



## “We’re all travelers, all sojourners”: A pseudo-ethnography of incarceration and adaptation

**Maria Virginia Aguilar \***, Edwin Falcis Lineses

Social Sciences Department, De La Salle University-Dasmariñas.

Dasmariñas, Cavite, Philippines 4115.

[mgaguilar@dlsud.edu.ph](mailto:mgaguilar@dlsud.edu.ph)

\* Corresponding Author

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### ABSTRACT

The study intends to describe the dynamics in jail, the notable features of incarceration, and inmates' cultural premises to achieve adaptation to a different environment. Using participant observation and several indigenous methods of gathering data twenty inmates in a city jail were purposively selected for this qualitative study. Several findings are notable. First, traveling is a fitting metaphor to depict the inmate culture developed inside the jail, more so that it is consistent with how the inmates call their incarceration as a momentary *biyahe*, i.e., a sojourn. Second, the inmates reveal that a must-learn code of conduct *patakaran* or *magna carta* which is rooted in respect and discipline is essential to survival. Third, by tacit agreement with the jail management, the inmates have organized themselves with distinctive hierarchical roles that should be respected to maintain discipline and order. Each cell has its own structure to impose discipline and to accomplish every member's task. Fourth, a system of meting out punishment to the disobedience of rules is strictly enforced. Ultimately then, inmates adapt to a new environment and acquire behaviors appropriate to their community. Fifth, pockets of resistance are afforded, albeit in small and imperceptible manners. The study concludes that the facility's culture is dynamic, and inmates assert their roles beyond the prevailing social and structural forces.



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### INTRODUCTION

Years ago, I volunteered to teach in the Alternative Learning Systems (ALS) program in a place dreaded by people and doomed by the society in the jail. It was difficult, and researchers must admit that was regretful. But soon, it was taken aback, knowing that bigotry has no place in understanding the real world. The learning that researchers gained with the opportunity of human interaction, amidst Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs), even just a while, was liberating, pun unintended. Three years after the assumption of Rodrigo R. Duterte to the presidency, the number of inmates or PDLs grew a staggering 64%. The population of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) increased from 96,000 to 160,000. This does not include the population of the Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) yet. Officially, we now have the most overcrowded correctional facilities in the whole world, with a congestion rate of 605% (Narag, 2018).

There used to be an eclipse of prison/jail ethnography in the early years, but it has slowly changed (Walker, 2014). Prison studies, abroad or in the country, faced several challenges. Prison management is pervaded with a defensive orientation as a panoptic culture of suspicion, permeates every activity (Waldram, 2009). The conduct of studies inside is generally seen by institutional

gatekeepers as threatening to control information, problematic for inmates, and potentially dangerous for ethnographers (Rhodes, 2009). However, Wacquant still maintains that it is indispensable to go, see, touch, and feel these communities and conduct ethnographic fieldwork (Piché & Walby, 2009). Given the number of these subcultural communities, there should also be a growing need to take a closer look at and understand their plight and eventually contribute to the urgent need to help in the rehabilitation process. Anthropology, presupposing skills in entering cultural communities, establishing trust, and encouraging strangers to talk, is suited to this cultural description task. The dynamics in jails call out for attention to matters best understood through an ethnographic sensibility: 1.) The local structures and knowledge; 2.) Experiential worlds; and 3.) Cultural logics that make up the texture of life inside these institutions (Rhodes, 2009).

The study described the jail community's dynamics, the notable features of incarceration, and cultural premises used by inmates to achieve adaptation to a different environment. Researchers argue that the incarceration of PDLs is not a mere phenomenon of involuntary confinement but a cultural production process, i.e., adaptation. As used in this study, it refers to the complex forms of social coordination and tool use to survive (Levinson, 2000). It is making the most effective use of their environment. Individuals, surrounded by different social and cultural contexts, learn to live somewhere with somebody. In this process, people redefine a new identity. Thus, researchers contend that despite the highly regulated environment, inmates exercised their agencies beyond reproduction theory, i.e., Bourdieu's concept to describe how dominant classes within unequal society replicate and legitimate aspects of their culture (Banks, 2012).

## METHOD

Researchers used anthropological techniques in gaining insights into the nature of community and cultural production in incarceration. Researchers intend to walk through the nature of confinement and how inmates learn to live their community's life with peculiar social organizations, standards of values, expectations, normative behaviors, moral orders, and systems of reward and punishment (Jocano, 2002). Researchers used tools of ethnographic fieldwork to describe a culture and its consequent production (Spradley, 1980). Researchers limited participant observation, however, is due to institutional constraints. Researchers merely privileged to observe the community and conduct unstructured interviews as foreshadowed questions were asked when the occasion presents itself. Researchers utilized indigenous methods of *pakapa-kapa* or feeling about (Enriquez, 1990) and *patanong-tanong* or asking informally, including *pakikiramdam* or empathic inquiry (Pe-Pua, 1990).

Researchers purposely selected the participants by using expressing preference over key informants for in-depth study. The interviews were directed at them in whom that researchers invest a disproportionate amount of time as they are well informed, articulate, approachable, or available to me (MacMillan, 2008; Wolcott, 1988). Researchers asked them some "materials" that can use to verify data from interviews and observations. Thus, in using archival stratagem with the preceding methods, researchers employed Triangulation. Our site's choice was not much of a stroke of serendipity as most ethnographic studies (Wolcott, 1988). Researchers chose the Terminal City Jail and sought the permission of the jail officials for this research. Rapport and credibility-building through social interactions came after.

In reciprocity, researchers guaranteed to respect institutional policies and abide with the spirit of confidentiality and privacy. These are in cognizance of the researcher's responsibility to safeguard this research respondents' rights, interests, and sensitivities, examining the implications of the study as they may have consequences unseen by them (Spradley, 1980). Researchers restrained from taking pictures of the inmates and the jail. To compensate, we politely asked my informants if we can scribble a note or two once in a while as we casually conversed. Next, visits were paid to observe the jail environment and initially talk to some jail guards and inmates roaming around.

### Framework of the Study

In pursuing this study, researchers informed by the concepts of structure, agency, and cultural production (adaptation and identity formation), being opposed to cultural reproduction.

Researchers attempted to make sense of these concepts to frame my study. The variables and concepts used in this study and how they are linked presented in Figure 1. Notwithstanding the constraints of ethnography, exacerbated by the research site's sensitivity, a prison, the study took the succeeding diagram as the study's overarching framework. The straight lines refer to the power of structures prevailing over inmates. Society imposes expectations through the stigma it throws on inmates. BJMP imposes standard rules to follow for inmates, as seen in the bureau's mission to rehabilitate them. Though partly on the side of inmates, cell officers supported the bureau's thrust to impress upon them the prescribed conduct or norms they all need to follow.

The dotted lines refer to inmates' assertion of their agency through subversion techniques to act the role they have been assigned, but in acting them out, they will have the opportunity to redefine them and give them new meanings. Categorically, these are mimetic strategies (Galea, 2005). In contestations, adaptation is attained, and a new identity has forged the product of cultural production. In general, researches used the metaphor of traveling in our attempt to describe the culture of the place of incarceration. This is consistent with what the inmates refer to incarceration to be momentary "biyahe," i.e., a sojourn.

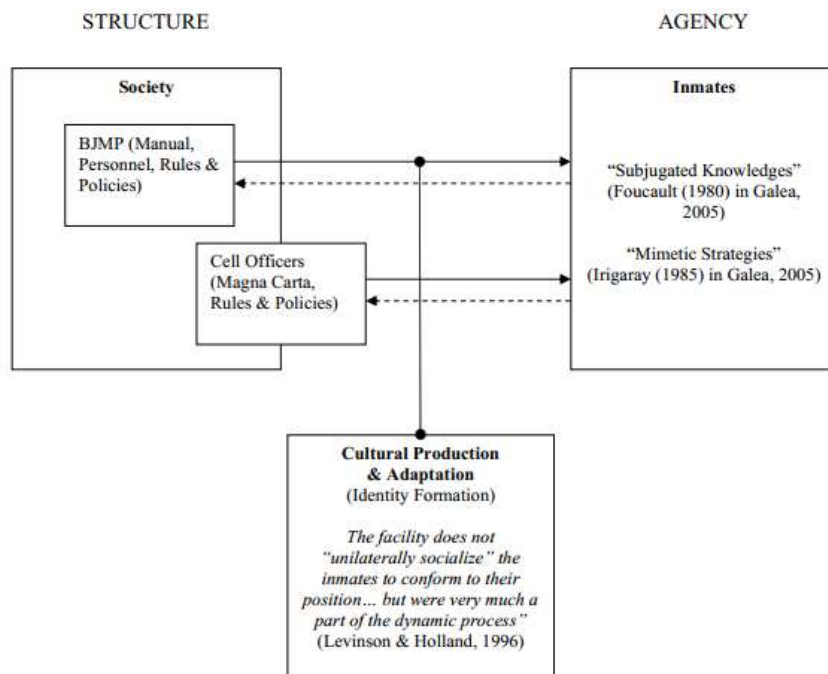


Figure 1. Cultural Production in Incarceration

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

### The Terminal

The setting is a facility strategically situated beside the public-turned-private hospital, the social welfare office, and adjacent to a big university in a province. It has a total land area of 2,000 square meters, donated by the local government in 1999. A hundred-meter perpendicular to the main avenue towards resettlement areas and one will bump straight into an edifice fortified with roughly 15-foot rusty grayish concrete walls. Above the walls are protruding barbed wires in 45-degree angles from either side. Left of the front gate is a mango tree enough to shade those who would be visiting the jail when they are inspected before entering the premises. Just under the tree are three 2x4 feet portrait tarpaulins mounted on the wall by concrete nails declaring the steps on the Release of Inmates, the Commitment of Inmates, and the Visitation Service. On the right side is a big 4x5 foot

boxed *Paunawa* or announcement painted in bold letters on the wall. Above the 5-point paunawa is a camera mounted inconspicuously and hooked directly inside the personnel's guard post to see what transpires outside.

The right of the paunawa is roughly a 3x8 feet steel door just enough for people to enter. On eye level of the door is a sliding lid to veil the solid welded quarter-inch grills from which a doorkeeper can peek out. Right of the door is the main gate of steel exclusively used for vehicles entering to and fro the facility. It is a 10-foot swing door with a big logo of the bureau on the outside and the jail's name and its address right on top. Entering the premises, researchers needed to pass by a doorkeeper. The doorkeeper usually asks me politely, "what do you intend to do?" to which we respectfully conveyed our intention. On the succeeding visits, our familiarity with them facilitated by the accessible entrance. Few steps left of the gate are separated by an administrative building of around 30 square meters of which the entrance is back. It is divided into two sections: the administrative office, which has a table, two chairs, and an old computer set, and the warden's office towards the inside. 26 personnel manned the jail: 3 officers and 23 non-officers in alternating schedules for the week.

On the side of the office is the main building for the inmates. It is a one-story building made up of concrete and iron grill bars. It has a floor area of 264 square meters. It has ten cells for inmates; 8 cells for males, one female dormitory, and one cell serving as an infirmary. It has an ideal capacity of 200 inmates, but it houses 349 detainees, of whom 331 are males, and only 18 are females. Adjacent to the main building is the visiting area of around 40 square meters. It is well ventilated with a cyclone wire fence filled on top with coiled barbed wires. Fronting the building is an open space sunning area used as a half basketball court. A meter away is a cozy and straightforward hut, made of fine bamboo and nipa, where officers receive visitors and eat meals. It is seen straight from the main gate. It is also under a mango tree just adjacent to the guard post. Moving further are quarters made of wood and nipa extended in long parallel rooms divided into sections: the personnel's outpost, their sleeping quarters and washrooms, the inmates conjure, and the kitchen. Hindmost is a space for gardening and on the right end is a cyclone wire enclosed area with a see-saw and a swing for the visiting children of inmates.

Under the mango tree in the center of the facility is a 3-foot diameter round table made of uneven wood placed side by side, forming a circle. It has two benches made of the slab and permanently mounted on the ground. This is where researchers conduct our unstructured interviews. It is a meter away from the Kubo (hut) and the guard post where personnel can hear us. Researchers accepted this as a negotiated term.

### The Travellers

Our informants are purposively selected for the reasons that previously mentioned. They refer to themselves as *byahero* (traveler). Probing on this, our informant, Blackjack said, *"Just nothing, sir. It's because as if we are traveling here inside, where it is different from the place outside."*

Mayora, the head in the women's cell, is 33 years old, born on October 2, 1985, in the city's resettlement area where she used to live. She has been in the facility for eight years. She is charged with illegal possession and selling of drugs. She is the mother of an 8-year-old boy, whom she had left when he was just five months to other relatives. Her mother, father, and his husband are also in the same facility. She is the eldest in the siblings of 8. In an attempt to escape from their family's financial difficulty, she cohabited at an early age of 16.

Blackjack, as he is fondly called for idolizing the Filipino singer Blackjack, is a tattoo-laden recidivist, 48 years old born on December 6, 1970. He is now on his 14th time in jail for various offenses: possession of deadly weapons, drug use, theft or pickpocketing, frustrated homicide, illegal gambling, robbery, grave threat, child abuse, and murder. He lived in a Muslim area in the city but was born in Cavite City and grew up in Caloocan City. He grew up witnessing the abuse his father inflicted on his mother. His father has another family and children. He is the youngest in the siblings of 3 from his mother. When he was young, he hit his father's head with wood to save his mother. He found his niche with pickpockets in Quiapo and started as a juvenile detainee in Manila City Jail.

Tatay Bee, the most serious among the informants, is 53 years old, born on February 22, 1965, in Manila. He grew up with his grandparents for his parents separated when he was young. He was a member of the Philippine Army at the age of 20 until 1986 when he was relieved in service before he became a driver-bodyguard. He was married in 1990 and had a son. He used to live in the same city where the facility is located. His wife and his son left him for another man soon after he was detained in 2013. He is charged with statutory rape he claimed was just set up by an influential relative of somebody he had trouble with.

#### Moving On

Our informants are in one accord to tell me the essentials of survival in the facility: a must-learn code of conduct and they need to learn this at the soonest possible time. They refer to this as their *patakaran* or *magna carta* rooted in respect and discipline. Besides this, inmates have to learn their dailies and respective responsibilities; otherwise, they would be met with disciplinary measures.

#### *Bawnderi*: Expectations

Probing further on what inmates needed to learn, in nonchalance, they replied, that is more than just the routine they needed to learn. Mayora even shed a tear fighting her emotions but nodding down in a soft voice, saying,

*"We're just okay here. Everything is free, yet here inside, it is really difficult." Moments after, I saw her sobbing.*

Blackjack, my skinny, tall, dark informant, full of charm and confidence even without four upper front teeth, always clad in loose yellow sando and low waist shorts, continued to tell a daily routine in jail. Tatay Bee, a serious and pensive informant of mine, also shared his difficulties in learning the routine that he has to be acquainted with. Their day usually starts at 6:00 AM for most of the inmates. At 7:00 AM, it is expected that everyone is done with morning rituals like fixing up their 'beds' and gearing up in anticipation of the rancho.

*"Those who are not officers should wake up earlier, they are those who sleep on the floor, they do not have a bed so that others can move. At these times, sir, our eyes roam around and tummy grumbling as we're all hungry by then, we only have few supplies of food, though it's just okay. We'll just be used to it (laughs). That's what we need to learn here."*

Polen follows (or precedes) after (or before) breakfast, usually around 8:00 AM. At around 9:00 AM, inmates can do whatever they want to do, like doing chores, taking a bath, laundry, or whatever the nanunungkulan (officers) ask them to do. This is where isolation and boredom sinks in, Mayora reasoned,

*"At first, it was so difficult. It's because I have a small child outside. I just gave birth to my son when I was transported here. It was very difficult for me. I think you already knew this, most of my family members are also here, but one needs to know how to adjust here."*

Polen comes again around 11:30 AM, 3:30 PM, and 6:30 PM. Once, even while having interviews, informants excused themselves for a few minutes till they are all accounted for. Rancho comes roughly noon.

*"After eating and doing chores, up to you what you want to do. At 7:00 PM, all expecting food ration for their dinner and is followed by final headcount at 8:00 PM"*

After freshening themselves up and fixing their beddings, they now have the chance to watch local television channels.

*"Others were bored even watching TV, but everyone has to find ways to address boredom. That's what you need to learn here. After watching around 10 PM, we now need to sleep tomorrow, the same things happen"*

#### *Pamasahe*: Roles

The community is marked with distinctive organizational roles that are a must-learn for maintaining discipline and responsibility. Blackjack, with confidence while moving his head from left to right in fast rhythm in stern stance, spoke,

*"Here, sir, I can say that the behaviors of people here are different. If you do not abide, I don't know what happens to you (laughs). Modesty aside, we're organized and polite here, unlike outside. We have our own rules and regulations discipline. Discipline indeed, this is what you need to know here".*

Aside from jail administration, each cell has its own structure to impose discipline and to accomplish every member's task. They call this *mga nanunungkulan*. A Mayor runs each cell. A mayor supervises the cell and facilitates meetings, also called *symbol*. It is held at least once a month or when the Mayor deems it necessary. A Bastonero or *Segunda mayor*" assists the Mayor. They are in charge of imposing discipline in each cell. *"They are important in enforcing discipline and organization here as they are the mayor's alter ego,"* said Blackjack, who expressed with emphasis nodding his head back and forth.

*"They are the ones who enforce chores and cleanliness of the cells" this was an added interruption of Tatay Bee while listening to Blackjack.*

Each cell also has a *Buyon* or *Tsip Buyon*. Generally, a *buyon* is in charge of cleanliness and orderliness in the entire cell. As such, he is in charge of *buyonero*, *mahinarya*, *ranchero*, and *dyuti*. Generally, a *ranchero* is in charge of the securing and distributing of food for the entire cell. *Mahinarya* refers to inmates tasked to secure and look after all inmates during the night in the cell. They are considered as *tanod sa gabi* (night watcher). Blackjack in a rugged voice, emphasized through two hands open placed parallel to his chest,

*"When we're asleep, they are the ones who guard and attend to us here in the cell. We don't know what might happen through the night. At least somebody watches us. Leftover food is also guarded."*

Every cell has a *Dyuti* accountable to the *buyon*. This is a momentary position for the day, unlike others. Blackjack once explained in the course of the interview,

*"The dyuti takes charge of the food and drinks in the morning. For instance, before somebody drinks water, he needs to secure permission from the dyuti so others will not run out of ration. If food is spared for others who are not yet around, it will still be there. If no one watches over it, others might get it."*

*Trasti*, for exhibiting good conduct in the stay in the facility, are inmates who have been given special privileges by the jail administration. Nonetheless, they still have to do their share.

#### Front Seaters and Back Seaters: Education & Development

Initially, personnel briefs the newcomers through the prescribed process of the commitment of inmates. The rest, however, is unfolded inside the cell. When a person 'made a trip' inside, he may not know what it is inside. This mystery is slowly unraveled to him when he is already in. After going through the formality of commitment, one is introduced to a new way of life. Inmates learn the ways of the community by direct instruction. Usually, new inmates assigned in the cell are very quiet and respectful. They are a bit uncomfortable and worried about something. Mayora and Tatay Bee, respectively, pensively and seriously reminisced,

*"When I first made a trip here, I was somewhat afraid I don't know what will happen to me. I was very polite and often just quiet till the cell officers talked to me and told me what to do and are expected from me."*

*"My experience was terrible. My body built was good, and the charge against me was heavy. Many hurt and mugged me, Blackjack was one of them, but I understand them. That's the way things here."*

As stated in their magna carta, no one is allowed to talk nor to come closer to the newcomers unless the cell officers already spoke to them. This means that new inmates are first acquainted, talked, and briefed only by cell officers. Tatay Bee lamented,

*"Talking to newcomers is exactly what you should not do here. The cell officers first talk to them, orient them, so the inmates would know how to behave here."*

Inmates usually follow the apprenticeship system of learning in that *buyon*, for instance, are charged with training new inmates. When researchers elicit for anecdotes from Mayora, in concession to Blackjack, she said,

*"The buyon here trains the newcomers, for example, the buyon shows to the new inmate how to clean the bathroom before the newcomer does what he needs to do in short, the buyon trains the inmate."*

The learning process is also evident in the process of advising in the cell. The cells have advisers who are respectable and deemed possessing wisdom. Thus, in due time inmates also learn from others. Tatay Bee, explaining with seriousness in his face while trying to grasp for words, said,

*"advisers are open-minded to teach, they need to advise the erring inmates there are also many here. They also commend those who do good."*

Mayora trying to add to the discussion, elaborated on how this is done,

*"In our cell, if someone did good, we validate somehow it makes us feel better it isn't that it's good. Somebody appreciates what we do for others."*

Most importantly, inmates learn vicariously (Strickland, 2001). This means that one of their best learning moment is when they learn from the mistakes or knowing where another inmate's misdemeanor led to. This they ought to learn for fear of reprisals and disciplinary measure known as *takal*. There were still those who would do not learn the community's ways easily, but they are meted out with a type of discipline that inmates are without choice than follow and consequently do what they are expected to do. Ultimately, they adapt to a new environment and acquire behaviors appropriate to their community. Blackjack, who has words for everything, showed me how they are enculturated,

*"As time went by, we become more disciplined here. There are times that others still are mischievous or indifferent, but when we are disciplined, we become good. Otherwise, we will be betrayed by others, so we will be flogged I experienced such".*

This is how a new behavior is taught to every inmate. A "*salto*" is usually given with a *takal*. Afterward, an explanation is offered by the *nanunungkulan*, particularly a *bastonero*, as to why an inmate is given sanctions. This is accepted positively by inmates and deemed even necessary by them. Blackjack narrating his experiences just laughed at it but

*"I was somewhat stubborn before (laughs). When I was flogged, the lowest was five lashes, and it was already painful. You would have difficulty standing. Even more painful if you'll receive another flogging long after (laughs) want to receive another right after I got flogged".*

Mayora was trying to explain with an assuring look that the *takal* is usually the last resort when inmates still are not paying attention to what they are expected to do. Sanctions for erring inmates also include pumping, push-ups, or other additional duties.

*"Flogging is not usually and easily done. There are warnings to those who are recurrently silly who do infractions. First, second times they are warned if it did not work, then the Flogging."*

The Commitment of Inmates undergoes processes: Step 1.) Committing Officer will present valid ID and deposit service firearms, if any, with the Gate Officer; 2.) Committing Officer proceeds to the Desk Officer and presents the documents and the person's to be committed; 3.) Records Officer receives the documents, searches the inmate/s, and assigns them to their cells; and 4.) The Warden or his representative signs the Turn-over Form and provides a copy to the Committing Officer. The idea of vicarious learning is that people can learn by observing others' behavior and the outcomes of

those behaviors, notwithstanding Bandura's claim that learning can still occur without a change in behavior.

It is the use of a paddle to flog the thigh of erring inmates. The paddle they used is called "balila," which is a 2 x 3-inch wood made round to serve as a paddle. The lowest that an inmate usually receives, still depending on the infraction's gravity, is five lashes. To women, a salto is meted out with pumping where an erring inmate crossing her hands, holds her ears through the index and middle fingers for fifty or a hundred times.

### Overtaking

Despite the highly regulated and panoptic environment, inmates, in general, can still subvert rules of the facility and show resistance or even defiance against the personnel and cell officers to assert themselves and their way of doing things. In a way, their subjugated knowledge challenged the dominant views of what it only is, what they are restricted to do, or how they should behave while in incarceration (Galea, 2005). Activities such as Alternative Learning System (ALS) or Bible sharing available to them during spare times in the day are forms or opportunities of resistance. Livelihood programs like tailoring, carpentry, cosmetology, gardening, and auto-mechanic, to name a few, are subverted to inmates' end. These are opportunities for (male) inmates to be "near" women inmates, a no-no under normal circumstances, to whom they can establish "relationships." Blackjack, referring to ALS and Bible sharing, narrated with a sinister look and a broad smile on his face,

*"There are those who join in ALS or Bible sharing. It's good as we learn something. But little did others know that some were seizing the opportunity to be with women."*

Blackjack stood raising his left arm, moving his body in synchrony to what he is saying, smiling in between pauses, elaborating his statements,

*"I am actively participating in the Bible study, sir. I take charge of it. It's enjoyable at least there is something good in our others, however, just joined as there are occasional snacks served or to go out of the cells or so that we can talk to women whom we can establish relationships."*

Another form of everyday resistance is seen in the way they conduct their love affairs in the community. Aside from only-men-should-court-women, it is a cardinal rule in the community that prohibits showing any form of romantic affections. Likewise, no relationship should be formed if one has a "loved one" outside visiting at least for a time. These norms in courtship are to be followed in the community.

Courting and relationship can only be allowed if the mayora knows it. Hence, the man writes a letter and gives it to the mayora. She reads the letters first before giving it to a female inmate. When a woman responds to the letter, the *mayora* also reads the reply before she hands it to the man courting the woman. This means that *mayora* knows all statements and courtship processes between the woman and the man. This is what inmates call a system of *pasabi*. Nonetheless, through the dynamics of *tapon-sulat*, inmates contested all prescriptions in the way things are done inside. Blackjack giggling related,

*"Here it's different girlfriend-boyfriend relations here are simple smile-exchange or letter-writing to each other to show we're with somebody is more than enough (laughs). In other words, just meeting eyes and flying kisses with some talks or letters."*

*"It's also accepted the exchange of letters. Sometimes they do not know, discreetly holding hands while in Bible study sessions because it's not allowed but possible (laughs). There are still others who can."*

Probing his last statement, I found out that though intimacy is only afforded to inmates and their visiting spouses, others found their way. "We have one there," Blackjack extending his arms and pointing at the room beside the *kubo*, "mahiwagang silid para sa kunjuhan" (mysterious place for intimacy). Then he sheepishly lowered his voice as if ashamed of me as he talked about it.



Concerning the bureau standards, inmates also found some way to exploit known rules and still get their way. The conduct of the punitive takal is officially not allowed in the BJMP Manual, but it is happening. This is cell officers' subversion of the personnel or the bureau's manual of regulations beyond panopticon.

Cellphones or even deadly weapons, for instance, are sometimes in possession of some inmates. These are essentially prohibited in the cell, but these things found their way in. I tried to elicit elaboration on this matter, but my informants begged off. Tatay Bee changing the topic instead narrated,

*"The greatest thing that we did before that even the warden was immediately relieved we had noise barrage, the whole day nobody listened to them. It was because the warden was so new, yet he was very rude and grossly disrespectful. We almost had a riot, but good thing we are good with other jail employees. It was just the warden that we did not like."*

### Crossroads

In a short time and with few hours of socialization, researchers only see a glimpse of what it is to be inside the inmates' community and how they learn to live their different lives. They have acquired a new sense of membership in a society whose identity is intertwined with the meaning and consequences of becoming literate in the community they are in (Bell, 1997; Ferdman, 1991; Li, 2000). PDLs needed to learn this way of life in coping with their confined walls. Once inmates enter the community, it would only be a matter of time to learn and eventually live the way others lived inside. It is evident in the language they used, the thinking they do, and the behaviors and mutual respect they exhibited marked with a new sense of unifying discipline evident in all facets of living inside the walls. This learned way of life is different before incarceration. This is construed as literacy being an essential part of a person's conception of culture and personhood, appropriate to the members of the group they belong to (Li, 2000), or what Rudmin (2010) coined cultural mentoring of acculturation.

Inmates lived their lives inside with discipline, organization, and respect. These are what made them "educated inmates" as "historical and cultural particularities of the 'products' of education" or again, in this regard, learning (Levinson, Foley, & Holland, 1996). In a way, they resemble the bureau's thrust of "human safekeeping and rehabilitation" (BJMP official website) but with their flavor. Inmates told me implicitly and explicitly of these concepts. Despite the infractions and deviance of some inmates, discipline is paramount to them. From the moment new inmates entered the cell, they refrain from talking to newcomers unless otherwise briefed by those in positions to the daily routine. From daybreak to night off, everyone religiously follows the duties that every member performs to the sense of reward and punishment to the treatment of visitors who enter their premises, discipline is the catchword. It is everything in the community.

The fact that inmates have their sense of "structure" (apart from the bureaus) and how this helps run their entire cells with smoothness and order is loud enough to tell tales of their peculiar functional organization. The positions inside the cell coined by themselves are of necessity to thrive in an orderly manner. The mayor for execution, *bastonero* for enforcement, *mahinarya* for monitoring, *buyon* for cleanliness, *ranchero* for food security, or *dyuti* as workers, and everyone to help out indicate an organized society.

Respect is reflective in the rules inmates formulated and the conduct they observed in relation to others. My experience as a visitor in their community is shown with the utmost respect. Not only because visitors provide them with "something" but also because visitors are people, and as such, inmates should be respectful of, not merely because it is embodied in their code. In the end, it becomes a product of culture, acquired by every member, rooted in their belongingness to the community. This is the adaptation and, ultimately, the learning process, validating Aguila's renegotiated cultural identities (Aguila, 2015).

## CONCLUSION

This confinement phenomenon is not merely demonstrated what the rules of the bureau and the cells make of inmates. In the process, inmates themselves achieved the making of a new social order, a winning tussle. This affirms the concept of being creators of knowledge purported by Galea (2005). This was done by representing themselves other than their usual behaviors derived from Foucault's possibility of using one's positions within networks of power to think about themselves differently (Galea, 2005). The facility's culture is dynamic, and inmates asserted their roles beyond the prevailing social and structural forces. It is what Foucault asserted as resisting oppressive discourses through mimetic strategies. These means acting out the roles that they have been assigned to, but in doing so, they redefined their roles and gave them new meanings (Galea, 2005). This appropriation, or the interplay of the self with social conceptions and expectations, brought out inmates' formulated identity fashioned to make their own, to reorder them, adapt them, and otherwise transform them (Rockwell, 1996).

Inmates fuse the bureau's power and structure and the cell officers towards the production of their very own selves. After all, hegemony and identity-production are contingent processes, and the structure, important as it is, is only one force among many in the lives of the inmates. The things inmates learn from somewhere and somebody coupled with contestations made is in so doing producing a society of their own and participating in the constitution of a new social distinction to which they are very much a part of the dynamic process (Levinson, 1996; Skinner & Holland, 1996). Even in confinement, development exists, and cultural production is as alive as it is in the outside world. It is where cultural production, i.e., the interplay of agency and structure, is so much active despite a more constraining environment under powerful structural constraints, which is of a panoptic jail (Levinson, Foley, & Holland, 1996).

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