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Positioning Analysis of Filipino Family Narratives in the Context of Prisoner Reintegration

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Abstract

Prisoner reintegration may be viewed as a crisis situation that may lead to a period of instability within the family. Existing researches in this area remain focused on the individual perspective of ex-offenders rather than the experiences of receiving families back in their households. In this study, we aim to examine the reintegration experiences of the family as a group from an initial state of chaos to equilibrium upon the reentry of an incarcerated parent. Using a sample of 12 interviews of family members left behind by incarcerated fathers, three major storylines relating to the family's struggle for moral re-ascendancy in the context of parental reintegration are identified: othering, rehabilitation, and restoration. We explain the interlocking emotional, discursive, and material forms of labor embedded in the process of prisoner reintegration. Policy implications on social and institutional aid to the families of reintegrating fathers are also discussed.

Keywords

prisoner reintegration, victimization, mothering, stigma, familial process, fathers

Prisoner reintegration is a complex process of transitioning from being incarcerated back into society, which involves re-adjusting and reconnecting to families, communities, work, and civic life (Rosenthal & Wolf, 2004; Sampson & Laub, 2003). Previous studies showed the manifold challenges ex-offenders face in their transition from prison to society such as social stigma and low family bonds (Arditti & Few, 2008; Opsal & Foley, 2013). To buffer the risk of recidivism, findings showed that ex-offenders felt a higher chance of desistance and ease of reintegration due to abstinence of drug use, availability of employment, strong family support and circle of friends, personal motivation to change, and old age (Davis, Bahr, & Ward, 2012). In this process of transition, scholars posited that the family is an important support system in the post-release adjustment of ex-offenders (Berg & Huebner, 2011; Visher, 2013).

As normative psychological and systemic processes are challenged, families left behind may experience instability of relationship dynamics and re-assignment of roles and routines upon the reentry of a formerly incarcerated member (Farrall, 2002; Few-Demo & Arditti, 2014; Luther, Reichert, Holloway, Roth, & Aalsma, 2011; Martinez, 2006). However, studies on the experiences of receiving family members of ex-offenders remain scant. Also, past studies implicitly viewed families as stable support systems that readily accept ex-offenders (Bahr, Armstrong, Gibbs, Harris, & Fisher, 2005). Thus, a better understanding of experiences of family

members would enable professionals to address specific issues and needs of families and their role toward successful prisoner reintegration.

The purpose of this research is to explore the reintegration experiences and relational dynamics within the family from the perspective of its receiving members. Applying insights from positioning theory as a discursive approach (e.g., Bartlett, 2008; Harré & van Langenhove, 1999), we examined stories of family members in their struggle to regain stability in their household, mend familial connections, and strengthen social relationships with the larger community amid stigma. The objective is to build on critical work about prisoner reintegration using qualitative interviews of Filipino family members left behind. From a developing country context, we aim to contribute knowledge on interlocking emotional, discursive, and material labor of receiving family members in the context of prisoner reintegration. The main questions we ask in this research are as follows:

Research Question 1: What are the major storylines constructed in accounts of receiving family members?

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Research Question 2: What are the positions embedded within these storylines in the context of prisoner reintegration?

Challenges to Parental Reintegration

For ex-offenders, reintegration is a major transition from the prison back to the rest of society. In transitioning, however, they may feel financially and socially vulnerable due to the many changes that occurred while they were incarcerated (Farkas & Miller, 2007; Woodall, Dixey, & South, 2013). Risks that may hinder ex-offenders from successfully reintegrating back to society abound. Due to a history of incarceration, diminished prospects for employment, frequent work rejections and experiences of discrimination, and difficulty maintaining stable jobs are experienced by some ex-offenders (Esteban, Alós, Jódar, & Miguélez, 2014; Sangoi & Goshin, 2014; Turney, Lee, & Comfort, 2013; van Olphen, Eliason, Freudenberg, & Barnes, 2009; Wakefield & Uggem, 2010; Western, Braga, Davis, & Sirois, 2015). These opportunity setbacks may affect their psychological and physical well-being, which can include heightened risk to depression (e.g., Turney, Wildeman, & Schnittker, 2012), substance abuse (e.g., van Olphen et al., 2009), and even suicide (e.g., Jones & Maynard, 2013).

Re-adjustment problems related to forming or renewing relationships with peers and family members may also occur, which may lead to further social isolation (Tewksbury & Copes, 2013; van Olphen et al., 2009). Despite these relational difficulties, some findings also showed that ex-offenders were still optimistic and hopeful about their lives outside prison (Benson, Alarid, Burton, & Cullen, 2011; Guse & Hudson, 2013). Their positive outlook toward the future may help lower feelings of depression (Shinkfield & Graffam, 2010). To provide psychological and material support to ex-offenders, religious organizations, along with the support from the family and community, are engaged in assisting incarcerated individuals to lead normal lives beyond their prison term (Markway & Worsham, 2009; Shinkfield & Graffam, 2008; Zimmer, 2005).

Role of Family Support in Parental Reintegration

The family is the closest social unit that may provide ex-offenders with warmth and acceptance. Receiving families act as a buffer system, which provides emotional, informational, and financial support in the reintegration process (Cobbina, 2010; Davis et al., 2012; Naser & La Vigne, 2006; Naser & Visser, 2006; Wallace et al., 2016). However, family support upon reintegration may not always be available. For instance, family members left behind may have to recover from the experience of ambiguous loss (Bocknek, Sanderson, & Britner, 2008). Ambiguous loss pertains to relationship incongruence, which occurs when a close connection still exists between a person and someone physically absent for a long time. The ambiguous loss theory may explain why families may face

challenges in reestablishing family relationships and in reassigning familial roles during the reintegration period (Few-Demo & Arditti, 2014; Lindquist, McKay, McDonald, Herman-Stahlm, & Bir, 2009).

Ex-offenders may also realize that their families have changed so much while in prison. For instance, studies showed increased personal and social vulnerabilities, which may include impaired reconstruction of familial ties between children, spouses, and ex-offenders, and family conflicts due to drug use among ex-offenders (Dolwick Grieb et al., 2014; Mowen & Visser, 2015; Naser & Visser, 2006). Furthermore, families may have to contend with prison-related stressors carried by ex-offenders such as the potential stigma transference among receiving members (Farkas & Miller, 2007). In response to this, withdrawal or secrecy is often an adaptive coping mechanism of family members to avoid stigma by association with ex-offenders (Winnick & Bodkin, 2008).

A Multisystemic View of Prisoner Reintegration

Extant literature on prisoner reintegration offered valuable insights on the catalysts and impediments to successful reintegration. Many studies have underscored the instrumentality of the family in the successful reintegration of ex-offenders, yet few have looked closely into the perspectives and stories of family members supporting reintegrating parents. For example, a recent critique contends that current reintegration policies highly focus on the individual ex-offender perspective (Datchi, Barretti, & Thompson; Sexton, 2016). Despite prisoner reintegration being a social issue, adult criminal behavior is still understood as an individual phenomenon, and that accountability remains at a personal level. In line with this critique, we echo Datchi, Barretti, and Thompson's (2016) assertion that prisoner reintegration needs to be viewed from a multisystemic perspective, which encourages an integration of family care systems in the successful reentry of the prisoner. In the context of this study, their assertion underscores the important role of receiving families of ex-offenders as valuable resources for economic and emotional support for successful reentry. However, the stories of receiving family members seem to be pushed in the background in relation to the primacy of understanding ex-offender needs. The experience of prisoner reintegration in the family can be understood as a micro-transition wherein receiving members jointly construct new meanings and readjust their roles and relationships to accommodate ex-offenders (Martinez, 2006; Molinari, Everri, & Fruggeri, 2010).

Positioning Theory as a Lens to Understand Familial Processes

In this study, we used positioning theory as our analytical approach to examine how family members reconstruct meanings related to their roles and social relationships in the context

of prisoner reintegration. Positioning theory suggests the usefulness of positions as a dynamic alternative to the concept of roles (Davies & Harré, 1990). Whereas roles are deemed stable across time, positions are more fluid and are adapted from a variety of discursive resources available to the individual. The aforementioned theoretical lens has been utilized in studies on health and clinical psychology (Sabat, 2003), organizational psychology (Hirvonen, 2016), and social movements and peace process (Louis, 2008; Montiel & Christie, 2008).

The main premise of positioning theory is that day-to-day social interactions can be fragmented into distinct social episodes (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999). Dynamics of social episodes are examined in terms of an interactional triad: positions, speech acts, and storylines (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999). Positions are clusters of rights and duties, which form the normative constraints of social actions (Harré & Slocum, 2003). The moral acceptability of actions by actors is evaluated vis-à-vis the prevailing local moral order (Slocum-Bradley, 2009). According to Harré (1987), a moral order is defined as “a system of rights, obligations and duties obtaining on society, together with the criteria by which people and their activities are valued” (p. 219).

Positioning theory also underscores the intentionality of acts—that is, acts are directed to another actor (Adams & Harré, 2003). Speech acts are social in that they occur within a relational context. The discursive force of speech acts may legitimize, delegitimize, justify, reinforce, maintain, or contest prevailing discourses (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999; Sabat, 2003). For example, in the context of prisoner reintegration, members may engage in gatekeeping for stigma management—that is, to silence malignant positioning of the father as criminal. However, utterances only have social meaning as they follow a certain storyline. Storylines, therefore, provide logical coherence and intelligibility to the flow of social interaction. Using these storylines, positions are accorded to actors in relation to the local moral order (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999; Slocum-Bradley, 2009).

In articulating the applicability of positioning theory to the analysis of transitions in the family, we draw insights from the dialectical relationship between roles and positions. Henriksen (2008) posits that positions (i.e., cluster of rights and duties) and roles (i.e., derived from existing social structures) are not necessarily in theoretical opposition to each other. The overlap in these two concepts may be observed in the processes of crystallization of positions to roles and liquidation of roles to positions. In the context of prisoner reintegration, reentry of ex-offenders may also pose a threat to the stability of the family, as established roles that have crystallized are challenged and become fluid positions to accommodate the return. Across time, receiving family members continue to negotiate discursively produced meanings vis-à-vis prevailing structures that enable and constrain (Bartlett, 2008; Winker & Degele, 2011). Framed in this manner, we assume the inseparability of relational struggles of family

members with the legal, social, and cultural structures that continuously shape the process of prisoner reintegration.

Statement of the Problem

Using positioning theory, the study sought to examine the complex lives of families immersed in the context of parental reintegration post-incarceration. Specifically, the study aims (a) to identify the major storylines constructed from accounts of receiving family members and (b) to identify the positions embedded in these storylines in the context of prisoner reintegration.

Method

Local Cultural Context

Previous studies highlight the importance of gendered accounts of incarcerated parents. Findings in other countries showed that males have higher risk of recidivism than females, although risk differs across age groups (Abrifor, Atere, & Muoghalu, 2012). Points of focus include, but are not limited to, roles, ideologies, and consequences of “mothering” and “fathering” (Granja, da Cunha, & Machado, 2015; Swisher & Waller, 2008). Although the nuancing of gendered meanings is valued, this study subsumes (but not minimizes) these meanings within the larger cultural ideologies of the Filipino family. Conversations of and within the family reproduce systematic structuring of moral relationships and institutions embedded in the exchange (Blain, 1994). Reflexively, we view narrative accounts of family members as culturally grounded dialogical sites in the production of social life (Tanggaard, 2009).

Study Design

A qualitative approach was adopted to address the study objectives. The qualitative approach deals with the exploration of inductively generated descriptions and meanings of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2003; Willig, 2013). In this study, six families with formerly imprisoned fathers were purposively sampled. Filipino fathers, as a case exemplar, normatively function as the main breadwinner of the family and as a stable source of economic support and protection for its members (Jocano, 1998). In the initial context of paternal incarceration, mothers and children left behind may experience challenges until they regain equilibrium as a group. However, upon reentry, Filipino fathers may heavily experience a double-tiered struggle to assert their “rightful” place at work or within the family (see also Dillaway & Paré, 2008) due to felt and enacted stigma. It is along this backdrop wherein we locate accounts of mothers and children.

Study Setting

The New Bilibid Prison, located in the city of Muntinlupa, houses bulk of the prison population of the Philippines.

Outside its premises are nearby communities where families of incarcerated and reintegrating individuals reside. The proximity enables frequent interactions between incarcerated individuals and their loved ones.

Participants of the study were family members supporting incarcerated fathers previously imprisoned in the New Bilibid Prison. We also recognized that not all crimes carry equal weight and moral consequences (e.g., theft vs. murder). This study limits the scope of crime to committed murder, which explains stronger stigma associated to fathers and their receiving family members. Participants were also from low-to-lower middle class urban families. They are all affiliated with Philippine Jesuit Prison Services Foundation, Inc. (PJPS), a non-government, non-profit organization that provides support to incarcerated and reintegrating individuals, as well as their families. As a caveat, even though PJPS's scholars were interviewed for the study, questions asked did not revolve around the services the institution provides but rather on their family experiences before, during, and after the incarceration of a family member—the father in particular.

Target Population, Sample Size, and Ethical Considerations

Six mother–children pairs filially related to a reintegrating father were purposively sampled for the study. The mothers engaged in multiple employments to earn for their families (e.g., buy and sell, house help, painter, construction helper), whereas their children studied in local public schools. The identification of participants was done with the help of a partner institution, the PJPS Foundation, Inc. The following criteria for the selection of participants were observed: (a) the reintegrating father should have been released for at least 1 year prior to the conduct of the interviews (i.e., incarceration period ranged from 4 to 20 years), (b) the father and the mother were not separated, and (c) the child to be interviewed must be at least 12 years old. These criteria were put in place for the purposes of standardization and to ensure minimal risk to the participants.

Due to the sensitive nature of the topic, ethical soundness of the design protocol was reviewed and approved by two external panelists. Children aged between 11 and 15 years were asked to sign assent forms whereas mothers were asked to sign consent forms with a written clause stating their willingness to allow their children to participate in the study. They were given full liberty to withdraw their participation in the study, and were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and the anonymity of their identities in the written report. Pseudonyms were used in the written report to protect the participants' real identities.

Data Collection Instrument

The study employed interviews as its main data collection strategy. Tanggaard (2009) posited that research interviews

provide dialogical contexts for the production of social life and personal narratives. Interviewees draw from a variety of discursive repertoires in positioning themselves and others in their accounts. Within the interview setting, participants both evoke their own reflexive positions and ascribe positions to other actors in their narratives. It is in this light that the research interview as a data collection strategy complements positioning theory as a discursive theoretical lens in the analysis of the dynamic and joint construction of meanings in social interactions.

To capture the meaning-making processes of family members supporting reintegrating fathers, a semi-structured interview guide was used. The questions revolved on their experiences before, during, and after the father's incarceration. Questions that probe on specific details were asked as deemed necessary, allowing for a balance of flexibility and focus in terms of the questions that were asked.

Data Collection

Pilot testing was undertaken to refine the semi-structured interview guide with the aid of the partner institution. After which, interviews with identified families were scheduled. These were conducted in a well-ventilated room provided by the partner institution. Mothers and children were interviewed simultaneously in two separate places. One of the researchers interviewed all the mothers while the other interviewed all the children to control for interviewer characteristics that might influence the interviewees' responses to the questions.

Rapport was established through short introductions prior to the interview. Mothers were asked to sign consent forms while the children were asked to sign assent forms after a verbal explanation of the nature of the study and the participant's rights. It was made clear to the participants that the study is completely voluntary and that they may withdraw at any point of the interview without any consequence. They were also given time to ask questions, if any. After which, verbal permission to record the interview was sought from the participants. The interviews then proceeded. They lasted from less than an hour to 2 hr, depending on the pace.

Data Analysis

To systematically organize textual data, researchers transcribed the interviews. Each of the researchers transcribed the set of interviews they conducted. Repeated iterations of reading and re-reading of transcripts were conducted after data transcription to strengthen validity of the analysis. Data analysis was done manually following positioning analysis (see also, for example, Ofreneo & Montiel, 2010). After which, accounts that relate to experiences after the father's release from prison were extracted from the data corpus to facilitate data analysis. Data analysis involved three major stages. The first stage of analysis included the identification

of (a) major storylines, (b) social forces of utterances within each storyline, (c) clusters of rights and duties (i.e., positions) of the family system and the individual family members within each storyline, and (d) structural constraints to positioning. The second stage of analysis involved the clustering of storylines into an overarching storyline, parallel to the identification of a superordinate theme in thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The last stage involved writing descriptions of major storylines together with the positions taken up by collective and individual actors within those storylines. This stage also involved the identification of exemplar accounts that illustrate clearly the meaning of each storyline. As cultural insiders, iterative analyses from data transcription to writing of results involve critical discussions, which underscore the partial and reflexive construction of meanings over a period of time (i.e., immersion and distancing from data and writing).

Results

To answer the research questions, (a) what are the major storylines constructed from accounts of receiving family members and (b) what are the positions embedded in these storylines in the context of prisoner reintegration, positioning analysis was employed. Results show an emotional struggle for moral re-ascendancy of malignantly positioned families. Entrenched in the unique and rich context of the intersection of crime and economic vulnerability, they actively contest their moral position as a family. In particular, three major storylines emerged in the analysis: (a) othering, (b) rehabilitation, and (c) restoration. These storylines temporally unfold in a non-linear fashion, with the second and third major storylines happening simultaneously. It should be noted that the voices of children may seem “silent” in the first storyline. The sampled interviews of children showed limited knowledge (e.g., vague articulation of father’s imprisonment) or muted discussion of the incarceration history of their fathers (e.g., some children opted not to dwell on sensitive topics when probed). Children’s “silence” as discursive utterance, however, is recognized as important to the unfolding of the storylines. In relation to this, silencing of children’s voices may indicate participants’ desire to protect and maintain a positive image of their families. In the following subsections, we present a sample of exemplar accounts to elucidate and expound on the meaning of each storyline.

Othering Storyline: Freed but Still Chained

The legal system, which has convicted the father for his crime in the name of legal justice, consequently conferred the father an implicit derogatory label (i.e., criminal/ex-convict). This structurally conferred label is evoked in the ideology on the father as an incapable “bad” person (i.e., an ex-convict), thus becoming part of his social identity. Consequently, this ascribed social identity malignantly positions the father as a

dangerous threat to society. The family is not spared from this dynamic, as the malignant positioning of the father also apparently positions the people closest to him (i.e., immediate family circle) as morally contaminated. Ultimately, the entire family system is then implicitly positioned as morally contaminated, and therefore, worthy of denigration and social exclusion.

Anna’s account referred to the existing legal–moral ideology of punishing people who commit acts of malevolence toward other people. In the context of crime, this gives non-criminals a right to denigrate the convicted, whether they were already released or not.

We were told before, “Don’t go near him. He was imprisoned . . . He’s a murderer.” But you’d see them approach my husband when he has money. If he doesn’t, they treat him like dung. Yeah, that’s how people outside bars are . . . If you were imprisoned before, they’ll treat you like dung. (Anna, mother of two)

Anna shared an instance when her husband, Charles, experienced outright denigration and belittlement because of his history of incarceration. She alluded to the felt presence of people external to the family system who treated her husband with aversion, having been convicted of murder. However, the tension blurs with the father’s acquisition of economic capital (i.e., money) thereby suggesting that the aforementioned may subvert the malignant positioning of the father as a dangerous threat to society. However, in a situation of economic vulnerability, repositioning through the acquisition of economic capital is difficult to achieve, if not impossible. Sarah’s account showed how fathers are able to negotiate initial malignant positioning despite the pervasiveness of economic vulnerability.

[Isn’t it the case that] if you are an ex-convict, [people will] say that you can’t be trusted because you’re an ex-convict? That’s why our life is unstable. Sometimes, we have food on our tables. Sometimes we don’t . . . [My husband just says], “Prisoners are people. We are all equal. We don’t care if you don’t trust us. What matters is that we trust ourselves.” (Sarah, mother of four)

In the account above, Sarah described the manner by which her husband, John, discursively repositioned himself in relation to those who have positioned him as an untrustworthy worker (drawing from the father’s malignant positioning as a “bad” person). Explicitly articulated in Sarah’s account is the collective view of the family as financially unstable. Unable to reposition through the acquisition of economic capital, Sarah (invoking John’s voice) drew from the existing ideology of equality of all persons, followed by a statement of confidence in a moral self. By discursively repositioning through the affirmation of confidence in a moral self, John was able to deflect his malignant positioning as an untrustworthy worker. However, some fathers are unable to personally draw from readily available ideologies

to counter initial malignant positioning. In which case, mothers felt the need to intervene to thwart the malignant positioning of the father. Anna's account illustrates the contestations of positions associated with the aforementioned familial process.

At first . . . my husband always grumbles. I observed that he always whines. [Then] I found out that he's just paid a hundred pesos for a day's work . . . I asked him, "Why? Why are you acting like that?" He said, "[I got so tired working today]. Work ended at 6 [pm]. [W]e started early morning. [That's an entire day of work] and I was only paid a hundred pesos . . ." I asked, "Why?" He said, "That's what they gave. [What can I do?] I don't want to work anymore . . . They treat me like a slave . . ." I said, "Then don't come back anymore . . ." After a while his employer went to our house. [I] went out to face him. I told [his employer], "My husband won't work for you anymore Sir . . . You treat him like a prisoner. My husband has already been released! His salary should've been four hundred pesos . . ." That's why I said he can't work anymore . . . I won't allow him to do [those part-time jobs]. I'll just make him take care of our children. I'll just do other people's laundry [for a living]. (Anna, mother of two)

In the quote above, Anna described her husband's frustration over work. She added that her Charles's frustration stemmed from the unjust remuneration he received despite his hefty workload. Malignantly positioned as an ex-convict (and therefore, a "bad" person), Charles was unable to steer his employer's unfair treatment. Unable to discursively contest initial positioning, Charles declared his desire to quit his job, as he was being treated like a slave. In this instance, there was a deliberate attempt to maneuver through initial positioning through withdrawal or avoidance. In such a powerless situation, Anna felt the need to confront the employer and told him that her husband must not be treated like a captive, and that he deserves proper treatment. By doing so, she was able to reposition the employer as the abuser and her husband as the abused.

Furthermore, positioned as her husband's defender, she was able to enact personal power over her husband who was displaced in his deployment to the domestic sphere of house work. In this specific instance, violent episodes may emerge from the piercing of social stigma that encroached on relationships of family members. To explain further the assertion of personal power of the wife over her husband, domestic contestations of power embedded in episodes of spousal conflict may be examined. To illustrate, Lara narrated an experience of domestic violence, which involved complex marital contestations of power.

[There was this instance between my husband and my eldest son]. [My husband] kept blurting out [harsh words]. My eldest son, on the other hand, just slept to avoid hearing his father's [ranting]. [When his father caught him sleeping], he was slapped . . . My child was so shocked! When [my son stood up], my husband grabbed his shirt and hit him in the chest. That's when

I got mad. That's when I got really mad . . . I said words [I never thought I'd say] . . . He told me, "Get out of this house!" . . . I said, "You get out of this house. We don't need you anymore. Of what use are you if you'd just let me shoulder the entire burden? What kind of a father are you? [It's you who should] get out of this house." (Lara, mother of three)

In the quote above, Lara described a domestic conflict episode with her husband James after the latter inflicted physical and verbal violence upon his child, Jack. Her patience having been extinguished, Lara felt the need to retaliate to protect her child. After James said that Lara and her children should leave their home, Lara said that it was James who should leave. In this exchange, she drew from the existing cultural ideology of the father as a failed breadwinner in discursively positioning James as an incapable "bad" father. As such, James was unable to provide for them and has abandoned his obligations, thereby giving Lara the right to re-assert control. Specifically, Lara was able to reposition herself as the family's breadwinner and as a responsible "good" mother, consequently having the right to evict the father from their home. In this situation, we showed a shift in domestic power relations that may occur as a consequence of the father's inability to fulfill his responsibility as the family's provider. This structural constraint to positioning (i.e., lack of job opportunities for the reintegrating father) may, therefore, inflict pressure on individual family members and may exacerbate familial conflict, thereby crippling existing family relationships (e.g., through escalated spousal violence).

Furthermore, the implicit derogatory label of the father as an ex-convict does not only affect the father himself but also his family. Anna echoes this idea:

Before, people ridicule us. "Oh, don't get near that woman. Her husband was imprisoned. Her husband is an ex-convict." People avoid us before . . . When my husband got out of prison, people avoid us . . . Those civilians. [One time someone told] my daughter not to stay close to her child because Jane's father was imprisoned. I just told my daughter, "Let it be. Let it be if the world seems to have banished you. [We still have our God. He won't banish anyone.]" (Anna, mother of two)

In the account above, Anna described instances when she and her daughter experienced othering as a consequence of the malignant positioning of the father as a dangerous threat. In this utterance, Anna and Jane were positioned as morally contaminated with biologically imprinted danger (i.e., tendency to kill runs in the family), which then evoked an aversive response from others. Family members, as a result, experienced banishment or exile, which they cannot readily contest. To reposition, mothers needed to protect their children's identity against the felt stigma of having an incarcerated father. In the process of negotiation, Anna repositioned her daughter Jane as "innocent in God's eyes," despite having been banished from the rest of the world.

Rehabilitation Storyline: Keep the Gates Closed

Despite internal (i.e., reestablishing family relationships) and external (i.e., social stigmatization and financial instability) shocks that shake its foundation, the family strives to maintain equilibrium. To resist further stigmatization and moral denigration, the family closes in to itself (i.e., rehabilitates from the inside). In this familial process of rehabilitation, members within the family are accorded the right to limit the disclosure of information about the father's incarceration (i.e., positioned as gatekeepers). In this context, fathers are discursively positioned as personally victimized, thus discursively repositioning the father from perpetrator to the aggrieved. This extends to the entire family system, which is consequently positioned as collectively oppressed.

Knowledge management through non-utterance or "silencing" occurs within the family to safeguard the children from psychological harm. Accounts show that parents deliberately gate kept information about the father's incarceration to their children. Silencing or non-utterance as a discursive strategy, then, may serve the function of maintaining a sense of normalcy within the family.

I don't know. They won't tell me the reason for his imprisonment. They won't tell me why. (Nina, grandchild of Mary)

In the quote above, Nina declared that even though she knew that her grandfather (whom she treated as her father) had been incarcerated before, she still did not know the full story behind it because her parents had opted not to disclose the aforementioned information. With silencing as a form of knowledge management, mothers were able to effectively position their children as innocent accorded the duty of not knowing further. Children's accounts, moreover, suggest that silence also occurs as a function of stigma management. In her account, Nina alluded to a sense of disbelief that her father had been previously incarcerated, and consequently chooses to keep mum about it. She adds,

I really didn't want to believe that Dada was imprisoned. What if others find out? Of course, they would poke fun at you and say that your dad is evil, that he isn't a good person. So there. I just kept it as a secret. I never told anyone about it, even to my friends. (Nina, grandchild of Mary)

In the quote above, Nina implied that her disbelief stemmed from her inability to distinguish between her grandfather's self as perceived by members of the family (i.e., as a responsible father) and her grandfather's self as perceived by others outside the family (i.e., as an ex-convict). At this point, reconciling contrary positions has been difficult for Nina. Moreover, wary of the possible implications of disclosing her father's history of incarceration even to her closest peers, she consequently positions herself as a gatekeeper having the right to restrict disclosure of information about her grandfather's incarceration. We suggest that this

positioning has a double-tiered social force: to protect the family system and to preserve existing social relationships.

Furthermore, the familial process of rehabilitation in the context of parental reintegration involves the discursive positioning of the father as a victim of the external environment to thwart his initial malignant positioning as a dangerous threat to society. Mary echoes this assertion.

[It's important] that he always can come home to a family who will accept him no matter what he's been through. Because, it's not easy to be released, right? It's not easy to be released. You're there inside for a long time . . . You can't easily fight the temptations that lurk in the environment . . . What's important is that he has a family that's ready to accept him. He is not to be judged for his mistakes, but to usher towards recovery. We can't just let someone get stuck in his mistakes, right? We need to help him get over it and start anew. I believe that it is man's nature to be good. No one is created evil. Malevolence lurks in the environment and you can be a victim of it if you are unaware right? But when you realize that you are already being held victim, that's when you're ready to change . . . (Mary, mother of three)

In the account above, Mary drew from the existing ideology of trusting humanity's intrinsic goodness in discursively repositioning the father as a victim of harsh social environment. In such a powerless state of the father, Mary discursively positioned herself together with her children as biological moral anchors (e.g., a family who will accept him no matter what) accorded the right to assist the father in his moral rehabilitation. Ultimately, these positionings implicitly view the family as collectively oppressed by actors external to the family, which hinder the successful reintegration of the father and threatens the stability of the family system.

Explaining this further, we suggest that temporally contingent discursive repositioning through the situational reframing of the father as victim has a two-tiered social force. On one hand, it counters the malignant positioning of the father as a dangerous threat to society. Reframing the reintegrating father as victimized, he is relegated from aggressor to the aggrieved. This suggests transference of blame from the person to the environment, which may reclaim the father's innocence. On the other hand, positioning the father as personally victimized consequently debunks the malignant positioning of the father's family as morally contaminated and consequently discursively positions it as morally upright.

Restoration Storyline: A Hope Beckons

Economically crippled yet internally intact, the family anticipates a future emancipation from their dismal state. In this context, a hope beckons as the family embarks on a project toward its collective restoration. In this familial process, the redemptive instrumentality of the child in the moral repositioning of the family is underscored. Discursively positioned as embodied hope, children are accorded the duty of

redeeming the family from its socially vulnerable state. Having raised their children well, mothers and fathers are consequently positioned as responsible parents who work hard for the well-being of their children.

Sarah's account suggests a feeling of relief over their daily survival despite the challenges her family faces.

In God's grace, we survive. I [told my children], "We'll get through this. It won't be like this forever. Just study hard. And just don't lose hope. Let's just keep our faith in God. That's number one" You know, my child's in the star section . . . She really perseveres. (Sarah, mother of four)

In a situation of crippling economic vulnerability, Sarah repositions through strengthening personal faith. Positioned as a faithful believer in God, she stated her confidence in a brighter future, which is yet to come for her family. She placed utmost importance in complete submission in God's will, implicitly articulating the position of the family as economically vulnerable. This submission to God's will opens up the space for hope for the family, which is embodied in the children. To further stress the position of her child as a persistent student, she mentioned that her child was in the cream section, thereby declaring the child's academic prowess.

Meanwhile, accounts suggest that parents strive to raise their children well. Mary's account suggested that her husband was actively involved in parenting as seen in his enactment of parental discipline over their grandchild, Nina.

He's (father) a disciplinarian. He's a disciplinarian in terms of their education and their choice of peers . . . That's where he pays attention. My children, they are already big. Whenever they joke around, that's what he always says—that it's okay to make friends as long as there are limitations. (Nina, grandchild of Mary)

The account above showed that Mary's husband, Jerry, took measures in preventing their children from being negatively influenced by peers and realigning their priorities (i.e., studies). Repositioning her husband as a responsible "good" parent, Mary evoked the moral self of her husband in the domestic sphere. In contrast, in the unfelt presence of the father's parenting care, mothers still strived hard to provide for the needs of her children. Lara's account clearly illustrates this:

I told him, "My child, even if I am only like this . . . I am not like other mothers who look fashionably presentable. I hope, however, you are not ashamed of me . . . Because [you've] seen that I really toil for you. I work hard even if I wasn't able to finish my studies because I want you to lift me out of this situation." (Lara, mother of three)

Lara's account described a conversation with her child, Jack. She differentiated herself with other mothers who are

able to invest in their looks, stating that despite her inability to project a pleasant physical image, her child should not treat her as shameful. By doing so, she reflexively constructed a social image of an honorable mother who toils for the betterment of her children. Consequently, she positioned Jack as embodied hope who will eventually redeem her from her sufferings. Children, however, seem to have recognized their position in helping the family overcome the hardships of life through their personal successes. The meaning-making of children in relation to the storyline is articulated by Andi, Anna's daughter:

For me, education is like a key. I have [big] dreams for Mama [and] Papa . . . [I want to] provide them proper housing. I want to keep my sibling away from . . . fraternities . . . Sometimes, it is I who tell him not to join them because he is starting to learn from them. He already knows a lot because of them. (Andi, daughter of Anna)

This account reveals that children of reintegrating fathers construe education not just as a personal goal, but as a collective achievement for the family. The restoration storyline anticipates an upward economic mobility for the family in the child's acceptance of his or her positioning as the family's embodied hope. As a result, the child assumes the position and works toward the fulfillment of the duty it entails—that is, the continuous strife for personal success. Through her ambition to finish her education, Andi thinks about how the aforementioned could help her family relegate to a better physical (e.g., housing), environmental (e.g., fraternity-free communities), and relational (e.g., sibling relations) state. Through this utterance, she was able to position herself as a loving daughter, aiming for the benefit of her family. Ultimately, she also alluded to a future positioning of the family as a restored moral system.

Discussion

Overall findings showed the complexity of moral struggles in the context of parental reintegration. The three major storylines of othering, rehabilitation, and restoration surface the overarching narrative of the family as a struggle for moral reascendancy. We see that the ex-convict position has an ambiguous and contrasting meaning for family members supporting reintegrating fathers. At an intrafamilial level (i.e., a view from within the family), the position ex-convict accords fathers the right to start anew upon his release from prison, whereas at the extra-familial level (i.e., a view from outside the family), the same position may deny rights accorded to reintegrating fathers. As these positionings, at times, contradict one another, reintegrating fathers and their families face difficulty contesting initial malignant positionings. This makes the journey toward moral reascendancy a painful ride through malignant positionings of the father as a dangerous threat to society and his family as a morally contaminated system.

In relation to the previous body of work on parental reintegration, our study contributes to a more inclusive understanding of families of reintegrating fathers as they struggle to contest their moral position as a family system. Using exemplar accounts of family members who provide support to reintegrating fathers, we were able to show the increasing responsibility latched to families as readily available support systems without stable access to resources, both money and time (Pinto, 2011). Findings also echo socio-emotional problems of families over time such as deteriorating quality of relationships (Ferraro, Johson, Jorgensen, & Bolton, 1983). In the context of parental reintegration, the persistent emotional sapping across members can allow us to be critical of their complex roles vis-à-vis location of the family within the wider moral order.

As a case in point, the economic vulnerability of reintegrating fathers as failed breadwinners are pierced through the process of rehabilitation or healing from within the family. Within the family context, instances of escalated spousal conflicts may provoke forms of violence as experienced by some of our participants. On one hand, physical violence toward the spouse or children may be viewed as re-asserting control among financially frustrated fathers. On the other hand, perpetration of symbolic violence through stigmatization may occur in three levels, namely, (a) denigration of reintegrating fathers forced positioned as victims (i.e., stigmatized locations inside and outside the home), (b) emotional over-burden of mothers who assumed both financial and caregiving roles within the family (i.e., intensive and extended mothering), and (c) paradoxical positioning of children as embodied hope, at the same time, valued economic investment to uplift the family from further stigmatization and poverty (i.e., younger children are silenced and regulated symbolic capital).

Another major insight from our findings shows the reconstruction of social force attached to a victim position of reintegrating fathers. In contrast to a cultural trope of justifying victims as powerless and aggrieved, family members left behind are able to reconstruct these justifications as a prerequisite to change their collective position from morally contaminated to morally upright. In the rehabilitation storyline, the fathers' failure to support their family is reconstructed as a failure of the wider environment (e.g., lack of work opportunities for ex-convicts) to recognize their desire to change and achieve a normal family life. In the passage of time, reintegrating fathers structurally positioned as financially powerless allowed them to open other avenues for change in their families, thereby displacing stigmatizing sanctions of their previous crime. This temporally contingent meaning of victimization extends to the familial process of restoration wherein incarcerated individuals put forward a narrative of desistance and subversion to construct acceptable personal identities that allow for a sense of purpose and growth (Morran, 2011; Rajah, Kramer, & Sung, 2014). Similarly, we suggest that restoration of "acceptable" identities of fathers

as failed breadwinners anchored in a victim position allow the moral re-ascendancy of the family as a whole with hope for a better future.

In an attempt to ease the reentry of formerly incarcerated parents and to reduce their risk of reoffending, studies have looked at possible trajectories for intervention (Olson, Rozhon, & Powers, 2009; Raphael, 2011). Complementing current literature on reentry interventions, our findings offer important practical implications on institutional, social, and psychological aid for reintegrating parents and especially their families. Transition programs from prison to workplace may be needed to cushion the reintegrating father and his family from economic vulnerability, which may interact with social stigmatization in crippling familial relationships and worsening the well-being of family members. Spiritual support may also be offered by religious institutions to propel Filipino families to recover from reentry challenges. Although a continuous struggle for developing countries, local institutions may consider providing forms of educational support for children of reintegrating parents, thereby increasing symbolic capital of the entire family and lessening emotional and economic costs of parenting. Community programs can also be curtailed to emotional needs of children as they strive to uplift the rest of the family from stigmatization in the context of poverty.

As part of the limitations, this is a small-scale study that only captures a partial snapshot of a broad cultural landscape of challenges and opportunities to issues related to temporal reintegration. We recognize that not all families with incarcerated members are homogeneous (e.g., not all families report the occurrence of spousal violence). As such, generalizations are difficult to assert because of the cultural specificity and embeddedness of recollected accounts (i.e., low income Filipino families). Further researches can explore and analyze accounts of fathers vis-à-vis other members, as well as examine quality of children's social support networks. Despite these limitations, this article offered rich material on the contestations of individual and collective positions assumed in familial processes amid change.

Conclusion

Against interlocking emotional, discursive, and material forms of labor, successful reintegration is more challenging to those receiving families entrenched in poverty alongside weak community and institutional support. In light of patterns of positioning in our results, we may conclude that the family unit is a dynamic social support system where readiness to accept reintegrating prisoners back into societal and home life is not automatic. As a support system filled with contestations, members utilized various personal, symbolic, and economic resources to mend relationships, create new roles, challenge stigmatizing social norms, and reestablish daily routines and practices. Using accounts of families of formerly incarcerated fathers, we further push for critical

dialogue between families at the margin of transformation with community workers and policy makers.

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