

NETWORK GOVERNANCE IN INMATE REHABILITATION: LESSONS FROM AN INDONESIAN BORDER CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION

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Abstract: Social reintegration of inmates constitutes a major challenge in contemporary correctional systems, particularly in regions with limited resources and complex social contexts. This study analyzes the practice of Network Governance in the Inmate Development Program at the Class IIB Correctional Institution of Nunukan Regency using the framework proposed by Molin and Masella, which encompasses the dimensions of choice, meta-governance, and evaluation. Employing a qualitative research approach, data were collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis involving key stakeholders engaged in inmate development. The findings reveal that a cross-sectoral network involving actors from education, vocational training, rehabilitation, religious guidance, and social reintegration has been established and functions operationally to support inmate rehabilitation. However, the governance of this network remains predominantly centralized, with the correctional institution exercising dominant control over partner selection, coordination, and decision-making processes. Network coordination is largely administrative and program-oriented, while horizontal integration and collective leadership among stakeholders remain limited. Furthermore, program evaluation is fragmented and conducted separately by each institution, without an integrated mechanism that incorporates the perspectives of all actors, including inmates. This study concludes that although Network Governance has supported inmate development at a functional level, it has not yet evolved into a collaborative and learning-oriented governance system, highlighting the need for strengthened cross-sectoral forums, collaborative leadership, and integrated evaluation mechanisms to ensure sustainable social reintegration outcomes.

Keywords: Network Governance, Guidance, Prisoners, Correctional Institutions.

1. Introduction

The social reintegration of prisoners is one of the main challenges in the correctional system in Indonesia. According to Maruna (2001), social reintegration cannot be understood merely as a single event that occurs after prisoners are released, but rather as a long-term social process involving various aspects. Correctional institutions no longer exist as institutions that merely supervise groups of individuals who are serving prison terms, but as democratic public institutions that have a strategic function in fostering and restoring the capacity of prisoners to be able to function socially, economically, and morally after serving their sentences. In line with the view of Ramadhan et al. (2021) that the Directorate General of Corrections has a responsibility to rehabilitate prisoners for the better. This rehabilitation can be in the form of personality development or skills training.

Steers (1977) explains that a good organization is one that is able to adapt to its environment or changes. In relation to this theory, a shift in perspective on correctional institutions places inmates as subjects of human



development who need to be prepared comprehensively and sustainably, not only to obey the law, but also to participate productively in society. From a theoretical perspective, Network Governance is understood as a form of governance that relies on relationships between relatively autonomous but interdependent organizations, with the aim of producing public value that cannot be achieved individually, Provan & Kenis, Z (2008).

This is in line with the practical guidelines for the implementation of democratic public services based on the new public service approach proposed by Denhardt & Denhardt (2007), namely, serve citizens not customers, seek the public interest, value citizenship over entrepreneurship, think strategically, recognize that accountability is not simple, serve rather than steer, and value people not just productivity. These seven aspects illustrate Denhardt & Denhardt's (2007) view that government cannot operate like a business and must be run democratically. Both elected and appointed civil servants act based on this principle and express a renewed commitment to ideals such as the public interest, the process of governance, and the expansion of democratic citizenship.

Normatively, the direction of policy regarding correctional institutions is confirmed in Law Number 22 of 2002 concerning Corrections. This law discusses and affirms the concept of social reintegration as the main orientation of the correctional system, adding to the functions of correctional institutions which include the guidance of prisoners, correctional counseling, health care and rehabilitation, as well as enhancing the role of the Correctional Center in the process of reintegration back into society.

This regulation emphasizes that correctional services are an integral part of an integrated criminal justice system oriented towards recovery and legal justice, whereby prisoners not only serve their sentences as a form of normative responsibility but also as an area for self-improvement so that they can re-engage in social life. In Indonesia, prisoner rehabilitation is carried out through two channels, namely personality development and independence development. The enforcement of regulations on the rights and procedures for rehabilitation, including remission, assimilation, parole, and others, is also regulated in implementing regulations, including Government Regulation No. 32 of 1999. Which has been updated to Government Regulation No. 28 of 2006, which emphasizes that this policy is part of a strategy for the rehabilitation and social reintegration of inmates, not merely a reduction in their prison terms.

However, the rehabilitation carried out in correctional institutions has limitations, especially when faced with the multidimensional and ongoing needs of inmates. According to Clear and Frost (2014), an institutional approach that focuses too much on internal programs in correctional institutions tends to have limited impact if it is not supported by other social systems outside the institution. During the transition phase to community life, inmates face various structural challenges, such as limited access to employment, minimal social assistance, and negative stigma from the social environment. Bazemore and Stinchcomb state that successful social reintegration is highly dependent on the orderliness of the local community as the immediate environment for prisoners. Community support, both in the form of social acceptance and access to employment, plays a significant role in reducing the risk of recidivism.

This is also explained by Petersilia (2003) that in the social world, many prisoners return to society with limitations such as low levels of education, work skills, mental health problems and illegal drug abuse, as well as social stigma from the community. In line with this, the principles of decentralization and division of government affairs need to be involved in supporting the social reintegration of prisoners, which is also related to the role of local government, both at the provincial and district/city levels. Within the framework of Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government, local governments have authority in the fields of social affairs, employment, education, and community empowerment, which are substantively related to the social reintegration needs of inmates. Therefore, the success of prisoner rehabilitation does not only depend on the internal policies of the Ministry of Law and Human Rights, but also on synergy with local government policies and programs, including in North Kalimantan Province and Nunukan District.

Bryson, Crosby, and Stone (2015) explain that in the context of complex public services, including social rehabilitation, network-based cross-sector collaboration is needed in order to address the multidimensional needs of beneficiaries of guidance. Meanwhile, in Indonesia, Prasetyo (2020) shows that independence guidance programs in correctional institutions still tend to be partial due to weak integration between agencies, so that the impact is not yet sustainable. Research by Suryani and Hidayat (2019) also found that limited cross-sector coordination means that skills training in correctional institutions is often not connected to the job market, so that the benefits of guidance are limited to increasing internal activities.

The implementation of the Prisoner Development Program at the Class IIB Correctional Institution in Nunukan Regency shows efforts to involve various cross-sectoral actors such as the Correctional Center, the Education Office, the Manpower Office, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and other partners. This involvement is in line with Ansell

and Gash's (2008) view of public policy collaboration, which explains that collaboration does not only involve one agency but where the government can cooperate directly with several public institutions, involving both government and non-government stakeholders in a formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative decision-making process. In addition, Visser and Travis (2011) also explain that the success of a rehabilitation program is greatly influenced by the integrity of job training and post-release assistance services, which can only be realized through multi-party collaboration. However, the cooperation that has been established is still not fully managed within a systematic and sustainable network governance.

Limitations in the coordination mechanisms between actors, weak integration of roles, and the suboptimal nature of joint evaluation forums indicate that the implementation of correctional policies at the local level still faces governance challenges. This condition reflects a gap between national policy design, which emphasizes social reintegration, and the reality of implementation at the regional level, which is still sectoral and programmatic in nature. O'Flynn (2008) explains that institutional fragmentation in public policy often leads to program overlap and weak policy achievement.

This situation confirms that the issue of prisoner rehabilitation is not only related to the quality of the program, but also to how relationships between actors across sectors are managed and synergized within a network governance framework. Therefore, Network Governance is a relevant approach for analyzing and understanding the dynamics of prisoner rehabilitation in the context of cross-sector collaboration. In the implementation of public policies involving various actors, traditional hierarchical relationships are often insufficient to explain the dynamics of decision-making and coordination. Network governance emphasizes the importance of horizontal interactions, trust between actors, and non-hierarchical coordination mechanisms that enable the achievement of common goals in a more adaptive and contextual manner.

Referring to Molin and Masella (2016), Network Governance consists of three main dimensions, namely choice, meta-governance, and evaluation. These three dimensions provide an analytical framework for understanding how actors are selected and involved in networks, how networks are coordinated and led, and how collaborative performance is collectively evaluated. Using this perspective, research on the Prisoner Development Program at the Class IIB Correctional Institution in Nunukan Regency is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the configuration of cross-sector networks, the dynamics of their management, and their contribution to the continuity of development and the readiness of inmates to undergo social reintegration with dignity.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses qualitative research methods. Data collection methods include observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The data sources consist of primary and secondary data, using the Network Governance approach by Molin and Masella (2016). Several elements are included in Network Governance, including Choice, which refers to the process of selecting actors and forming relationships within the network. Choice reflects how organizations determine cooperation partners, set levels of involvement, and choose the form of collaboration that is considered most relevant to common goals. Second, Meta-governance. This dimension relates to network regulation mechanisms that aim to maintain the coherence of collective actions without eliminating the autonomy of each actor. Meta-governance includes coordination, facilitation, rule-setting, network leadership, and alignment of objectives between organizations. Third, Evaluation. This dimension refers to the process of assessing network performance through joint reflection, feedback exchange, and collective learning. Evaluation focuses not only on output achievements, but also on the quality of relationships between actors, the effectiveness of coordination, and the network's ability to adapt to change.

Meanwhile, data analysis was conducted using interactive methods. Informants in this study were individuals and institutions involved in the rehabilitation of prisoners at the Nunukan Class IIB Correctional Institution, namely the Head of the Class 12 Correctional Institution, the Head of Education and Training and Class 9 Activities, Head of Work Activities Subsection Class 8, and Head of Registration and Community Development Subsection Class 8 at the Nunukan District Class IIB Correctional Institution, as well as external stakeholders ranging from the Manpower Office, Education Office, Food Security and Agriculture Office, Ministry of Religious Affairs, MUI, KUA, and the community served by the Correctional Institution.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of Network Governance in the Prisoner Rehabilitation Program at the Class IIB Correctional Institution in Nunukan Regency demonstrates efforts to transform the management of rehabilitation by

involving cross-sector networks in response to the complexity of correctional issues. As an institution located in a border area, the Class IIB Correctional Institution in Nunukan Regency faces limitations in internal resources and multidimensional correctional needs, including education, job skills, rehabilitation, moral guidance, and social reintegration. These conditions have encouraged the development of cooperation networks with various external actors to support more comprehensive correctional implementation.

Network Governance analysis in this context is conducted through three main dimensions, namely choice, meta-governance, and evaluation. These three dimensions provide an overview of how networks are formed, managed, and evaluated in supporting the objectives of community service. The results of the study show that the guidance network has been formed and is functioning, but has not yet fully developed into an integrated and collaborative network governance system.

In the choice dimension, the Nunukan District Class IIB Prison acts as a central actor that initiates and determines the involvement of external stakeholders. Partners are selected through formal mechanisms in the form of memoranda of understanding and cooperation agreements as the legal basis for the implementation of the guidance program. The determination of stakeholders is based on program needs, particularly in the areas of education, job skills training, rehabilitation, religious guidance, and preparation for social reintegration. This approach shows that the formation of networks is pragmatic and oriented towards meeting the operational needs of prisons.

External factors involved in the guidance network have clear and complementary sectoral mandates. The Correctional Center plays a role in assisting and assessing social reintegration, the National Narcotics Agency handles the rehabilitation of inmates involved in narcotics cases, the Education Agency through PKBM provides equivalency education, the Job Training Center and the Manpower Agency facilitate job skills training, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) carry out moral and spiritual guidance, and BP3MI contributes to facilitating access to post-release employment opportunities. This pattern shows that the network is formed based on the compatibility of institutional functions, rather than through a joint strategic planning process across actors.

From the perspective of inmates, participation in the choice dimension is realized through participation in available guidance programs. Inmates have limited space to choose activities according to their respective interests and potential, such as arts and crafts for female inmates and agriculture, animal husbandry, and job training for male inmates. Although there are elements of individual choice, the space for inmate participation remains within the limits of programs established by the correctional institutions and external partners. Thus, inmates are not yet involved in determining the direction and design of rehabilitation policies at the macro level.

This condition shows that the dimension of choice in the prisoner rehabilitation network is still top-down. Prisons play a dominant role in determining actors and forms of cooperation, while external stakeholders and prisoners' function more as implementers and beneficiaries of the program. The network has been formed functionally, but has not yet developed into a collaboratively constructed network with equal levels of participation.

In the meta-governance dimension, the Nunukan District Class IIB Prison dominantly performs the function of network management. The prison regulates the activity schedule, coordinates the involvement of external actors, and supervises the implementation of the rehabilitation program. Network management is carried out through formal and informal mechanisms, with the prison acting as the main link between inmates and external stakeholders.

The dominance of correctional institutions in meta-governance is inseparable from the characteristics of correctional institutions, which have strict regulations and security standards. All activities of external actors must comply with the internal systems and rules of correctional institutions. This mechanism is effective in maintaining the stability and order of program implementation, but it has an impact on limiting the space for joint leadership and strategic dialogue across sectors.

Cross-sector coordination in the guidance network is still programmatic and activity-based. There is no permanent networking forum that brings together all stakeholders on a regular basis to collectively design, monitor, and evaluate guidance programs. As a result, interactions between external actors take place partially according to their respective fields, without strong horizontal integration. The network resembles a collection of bilateral collaborations between correctional institutions and partners rather than a comprehensive collaborative system.

At the inmate level, meta-governance is manifested through internal arrangements in the form of division of activity groups, scheduling of activities, and the role of tamping or internal coordinators. These roles support the smooth operation of rehabilitation, but do not provide space for inmate participation in strategic decision-making. Thus, meta-governance emphasizes administrative control rather than facilitating collaboration and shared learning.

The evaluation dimension is the weakest aspect of Network Governance practices at the Nunukan District Class IIB Prison. The evaluation of rehabilitation programs is still dominated by internal prison mechanisms that focus on activity achievements, inmate participation rates, and the smooth implementation of programs. Monitoring is carried out administratively and operationally, without systematic integration with the perspectives of external stakeholders.

Inmates assess the success of rehabilitation programs from more substantive aspects, such as behavioral changes, skill improvements, and mental readiness to return to society. This assessment reflects the outcome achievements that are the main objectives of rehabilitation. However, the experiences and assessments of inmates have not been systematically accommodated in formal evaluation mechanisms, so they do not directly contribute to improvements in rehabilitation policies.

External stakeholders also conduct evaluations according to their respective agencies' systems and indicators, such as evaluations of education, rehabilitation, or job training. However, these evaluations are conducted separately and are not compiled into a single mechanism for reflection across actors. The absence of collective evaluation means that the results of the assessments are not accumulated into network learning that can be used for integrated program development.

Overall, the practice of Network Governance in the Prisoner Rehabilitation Program at the Class IIB Prison in Nunukan Regency shows that a cross-sector network has been established and is functioning to support rehabilitation. However, this network is still at the functional-operational stage and has not yet developed into a collaborative, adaptive, and collaborative learning-based network governance system. The dimension of choice is still dominated by institutional decisions made by the prison, meta-governance is centralized, and evaluation has not been collectively integrated.

These findings confirm that strengthening Network Governance in prisoner rehabilitation requires a shift from administrative coordination to sustainable strategic collaboration. The institutionalization of cross-sector network forums, the strengthening of collaborative leadership, and the development of joint evaluation mechanisms that integrate the perspectives of all actors, including inmates, are important prerequisites for the realization of a holistic and long-term orientation correctional system. With these reinforcements, the rehabilitation network at the Class IIB Prison in Nunukan Regency has the potential to become a model of network-based correctional governance that is relevant to the context of border areas and the complexity of public services in Indonesia.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that the practice of Network Governance in the Prisoner Rehabilitation Program at the Class IIB Correctional Institution in Nunukan Regency has formed a cross-sectoral network that functionally supports the implementation of inmate rehabilitation. The network involves various external actors with complementary sectoral mandates, particularly in the fields of education, job skills training, rehabilitation, moral guidance, and preparation for social reintegration. However, based on an analysis of the dimensions of choice, meta-governance, and evaluation, the rehabilitation network is still dominated by the central role of the correctional institution as the main controller. The selection of cooperation partners is top-down, network management is still centered on administrative coordination, and the involvement of external stakeholders and inmates has not yet reached a level of strategic collaboration in planning and decision-making.

Furthermore, this study found that the evaluation dimension is a major weakness in the practice of Network Governance at the Class IIB Prison in Nunukan Regency. The evaluation of the guidance program is still fragmented and sectoral, without a mechanism for joint reflection across actors that can encourage collective learning and continuous improvement. The absence of integrated evaluation has an impact on the weak continuity of rehabilitation services, particularly in the post-release phase for inmates. Therefore, strengthening Network Governance requires the institutionalization of cross-sectoral networking forums, strengthening collaborative leadership, and developing a joint evaluation system that integrates the perspectives of all actors, including inmates, in order to realize holistic, adaptive, and long-term oriented rehabilitation of prisoners.

Acknowledgment

This work is supported by the Public Administration doctoral study program and the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Hasanuddin University for granting permission and facilitating the entire research process carried out so that this study can find results that can be suggestions for increasing the capacity of the foster organization, especially at the Class IIB Nunukan Penitentiary. Finally, this study only covers the Class IIB Nunukan Penitentiary,

so that further research opportunities are open to see whether similar fostering patterns apply in other correctional institutions with different classifications.

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