

Lived Experiences of Reintegration: A Case Study of How Former Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL) Experienced Reintegration in a Local Context

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Abstract:- The Philippines was one of the countries with the highest imprisonment rate for every one hundred thousand people in the population. Based on the relevant data gathered from the World Prison Brief (2020), an increasing trend in the prison population of the country can be observed. In 2016, the total prison population increased to 142,168 with a prison population rate of 140. In 2019, the total prison population ultimately reached 215,000 with a prison population rate of 200. Based on the Mandela rule, prisoners shall be called Person Deprived of Liberty (PDL) who, under the guideline of the United Nations, are entitled to minimum humanitarian treatment. The study employed the qualitative method of research using case study approach. This will be used in describing the reintegration lived experiences of the former PDL in the Iriga City Jail and their coping mechanism on the challenges of their reintegration in the local context. The study employed the qualitative method of research using case study approach.

The findings below were revealed in the study.

1. The former PDL experiences anxiety sensitivity on how other people may treat them. They also experienced trust issue from friends and relatives. The PDLs also were seeking for acceptance with fair treatment from the community members. They also expressed some difficulty on having job opportunity. As part of their day-to-day living, their life-long learnings while inside the city jail were somehow instilled to them; and,
2. The results that having the feeling of acceptance from the community, mind shifting, support from the family members, and being hopeful to positive eventualities were very important coping mechanisms in the reintegration process of any former PDL, for them to gain back and boost their self-confidence and live a normal life.

The conclusions below were drawn in the study.

1. There were shared lived experiences of the former PDLs in the reintegration process which notably highlights their anxiety sensitivity, seeking for fair treatment from the community members, the difficulty on having job opportunity, and the life-long learnings instilled to them while inside the city jail.
2. Having the feeling of acceptance from the community, mind shifting, support from the family members, and being hopeful to positive eventualities were very important coping mechanisms in the reintegration

process of any former PDL, for them to gain back and boost their self-confidence and live a normal life.

Keywords:- Lived Experiences, Persons Deprived of Liberty, Reintegration.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Philippines have a rate of crime, violence, and terrorism that is rather above average. In the year 2020, the nation was in the lowest five in the Asia Pacific region for both its order and security index ranking. In a similar vein, the Philippines was one of the countries with the highest imprisonment rate for per one hundred thousand people living there. The rate of criminal activity was especially high in locations that had greater inhabitants, higher unemployment rates, and poorer neighborhoods. (SRD, 2021).

Año noted that from a total of 139,111 incidents in 2016, the number of index crimes decreased to 41,260 in 2020 and is now at 27,523 for the first nine months of this year. Included on the list of index crimes are homicide, rape, robbery, violent assault, burglary, theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson. Because of the severity of their actions and the regularity with which they are committed, these crimes are used as a measure of the crime experience throughout the country. Citing the improved national crime situation, Año said crime volume was at a decreasing trend from 584,883 in 2016; 383,189 in 2020, and 282,631 in the first eight months of 2021. From 2016 to 2021, 307,521 drug personalities were arrested with 13,244 identified as high-value targets (HVT) in 213,504 illegal drug operations where PHP64.09 billion worth of illegal drugs were seized (PNA, accessed 2022).

The Philippine penal system is considered as one of the most concentrated systems in the world (McCarthy, 2020). Based on the relevant data gathered from the World Prison Brief (2020), an increasing trend in the prison population of the country can be observed. In 2012, the total prison population was 106,323 with a prison population rate of 111. In 2016, the total prison population increased to 142,168 with a prison population rate of 140. In 2019, the total prison population ultimately reached 215,000 with a prison population rate of 200.

Based on the Mandela rule, prisoners shall be called Person Deprived of Liberty (PDL) who, under the guideline of the United Nations, are entitled to minimum humanitarian

treatment (Echeminada, 2017). Under Article 10 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights that provides for the respect for the essential dignity of the human person, the term PDLs is adopted with the purpose that such neutral term will prevent branding by the use of derogatory words like “prisoner” and others. The new term PDLs in the Philippines appeared in the Revised Implementing Rules and Regulations, according to Section 23 of Republic Act No. 10575, otherwise known as the “The Bureau of Corrections Act of 2013.” It legally defines PDLs as “detainee, inmate, or prisoner, or other person under confinement or custody in any other manner.”

Defined as an ongoing process which is known from within by individuals, lived experience derives from the phenomenological tradition and is rooted in the enactive approach of cognition. As such, lived experience appears to be active and passive, holistic, situated in a complex temporality, and partly pre-reflective (Dieumegarda, 2021).

The Philippines is a State Party to many treaties and agreements pertaining to individuals deprived of liberty that were ratified by the United Nations. Imprisonment and other actions that result in shutting off an offender from the outside world are afflictive for the mere reason that they take away the individual's right to self-determination by robbing him or her of their liberty. This causes the person to be cut off from the outside world. As a result, the justice system must not make the suffering that is already present in such a scenario any worse, with the exception of circumstances in which doing so would be incidental to the implementation of appropriate segregation or the upkeep of appropriate discipline.

Republic Act No. 10575 is the Revised Implementing Rules and Regulations. It is hereby adopted and promulgated pursuant to Section 23 of Republic Act (RA) No. 10575, otherwise known as the “The Bureau of Corrections Act of 2013” with the intention of formulating and enforcing the appropriate rules and regulations so that the correctional services may be improved. " It is the policy of the State to promote the general welfare of every prisoner and to safeguard the basic rights of every prisoner who is incarcerated in our national penitentiary. This will be accomplished by promoting and ensuring the prisoner's reformation and social reintegration, as well as by creating an environment that is conducive to rehabilitation and is in compliance with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (UNSMRTP). In addition to this, it acknowledges that it is the state's role to enhance the government's capabilities in order to institutionalize correctional services that are both highly competent and highly efficient. (Philippines Official Gazette, 2016)

According to Senator De Lima (2019), for persons deprived of liberty, The UN System Multi-Regional Training Program (UNSMRTP) is an all-encompassing instrument that was designed to assist policymakers and implementers in ensuring that detention facilities provide possibilities for correction and reform. In addition, there are further criteria

that apply specifically to certain groups, such as women and people with disabilities. Aside from those universally accepted criteria. The Constitution of 1987 has a provision in Article III, Section 19 that states, "the use of inferior or insufficient prison institutions under subhuman circumstances will be dealt with by legislation." As a result, there are sufficient grounds for reforming our correctional and imprisonment system, both in the Constitution and in our internationally enforceable obligations, which we should pursue. But more than these legal imperatives, the reality on the ground should be what compels our officials to advocate for the changes that are so desperately required.

Thus, reintegration is not an option but rather the consequence of imprisonment given that in most cases almost everyone imprisoned will one day be released (Travis and Visser, 2005). It is defined in both narrow and broad terms. Narrowly speaking, reintegration begins the day a prisoner is released from confinement. Broadly speaking, it is a longer-term process that commences as soon as a prisoner is taken into custody and includes everything that is done to a convicted person, serving the cause of preparing the individual for success after release (Maruna, Immergreen and LeBel, 2004:5). Reintegration is a resource intensive endeavour intersecting as it does with issues of housing, family, health, education, employment and community wellbeing because prison populations typically constitute such a multitude of deficits in this regard.

As stated in Rule 59 of UNSMRTP “to this end, the institution should utilize all the remedial, educational, moral, spiritual and other forces and forms of assistance which are appropriate and available, and should seek to apply them according to the individual treatment needs of the prisoners” (Philippines Official Gazette, 2016) On a national scale, the Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) shall be able to completely deliver the actual realization of deterrence (both special and general deterrence), restraint, reformation, retribution, and restoration as major interventions for the treatment of law offenders towards a safe, secure, harmonious, and progressive Philippine society. To this end, the State shall provide for the modernization, professionalization, and restructuring of the Bureau of Corrections by upgrading its facilities, increasing the number of its personnel, upgrading the level of qualifications of their personnel, and standardizing their base pay, retirement, and other benefits, bringing it up to par with that of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP), and maximization of land use development for the agency's sustainability.

➤ *Theoretical/Conceptual Framework*

The study is anchored on the theory of role accumulation postulated by Sieber (1974). The assumption that multiplicity of roles produces a strong tendency toward role strain as a consequence of role conflict or role overload is disputed. The benefits of role accumulation tend to outweigh any stress to which it might give rise, thereby yielding net gratification. Four types of rewards derived from role accumulation are discussed: role-privileges; overall status security; resources for status enhancement and role

performance; and enrichment of the personality and ego gratification.

The importance of taking rights more fully into account in research and theory is emphasized. The possibility that barriers to role accumulation are a source of social instability is briefly assayed. A key assumption underlies current theories of social roles—those multiple relationships with diverse role partners is a source of psychological stress and social instability. Goode (1960:485) in particular supports this viewpoint, although it is more or less implicit in the writings of most role theorists. Goode introduced the term

"role strain" to signify the difficulty of performing multiple roles, asserting that the resultant tendency toward strain is a ubiquitous feature of social life.

Figure 1 depicts the analytical/conceptual paradigm of the study. The input primarily focuses on the investigation of the reintegration lived experiences of the former PDL. It also evaluates the coping mechanisms of the former PDL in their reintegration in the local context. The process is qualitative using case study approach by employing the purposive criterion method in selecting the participants of the study.

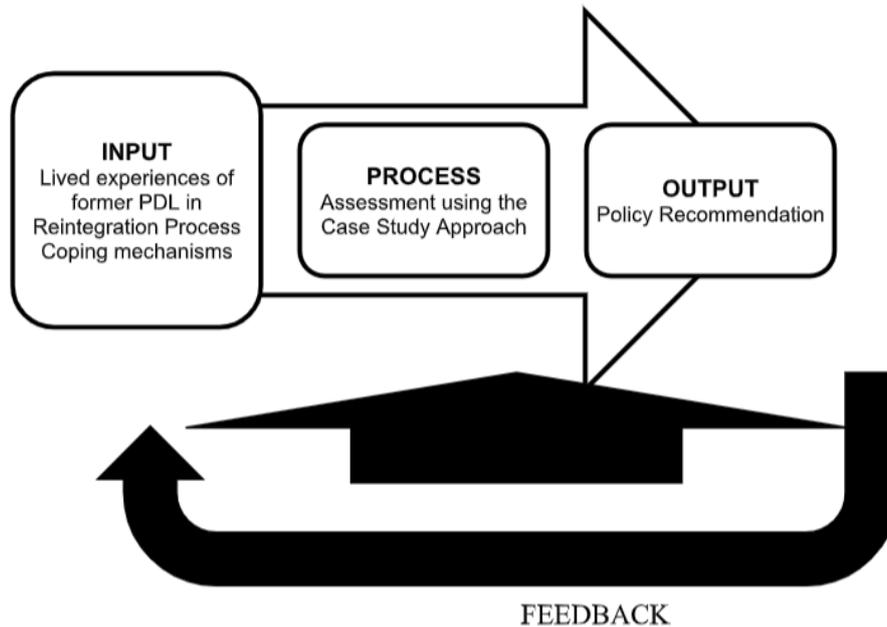


Fig 1:- Analytical/Conceptual Paradigm

The output of this research could serve as feedback for policy making to the Iriga City Jail and BuCor as a whole on other measures to further strengthen their reintegration program of the former PDL and help them improve the quality of life with the community members. The purpose of this is to help the PDLs improve their quality of life despite the circumstances by developing their appreciation and respect for the law and in turn, reduce their tendencies to recidivate, and prepare them for reintegration in society.

Statement of the Problem and Hypotheses. The study intends to investigate the reintegration lived experiences of the former Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL) in the Iriga City Jail.

Specifically, it aimed to answer the following questions: What are the lived experiences of the former PDL in their reintegration process?

What are the coping mechanism of former PDL’s on the challenges of their reintegration in the local context?..

II. DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The present study is basically a qualitative type of research using the phenomenological approach. A qualitative research design is a strategy that is used to explain life events and give them significance. This methodology is methodically subjective.

➤ *Research Design and Methodology*

The study employed the qualitative method of research using case study approach. This was used in describing the reintegration lived experiences of the former PDL in the Iriga City Jail and their coping mechanism on the challenges of their reintegration in the local context. Results of the study could serve as basis in determining the most effective reformation programs being given by the Iriga City Jail personnel. The purpose of qualitative research is to acquire knowledge and to investigate the breadth, depth, richness, and complexity of the topic being studied. (University of Missouri-St.Louis, n.d.).

➤ *Population and Locale of the Study*

As qualitative study, the participants were seven (7) former PDL's with cases on crimes against property detailed at Iriga City Jail and were released at least five (5) year back, that is from year 017 to 2022, and who are currently residing in the Fifth District of Camarines Sur.

➤ *Data Gathering Tool*

The study made use of an unstructured interview format and document analysis. These data gathering tools mentioned above were utilized together to gather wide-ranging data that can provide the subjective and objective indications from the respondents as well as the key informants. The gathered detailed information from the research tools were process in triangulation to validate whether the given data through the unstructured interview guide is precise with objective cues.

➤ *Data Gathering Procedure*

In data gathering, the researcher sought permission to the Head of Iriga City Jail. The main procedure to used is interview through an individual face-to-face semi-structured or unstructured interview guided format. Other technique employed is the document analysis as form of triangulation to confirm the responses of the participants.

➤ *Treatment of Data*

As qualitative study, the data gathered were analyzed according to its clustered meaning. The codes and themes were formulated as the researcher analyzes through the data. These transformations were tied together to frame a general description and interpretation of the experience. This data was processed using the application of a Topic Modelling Software.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the significant findings of the study and were divided into two (2) parts. The first part presented the lived experiences of the former PDL in their reintegration process. And, the second part identified the coping mechanism of former PDL's on the challenges of their reintegration in the local context.

➤ *Lived experiences of the former PDL*

This presents the lived experiences of the former PDL in their reintegration process. It showed that the most common lived experiences of the respondents expressed were the feeling of anxiety sensitivity, trust issue, seeking for fair treatment, job opportunity, and their life learnings as PDL.

Results revealed that most of the former PDL had experienced a trust issue among their relatives and friends. The former PDL participants is somehow seeking also for fair treatment from the community. It is however good to note that another participant had experienced fair treatment from his colleague. The participants also had the feeling of anxiety sensitivity. The former PDL also had the feeling of difficulty in looking for job opportunity. There is also one who said that he also had some job opportunity like laborer on construction projects, as baggage boy and buy and sell. The

last lived experiences expressed by the former PDL is the life learnings they had while inside the city jail.

It could be inferred from the results that the former PDL experiences anxiety sensitivity on how other people may treat them. They also experienced trust issue not only from friends but even from their relatives. As they want to live a normal life, the PDLs also were also seeking for acceptance with fair treatment from the community members. They also expressed some difficulty on having job opportunity. As part of their day-to-day living, their life-long learnings while inside the city jail were somehow instilled to them.

➤ *Coping mechanism of former PDL's*

This portion showed the findings on the coping mechanisms identified of the former PDL's on the challenges of their reintegration in the local context. The various coping mechanisms of the former PDL's in their reintegration process such as the feeling of hope, acceptance by the community members, family support, mind shifting, and the feeling of acceptance.

One of the coping mechanisms of the former PDL's on the challenges encountered in their reintegration is the feeling of acceptance from the community members. Mind shifting is a change of focus and perception and having a family support as part of the reintegration process is very important to the former PDL.

Finally, the former PDLs had the feeling of hope that one day, they will be accepted completely by the community, and they could gain back the trust and confidence of the people.

It could be inferred from the results that having the feeling of acceptance from the community, mind shifting, support from the family members, and being hopeful to positive eventualities were very important coping mechanisms in the reintegration process of any former PDL, for them to gain back and boost their self-confidence and live a normal life.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

➤ *The conclusions below were drawn in the study.*

There were shared lived experiences of the former PDLs in the reintegration process which notably highlights their anxiety sensitivity, seeking for fair treatment from the community members, the difficulty on having job opportunity, and the life-long learnings instilled to them while inside the city jail.

Having the feeling of acceptance from the community, mind shifting, support from the family members, and being hopeful to positive eventualities were very important coping mechanisms in the reintegration process of any former PDL, for them to gain back and boost their self-confidence and live a normal life.

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