

ARTICLE

The potential and plausibility of Rehabilitative Prison Culture: A Philippine example

Hannah Nario-Lopez

ABSTRACT

This paper is an integrative analysis of literature that discusses the potential of Rehabilitative Prison Culture (RPC). This article takes off from the consistent finding that prisons experience conflict in organizational vision, staff roles, and implementation of treatment programs primarily due to questions regarding effectiveness of rehabilitation. The effectiveness of rehabilitation has been a focal concern due to high rates of recidivism despite the assortment of therapeutic interventions. It can be culled from the literature that rehabilitation seems counter-intuitive because prisonization contradicts its causes.

In 2018, Ruth Mann, Flora Fitzalan Howard, and Jenny Tew popularized Rehabilitative Prison Culture (RPC) as an institutional vision in prison settings. RPC is practiced in Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPSS) and showed the potential to reduce inmate re-offense. RPC's potential highlights the importance of putting prison staff and inmate families at the heart of inmate rehabilitation through socially-driven total life reorientation. With RPC's promising proem, this article provides an evaluation of the resonance of RPC by examining: (a) the consequences of prisonization (Clemmer [1940] 1958); (b) the path to "moral performance of prisons" (Liebling 2004 and 2005) juxtaposed with existing studies parallel to the causes of RPC, and; (c) the viability of RPC vis-à-vis already existing informal systems in the Philippines' overcrowded prisons. The article ends with a discussion of the immediate needs of most prisons. I aim to facilitate an interdisciplinary assessment of sociological and criminological evidence to provide a pragmatic approach in managing jails and prisons.

KEYWORDS

rehabilitation, prison sociology, jails, prisons, prison culture

Introduction

Whether or not prisons effectively reduce primary deviance and crime rates is a long-standing concern that governments and prison regimes have been confronting throughout history. This problem has been the main impetus of the evolution from punitive to a rehabilitative form of punishment.

In 1700s Europe and colonial America, the prevailing view on crime was that it was hopeless to change offenders (Hanser 2016). Punishments were used as demonstrations for the public to deter lawlessness and ensure public safety (Hanser 2016). Criminal sanctions took the form of corporal punishment, public executions and humiliations, and eviction of offenders from their communities (Cullen and Gilbert [2013] 2015). Enlightenment thinkers subsequently questioned the ideology behind corporal punishment and its capability to prevent crime (Beccaria and Voltaire 1767; Bentham 1789; Montesquieu [1748] 1989). Slowly, campaigns for humane and more rational sanctions emerged. This birthed penitentiaries, where prisoners worked tirelessly, marched in lockstep, and isolated from the public (Foucault 1975). Only a century later (1800s) did reform movements further revolutionize perspectives on criminality. Emphasis on the significance of societal problems such as poverty aided the understanding of lawlessness (Hanser 2016).

Fast forward to the 1950s and 1970s, when the rehabilitative ideal—working under the premise that “criminals” can be reformed—gained attention (Allen 1981; Phelps 2011). Various reforms were implemented to improve the treatment of prisoners in and out of prison cells. In 1957, the United Nations (UN) adopted the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners as standard in managing prisons and treating prisoners (UNODC 2015). Now known as the “Mandela Rules,” the protocol mandates states to provide Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL)¹ necessities such as accommodation, hygiene provisions, food, medical and psycho-social services, and access to religious rights (RA 10575 2013). The Prisoner Rehabilitation Act of 1965 in the United States (US) provided vocational training in detention, which allowed prisoners to prepare for reintegration (Carpenter 1966). Other countries followed suit. However in the 1970s, harsh prison conditions and officer abuse ensued despite efforts for reform, sparking numerous riots expressing prisoner demands for better facilities and treatment from prison leadership and personnel (Irwin [1985] 2013).

Contending views on prison goals and outcomes caused distrust in the rehabilitative ideal. Conservative movements began calling for a tougher take on crimes, which gained popularity among people (Allen 1981; Martinson 1974). Despite the public’s turnaround, scholars persisted with research highlighting rehabilitative justice’s effective role in reintegrating inmates back to society (Phelps 2011). Recently, support for studies searching for prison alternatives have been growing, especially in Europe (Phelps 2011). Around the world, clamor for human rights and preservation of dignity of even those in conflict with the law have been

increasing (Feeley and Simon 1992). Today, especially in the US, unchanging recidivism² rates are primarily attributed to ironies of prisonization (Garland 2001; Garrison 2011).

However, contemporary appraisals of prison systems argue that providing education and reorienting values are not enough to eradicate recidivism. The “moral performance of prisons” (Liebling 2004 and 2005) instead suggests that on top of traditional rehabilitation programs, humane safekeeping—such as practices of respect, trust, dignity, safety, and well-being—must also be implemented (Liebling 2004 and 2005; Mann, Howard, and Tew 2018). These features of humane safekeeping enable positive behavioral change, development of life skills, and the ability to make decisions with integrity (Drake, Darke, and Earle 2015).

This article gives special attention to Rehabilitative Prison Culture (RPC), a form of prison management routine and relational strategy in penal settings that can assist in setting standards for the “moral performance of prisons” (Liebling 2004 and 2005). I looked specifically into RPC as it was gaining traction with academics and practitioners since Ruth Mann, Flora Fitzalan Howard, and Jenny Tew popularized the term in 2018. By outlining RPC’s effects in Her Majesty’s Prison and Probation Service (HMPSS), Mann, Howard, and Tew (2018) argued how RPC may reduce recidivism in the United Kingdom (UK). In RPC, collaboration between prison staff and inmate family members is the heart of rehabilitation support.

However, RPC is institutionalized only in HMPSS (Government of United Kingdom 2019). Some elements of RPC have been implemented in European countries that practice frameworks supporting “rehabilitation over punishment” in prison mandates and protocols (McCray 2015, 10). To date, no study on the Philippine carceral system has independently evaluated RPC in terms of its potentials and consequences. Considering this, the study will explore the constitutive elements of RPC, namely: revitalization of systems already in place; collaborative leadership; prison population engagement and guided empowerment; and participative families. This study will also evaluate the positive aspects and risks of RPC on moral quality of prison life (Liebling 2004 and 2005).

Objectives

This article aims to contribute to discourse surrounding the effectiveness of prisons by providing a synthesis and analysis of existing literature from the disciplines of criminology and sociology³ about the problem of prisonization, elements of RPC, and the trajectories of RPC in the context of policy amendments and prison management protocols.

Putting criminology and sociology in dialogue is relevant as both have made significant contributions to understanding jails and prisons. Specifically, criminology problematizes law-breaking, crime and deviance, criminogenic risks⁴ in the context of different social milieus, and the state’s subsequent response to the

latter. While criminology focuses on the individual and the immediate milieu they are subjected to in the criminal justice system, sociology investigates the broader societal context of deviance, crime, and group interactions and relations arising from the social world outside prison settings. Sociology supplements the state and administrative improvements suggested by criminology and looks at crime and deviance from the perspective of power and social inequalities present in the broader social world. These lines are blurred, however, as interdisciplinarity becomes a more salient approach in framing and assessing problems on crime, deviance, and justice.

The ways by which sociology complements and overlaps with criminology in the study of “effectivity” of rehabilitation are relevant because jails and prisons (as social institutions) have direct and unintended consequences to individuals, groups, and larger societies. Criminology and sociology—specifically the fields of prison sociology and sociology of deviance—are mutually relevant in the study of structures, systems, and social conditions that overlap in issues of social order, social control, human rights, and justice that are central in the assessment of RPC as a cultural framework in the prisons.

Furthermore, the article forwards the argument that jails and prisons are social spaces. Thus, questions on how prisons work must be studied because interactions and relationships facilitated by these structures may reveal clues on why particular prisons work and some do not. The social is powerful and creates undetected yet salient features of our everyday life.

Studying prisons and jails from a social scientific angle is important because it pulls attention toward various features of social life in unique settings. These realities may have been overlooked by policymakers, administrators, and law enforcement practitioners in developing policies for social order, crime deterrence, and justice. While this article gives special attention to the transformation of social relations within prison walls, it is not my intention to oversimplify broader social issues that surround the delivery of justice. Instead, this article pools empirical knowledge parallel to RPC useful to researchers, consultants, legislators, and criminal justice practitioners as bases for: (a) determining viable solutions to immediate issues that concern prison order and management, and (b) planning responses to curb recidivism.

This article organizes literature in three sections: (a) the ironies of prisonization and its consequences to rehabilitation, (b) the elements of RPC already present in various prison systems, and (c) the multiple trajectories and policy changes that can be made to initiate RPC. To date, empirical work that specifically investigated the direct effects of RPC in other prison settings is not yet available, precluding a more thoughtful examination of RPC. As such, this literature review will examine its elements and focus on changes that can be done within prison settings to resolve prisonization’s contradictory effects. This article juxtaposes elements of RPC with respect to the Philippines and other social problems that the country’s

justice system is facing to suggest pragmatic application, feasibility, and likely shortcomings of RPC in such dire conditions. The article ends with a discussion on the immediate needs of most prison settings and call for collaboration between practitioners and research-academics.

The hope is that this article can provide take-off points for innovations in managing rehabilitation facilities to inform policy and practice to promote better social relations.

Method

Literature reviews are foundational elements in knowledge production and an effective way of approaching broad questions. Providing an overview and evaluation about the RPC's potential could pave the way for theory development and evidence-based approaches to managing jails and prisons.

This paper utilizes an integrative and systematic review of existing literature as a research method (Snyder 2019; Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart 2003) to facilitate the assessment of evidence from sociology and criminology about the potential of RPC to reduce ironies of prison and wane recidivism. Articles were initially identified via use of keywords such as “jails,” “prisons,” “officers,” “jail/prison management,” “jail/prison culture,” “prison life,” “recidivism,” “criminal justice system,” and “human rights in prisons.” Search engines available in Google Scholar, Directory of Open Access Journals, and journal distribution sites such as JSTOR, EBSCO, and Proquest were utilized. Around 200 articles were sorted, reviewed, and organized depending on their relevance (Ryan and Bernard 2003)—i.e., how key points and arguments conversate with each other and the degree to which their findings were also expressed in different settings. Aside from noting divergences and departure points, I also went over their respective reference lists to see their belongingness to particular conversations in literature. Those who played critical roles in the discussion were cited in this study.

The literature available was analyzed thematically, according to topic and parallelism of findings to the elements that RPC, which also informed the structure of the discussion of the results of this piece. The themes are: (1) What problems does RPC solve?; (2) What is the element of RPC, and who are the key actors in implementation?; and (3) How can RPC be implemented?

As an integrative review of literature, this article does not aim to cover all papers ever published on topics relating to the elements of RPC, but instead aims to map resonant findings and perspectives that are supportive and probative to the effectivity of RPC.

Results and Discussion

Ironies of Prisonization

Across the literature, there is consensus that prisonization is seen as counter-intuitive to the objectives of the criminal justice system. Prisonization, conceptualized by Donald Clemmer ([1940] 1958), tackles the adjustment process by which inmates adopt normative prescriptions of the prison culture. According to Clemmer ([1940] 1958), when an offender becomes admitted to a penitentiary system, they adapt to institutional features of prisons such as deprivation of privileges and imposition of sanctions, and thereby respond using survival codes pertinent to inmate-to-inmate relations. It is through these institutional features that inmates are forced into primary group affiliations of deviance. The acceptance of inmate codes becomes normalized and is made necessary. In turn, instead of providing opportunities for offenders to transform and reorient their ways by addressing the reasons why they committed a crime, prisonization adversely exposes offenders to more criminogenic attitudes and increases the chances for one to re-offend and remain a public safety threat upon release (see Figure 1). Prisonization, according to Clemmer and many others that came after him, is the primary reason why rehabilitation fails (Apel and Sweeten 2010; Barton and Butts 1990; Bergman 1976; Bondeson 1994; Killias et al. 2009; Lulham, Weathernburn, and Bartels 2009; Villettaz et al. 2015).

Since the early attempts to expand knowledge on prisonization's effects, the disciplines of sociology (Garabedian 1963; Thomas 1973; Thomas and Foster 1972; Thomas and Zingraff 1976; Wellford 1967) and criminology (Akers, Hayner, and Gruninger 1977; Schwartz 1971; Zingraff 1975) have been aiding each other's frames of reference.

Criminologists and sociologists share the view that prisonization has many other distinctive consequences in re-offending, such as (a) forcing people with high moral standards to intermingle with lawless offenders (e.g., Dimock 1997); (b) serving as a source of skills-sharing to "improve" criminalizing behavior through interaction with co-detainees (e.g., Braithwaite 1999); (c) parting to total estrangement of the offender from his/her non-offending support network, which can be the only source of positive reinforcement and aspiration for the offender (Houchin 2005; Mann, Howard, and Tew 2018; Wheeler 1961); (d) dwindling of employment opportunities due to prejudice and public fear toward people with a criminal record (e.g., Cullen 2013; Meredith, Speir, and Johnson 2007; Wheeler 1961); and (e) total separation from law-abiding society (e.g., also earlier pointed out by Durkheim [1897] 1951; Hampton 1984; Lippke 2001).

Prisonization is an inherent problem in prison intervention. Before the birth of sociology, early political thinkers such as John Stuart Mill, Immanuel Kant, Charles de Montesquieu, Alexis de Tocqueville, and Francis Lieber viewed prisons and punishment as tools for state legitimization, order maintenance, and soul



Figure 1. The consequences of prisonization.

reformation (Gottschalk 2006). These theories inspired the functionalist tradition in sociology, wherein law and punishment are regarded as functional implements that orders society through norms and sanctions (Durkheim [1897] 1951).

For Karl Marx and Michel Foucault, incarceration is viewed as limiting, dehumanizing, and a vulgar expression of our society’s inequalities. From the time of corporal punishment, torture and public execution were widespread until the eighteenth century, when prisons adopted incarceration (Foucault 1975; Hardman 2007; Gibson 2011). According to Foucault (1975), detention is more egalitarian because it takes freedom—a fundamental and universal good supposedly accessible to everyone—away from the offender. One may think of incarceration as more

humane than corporal punishment since neither physical pain nor public shame is inflicted on the deviant. However, Foucault argues that while imprisonment might have taken away gruesome elements of crime punishment, it has tacit features of psychological manipulation. By the use of symbols, those incarcerated are transposed as docile bodies that are used as subjects of authority through different modes of discipline, wherein the body becomes more “useful” to the authorities or the system as it becomes more obedient. Coercion operates via discipline, wherein docility enables the unconscious tampering of people’s feelings, actions, and choices that strategically design conditions wherein the incarcerated individual moves around. With the use of isolation and surveillance techniques, bodies become disciplined. Foucault believes that isolation is a useful tool for reform as it forces the incarcerated to reflect on their actions. The surveillance technique depicts the shift of social control from direct crowd judgment in public executions to the mere feeling of continuous surveillance in the form of laws, norms, and moral guidelines (Alford 2000; Bert 2012; Gibson 2011).

Another sociological take on prisons that scrutinizes power is the Marxist view, which posits that the inequality experienced by the proletariat, specifically the cheap exchange of labor for its real value, is an essential element of capitalism. Penal systems do not merely protect society from crimes (as it is pronounced publicly) but are operated by the ruling class to maintain social inequalities (Melossi 2014). They are instrumentalized by the ruling class to deter any act that will question, challenge, or destabilize their dominance (Rusche and Kirchheimer 2003). This is done through punishing insurgents via confinement in penal institutions that should have conditions worse than the living standards of the poor proletariat. The history of the criminal justice system in capitalist society has been entrenched through: (a) intensifying criminalization of those who detest the discipline of the working class to serve as examples for others, (b) keeping down wages through punitive policies given to uncooperative workers who try to break from the wage relations, (c) enunciating legalistic logics and touting crime statistics as tools for naturalizing the capitalistic economy, and (d) repressing radical movements to curb impassion against social inequalities (Jay 2019). In Marxism, crimes committed by the proletariat are done out of hopelessness and hunger. Still, capitalist penal systems are vicious toward the masses.

Incarcerated individuals in Philippine jails and prisons, the case study in this literature evaluation, experience that same direct adverse effects of prisonization. However, the results of prisonization are further aggravated by material deprivations and institutional underdevelopment universal in Philippine jails and prisons. These include: (a) overpopulation, (b) overcrowding, and (c) magnification of class and gender inequality in prison settings.

Philippine prisons and jails “combined” (Jones 2014, 61) are approximately 300 percent congested and are expanding yearly at a rate of five percent. As overpopulation worsened, Philippine jails and prisons painfully struggle to meet

the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners. The numbers ballooned in mid-2016 after President Rodrigo Duterte launched his strong-arm campaign War on Drugs, wherein prison overcrowding rose to 600 percent at certain months when extrajudicial killings were rampant and profiled drug addicts chose to surrender out of fear (The Prison Insider 2019).

In 2018, Parole and Probation Administration (PPA) reported insufficient funds as the major challenge in performing its functions. Access to already scarce resources such as space, food, water, medication, rehabilitation programs, and workforce (The Prison Insider 2019) has been a recurring problem for officers mandated to distribute them. Operating at 463.6 above occupancy level in 2018, the Institute for Crime and Justice Policy Research and Birkbeck University of London's (2021) World Prison Brief reports the Philippine prison system as the second highest occupancy level in the world. CNN reported in 2019 that 5000 PDL die in the New Bilibid Prison, the Philippine's largest penitentiary facility, each year (Yeung 2019). As the world faced a pandemic, Raymund Narag, a leading Philippine criminal justice expert, cautioned that Philippine jails and prisons are a "COVID-19-time bomb" (*Philippine Daily Inquirer* 2020; see and Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism 2020), which can quickly become the country's pandemic epicenter (Santos 2020).

These material conditions are experienced differently across classes and genders. Class and gender may further limit an individual's access to resources and put them at higher risk of vulnerability (Lewis 2000 and 2005). Most of those incarcerated have low-income jobs: farmers, unskilled laborers, and workers in the informal economy (Talabong 2018). In New Bilibid Prison, for example, around 36 percent of the PDL population used to be farmers, while 27 percent were crafts and trade workers (Talabong 2018). The high percentage of inmate population belonging to the lower class is attributed to their inability to pay bail, understand and comply with extrajudicial settlements, and access legal services that will focus on their case. For example, in 2019, each public attorney in the Philippines assisted 5873 potential clients and handled 390 cases (Public Attorney's Office 2019).

Moreover, poor PDLs are intimidated with the complexity of the criminal justice process because of their low literacy skills, *hiya* (shame) due to lack of education, and social stigma (Lopez-Wui 2005). In a separate study about jail officers in the Philippines, officers had shared with me that intimidation toward the complex law and justice system further hinders PDL and their families from perceiving the gravity and repercussions of the legal battle they need to face (Nario-Lopez 2017). Lower-class PDL do not get as much financial and legal support from their families because of shared habitus or social conditions (Katz 2002; Smith et al. 2007). Families—usually wives and mothers (Smith 1986)—who want to give support are incapable of providing strategic statements, unable to follow-up or find witnesses primarily because of their limited knowledge and awareness of the procedures and are demoralized because of the extensive process (Comfort 2007).

In 2016, 8.9 percent of PDL were women, 99 percent of whom were convicted for non-violent crimes such as crimes against property (The Prison Insider 2019). Incarcerated women face unsanitary facilities, costly phone calls, risk of separation anxiety, and depression—all aggravated consequences of prisonization due to their gendered concerns as females and mothers (Sharp and Marcus-Mendoza 2008; Player 2003; Law 2012; Baker 2016). Compared to men, women are at greater danger to torture and sexual abuse (American Civil Liberties Union 2020; Amnesty International 1998; Barlow 2014; Just Detention International 2009; Rimban and Balmaceda-Gutierrez 1999). Despite their rampancy, very few torture cases are reported due to power relations and the culture of silence that surround sexual abuse even after the adoption of the Anti-Torture Law (Baker and Danish Institute Against Torture 2014). Women rarely speak of prison abuse due to the doubled layer of stigmatization they experience: first, as a criminal without morals, and second, as an abuse victim who “asked for it” (Baker and Danish Institute Against Torture 2014).

Moreover, a concern exclusive to women is pregnancy during incarceration. Women who experienced pregnancy during incarceration reported anxiety toward the health of their unborn babies, guilt about future discrimination that their child could experience by having a “criminal mother,” and insecurity toward their ability to provide for their child (Baker and Danish Institute Against Torture 2014). After birth, incarcerated women only have a month to take care of their babies, further exacerbating anxiety, guilt, and depression. Aside from the scarcity of provisions to respond to these “special concerns,” the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) has been criticized for failing to address other gender-specific needs in admission procedure, women-specific hygiene needs, reproductive health, and close access to family and children (Baker and Danish Institute Against Torture 2014) despite its institutional Policy on Pregnant Inmates and Infants (BJMP 2010).

Based on UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC 2009) data, PDL who identify as lesbian, gays, bisexuals, transgender people (LGBTs) also experience layers of marginalization and discrimination from arrest to release since institutions do not have protocols to respond to SOGIE. Just like women, LGBTs are exposed to sexual abuse and do not have access to reproductive health. But compared to women, LGBTs have higher risk of contracting HIV/AIDS (UNODC 2009). In a study among Filipino gay PDL in Leyte Regional Prison, the intersectionality of class and gender is evident whilst the perception that gay men (*mga bakla*) are accepted (Relis, Agustin, Mercines 2016). The danger here is that heteronormative impositions can manifest as forced servitude⁵ to do unjustifiably “feminine tasks” such as cooking, laundry, washing dishes, nursing the sick, giving haircuts, Zumba dancing in exchange for food and protection, which other more well-off or non-gay PDL can outrightly reject (Marksamer and Tobin 2014).

The Philippines shares with other countries the effects of prisonization, further exacerbated by the inability of “docile bodies” to overcome impoverished material

conditions, and gender and class discrimination (Relis, Agustin, Mercines 2016). And while some would argue that small changes are limited in resolving wider social inequalities, RPC presents a workable solution to reconstruct prisons and enable them to address pressing issues of human rights violations, abuse, torture, and humane safekeeping. Even though RPC may not fully address the root causes of broader social inequalities, it does not mean that the reforms RPC offers are to be discredited. RPC is not a social panacea, but it is a worthwhile cause due to its targeted thrust to problems that surround social life in prisons.

Revitalization of Systems Already in Place

What exactly is Rehabilitative Prison Culture, what does it consist of, and how can it help overcome prisonization? Criminologists Mann, Howard, and Tew (2018) suggest that prison regimes can overcome prisonization and other aggravating factors by changing its culture.

The social sciences have been interested in the concept of culture as a powerful force to influence individuals through their social life. Culture varies from group to group and dictates ideas, customs, rationalizations, valuations, and social behavior of groups and its people. Culture can be symbolically (Althusser [1969] 1971) manifested and are observable through rituals, norms, communication lines, and—as sociology highlights—hierarchies of power (Bourdieu 1977). Sociology's critical take on culture confronts concentrations of power in punitive prison regimes. Sociology asserts that democratizing power (*Corrêa Cavalieri* and Almeida 2018), as it is presented in rehabilitative justice frameworks, distributes power, and gives opportunities for inmates—who occupy the lowest echelons of society—to communicate and engage with prison leadership and administration. Forms of culture operating within jails and prisons are a problem with both grave and ill-effects to social relations (Gottschalk 2006), mainly by empowering those who aim to disempower others.

The way RPC responds to the problem of prisonization by changing culture resonates with sociology's vision to uncover social inequalities. Specifically, the constructivist tradition helps us understand that just as culture shapes the social, culture too can be changed by the social. Culture flows from and within each micro-society and inter-group relations. And, just as much as societies had created cultures, people have the capacity and responsibility to change them (Berger and Luckmann 1967). By highlighting culture, RPC forwards an exciting take on what could have been missing in efforts to improve prison regimes.

Mann, Howard, and Tew (2018) proposed that RPC revitalizes rehabilitative prison regimes already in place by (a) reiterating the purpose of the institution across its levels; (b) having constant dialogue between the leadership, its officers, prisoners, including their families wherein deliberative reinvention of policies and procedures are based on; (c) having strong visual images and language that give hope, encourage, and clarify the possibility of change through the institution's

rehabilitative vision; (d) performing careful assessment of risks and making available a diversity of evidence-proven intervention activities; and (e) sentence planning with the offender's families for successful reintegration to society. As a framework that vivifies culture, RPC makes explicit these successful elements of existing facilities in a unified platform by: (a) making prison settings more humane, (b) sharing leadership, (c) engaging and empowering prison population, and (d) giving opportunities for families to participate.

Humane and Accountable Prisons

Improving the practice of rehabilitative philosophy focuses on the precarity of inmates to: (a) prisonization; (b) prison regimes that have structures to dominate "docile" bodies; (c) exposure to abuse; and (d) isolation, differentiation, and lasting effects of stigmatization. To tackle this, RPC posits the value of developing humane and accountable prisons through positive social relations with prison personnel.

Among the major works that focused on prison administration and the role of staff is *Governing Prisons: A Comparative Study of Correctional Management* by John Dilulio (1987). A pertinent theme in understanding rehabilitative culture focuses on how the path to better prisons can be attained by dismissing officers' castigating and retaliatory responses in maintaining prison order. From the comparative study of philosophies and correctional leadership of three prisons, Dilulio concluded that prisons must be governed as a constitutional government, where internal controls are made possible through a prison bureaucracy.

Dilulio encouraged succeeding works. In 1999, Marie Griffin found that adverse organizational climates act as a stimulant for officers to use force readily. This concern resonated for more than a decade. In 2012, Eric Lambert and Eugene Paoline suggested the following strategies to enhance officer work environments and organizational climates: (a) formalization of their jobs beyond custodial occupations, (b) the advancement of instrumental communication, (c) increase of officer's input in decision making, (d) increase in their job variety; and (e) reduction of role strain and cultivation of administrative support.

From a sociological perspective, giving attention to prison staff members is just as important as inspecting physical spaces within prison walls. I have argued that giving focus to officers and opening the conversation provides relevant assessments on how to raise the social conditions inside rehabilitation facilities (Nario-Lopez 2017), especially in the Philippine context where staff-to-PDL ratio is high (Jones 2014). In 2019, officer-to-inmate ratio was 1:100 (Jones and Narag 2019). Direct supervision of staff is thus impossible, increasing the probability that violent incidences can occur (Wener 2006).

RPC forwards that valuing officer work is beneficial in two aspects: (a) officers perform their functions because they serve as primary channel to carry out security, harmony, and specific rehabilitation treatments; and (b) officers are also

social beings that practice norms, good or bad, within their profession. Officers are the backbone, not just instruments, of correctional institutions (Hogan et al. 2013). As Francis Cullen, Faith Lutze, Bruce Link, and Nancy Wolfe (1989, 33) said: “[t]he fabric of life within the correction system is shaped intimately, and daily, by the system’s employees.”

Therefore, some studies in both sociological and criminological journals have included officer performance, rather than focusing on prison communities alone. These studies included the organizational (Jackson and Ammen 1996; Moon and Maxwell 2004) and social dynamics of staff culture with their relationships and contexts of interaction with other actors in the prison setting. For example, Griffin (1999) found that negative organizational climates act as a stimulant for officers to use force (Gordon and Stichman 2016) readily. In Liz Elliott’s 2007 work, she examined how punitiveness and its susceptibility to overemphasize “security” forgoes enforcement of rehabilitative values and positive relationships among and between staff and PDL, making incarceration incongruous with rehabilitation. Anja Dirkzwager and Candace Kruttschnitt (2012) saw how prison staff members perceived to have an aggressive approach often have detached relationships with detainees, who then become unresponsive to programs. In contrast, in another prison setting where staff are found to be helpful and fair, recidivism is rare among the prison population (Dirkzwager and Kruttschnitt 2012). As early as 2004, Liebling pointed out that prison management must keep a keen eye in fostering positive staff-prisoner relations because officers can be catalyzing forces in humanizing prisons.

RPC reflects these by making prisons humane and accountable in the following aspects (Mann, Howard, and Tew 2018): (a) officers are empowered to contribute to the improvement of their organizational climates by making it a safer space for them and the inmates; (b) RPC recognizes the officers’ ability to take part in shaping the moral performance of prisons by putting forward empathy over safety; and (c) RPC plants seeds of community care within prison settings. RPC will not only help improve prison life for detainees, but it will also make working life for the officers easier, and more importantly, kinder. Hostility becomes uncommon because of voluntary cooperation between officers and the prison population (Liebling et al. 2019, see case of Warren Hill Prison in UK), who become more accountable for their responsibilities and actions.

However, Narag and Jones (2016) cautioned that shared governance or cooperation between PDL and prison staff can breed patron-client relationship and corruption. I argue that this could be countered if the leadership fully understands the importance of changing their perspective toward withholding internal controls in the interest of collaborative participation. The succeeding section will discuss the centrality of collaborative leadership in RPC.

Collaborative Leadership

In empirical studies (Ramirez 1984; Tittle 1974) and even in popular depictions of prison life, the oppositional relationship between prison authorities and inmates are often accentuated, wherein: (a) on one hand, prisoners are always seeking ascendancy and control; and (b) on the other hand, authorities are just dutifully “getting the job done” to secure safety and order. Inmate defiance makes enforcement prison order very difficult due to inmates’ perceptions of officer legitimacy (Misis et al. 2013; Steiner and Wooldredge 2018).

According to Narag and Jones (2016), specific distinctions must be made between self-governance and shared governance. Self-governance, practiced in Latin American prisons, paved the way for opportunistic gang leaders to pursue their own interests. Shared governance, however, practices mutuality, camaraderie, other-centeredness, and cultivation of positive community values.

In the Philippines, prison gangs (*pangkat*) and officers already share governance (Gutierrez 2012; Jones 2014; Jones, Narag, and Morales 2015; Narag 2005; Narag and Jones 2016). Shared governance is seen in the way prison gangs and officers attempt to find middle ground and co-exist with minimal conflict (Narag and Jones 2016). For instance, when conflicts occur, officers and gang leaders immediately contain violence to limit casualties and further fissures between inmate groups (Jones 2014). Inmate groups cooperate because they have a stake in minimizing violence. When incidents escalate and become known to the public, the bureau replaces prison wardens with new stricter management—a change to new rules and personalities that PDLs do not really like (Jones 2014). To minimize conflict, inmates self-discipline by negotiating and agreeing among themselves (Jones 2014). *Pangkats* keep peace, maintain order, relieve “pains of imprisonment” (Sykes 1956), and “put out fires” (Narag and Lee [2017] 2018).

Filomin Gutierrez (2012) found that shared governance can be liberating, flexible, and valuable if a trust-based prison management system or leadership secures the support of all members of the community, starting from the prison leader. In the Philippines, gangs have positive functions both to prison administration and to its members. Gutierrez (2012) saw that gangs serve as positive mechanism for self-governance among inmates wherein facilities are undermanned, dilapidated, and basic provisions are almost absent. Gangs serve as aides for order and equilibrium maintenance.

But as stated earlier, shared governance (due to the beguiling quality of self-governance) can form a patron-client relationship among prison guards and inmates (Narag and Jones 2016), which can become dangerous antecedents for extortion (Biondi 2016). While RPC cannot ensure that it can eradicate “corruption of authority” (Sykes 1956, 123 and 127), especially in the Philippines, it is important to lay the groundwork for genuine trust between leadership and PDL population and families by changing how power is possessed and exercised. This starts from the willingness of prison administrators to relinquish and devolve power over

members of the prison community. RPC suggests that power, as it is habitually practiced in decision-making, must be deliberated among members of the prison setting in a form of collaborative leadership to provide hospitable conditions to cultivate targeted solutions to problems.

To integrate rehabilitative efforts, RPC suggests that prison leadership must be open for “collaborative leadership” with staff, PDL, and their families. Collaborative leadership opens spaces for deliberation to dissolve factions despite differences in stakes (Melnick et al. 2009) and perspectives in suffering (Liebling 2006). Collaborative leadership solicits commitment based on each other’s stakes, limitations, and positions.

RPC forwards four main changes that can be applied in detention (jail) and correctional (prison) facilities to promote collaborative leadership: (a) prison administration leaders must provide opportunities for people to share ideas and act upon them; (b) leaders must welcome new ideas to reinvent systems or “ways of doing things”; (c) leaders must promote and celebrate the successes of each member of the community by securing engagement and commitment between all members of the prison community; (d) leaders must model the ability to admit and learn from mistakes; and (e) leaders must openly and graciously communicate with staff members, PDL, prisoner family members in the context of respectful collective activities, such as coaching sessions and therapeutic community (also present in the Philippine setting, see De Leon 1989, 1997, 2000; Manning 1989), and other formalized channels for consultation, deliberation, cooperation, and collaboration. This way, community collaborations pave the way for sustaining smaller projects (De Leon 2003; Novo et al. 2012; Sherwood and Kendall 2014 and at the same time, boost morale of low-ranking custodial officers and inmates (Nario-Lopez 2017). In these trajectories, RPC creates a community—an alliance—that goes beyond prison walls.

Prison Population Engagement and Guided Empowerment

Due to the threat that the prison population poses against prison authorities, gangs are often depicted with disfavor and mistrust (Fleisher and Decker 2001; Gaes et al. 2002; Lessing 2014 and 2017; Trulson, Marquart, Kawucha 2008). Prison administrations have tried to eradicate gangs, but most efforts are unsuccessful despite extreme measures (Specter 2006; Spergel et al. 1994). In some settings, gangs seem impossible to eradicate (Scott 2001).

As an attempt to understand why and how gangs persist in most prison settings, scholars have investigated their function as an adaptive mechanism for the incarcerated. For example, political scientist David Skarbek (2012) presented a sociological take on gangs as means for inmates to associate and create organizations. By protecting themselves, inmates arrive at some sort of prison order despite reprimands from prison administrations.

In the Philippines, *mga pangkat* act as social support system that provide self-discipline and self-empowerment through the distribution of jurisdiction and accountability to inmate group leaders (*mayores*), who become directly responsible for members in following facility rules (Gutierrez 2012). Using the *pangkat magna carta* (gang code) that resonate facility rules and authored by gang members themselves, inmates are given chances to take initiative in maintaining order through self-help and contribution to custodial tasks (Gutierrez 2012). Negotiations and agreement are generally stipulated in *pangkat magna carta*, which all PDL are expected to mutually agree to. The *pangkat magna carta* instills self-discipline, respect for staff members, co-detainees (even those from other *pangkat*), and each other's visitors (*dalaw*) (Gutierrez 2012; Narag 2005; Narag 2018). The *mayores* (PDL leader) act as guardians who oversee communication between bureau actors (such as officers and other higher-ups, and even service providers) and his members. In some jails, *mayores* meet weekly with wardens to communicate their *pangkat* concerns. *Mayores* are trusted by both officers and detainees and have, in turn, obligations to ensure understanding between them and uphold peace and social order among its members (Gutierrez 2012; Jones 2014; Narag and Lee [2017] 2018).

Narag and Jones (2016) further found that through prison gangs, inmates maintain their self-identity and pre-prison professions, skills, and talents by extending their professional expertise in prison. In utilizing their skills and talents, inmates preserve their pre-prison identity (Goffman 1961) and find new meaning despite being incarcerated. These findings suggest that gang membership have both social and psychological relevance for PDL.

Though *pangkat* system has been practiced in the Philippines—with many officers seeing benefits in sharing responsibilities (Narag and Lee [2017] 2018) to maintain order with detainees—further studies must be conducted to investigate its dynamics. While this system of shared governance is welcomed by prison managements for alleviating custodial complications (Nario-Lopez 2017; Narag and Lee [2017] 2018), gangs are still not formally endorsed in the Philippine jail and prison facilities.

Other than the experience of Philippines jails and prisons toward gangs, studies from different contexts have also seen the capacity of inmates to carry out positive attitudes and behaviors. Valerie Clark and Grant Duwe (2015) studied Power of the People (POP), wherein evaluation results showed that inmates can develop sound decision-making skills about their futures through personal leadership training. Patrice Villettaz, Gwladys Gillieron, and Martin Killias (2015) saw that non-custodial or community sanctions were more effective than custodial or officer-inflicted sanctions, proving that the community-approach in prison care is indeed a viable route to prison management. Maggioni et al. (2018) supplement this with their finding that inmates are indeed capable of pro-social behaviors, altruism, fair negotiations, and trust-worthy relations (Haney 2003; Bottom et al. 2017).

Inmates' capacity to practice pro-social behavior is seized by another element of RPC—engagement and guided empowerment of the inmate population. Harnessing engagement of prison population through collaboration in addressing issues that affect their welfare is a form of guided empowerment that teaches inmates how to independently make important decisions for themselves (Bloomberg 1977).

To further strengthen this, prison systems may also use participatory research. In the Philippines, Marina Gamo (2013) found that participation in research has positive effects to inmates, by giving them a sense of purpose and of “humanness”. In the planning and drafting of programs, prison management can also be assured that “there is no doubt that their needs will be met and their problems addressed” (Gamo 2013, 218).

Inmate participation could not, however, guarantee a perfect democratic strategy for prison management. Bishop (2006) has shown that while prison councils in Wales and England can serve as effective outlets for raising inmates' needs and concerns, they can still breed corruption. For example, self-governing elected prison council leaders forward only their self-interest, which does not necessarily reflect the concerns of the inmate majority. Moreover, heightened tension between staff and inmates was also observed in hearings. Thus, it is important to note that in designing participative programs in prisons, strategic program design planning and evaluation must be continuous. Unlike the informal rules that enable shared governance with prison gangs in the Philippines (Narag and Jones 2016), institutionalization and regulation could lessen the tendencies and incidences of power corruption, clashing of interests, client-patron relationships, and extortion involving officers. Moreover, without systemic change in prisons' budget allocation from national government, the burden of improving prison welfare could be passed on to inmates. This was seen in Narag and Jones' (2016) study on prison gangs where shared governance was observed but prison administration became reliant on inmate-initiated fund collection for necessities that the facility cannot provide.

Since RPC aims to address culture, other sources of social support and values should also be considered in the whole programming process. Involving other social institutions starting with families, is another response of RPC to ensure significant and lasting changes in inmates' welfare.

Participative Families

A person's value-orientation, rationalization, and general well-being stem from membership in the family. During incarceration, families remain the primary means of moral, emotional, and financial support for PDL. In 2007, sociologist Megan Comfort published *Doing Time Together: Love and Family in the Shadow of the Prison* which discussed the lives and experiences of the incarcerated's family. Comfort looked deep into the relationship of the offender and family member—especially women, wives, girlfriends, mothers—who have dissolved the frontiers of home and prison to give a sense of intimacy and express love while awaiting justice.

This study found that families are indeed a source of strength and sustenance, and bridges to hope for the inmate (Bertulfo, Canoy, and Celeste 2016); Harding et al. 2016; Williams and Taylor 2004).

In some prison settings, families are included in therapy programs to change family lifestyle, orientation, and norms (Bayse, Allgood, and van Wyk 1991; Cullen and Applegate 1997). In a more recent study, Corrine Datchi, Louis Barretti, and Christopher Thompson (2016) found that promotion of family involvement in prisoner rehabilitation during incarceration is effective in diminishing risks of re-offenses. However, families can also aggravate one's criminogenic risk (see Andrews and Bonta 2010; Andrews, Bonta, and Hoge 1990, Andrews, Bonta, Wormith 2011; Garbarino and Eckenrode 1997; Grieger and Hosser 2014), either as underlying reason or motivation for deviant and unlawful behavior to develop (Thornberry et al. 2003; van de Rakt et al. 2009)—a reality especially true among substance abuse victims (Stanton, Todd, and associates 1982; American Addiction Centre 2020. Sociological and psychological studies found that verbal abuse and exposure to acts of violence at home have lasting effects on the young (Clayton and Moore 2003), triggering the onset of deviant behaviors, later criminal activities (Goodwin and Davis 2011; Piquero Farrington, and Blumstein 2003; van Dijk, Nieuwebeerta, Apel 2018), and criminal careers (Rakt, Nieuwebeerta, and Apel 2009).

Mann, Howard, and Tew (2018), argue that family is the unseen pillar of the rehabilitation process. Because of its productive/destructive force, families must be given more opportunities for participation in rehabilitation programs. In RPC, families are given recognition, role, and attention. RPC suggests that family support must also go beyond incarceration and should assist in PDL reintegration. The primary buy-in for families in RPC, especially struggling ones, is that avenues for rehabilitation will also be extended to them through programs that help heal negative relationships and challenge their existing frames of knowing and believing. Donald Jay Bertulfo, Nico Canoy, and Michael Angelo Celeste (2018) raised the need for Philippine institutions to provide material and emotional aid for families undergoing reintegration experiences, characterized by periods of instability, othering, and even rejection.

From my experience of jail research, however, there are families who are uncooperative with rehabilitation programs because they do not believe that their incarcerated family member will still change. They find that doing the rehabilitation activities is itself interfering with the way they live their life, or they simply do not do it because all their time and energies are dedicated to earning money for a living. There are PDL who are no longer visited by family members due to poverty and physical distance (De Claire and Dixon [2015] 2017). Perhaps, an alternative source already present in most Philippine prisons could be utilized to serve as a social support system in inmate rehabilitation such as the father (*tatay*) or big brother (*kuya*) figures (Narag and Jones 2016). Studies on prison gangs reveal how inmates view their prison cells as family (Gutierrez 2012; Narag 2005; Narag and

Jones 2016). Just as how family functions as the basic unit of society that protects and provides an individual, prison cells and their co-members are viewed similarly.

To make significant changes, RPC aims to deliver a holistic approach to inmate rehabilitation. Aside from changing the culture within the prison setting, RPC believes that when families are included, the responsibility of rehabilitation is extended and resettlements such as housing and employment after incarceration have greater chances of making a lasting difference in the PDL and their families' lives.

Trajectories and Policy Implications: Procedural and Fair Relations

Mann, Howard, and Tew (2018) argued that developing perceptions on justice and fairness are just as important as prisons being humane and accountable, sharing leadership, and involving families in trying to curb the effects of prisonization. They suggested that all officers and PDL must feel that they are treated fairly so that they can develop affinity to the vision of rehabilitation and cooperate to new changes despite personal inclinations.

Interpersonal justice is the notion that one is treated fairly with the right processes institutionalized, ensuring impartiality throughout the social system. In RPC, interpersonal and procedural justice has four features—voice, respect, neutrality, and trustworthy motives (Mann, Howard, and Tew 2018). Interpersonal and procedural justice's foundational elements in practice stem from role recognition of prison leaders and custodial officers, empathy for prisoners' experiences, importance of opening communication lines, ceaseless consultation, and collaboration for decision-making. For transformations to be perceived as fair, PDL and staff must know that they: (a) can trust their voice; (b) will be heard and respected; (c) are treated with courtesy; (d) will be consulted with respect; and (e) will be invoked to action because decisions are assured to be made with trustworthy motives (Mann, Howard, and Tew 2018).

Interpersonal and procedural justice have lasting benefits for both officers and inmates (Mann, Howard, and Tew 2018). For inmates, having strong perceptions on the existence and practice of procedural justice directly and indirectly affect their views of legitimacy and result in: (a) lower incidence of misconduct and prison violence (Reisig and Mesko 2009; Steiner and Wooldredge 2018), (b) higher commitment to the institutional visions in helping them rehabilitate (Baker et al. 2019), and (c) lower potential for recidivism (McCullough 2018). For staff members, the perception of fairness lowers stress levels (Hogan et al. 2006 and Hogan Lambert, and Griffin 2013) and burnout risks (Lee and Ok 2012). Authority, with positive values of justice that RPC suggests, may be strategically deployed to bring out the best of changes.

In RPC, support structures in the form of space design and communication protocols are encouraged to serve as reminders that fair relations are possible in prison settings and that whoever speaks up shall be heard and treated with

respect. RPC tools can be made available to make this possible (Mann, Howard, and Tew 2018): (a) the prison's physical space itself can be changed from being cold impersonal spaces to spaces that are warm and evoke a sense of normalcy, other spaces can have outdoor views, art, and signs with positive or motivational messages; and (b) clear communication channels must be put in place to create chances for individuals to speak-up, be heard, and take part in decision making.

Strategic space design is a primal support structure in RPC because: (a) the facility's design is instrumental in positively transforming social relations among inmates and between officers and inmates; and (b) space becomes a maximized tool to invite hope for the inmates and provide caring workspaces for the officers (Krueger and Macallister 2015; Moran, Jewkes, and Turner 2016). Having clear communication channels is also primal because these aids the regrowth of vanished connections with the loss of one's liberty (Inmate Compassion 2019).

On the contrary, Ruth Mann, Georgia Barnett, George Box, Flora Fitzlan Howard, Oscar O'Mara, Rosie Travers, and Helen Wakeling (2019) found that feeling unsafe, stigmatized, and humiliated compounds psychological factors by consuming inmates' personal resources. Moreover, inmates with poor literacy or underdeveloped communication skills are especially vulnerable because it is difficult for them to express emotions about past experiences and current emotions, which is further complicated by criminal justice system jargon (Søndenaa, Wangsholm, Roos 2016). In response, special attention should be provided in the form of paralegal consultations, psycho-social group therapy sessions, spiritual guidance, and one-on-one counseling so opportunities are made for inmates to become aware of available avenues to express their worries and concerns, and to fully comprehend how the legal process will affect them.

For prison authorities, it is important to understand the current culture that exists in their leadership so that their own approach to cultural change may be identified and tailored to fit the inmate population's needs (Eggers, Porter, and Gray 2011). It is vital for leaders to always reflect and honestly evaluate their own capacities (especially how they fare with international protocols),⁶ their personal traits, leadership style (Gonzales 2018), and ranking of values (Nario-Lopez 2017) so that change may be accomplished in the most pragmatic yet genuine manner. Because prison leadership is "the key to establishing and maintaining humane prisons" (Jacobs and Olitsky 2004, 477), RPC espouses that once the leadership changes perspective and becomes more reflexive on how rehabilitation can be more effectively done, front-line officers too become thoughtful, diligent, and driven with a deeper sense of purpose to help solve problems. With these, officers have greater ownership and fidelity to the vision of the institution (Mann, Howard, and Tew 2018).

Implications of RPC in policy construction to alleviate overcrowding and poor prison conditions and foster fair relations take the following forms (Mann, Howard, and Tew 2018): (a) creating an open and safe space of communication

among PDL and prison staff (e.g., in the Philippines, *mayores* have weekly dialogues with officers and detainees can raise concerns during their daily meetings as part of the Therapeutic Community Modality Program), (b) reconstructing physical spaces from cold-clamed spaces to warmer and open spaces that resemble a home, (c) addressing special needs of inmates by providing paralegal consultation and psycho-social therapy sessions, and (d) encouraging the practice of reflexivity among prison leaders and staff.

Initiating RPC is not easy, which is why engaging hope, through space and communication between each member of the prison setting is suggested to be the most useful starting point (Cullen and Gilbert [2013] 2015; Liebling and Crewe 2014; Liebling et al. 2019).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Criminologists, sociologists, and other scholars interested in incarceration see the 1970s as the pivotal decade in the history of punishment, where global view of imprisonment shifted from retribution to rehabilitation. Rehabilitation programs from then on are viewed as a human right from the state, an entitlement that gives second chances to offenders. However, uncertainty toward the effectiveness of rehabilitation remains. Despite extensive research on inmate social life and countercultures, sentencing policy, and recidivism, we know little about the effects of changes in cultural features in prison management.

In this article, elements of rehabilitative prison culture were examined. Based on findings culled from studies in sociology and criminology, the elements of RPC already existing in the Philippine setting, common in a variety of prison settings, and are resonant of effective strategies in running rehabilitation facilities. The promise of RPC is: (a) directed towards the incarcerated population, (b) oriented to successful PDL reintegration, and (c) aimed at reducing recidivism because of prisonization. RPC may curb the results of prisonization by tying together diffused rehabilitation efforts as it bridges prisons and communities, where the incarcerated: (a) learns positive values, (b) learns to source out and value hope, (c) shapes his or her own changed vision of life, (e) learns things toward gainful employment, (d) deserves reunion with family, (f) earns back society's respect and fade stigma away, and (g) can eventually be fully reintegrated into society (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Effects of Rehabilitative Prison Culture to the incarcerated.

While I do recognize that there are wider social problems that need structural and systemic changes, continuous normalization of human rights violations and various forms of violence in prisons persist (Snacken 2015; Elger and Shaw 2017; Human Rights Watch 2020). These need to be addressed immediately. The gap between rhetoric and reality is wide—even in the narrow spaces between cell bars. I argue, with the findings reviewed, that RPC *may* be the best option we have.

Issues on trust over effectivity of our current prison systems reveal that rehabilitation is not just about having risk classification in place. It is more than just a set of rehabilitation programs, neatly collated case files, well-stocked pantries, or tidy prison halls. I posit that it is time to reflect not only “what we have been doing” but also “how we have been doing” in terms of running rehabilitation facilities.

The alignment of scientific findings that make possible “humane and accountable prisons” through RPC’s constitutive elements confronts realities and provides solutions that are possible, with expectations that are manageable, and empowers all actors involved. Implementing RPC in prison systems is feasible because it harnesses existing cornerstones in prison systems, even those in the worst of conditions.

As a cultural system of positively relating with each other, RPC also has strong capacity to transform prisons into peaceful places to live and work, where clear boundaries are set, conversations are welcome, collaborations are celebrated, and people take initiative to make lasting difference in each other’s lives. We have seen these in some facilities in the Philippines where, despite overcrowding, staff shortage, and material deprivations, harmony, shared governance, cooperation, and mutualism are made possible (Gutierrez 2012; Jones, Narag, and Morales 2015; Nario-Lopez 2017; Narag and Jones 2016) through a united initiative overseen by an empathic leader (Nario-Lopez 2017). The case of the Philippines and the alternative responses (i.e., the *pangkat* system as shared governance, role of *mayores*, *pangkat magna carta*) that organically emerged out of their needs show parallelisms to the elements of RPC. This shows that RPC is feasible and necessary even in settings where deprivations are universal across the justice system and where detention and rehabilitation facilities are severely underdeveloped.

RPC, however, takes time. And like any other policy initiative, it may face problems in securing political capital and ease-in bureaucratic procedures. In the Philippines, I see that one of the greatest challenges in implementing RPC is the primacy of compliance with bureau protocols over any other consideration (such as the consequences of jail conditions in officers’ emotional labor, see Nario-Lopez 2017). Officers spoke of the disconnectedness of institutional protocols to the realities on the ground. When new instructions or more stringent revisions of old standards are immediately implemented, they are pressured to make it appear that they are compliant (Nario-Lopez 2017). Lower-ranking officers believe that their superiors have a limited view of policy implementation, such that authorities only enforce these rules from the perspective of power and fail to consider the nuances in the dynamics of “street level bureaucracy”⁷ (Bosma et al. 2018; Lipsky 2010; Williams 1992). Low-ranking officers believe that authorities should recognize their limitations and try to understand a bit deeper the value of “equilibrium”⁸ relations in jail operations (Nario-Lopez 2017). Certainly, the differences of positions between jail actors result in disparities in framing jail order. I hope that RPC can overcome such hindrances and resolve differences in addressing concerns and dilemmas between ranks and within walls. Another impediment I foresee in implementing RPC is the bureau protocol to reshuffle and reassign officers and leaders every three years. I have observed and gathered from officers’ narratives that progressive developments in jail management protocols usually end conterminously with leaders (Nario-Lopez 2017). Because of threats to RPC’s continuity, I recommend that RPC becomes institutionalized as a universal bureau protocol.

Like other projects, RPC needs to start from a united initiative to begin the process of change. Moreover, changing culture requires constantly practicing these rectifications in everyday life. It requires mutual support from all actors and focusing energies and efforts toward the successful reintegration of the incarcerated. RPC may be that change that prison regimes have been looking for and have been needing. However, I also recognize that changing prison cultures only chisels the thin end of the wedge. I urge scholars, researchers, and academics who have interest in justice regimes and human rights to give attention to jail and prison management through research and extension work (service sociology). I also seek the support of Filipino prison administrators, policy makers, and bureaucratic leaders to open possibilities of partnership with researchers and academics to: (a) see the potential of evidence-based practices, (b) produce culturally sensitive institutional approaches to improving systems and protocols, and (c) establish long-term program monitoring and evaluation to improve Philippine jails and prisons.

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Endnotes

- ¹ Even before the Mandela Rules were revitalized in 2015 and adapted by various states, the Philippine criminal justice system has used PDL since 2013. Adapted by both the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology and the Bureau of Corrections (RA 10575 2013), the term is a respectful way to refer to jail detainees and prison inmates, protecting them from stigmatization.
- ² Recidivism is the act of committing crime by a person who has already been in conflict with the law over a three-year period immediately following release. Recidivism may result in re-arrest, reconviction, or return to prison with or without a new sentence (National Institute of Justice 2020).
- ³ The disciplinal differentiation between sociology and criminology may be unique to Philippine academia. In the Philippines, those who are trained in sociology usually land in research, teaching, and advocacy work, whereas those who take degree programs in criminology take careers in police work, jail work, or corrections. The differentiation may not be true in other contexts, but I reckoned that recognizing where the disciplines diverge and overlap makes the case that interdisciplinarity should be welcomed, especially in confronting and thinking of solutions for longstanding problems in penal management and its possible contribution to recidivism.
- ⁴ "Criminogenic" translates to "crime creating." "Criminogenic risk" is a measurement of the probability that a specific person will commit crime. The risk score takes into account education, employment opportunities, housing, family relations, anti-social personality and cognition (i.e. poor self-control, states of anger, and rationalizations toward violence), history of deviant behavior, and unproductive leisure pursuits with their peers (such as gambling, drug use, vandalism, alcoholism). (Hannah-Moffat 2005; van Horn, Eisenberg, and Souverin 2018)

- ⁵ This critical take on “gendered role” assignments was also expressed as reflections in a series of gender sensitivity workshops in Manila City Jail, conducted by faculty members of the Department of Sociology, College of Social Sciences and Philosophy, University of the Philippines Diliman as part of the unit’s extension services. Workshops were conducted in two sessions: May 14, 2018 and Nov 25, 2019. I suggest gender and queer scholars record further empirical investigations about it.
- ⁶ See UNODC Handbook for Prison Leaders (2010). However, some international protocols are not culturally sensitive to coping mechanisms and adaptations which may vary across cultures. For example, in the Philippines, there is shared governance with *pangkat* and *mayores*, recognition of VIPs (Very Important Preso [prisoner] who pay rent used for facility repairs) (Narag 2005), and *kubols* (self-made/makeshift bunk beds) are not allowed by authorities (see Narag and Jones 2020). I think RPC can serve as a framework by which we can systematize, justify, and integrate these responses.
- ⁷ Examples of street-level bureaucracy are discretionary decision-making, protocol simplifications, and non-disclosure of information. These are important from the perspective of the front lines to make job deliverables manageable (Lipsky 2010) despite various limitations and stressors.
- ⁸ Equilibrium pertains to the state of harmony that facility leaders (wardens and unit heads) try to retain, wherein everybody is maximally happy in a maximally just system, to avoid gang riots and conflicts. These come in the form of protocols and traditional ways of relating (*nakagisnang sistema*), such as legitimized importance of gangs for providing social capital and social support within jail premises. Since *nakagisnang sistema* is not stipulated in bureau’s operations manual, bureau higher-ups often do not see that wardens rely on this for peace and order since they are severely undermanned (Nario-Lopez 2017).

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hannah Nario-Lopez is a BA and MA graduate of the UP Diliman Department of Sociology. She served as a Youth Advisor for the Southeast Wyoming Juvenile Detention Center. Currently, she is helping pilot the first Inmate Risk-Needs Assessment Tool for the largest jail in Metro Manila. She may be reached at hcnario@up.edu.ph.