

Rethinking Social Reintegration and Prison: A Critical Analysis of an Educational Proposal for an Alternative Model in Brazil

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Abstract: *The call for social reintegration of prisoners, in many cases, does not work or has been abandoned, leaving the question of inclusivity regarding the imprisoned an open challenge in contemporary societies. My study provides a critical analysis of a model defined as an educational system of social reintegration, which aspires to be an alternative to imprisonment in Brazil and worldwide by proposing a reduction in the recidivism rate at a lower cost. I discuss the possibilities of social reintegration and the educational conceptions and practices that can emerge from it, though a document analysis and ethnography of two model units. Starting from an already-existing model, I argue that, even in an extremely difficult context, it is possible to build a proposal for social reintegration that goes beyond mere bureaucratic marketing. This can improve the prospects of imprisoned people's re-entry into society, despite the persistence of stigmatisation and other difficulties attending their return to a society affected by high unemployment rates.*

Keywords: *prison education, rehabilitation, re-entry, prison sociology, adult education.*

Introduction

We know from Goffman's classical analysis (1961, 1963) that social reintegration has not affected existing practices in prisons, and from Foucault's genealogical analysis (1975) that prison reforms have not been implemented. Despite various critiques, there is an internationally recognised need to use prison as only the last measure, and to adopt alternatives when possible (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2007). The phenomenon of mass imprisonment has also been observed in some countries (Wacquant, 2009) – including, in increasing numbers, people with a low level of formal education and those from economically and socially marginalised backgrounds (Coyle et al., 2016).

Although international legislation recognises the importance of implementing reintegration projects in society (United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners [the Nelson Mandela Rules], 2015), this objective remains a form of 'bureaucratic marketing' in certain countries (Wacquant, 1999), and it has been implicitly abandoned in the discourses of politicians in other countries (Garland, 1999). In this scenario, it is not surprising that recidivism is considered high (Fazel & Wolf, 2015). Social inclusion of imprisoned people must be reformulated urgently and critically, and must take into account Italy's experience of overcoming another institution: the asylums (Babini, 2009; Basaglia & Franca, 1975).

To address this need, the Association for the Protection and Assistance of Convicted Persons (APAC) defines and manages an educational model that is oriented towards the so-



cial reintegration of prisoners. APAC is growing worldwide, and may lead to public policy resolutions in the Brazilian territory (Fraternidade Brasileira de Assistência aos Condenados [FBAC], 2019a). They have a vision to ensure that education is not merely school education or training for a profession, but is innovative, and involves a variety of agents in the reintegration project, including volunteers, the outside society and its institutions – not to mention the prisoners themselves.

There is a growing interest in the APAC model. Its rates of recidivism are lower than those found in the traditional prison system: The APAC rates range from 8% to 20%, versus the national index of 70% (Conselho Nacional do Ministério Público, 2013).¹ It is also cost-effective to the State, and there are very few cases of insubordination, rebellion, violence, and escape, contrary to what is evidenced in the traditional Brazilian prison system. This experience is described as ‘the most important fact that is happening in the world today, in prison matters’ (FBAC, 2016) by Prison Fellowship International, a consultative body for penitentiary affairs of the United Nations.

This study aims to provide a framework for rethinking theory and practice concerning education and the reintegration of prisoners, in the academic context as well as for those working within the prison. Two main questions guided the study: How does the APAC model conceive and define its educational project aimed at the reintegration of prisoners, and how is this project implemented in the most successful APAC units?

1. To address these questions, official APAC documents were collected and analysed in regards how the organisation represents itself and its model.
2. To identify critical issues in practical implementations of the model, a subsequent literature review was carried out, based upon all published work directly relevant to the best practices of reintegration. Given the scarcity of studies, special attention was paid to those works available in the Brazil research archive.
3. For further analysis of the practices and their applications, an ethnographic study was designed. The particular vulnerability of prisoners was considered. A 5-week participant–observation period was carried out between 2017 and 2019 by living in two units that had been identified as the most successful. Twenty open, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the key participants, including prisoners, directors, judges, teachers, social workers, psychologists and educators.
4. The model was finally contextualised in the light of Brazilian penal execution law and compared with other studies on the prison.

In this paper, a critical reflection was conducted using principles of philosophy, prison sociology and education, based on the analysis from this more extensive study. First, the model will be briefly described. After that, issues will be examined emerging from the analysis of researchers and the field period. Due to space considerations, only some of them have been selected.²

Description of the Model Managed by APAC

APAC was created in 1972 in São José dos Campos, São Paulo, under the leadership of an attorney named Mario Ottoboni, as ‘a private, non-profit legal entity that seeks the recovery of prisoners, the protection of society, the relief of victims and the promotion of restorative justice’ (Restán, 2017, p. 9). It emerged as a response to numerous rebellions that had occurred within Brazilian prisons. In one such rebellion, the local prison was destroyed, and a group of volunteers was asked to manage a structure to accommodate prisoners with whom they had built up good relations. The experience (which was originally intended to be temporary) lasted

¹ The measurement of recidivism rates in common prisons in Brazil is a complex task, also resulting in difficulties when it comes to comparison of recidivism rates in APAC units.

² For more information, see Grossi (2020a, 2020b, 2021),

for over a year, and when the public authorities wanted to assume the management of the space directly, a form of co-management had already been generated which the volunteers and prisoners asked to be maintained.

According to the Brazilian Fraternity of Assistance to Convicted Persons (FBAC), the body that supervises the APAC, there are 129 local APAC units in Brazil today, 51 in operation and 78 in the implementation phase, each running a *centro de reintegração social* (centre of social reintegration [CRS]) without police, with 43 male and eight female centres in ten Brazilian states (FBAC, 2019a). Since 1972, the association has provided support to 48,501 *recuperandos*³ so that it can be considered a consolidated experience. This project has been developed in Brazil, where since the 1990s, the prison population has increased by 707%: In 2016, the country had 726,712 prisoners, representing the third-largest prison population in the world, after the United States and China (Departamento Penitenciário Nacional [DEPEN], 2017). In 2016, there was a lack of vacancies for 358,663 prisoners.

The prison population (like the victims of homicide) is composed mostly of young people and persons of African descent. The majority of people in prison have a low level of education: As of 2016, 6% were illiterate, 56% had not completed primary education, and just over 9% had completed secondary education (DEPEN, 2017). However, we see that in these situations, only 15% of the prison population were engaged in work activities in June 2016 (DEPEN, 2017), and of these, only 13% worked outside the prison. Only 10% were in school activities, and the other 2% were involved in extracurricular activities such as reading, sports, leisure events, watching videos in the library, and engaging in assorted cultural experiences (DEPEN, 2017).

Consider now how APAC describes the CRS. Contrary to what is found in the traditional model, these centres are described as peaceful places with relaxed and aesthetically pleasing atmospheres, and without the levels of anger and violence present in prisons. The spaces are not overcrowded; they are clean and free of unpleasant odours, with the architecture designed for reintegration activities. The *recuperandos* wear their own clothes (not uniforms) and are called by their own names, thereby maintaining their individual identities. They are considered citizens serving a sentence (Restán, 2017).

In a CRS, according to APAC descriptions (Restán, 2017), there are no armed guards; nor is physical violence used. These conditions are achieved through a security policy based on personal relationships between operators and prisoners, with respect for human rights and dignity, according to clear and well-known rules. Building trust also involves co-management of the facilities: prisoners have the keys to the prison and take care of cleanliness, organisation, discipline, and security, in an effort to work together with APAC, volunteers and administrative staff (Restán, 2017). Each APAC branch is, according to the description, managed by a team that believes in the social reintegration of prisoners. They are mostly volunteers and are trained to relate to each other and resolve conflicts without weapons. All of them are considered educators according to the ‘pedagogy of presence’⁴ (Costa, 2010; Valdeci, 2016).

The APAC literature represents prisoners not as monsters, but as human beings. This is in keeping with modern theories of criminology (Baratta, 2019; Garland, 2001) and the idea, *Todos somos recuperandos* (‘We are all *recuperandos*’), since, as stated by APAC, we are all potential offenders. From this perspective, everyone is considered recoverable – regardless of the type of crime – and recovery is seen as the task of society, not only of the individuals themselves, as is seen in some contemporary reintegration programs (Garland, 1999). For this reason, all people are accepted in APAC units regardless of the type of crime and internal prison

3 Persons deprived of their liberty in the APAC system.

4 We want to change the other when we are not able to change ourselves. To be an educator is to educate oneself, to be sincere, authentic and transparent, before wanting to educate the other. In short, we could say that the pedagogy of presence implies knowing each one of the prisoners serving time in APAC. Their names, genealogy, stories, dreams, projects, expectations, joys, anxieties, worries, defeats, disappointments, fears (Valdeci, 2016, p. 236).

discipline. APAC states that internal prison discipline problems may be due to other situations of conflict. To participate in the programme, people must have been convicted and spent a period of at least one year in prison and must apply to an APAC unit. Also, they must agree to take part in the unit's internal activities, which include work, educational and spiritual activities. People who do not fulfil these commitments, engage in violence, use drugs, or escape will be returned to prison.

According to reports, the *recuperandos* participate in many events. In this model, all prisoners leave their cells at 7:00 a.m. and return at 10:00 p.m. They work, study, and have other activities. Education is fundamental in this model; in addition to attending supplementary and professional courses, the *recuperandos* in the closed system practice labour therapy. In the semi-open system, they have specialised labour activities (professional training workshops are offered in the reintegration centres). In the open regimen, the *recuperandos* work outside the walls of the reintegration centre and their work emphasises social insertion. This is associated with different motivational speeches that aim to promote 'human valorisation' and the re-encounter of *recuperandos* with themselves.

Certain aspects of informal education are also considered important in the CRS: Coexistence in the units is an educational issue with a variety of open channels of communication with the administration, ranging from dormitory meetings to collective meetings. The daily routine of interaction and coexistence among prisoners, who cannot practice any form of violence,⁵ is also described as an 'awareness generator'. It is also worth noting that education is offered not only to prisoners; volunteers, family members, and society itself must be trained to welcome *recuperandos* who are returning to life. According to the APAC documents, visitors, volunteers, and the external work of prisoners offer continuous exchanges with society. As the APAC units need active community support to survive, the education of society towards understanding and welcoming the *recuperandos* is another objective.

Society enters the units through exhibitions, open activities, videos, and school visits. Interactions with the public also occur when the *recuperandos* go out to work. The CRS also offers rooms for visitors and researchers. Research is encouraged, and a support centre for research is located in Itaúna, Minas Gerais. The APAC units depend on the organised civil society, because one of the pillars of this model is volunteering, which (according to the APAC literature) needs to be a testimony to 'unconditional love'. Municipalisation is another characteristic of this model, so the contact between the *recuperandos* and the community that will receive them at the end of their sentences is particularly important.

According to APAC founder Mario Ottoboni's 2014 book, *Kill the Criminal, Save the Person: The APAC Methodology*, the APAC method comprises 12 fundamental elements that arise from experiences with those deprived of liberty. In the book, Ottoboni argues that each of these elements must be applied in harmony with all the others to achieve the goal of social reintegration. If the elements are applied separately, the method may fail, as has been seen. The 12 elements are: (1) community participation; (2) reciprocal help between *recuperandos*; (3) work; (4) spirituality; (5) juridical assistance; (6) health care; (7) human valorisation through education, professionalisation and reality therapy; (8) family; (9) volunteers; (10) the CRS; (11) merit; and (12) the Day of Liberation, a spiritual retreat conducted by APAC.⁶ 'Unconditional love and trust' (Ottoboni, 2014, p. 65) undergird the application of the APAC methodology, as manifested by the volunteers who must welcome, forgive, and engage in dialogue with the *recuperandos* without partiality.

The following section presents a discussion of research that has analysed the APAC units at distinct times in the course of the evolution of the model.

⁵ Threats and disrespectful or offensive words in units are punished as disciplinary failures. Physical assault can be punished by returning the *recuperandos* to an ordinary prison.

⁶ To critically explore these elements, see Grossi (2020a, 2020b, 2021).

Discussion: An Analysis of APAC practice

This section discusses studies that have analysed the APAC model, with due consideration for the fact that comparison is difficult because each study was conducted in a particular CRS at a unique historical moment. However, it is important to review these analyses to have a more complex view of the model proposed by APAC and to understand its practical implementation. In the studies pertaining to Brazil, APAC units are analysed and described in distinct – and often conflicting – ways.

In Brazil, 41 academic studies of APAC were found in the Catalogue of Theses and Dissertations of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel, a foundation linked with the Ministry of Education, including 34 master's dissertations and seven doctoral theses. APAC has attracted researchers from a wide variety of academic disciplines, encouraging a perspective that is both multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary. The main fields of these studies are: law (7), sociology (6), administration (5), psychology (4), theology (4), economics (3), education (3), and regional development (2). We found only one study representing each of the following fields: integrated territory management, literature, public policy, anthropology, architecture, communication, and criminology. Among these, we analysed the 30 studies published and available in digital libraries.

An Innovative and Alternative Model?

The APAC model has been described as innovative (Ferreira, 2015; Silva, 2007; Vargas, 2011), and as a possible response in the area of restorative justice (Sacchetti, 2016; Silva, 2007). The implementation of APAC is interpreted by Vargas (2011, p. 224) as a pilot project that should be recognised as representative of progress in the prison system, despite the need for critique and adaptation.

APAC is described by Guerra (2014, p. 154) as worthwhile, and a feasible alternative to traditional prison practices. For Muhle (2013), 'APAC is an efficient, cheap and humane alternative to serving the custodial sentence' (p. 14). Vargas (2011) argues that if APAC can ensure that people do not become worse than when they arrived, it is already a solution that needs to be emphasised and that makes a difference in relation to the common prison model. In this sense, the model can be seen as a useful tool for the harm-reduction policy proposed by W. G. da Silva (2014), given how the prison system is structured – particularly in Brazil.

On the other hand, Resende (2013) critically argues that the APAC model does not favour the use of socially responsible alternatives; however, Resende does not specify exactly what these alternatives are. Alternative measures are rarely used in Brazil (Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada, 2015a), and they are used mainly for minor crimes. We see an international tendency to apply alternative penalties to situations that would not involve a prison sentence, with the possible effect of extending the web of social control rather than reducing incarceration (Aebi et al., 2015). This does not seem to be the case for the APAC model, however, because it receives prisoners who have already spent some time in prison with other people who are also serving a prison sentence.⁷ In this sense, in our analysis, the APAC model complements other alternatives rather than replacing them.

Contrary to what is commonly assumed, the *recuperandos* involved in the APAC units are not only petty thieves and drug traffickers, but people considered to be dangerous who have been given long prison sentences for offences such as homicide and rape. APAC prisoners are charged with the same crimes as ordinary prisoners (D. M. da Silva, 2007). In an APAC visit, the president explained that they prefer people with long sentences, because in these cases the unit has more time to work with these prisoners according to the model.

⁷ Exceptions were observed, as people not yet convicted were in the facilities due to the absence of a female prison. This situation can cause obvious problems, as some people do not accept the model of the prison and escaping from a CRS is relatively easy.

Social Reintegration Project

According to Ferreira (2015), an effective social reintegration treatment reduces the possibility that former prisoners will return to a life of crime. Resende (2013) argues that there is, effectively, a proposal for re-socialisation within the APAC structures, but he fears it may legitimise prisons. Carvalho (2016) also points out that *recuperandos* believe in the APAC method as an effective possibility of transformation. For Massola (2005) and Darke (2014), prisoners believe in the possibility of reintegration provided by APAC, in order to prevent committing new infractions; however, Massola also argues that APAC units are more focused on the characteristics of individuals than on the external society and the macro-level social forces that strongly influence the trajectories of those who return to society. This view, however, seems unnecessarily reductive, as we saw during our fieldwork period the effort APAC centres devote to educating the community, families, and the municipal authorities.

According to L. G. Oliveira (2012), the prisoners' narratives address recovery and returning to society, but it is possible that some of the *recuperandos* are simply fabricating identities for themselves within the units for opportunistic reasons. It is worth noting that sentenced persons respect for the model is essential for them to continue in the facility and for their progress, and their adherence to the model is seen as a sign of willingness to change. In this sense, it is not clear how much of this is a result of APAC's educational proposal itself, and how much is a consequence of evictions of prisoners who do not believe in the model.

The main studies analysing the APAC model also highlight the following: It stands out for its respect for human rights and its promotion of dignified treatment for prisoners and their families (Pasti, 2016; Resende, 2013; Vale, 2012; Vargas, 2011). Researchers reported on this humane and trustworthy treatment, as well as on the non-existence of vexing searches inside the units. Though in theory it would be illegal in Brazil, the invasive practice of physically searching people to avoid the entry of prohibited objects is still commonly adopted.

The APAC centres offer better material and symbolic conditions for the experience of people deprived of their freedom. The space is peaceful, and prisoners participate in the management of the centre, creating a potentially healthier environment for reintegration, as reported by Vargas (2011). Vargas (2011) and Massola (2005) note that prisoners also participate in the administration of the prison, which constitutes a specificity of the model – the rigid division (typically found in traditional prisons) between the guards and the people deprived of their freedom is eliminated (Oliveira, 2013). In APAC units, the role of maintaining discipline and preventing escape is also attributed to everyone inside the units generating a new organisation.

As mentioned previously, the main actors in APAC centres are the staff, the volunteers, and the prisoners themselves, completely changing aspects of an environment that is more typically dominated by uniformed prison guards, as reported in another APAC study by Massola (2005). The absence of uniforms in the APAC centres is analogous to one of the key steps in the major abolitionist reform that eliminated asylums in Italy (Babini, 2009). Armed agents are not admitted when the APAC model is fully applied. In the APAC experience studied by Massola (2005), there were still prison guards who, although not in continuous contact with the prisoners, created conflicts that resulted in transfers from the APAC system to the common system. The units we visited did not have armed prison guards, but it should be noted that some people from the security staff were former soldiers.

Formal and Informal Education, Professionalisation and Jobs

Regarding the activities found in the APAC proposal for social reintegration, Andrade (2015) and Coutinho (2009) point out that one of the differences between APAC and regular prisons is the quantity and quality of the activities offered to individuals with a prison sentence.

In the APAC model, education has a fundamental role in social reintegration. According to Rossato (2015), the option to serve a sentence in an APAC unit makes the prisoners a subject

of his or her path and increases the likelihood of success in adult education. The APAC model has been defined as an educational system, thanks to the construction of new morals through the global vision of the model, which considers all elements together (Rossato, 2015).

Unlike a traditional prison, where it is common to see permanent conflicts with the security staff that underestimate and undermine the educational area, the school in an APAC unit is seen as an important element, and relations among the school, staff and volunteers are more symmetrical and balanced than those in ordinary prisons (Vale, 2012). School time in prison units is often unpredictable because of the priority given to security and the internal needs of the units, which frequently do not consider education as a basic human right of the prisoner. In our experience, as in Vale (2012), the phenomenon of unpredictability is reduced in APAC centres, and classes usually take place on a regular basis. Nevertheless, precarious physical conditions of the school structure are also found in some APAC centres (Vale, 2012), in contexts where, in ordinary prisons, schools may not even exist. The practice of teachers is similar in both the studied APAC centres and the common prisons, with both using the same methodology and teaching plans (Vale, 2012).

In the APAC unit that was the object of Vale's study, students and teachers had a good relationship, as was the case in the prison analysed in the same city. Of note, the teachers thought the students were more interested in the school in the context of the prison, this being an activity that opposes forced laziness, which was (in this case) not present in the APAC unit, which offered activities all day (Vale, 2012).

In their analyses of the educational aspect of APAC, C. M. M. da Silva (2014) and Vale (2012) found no concrete proposal of pedagogical policies. Coutinho (2009) observes that the APAC model has little emphasis on education. In another studied unit, no educational procedures were adopted developing intellectual work, criticism or political participation, according to C. M. M. da Silva (2014). In our observations, however, we could see that all the *recuperandos* who had not finished high school were studying in spaces that seemed trustworthy, despite being modest: I did not find the bars that exist in common prisons to signal the danger posed by prisoners. In our field experience, education and work were often emphasised and valued in the model, in which participants could take university courses online or in person.

Figure 1

Classroom in an APAC centre in São João Del-Rei, Minas Gerais



Note. Meeting at APAC in São João Del-Rei, Minas Gerais. From Cristiano Oliveira. (<http://cristianossilveira.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/2015.06.29-Apac-1.jpg>) Copyright 2015 by

Aline Margotti.

Another important aspect of social reintegration is having a professional qualification. Since APAC was first created, finding suitable employment for *recuperandos* has been a fundamental objective (Darke, 2014; Massola, 2001). In the APAC he analysed, employment had an eminently resocialising – not simply an economic – function.

Fuzatto (2008), a researcher and also the president of an APAC unit, highlights the good preparation for job search and better life prospects of the *recuperandos* in São João Del-Rei when compared to those offered by a conventional prison model (p.71). When analysing the APAC in Viçosa, Tomé (2011) found that professionalisation workshops (carpentry, baking, vegetable gardening, and handicraft work) contributed to the qualifications and professionalisation of *recuperandos*, who worked primarily in the fields in which they were trained during their time in the CRS. However, the *recuperandos* demanded more variety in their training, which they felt could connect them with the labour market more successfully. This underscored that the biggest problem was still related to prejudice on the part of the hiring companies (Tomé, 2011). Similarly, Coutinho (2009), analysing an APAC unit and the prison in the same location, reported more professionalisation activities in APAC, but observed that these actions did not necessarily guarantee a job nor a successful recovery for the former *recuperandos*. The conclusion of Coutinho's analysis of this CRS was that professional training did not effectively meet the demands of the labour market (2009).

Maximiano (2014) found CRS programs that looked like those in the common prison system, and consequently argued that there is no effective professional qualification in APAC. While studying other units, C. M. M. da Silva (2014) also found that professional qualification policies were weak and inoperative, without actions for the effective implementation of professional qualification policies, and that the *recuperandos* did not know whether they would be hired later by private entrepreneurs. In this regard, C. M. M. da Silva (2014) concluded that APAC jobs are very similar to those developed in the American prison system. Because the *recuperandos* do not learn an activity that effectively allows them to enter the labour market, they are pushed into self-employment, informal work, underemployment, or even unemployment (C. M. M. da Silva, 2014). This situation was also found in our study during the fieldwork we performed between 2017 and 2019, when unemployment was high. In any event, we observed that APAC units offered more jobs when compared to the common prison system in Brazil, in which jobs are usually available for a very limited number of people. There are also administrative meetings (open, semi-open, and closed systems) and cell meetings, in which people discuss the problems they face in the units, and which can provide organisational skills.

Coutinho (2009) highlights the problems of former *recuperandos* in the labour market, arguing that, despite professional training, few of them assume a role in the formal labour market, performing instead only unskilled, informal activities. Even though some companies offer jobs to former prisoners, it is not sufficient to meet the demand. Vargas (2011) also addresses the problem of limited work alternatives offered to former prisoners. This difficult access to the formal labour market increases the gap concerning the illegal labour market which, by exercising stronger power over people, can ultimately reduce the possibility of social reintegration. It is worth noting Ottoboni's (2014) related argument that APAC units should have all their employees trained by former *recuperandos*, some of whom are already represented in positions of authority in both APAC and the FBAC.

At this point, it is important to pause and reflect on how reintegration becomes a macropolitical issue in regard to high unemployment rates. Training, education and professionalisation may not be enough to face such a problematic economic situation.

One of the ideas concerning informal education in the APAC social reintegration proposal aims to break the traditional prison's code of honour among prisoners: *Recuperandos* should not engage in violence or use the prison's typical language and slang; at the same time,

they should help with the managing of cell keys – a task that is viewed very negatively in the traditional prison's culture, and which is identified as an assignment of the prison guards (Oliveira, 2013). This is based on the idea of 'the survival of the fittest' – meaning, those who collaborate with the agents of authority can be put to death for becoming 'pariahs' who, inside the prison, help the guards and faithfully follow the regulations imposed by them (Oliveira, 2013).

Self-control is required to break the traditional code of honour, thereby obtaining increased responsibilities and benefits. In the CRS analysed by Massola (2005), the prisoners considered themselves different from the prisoners incarcerated in common prisons because the APAC *recuperandos* no longer respected the code of honour for prisoners who, for example, demanded death for rapists and paedophiles. In our study, we found no isolated safe sections in the APAC centres reserved for people who could be subject to violence in the common areas, thereby reinforcing the idea that those in the CRS should get used to living together without violence.

The need to respect and enforce internal rules is also a responsibility of those living in a CRS. For example, in the traditional prison community, *caguetagem* (whistleblowing) is regarded as a crime and is condemned by the prison community, but in the APACs it is seen as a sign of adherence to the model. By considering *caguetagem* as an act for which the *recuperandos* share responsibility, the APAC model confronts one of the fundamental rules of the traditional prison's code of honour, where such infractions are condemned (Oliveira, 2013). Consequently, in CRSs, those who report infractions are perceived as 'committed' and can be permitted access to a position of leadership and responsibility as they are proving to be trustworthy. These *recuperandos* who demonstrate their commitment to the APAC model, as they are placed in leadership positions in the units, have the effect of generating an inverted hierarchy of authority (Oliveira, 2013). In this way, the code of honour remains in place for only some of the prisoners, which makes the work of the 'committed' ones all the more difficult.

For the reasons given above, it is not surprising that the APAC model results in a culture that is completely different from that which is fostered by the code of honour in place in traditional prisons, as observed by Muhle (2013) and Oliveira (2013). The resulting social identity is positive, but it is not known whether [the *recuperandos*] are merely reproducing discourses for convenience (L. G. Oliveira, 2012). Massola (2001) argues that the APAC model's intentional breaking of the traditional code of honour results in certain interruptions of the prison culture, but some patterns persist. In the unit I analysed, vestiges of the traditional prison subculture had not disappeared completely, though they were moderate and had been partially modified by the CRS. In APAC, for example, *recuperandos* were not allowed to punish violations of the code of honour excessively, and in particular, impositions of the death penalty upon fellow *recuperandos* were forbidden (Massola, 2005).

Re-entry into Society, Recidivism, and Stigma

The APAC model stands out, according to L. G. Oliveira (2012), for its concern about the post-prison moment. This is certainly true during the penal execution process, as the model allows a gradual return to society, enabling a life of external work while serving one's sentence. However, the two APAC units we visited did not have a structured procedure for people who had served their sentences but could not find a job or a home. Possible problems when returning to society (for example, looking for a job and a house) could perhaps be solved through informal contacts with representatives of the APAC centres, but this service was not organically planned.

Returning to society remains a major challenge for some *recuperandos* after leaving their APAC units. One reason for this is that there is a poor follow-up of former prisoners. In the period of observation, we noted that employment agreements for *recuperandos* with the local municipalities were of limited duration for individuals leaving the penal system. This was also reported by Vargas (2011). By the time *recuperandos* are released from a centre, APAC's

assumption is that they are already socialised and are undergoing the gradual process of release from incarceration; however, this does not always happen. An exception seems to be the APAC unit in Itaúna, which FBAC headquarters manage, and which has had better results in this regard. This APAC is more rooted in its local society, making it possible for several companies to offer jobs to *recuperandos* (Vargas, 2011).

Muhle (2013) and Coutinho (2009) report that the stigma associated with *recuperandos* is lower than that of prisoners in general. Through their involvement in the local society, this stigma is disrupted, and a better reception is generated, according to Silva (2007). Companies that employ former prisoners contribute to reducing the social stigma, as reported by Coutinho (2009). Prejudice does remain, but according to Guerra (2014), the *recuperandos* are viewed differently from traditional ex-convicts. This is because the process of breaking social relations that we see in the typical system is avoided by the APAC model, and there is an effort to maintain links with the family (Tomé, 2011, p. 94). Vargas (2011) admits that stigma is reduced inside APAC units, but that it returns in strength when *recuperandos* leave them. Belonging to religious groups, which is encouraged by APAC, can re-signify prisoners' identities and help them overcome social stigmatisation, thereby providing a network that can also offer them employment opportunities (Tomé, 2011; Vargas, 2011). When reviewing the analysis Tomé (2011) conducted on the life trajectories of *recuperandos* from the CRS in Viçosa, we can see that stigma and prejudice still influence them as well – and their path in the units does not guarantee that the stigma will be broken.

Recidivism rates, though difficult to compare, must be taken into consideration when evaluating the success of social reintegration models. Reports of a 70% recidivism rate should be discussed, because this figure includes people who may not be convicted later; likewise, in Brazil the percentage of people placed in preventive custody rather than sentenced to prison is high. The most accurate study, even if conducted with limited numbers, reports a recidivism rate between 20% and 50% in the Brazilian context (Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada, 2015b). As there is no clear methodology regarding recidivism in the APAC model, several methodological problems are observed: For example, the *recuperandos* may commit a crime in another state and, in that case, would not be counted as recidivist offenders (Ferreira, 2015).

Additionally, to compare the two percentages, it would be necessary to understand the significance of the impact on prisoners of the selection for APAC admission and length of stay. Although the model claims not to select people with good discipline, it should be maintained in the units once people enter. In addition, it is mandatory that *recuperandos* remain in the CRS to be involved in work, study, and order-management activities in the units that may exclude several people – for example, people who have no intention of desisting from criminal acts. People who respect traditional criminal ethics, for example, do not ask for a transfer to an APAC unit (Augusto, 2016; Darke, 2014). Despite the few interviews conducted by Fuzatto (2008), the people who had been admitted to the APAC unit analysed had more positive experiences with families than had people in regular prisons. The primary socialisation process and life stories of people who have been in APAC centres were, therefore, more favourable in this studied unit (Fuzatto, 2008). This may also happen in other units.

Conclusion

Research shows that people in the APAC model believe in reintegration, although the extent to which this belief is due to opportunistic dynamics or to the eviction of people who do not adhere to the model remains unclear. Formal education is mandatory, and is seen as a priority; also, no problems regarding the availability of vacancies have been reported. Research seems to suggest that the APAC model does have an impact on recidivism rates, although we must stay on the side of caution before drawing premature conclusions until further research is conducted.

The APAC model seems to offer more professionalising activities than do traditional

prisons in Brazil. In some APAC units, these activities may lead to the insertion of *recuperandos* in the labour market; in other units, however, this does not seem to be the case, where re-entry into society is difficult and aggravated by the persistence of stereotypes.

The educational perspective that is integral to the APAC model is also noteworthy. This can be seen in both overt and subtle ways – for example, in the absence of armed agents both inside and outside the centres (despite the presence of prisoners considered highly dangerous), amid the pleasing aesthetics of the centre's environment, seems to ensure more respect for the rights of the *recuperandos*. Continuous exchanges with society and relationships with the outside world are described as excellent; also, the phenomenon of staff without uniforms is reminiscent of the results of the deinstitutionalisation of asylums in Italy.

Family relationships are less affected by residence in a CRS, and research shows the possibility of rebuilding social ties according to the proposed APAC model. Such strengthening of relationships can be compromised, however, if volunteers or interns lacking sufficient education are used to engage in this work, as we observed in some units. In addition, the CRS has certain unique protocols that (at least in theory) may break the traditional prison code of honour, while in actual practice the possibility of representing a cultural transformation for opportunistic purposes remains.

The APAC model is also recommended as a response in the area of restorative justice, providing a concrete example in support of the idea that society can be educated for a response that is not merely punitive. Also, studies describe the model as alternative and innovative, as it accomplishes a project originally planned but not actually accomplished, as Foucault reminds us. The proposal can represent an alternative model to traditional imprisonment in Brazil – and possibly in the world – although it needs to be improved in a number of ways. This alternative applies uniquely to people who have received a prison sentence and, therefore, does not currently seem to apply to people who might benefit from other approaches. APAC is also a model for reducing prison damage (whether to property or human resources), and it is also recommended as a possible public security policy based on the social inclusion (rather than exclusion) of prisoners; however, this, too, requires further research.

In spite of all that would seem to commend the APAC model in terms of its potential benefits, several issues remain. These include limitations in terms of post-prison follow-up to help people find a job and a home after leaving the unit. Unemployment and lack of jobs seem to be problems inherent in any reintegration project (not only the APAC model), making it difficult for people to enter the labour market.

Evidence suggests that the APAC model represents a reintegration proposal that can partially overcome reintegration practices – such as bureaucratic marketing (Garland, 2001; Wacquant, 1999), breaching of the dynamics of total institution (Goffman, 1961), and social stigmatisation (Goffman, 1963) – and go beyond the basic disciplinary and production dynamics of simple, docile bodies as described by Foucault (1975). The attainment of these ends is proposed through educational planning involving prisoners, volunteers, schools, institutions, and the greater society.

The APAC model is not a method to overcome the prison system itself, but it can be an alternative tool to help overcome the problems of the prison system reported in the sociological literature, such as criminal selectivity and the cultivation of the career criminal.

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