and pressing him against the wall, while one of them is yelling (unintelligible). The fight then moves towards the grid and Prisoners 2, 3, and 4, all move out of the way. Prisoner 5 lifts his head to see what is happening but does not move. Someone is yelling and a hand is visible with what seems to be a taser. Before Prisoner 6 falls on his back with the arms down the side, he manages to land a punch in Prisoner 1's face. Then two officers move into the frame, one yelling "get down" several times and another person yelling "I'm sorry", as Prisoner 1 rolls onto the floor. Officer 1 proceeds to yell "get on the ground", as he and Officer 2 move further into the cell. Prisoner 2 has moved to the far-left corner, still sitting on the bench, while Prisoners 3 and 4 are sat on the bench on the right side. Prisoner 1 gets up, as he talks to Officer 1, who tells him to stay down. Meanwhile Officer 2 moves towards Prisoner 3, still sitting on the bench. Officer 1 grabs Prisoner 1 by the arm and leads him back to the bench by the grid as Officer 2 reaches out to grab Prisoner 1 - both officers repeating "sit down" and "sit there". Prisoner 1 apologises and explains that he does not want trouble as he grabs the grid, still standing. Officer 1 is still holding on to Prisoner 1's arm. Two more officers have appeared, and as Prisoners 3 and 4 stand up, with Officer 2 guiding them out of the cell, Officer 1 continues to loudly repeat "sit down". Prisoner 2 gets up and walks across the floor to get out of the cell. Only Prisoners 1 and 6 (the latter not having moved since the tasing) are left in the room. Officer 3 walks in while putting on gloves. Officer 2 has guided Prisoner 1 towards the left corner as Prisoner 1 is repeating that he is not trying to cause trouble. More officers enter the cell, and Prisoner 1 moves around on the corner. Several of the officers tell him to stay where he is. Prisoner 1 speaks

indistinctly as Officers 1, 2, and 3 grab him, Officer 3 repeating “sit down” and Officer 4 asking “what’s your problem” and “you are gonna get tased if you don’t sit down”. Officer 5 points a taser at Prisoner 1’s back, while Officers 1, 2, and 3 grab his arm to restrain him (inaudible yelling). Prisoner 6 has started moving on the floor, wiggling his upper body and 3 officers stand around looking at the other officers restraining Prisoner 1. Prisoner 1 continues talking and becomes more agitated as the officers tell him to be quiet. As Officer 1, 2, 3, and 4 escort Prisoner 1 towards the exit, still saying “be quiet”, Officer 5 leans forward to look at Prisoner 6 who continues to wiggle and move his head. Officer 5 gestures with her hand at him, saying “stay there and shut up”.

As Prisoner 1 leaves the room, Officers 2, 4, 5, and 6 firmly tell Prisoner 6 to roll over (unintelligible chatter). Officers 2 and 5 bend down to grab Prisoner 6 as he argues with them (exact conversation is not audible). Officers 4 and 6 watch the officers pull Prisoner 6 off the floor as the clip ends.

Video 8: UK, corridor/day room, CCTV recording filmed with phone, no sound, 1 min 14 sec

In a hallway with doors (cell doors) and two pool tables, a few onlookers are seen, some moving about, others standing still and observing. One of the cell doors is open and a dark-clad person (Officer 1) is standing in the door opening. Some onlookers move closer to the open door, while another officer (Officer 2) runs towards the open cell. As the video is filmed on a phone filming CCTV footage on computer screen, the focus is briefly blurry as the phone camera is adjusted. As Officer 2 reaches the open cell, more onlookers walk by, some of which briefly stop to look into the cell before they walk on. More onlookers walk past, some holding plates of food, while some gather, but still at a distance to the cell. Suddenly Officer 1 stumbles backwards as the prisoner (Prisoner 1) comes out of the cell, attempting to grab Officer 2, then stepping back attempting a high side kick at Officer 2. Meanwhile, Officer 1 regains his balance and steps towards Prisoner 1. Prisoner 1 continues to throw punches at Officer 2, causing him to fall backwards. Officer 1 moves towards Prisoner 1, and as the prisoner moves towards and attempts a punch, Officer 1 attempts a kick at the prisoner but seems to miss, causing the

prisoner to attempt further punches at Officer 1, who has moved his arms in front of his chest with hands clenched into fists. Meanwhile, Officer 2 is getting back up and as he does, Prisoner 1 moves towards him, attempting a punch at his head as he turns to face Prisoner 1. Officer 1 then steps in between Prisoner 1 and Officer 2; both officers are positioned in a ‘ready to fight’-stance; legs apart, arms in front of their chests, and clenched fists. Prisoner 1 continues to throw punches in the direction of Officer 1, who manages to push the prisoner away, into one of the pool tables. Then a third officer (Officer 3) comes running and grabs Prisoner 1 around the neck and chest from behind while Officer 2 steps forward and grabs hold of the prisoner. Both officers are trying to get the prisoner onto the ground, but he attempts to get free. As a fourth officer (Officer 4) walks up to assist the others, one of the onlookers starts jumping up and down, holding a plate of food - his facial expressions reveal excitement. The officers seem to struggle to get Prisoner 1 to lay on the floor, and so Officer 4 bends down and grabs the prisoner’s left leg trying to pull it backwards and up. A fifth officer has arrived and assists Officer 4. The five officers manage to get the prisoner down on the ground while the onlookers move around, some jumping in excitement. The officers are seemingly having to put in effort to keep Prisoner 1 pinned to the ground. While more onlookers emerge, moving closer to the scene, two more officers arrive, assessing the scene.