Social representations of motherhood for women deprived of liberty in the female prison system

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Abstract *This paper aimed to analyze the social representations of motherhood of pregnant women, breastfeeding women, and those who experienced pregnancy in deprivation of liberty in the prison system. This qualitative study was conducted with 42 women and is grounded on the assumptions of the Theoretical Paradigm of Social Representations. Most participants were young women aged 18-39 (90.5%; n=38) and single (50.0%; n=21); 61.9% (n=26) reported two or more pregnancies and 47.6% (n=20) reported one or more miscarriages. The possible representation of being a mother in prison was crystallized, in semantic terms, mainly by the terms "separation" (f=27; OME: 2.9), "sadness" (f=18; OME: 2.3), "horrible" (f=16; OME: 2.1) and "pain" (f=12; OME: 2.8). In the substitution and decontextualization zone, representations were objectified by the terms "separation" (f=18; OME: 3), "sadness" (f=13; OME: 2.5), "fear" (f=11; OME: 2.2) and "horrible" (f=10; OME: 1.5). It was evident that the centrality of social representations for the study participants reflects the suffering experienced by the separation of the mother-child dyad.*

Key words *Nursing, Pregnancy, Prisons, Prisoners, Social Psychology*

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Introduction

Female incarceration is characterized as a sentence intrinsically linked to violence against women, which excludes their social role. This condition is associated with abandoning family activities as a partner and mother, among the female-assigned roles. In this context, the intertwining of motherhood is a complex issue, deriving from the cultural, contextual, historical, and social construction in the involvement of care and affective feelings[1,2].

Nevertheless, the setting experienced by women deprived of liberty during the pregnancy-puerperal period in the prison system draws the incipient and fragile outline of the dominant political, social, and patriarchal configuration concerning women's role in this field. This fact encourages gender inequality and corroborates the negative statistics regarding female incarceration during pregnancy[3,4].

In Brazil, the National Survey of Penitentiary Information (*Infopen Mulheres*), published in 2018, points to a 656% increase in the female prison population, reaching 42,000 from 2000 to 2016, with 40.6 women imprisoned for every 100 thousand. International data show that Brazil ranks fourth globally for female prison population, approaching countries such as the United States, China, and Russia, which rank first, second and third, respectively[5]. In Brazil, Argentina, and Costa Rica, more than 60% of female incarceration is associated with drug trafficking[3].

The current Brazilian panel of women in deprivation of liberty reveals a predominance of young, single, black women with incomplete elementary schooling level involved in drug trafficking crimes, which reflects, in the gender dimension, female submission to males, in this case, with passive attribution influenced by the partner in the relationship context[5,6].

The situations experienced in the prison context allow women, pregnant women, and mothers to assign meanings to their spatiality in the prison system. Therefore, they require a scientific investment in the female prison context as of motherhood from the perspective of the subjective meanings of the Theoretical Paradigm of Social Representations (TPSR). Thus, a better understanding can be achieved from changes in the deprivation of liberty setting[7]. From this angle, under the TPSR's lenses, the paradigm is the effect of human interactions between two or more people. Thus, the theoretical paradigm praises knowledge of the whole in specificities,

and not just in an isolated and unidentified way, supporting women in prison who need to talk about anguish, anxiety, joy, fear, and, above all, expose female specificities.

The contextualization allows us to grasp the answers from the research problem and, thus, answer the following question: what are the social representations of motherhood of pregnant and breastfeeding women who have experienced pregnancy in deprivation of liberty? From the paradigmatic and representational perspective, this paper aims to analyze this female issue in the prison system.

Methods

This work consists of a qualitative study anchored in the assumptions of the Theoretical Paradigm of Social Representations[7] based on the structural aspect and the Central Core Theory[8] and Mute Zone[9].

Moscovici[7] argues that Social Representations concern the effect of human interactions between two or more people, which assign the world, people, and voices more properties to define a social being, regardless of the setting. In other words, it is the familiarization of the unfamiliar[7].

The structural aspect of social representations is shown in this study, which is linked to the approach focused on the structure of representation and respective meanings to interpret people's relationships from a cognitive-structural perspective[7,8].

The study was developed in the four public female detention institutions in the State of Rio Grande do Norte (RN). The population universe of the research consisted of 43 women, among them pregnant women, breastfeeding women, and women who experienced pregnancy in deprivation of liberty in the female prison system of the state of RN. All were submitted to the eligibility criteria.

This research included women who, regardless of the prison regime, were in the following conditions: they had given birth in the studied setting; they experienced the breastfeeding process and the puerperal period within the prison system; and they experienced pregnancy or breastfeeding in the prison system.

Women who displayed risk behaviors to the researcher's safety were excluded from the study, namely: the correctional officer's understanding of aggressive actions by women during visits and recent abuse towards fellow prisoners; women

with altered psychic functions, such as thinking and felt perception that impeded the cognitive ability to provide data, following guidance from prison officers; women who, for personal or criminal reasons, could not be in a shared space for visits; women with signs of presumptive pregnancy and who had a miscarriage during collection.

Thus, the sample of this study consisted of all pregnant and breastfeeding women who experienced pregnancy in deprivation of liberty in the state of RN prison system, totaling 42 participants. Fifteen of these are pregnant, seven are breastfeeding, and 20 experienced pregnancy in deprivation of liberty in the prison system at another stage after data collection. We should stress that only one woman was excluded due to risk behaviors and for being in a reserved place.

Data were collected at three different stages, from May to September 2019, following the ethical and legal steps through a sociodemographic questionnaire, semi-structured interview associated with the Free Word Association Technique (FWAT), besides the replacement and decontextualization, which are conditions for obtaining the Mute Zone (MZ)[9].

The semi-structured interview was conducted by an FWAT-inducing term "Being a mother in prison". After responses from the term, each woman mentioned, in hierarchical order, the crucial words of "being a mother in prison". Soon after, the respondent was asked to utter a meaning for each term spontaneously, that is, expressing the context naturally, in order to find the representations in the semantic field[10].

The explanatory strategy of the inductive term aims to clarify the region implicit in the subjects' verbalization, to the detriment of the norms faced by particular social groups that cannot express situations due to the experienced context. The same technique was applied in different directions to find the MZ: "If I say to you: 'Being a mother in prison', what do you think the other women imprisoned here think?"[8].

Initially, the textual matrix was prepared with processing and theoretical analysis. Then, the data found were lemmatized and categorized for a better representational and operational understanding of both processes. Processing occurred in the *Software Interface de R pour les Analyses Multidimensionnelles de Textes et de Questionnaires* (IRAMUTEQ), version 7 alpha 2[11]. The lexicographic processing was performed with FWAT and MZ data using IRAMUTEQ 2.

The interpretation was conducted by prototypical analysis in this research (four-box table),

represented qualitatively to provide the reader with data on the actual situation of the researched topic for statistical and lexicographic analysis and interpretation[12].

The words with the highest evocation frequency and the most quickly evoked were searched in the prototypical analysis to collaborate with the understanding of the social components that integrate the common sense of pregnant and breastfeeding women who experienced pregnancy in deprivation of liberty in the prison system.

The participants' answers follow a pre-established mean, so that value "1" is directed to the first answer, and value "2" to the second answer, and so forth. In this sense, the cutoff points to compose the quadrants are shown based on the use of the median in the evoked words. The cutoff point was three in the five evoked words, per the Mean Evocation Order (MEO). Thus, words with MEO≤2 were classified as low evocation order and MEO≥3 included as high MEO, which were selected for this analysis[12]. The establishment of values to compose the four-box table with their respective representational components – central core and peripheral elements – was calculated automatically by the IRAMUTEQ software, obtaining an intermediate frequency of 8.37, with a Mean Evocation Order (MEO) of 3.08[11].

Therefore, we reinforce that these elements were the basis for elaborating the four-box table to understand the Central Core Theory (CCT), highlighting and identifying the central core, the intermediate elements, and the periphery of the representation based on normative and functional elements[13].

Furthermore, the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte approved the study under Opinion No. 3.178.18. Data collection was preceded by signing the Informed Consent Term, informing the women about data anonymity and confidentiality.

Results

In this study, in general terms, the participants were mainly from the private and provisional regimes; they experienced pregnancy in deprivation of liberty in the prison system, with 47.6% (n=20) in this profile; 90.5% (n=38) were aged 18-39 years, with a mean of 29 years; they self-declared single (50.0%; n=21); in terms of schooling, 59.5% (n=25) had not completed Elementa-

ry School and none had completed High School. Women from the capital Natal and the metropolitan region prevailed, totaling 59.5% (n=25).

Most women had three or more pregnancies (61.9%; n=26); regarding abortions, 47.6% (n=20) mentioned it at least once; the type of sentence to be served in a closed regime had the highest proportion (52.4%; n=22), and 16.7% (n=07) did not know the type of regime they were serving. A total of 14.3% (n=06) were serving time in the provisional regime. Regarding the time they served their sentence in prison, 54.8% (n=23) answered that it had been less than a year; 23.8% (n=10), two years or more; and 21.4% (n=09) reported having spent more than one year in the female prison system.

Prototypical Processing - Free Word Association Technique – Matrix 1

In the prototypical analysis of Matrix 1, the inducing term "Being a mother in prison" resulted in 210 evocations and 94 different words. The number of different words evoked by the women was shortlisted to 61After lemmatization and categorization. Excluding the evocations with a frequency lower than 3, the result was 31.1% (n=19). Chart 1 shows the result of the prototype processing of Matrix 1.

From the frequency and the Mean Evocation Order (MEO) in the ULQ, we observe the representational field as the possible nuclear representation of being a mother in prison, which was crystallized, in semantic terms, mainly by the element "*separation*", referring the state of "*sadness*" and "*pain*" to the inducing term "*being a mother in prison*", embodied as a "*horrible*" moment. Thus, the central core of the representations is characterized by the dichotomy of the maternal mother-child dyad at six months of age since the participants presented the terms directed to "*separation*":

Fear of being separated from my son. (Woman 1).

My pain increased when losing my son at six months. (Woman 23).

The secondary elements are found in the first periphery of the four-box table, in the URQ, where the words "*suffering*" and "*fear*" were the ones with high evocations and frequencies. Thus, the terms found can be linked to the central core, given the participants' statements when denoting meanings to strengthen these central elements, with the value being attributed to the rupture of the mother-child bond, also associated with "*suffering*" and "*fear*" experienced in the prison system, which arise from "*separation*" and imprisonment:

I try not to look at the bars, so I don't suffer and remember that I'm in prison. (Woman 6).

Suffering for the child. (Woman 42).

The LRQ contains the second periphery of social representation, which are the weakest elements in the representational organization, with less interference in the other quadrants since the number of evocations in this periphery is small and cited in the last places. Curiously, the quadrant emerges as a possibility for mothers, as it contains evocations and frequencies, inclining them, on the one hand, to "*adoption*" of the child to governmental institutions, and on the other, making the woman "*strong*", before the "*lack of assistance*" and "*child_imprisonment*", leading her to "*regret*", above all, to "*learning*" in the face of daily life in the prison system. The feeling of "*anguish*" in the second periphery is also highlighted, juxtaposing the presence of the element "*procedure*".

In the context studied here, "*procedure*" is understood to mean the moment when women deprived of liberty in the prison system are placed with their hands in front of and on the shoulders of the other convict or with their hands on their heads and facing forward towards the wall with their feet apart.

I fear losing my daughter to the guardianship council, justice, and adoption. (Woman 10).

It's knowing that my son is serving time with me. (Woman 9).

The contrast zone of the representation is configured as elements with low-frequency MEO, located in the LLQ; however, they emerged in the first positions. These are possible elements of setting the central core of individuals, thus inferring the presence of subgroups, with initial meanings of representation, without modifying the centrality of the four-box table. In this quadrant, we observed the presence of the word "*longing*", which is probably directed to the broken bonds, whether with the child or family members, making the experience in the prison system a "*hard*" condition and, at the same time, "*distant*" from the family base. The "*violence*" identified and reported by the participants is also pointed out, meeting "*fear*" in the first periphery and being "*abandoned*" by the state, family members, and, above all, by the partner in the prison system:

It is longing for the family, my mother, and my daughter. (Woman 17).

Fear of being hit in the face; pregnant women only get hit in the face. (Woman 23).

Chart 1. Four-box table of the prototypical analysis (matrix 1). Pregnant and breastfeeding women who experienced pregnancy in the prison system.

		MEO≤3.08			MEO>3.08	
		Upper-Left Quadrant (ULQ)			**Upper-Right Quadrant (URQ)**	
		F	**OME**		**f**	**MEO**
f≥8.37	Separation	27	2.9	Suffering	19	3.5
	Sadness	18	2.3	Fear	12	3.8
	Horrible	16	2.1			
	Pain	12	2.8			
		Lower-Left Quadrant (LLQ)			**Lower-Right Quadrant (LRQ)**	
		F	**MEO**		**f**	**MEO**
f<8.37	Longing	6	2.7	Adoption	6	4
	Hard	5	2.4	Strong	5	4.6
	Distant	5	2.8	Lack of assistance	5	3.6
	Violence	4	3	Child_imprisonment	4	4.8
	Abandoned	3	3	Regret	3	3.7
				Learning	3	3.3
				Anguish	3	3.3
				Procedure	3	4

Captions: f: frequency; MEO: Mean Evocation Order.

Source: Authors, based on research data.

Prototypical Processing - Free Word Association Technique - Replacement and Decontextualization Model – Matrix 2

After the inducing term "Being a mother in prison", the Matrix 2 prototypical processing identified 210 evocations and 95 different words; lemmatization and categorization were performed sequentially, showing/identifying 61 disparate words mentioned by the women. Therefore, evocations with a frequency lower than "3" were excluded, resulting in a 32.8% success rate (n=20) (Chart 2).

Matrix 2 four-box table refers to the substitution zone and the decontextualization zone (mute zone); the representations of the upper quadrant were objectified by the elements that underpinned the central core. As a result, the greater value was attributed to "*separation*", resembling the central elements of the four-box normality table (Matrix 1), with representational crystallization since the participants' statements are associated with the terms above. Therefore, "*separation*" reaffirms the maternal bond's (mother-child dyad) rupture, which is reinforced with negative feelings by "*being a mother in prison*", such as "*sadness*", "*fear*", and "*horrible*", directed at the mother's "*suffering*" with her child.

The composition of the first periphery (ULQ) occurred through powerful evocations of the mother-child dyad's rupture, highlighting the "*suffering*" by women within the prison system before, during, and after the presence of the child in the setting. "*Pain*" and "*lack of assistance*" also tend toward "*suffering*". However, these meanings are presumably attributed to the fear of the lack of child care and the "*lack of assistance*" felt in the prison system. Thus, we observe a strong presence of probable peripheral elements with influences in the evocations of the central terms due to the similarity in the meaning elaborated by women when citing the words above and found in the ULQ.

A strong meaning of the word "*violence*" is observed in the LRQ, related to what is experienced in the prison system regarding fights and rebellions, much in the same way that the symbolic value of the elements "*imprisonment*" and "*child_imprisonment*" are directly reflected in the child's suffering. The "*anguish*" mentioned in the evocation is focused on the frustrating idealization and temporal delimitation of the mother in taking care of her child, reaffirmed as the fear while performing the "*procedure*" while pregnant, transforming her into a stronger woman before reality. Circumstantially, the words "*cry*"

and "*regret*" are a greater understanding of their situation as individuals, that is, the daily life of pregnant or breastfeeding women in the prison system, referring to child-related meanings.

In this result, the contrast elements translate feelings, information, and, above all, the meanings attributed to the daily life of the participants in the prison system in the face of the "*longing*" for the child, the family, and the extramural life. One can also consider "*adoption*", "*distant*", and "*loneliness*" as expressions that reaffirm the "*longing*" in the dimension of distancing from the child, especially when it comes to "*adoption*". Words "*bad*" and "*hard*" are also added for this last semantic evocation, suggesting enhanced dyad rupture. Thus, the quadrant observed shows the uniqueness of the subgroups, formed without modifying the central elements of social representation.

Thus, the divergent terms and those that with representational differences are integrated into Matrix 2, such as central core ("*fear*" and "*pain*"), first periphery ("*pain*", "*lack of assistance*", and "*fear*"), contrast zone ("*adoption*", "*loneliness*", "*bad*", "*violence*", and "*abandoned*"), second periphery ("*violence*", "*cry*", "*adoption*", "*lack of assistance*", and "*learning*"). As a result, the crystallization between the two four-box tables is maintained with a strong presence of words that

represent and attribute meanings to the "*separation*" of the maternal dyad, potentiated by negative feelings.

Discussion

The social representation of pregnant and breastfeeding women and those who experienced pregnancy in deprivation of liberty in the prison system assumes a formative character, with elements enabling the crystallization of the central core. The experience of motherhood in imprisonment occurs ambivalently, between rupture and delicacy and sentimentality, thus suggesting that these women's experience follows a path of suffering due to the separation of the mother-child dyad before the criminalization of their acts and the meaning and feeling of being a mother, therefore, overlapping penalties imposed by norms, laws, and legal regulations of the prison system.

Despite divergent meanings, the terms evoked and found in Matrices 1 and 2 reveal an implicit logic for the same social meaning, per the reports of the participating women. Such values denote a similarity in the construction of normality and decontextualization of the four-box table quadrants.

The central core of pregnant and breastfeed-

Chart 2. Four-box table of the prototypical analysis (matrix 2). Pregnant and breastfeeding women who experienced pregnancy in the prison system.

		MEO≤3.01		MEO>3.01		
		Upper-Left Quadrant (ULQ)		**Upper-Right Quadrant (URQ)**		
		f	**MEO**		*f*	**MEO**
f≥8.1	Separation	18	3	Suffering	26	3.4
	Sadness	13	2.5	Pain	14	3.1
	Fear	11	2.2	Lack of assistance	11	3.7
	Horrible	10	1.5			
		Lower-Left Quadrant (LLQ)		**Lower-Right Quadrant (LRQ)**		
		f	**MEO**		*f*	**MEO**
f<8.1	Longing	7	3	Violence	7	3.4
	Adoption	7	3	Child_imprisonment	6	3.8
	Distant	5	2.4	Anguish	4	4
	Loneliness	4	2.8	Procedure	4	4.5
	Bad	3	1.7	Strong	3	3.7
	Hard	3	1.3	Cry	3	4
				Regret	3	3.7

Captions: f: frequency; MEO: Mean Evocation Order.

Source: Authors, based on research data.

ing women and those who experienced pregnancy in deprivation of liberty in the prison system defined in the four-box table (upper left quadrant) consisted of, statistically, by the terms evoked quicker, which is suggestive per the literature, as identified in the first positions, making them stable and resistant to modifications[8].

We emphasize that data found show singular divergences about the complexity of women who experience deprivation of liberty in their pregnancy-puerperal cycle, reinforcing an implicit condition, which makes us understand that they are organized and strengthened regarding social representation in the same core[8]. The generating function, a component for creating and transforming the meanings of other elements, provides them with meanings and values in the representation. In turn, the organizing function – which is the central core – conjoins the representational elements.

The word "*separation*" was the most representative term presented in the central core, grouped with the other elements in the same table, as directed to institutionalized separation in the Brazilian prison system: *sadness*, *horrible*, *pain*, and *fear*. Notably, the condition of the child's permanence in prison during exclusive breastfeeding is limited to the sixth month of life, as of Law No. 11,942 of 2009[14], resulting in a rupture of the mother-child dyad, generating, thus, feelings, emotions, attitudes, and responses as negative consequences for the dyad, besides some sense of self-protection due to the condition and circumstance of an incarcerated mother.

When associated with pregnancy or breastfeeding, the setting of female imprisonment is defined, on the one hand, as a range of particular representations for the woman-mother, which favor complications for the mother-child dyad, which can be understood as polemical representations[7]. On the other hand, as a projection of the future in the face of questions built from what is experienced in the prison system, when mothers have a date set to distance themselves from their children, mothers stay within the walls, and children go outside[15].

During their stay in the prison system, the women studied here suffer cyclically with their separation from their children in the context of incarceration. Another burden is the responsibility, concerns, thoughts, blame, anxieties, and, consequently, illness during pregnancy and postpartum over the next few days in the prison system. Indeed, these developments lead them to mental and physical illness, listed from sadness,

fear, and pain referred to in the evocations[16].

In the meantime, contextually, we should point out how hard it is for this woman to be a mother and to exercise motherhood without interference. We should also highlight the day-to-day life in prison and having to deal with preset dates and times in a disciplinary fashion, which can enhance maternal suffering and, consequently, the illness of women in prison, based on the rhetoric provided by the separation of the mother-child dyad. Added to the substandard and deteriorated environment prison conditions is cell overcrowding. The limited appropriate health support makes the prison system without the main functions of restricting, re-socializing, and reintegrating women deprived of liberty into society[16].

Incarceration situations are determinants and conditions for the mother's and the child's health problems since the environment is precarious, unhealthy, and hostile. From this perspective, the illness of the woman-mother locked in the prison system with the "incarcerated child" has high levels, given the circumstances, erupting, especially mental disorders with very severe developments[17]. This reality is evidenced in a study showing that 75% of women in prison suffer from some mental disorders[18].

Thus, we start from the situation that incarceration of the mother-child dyad – even under different conditions, backdrops, and regimes – shows projected aspects that follow the same path. On the one hand, we have mothers who need their children during imprisonment, due to the feelings built in the bond, in the woman's sentimental need, the biological and physiological needs of motherhood, besides the instability of how the child will live outside the prison and without the mother. On the other, children victimized and incarcerated in the prison system are impacted by reclusion from society, family members, and their growth and development, which are substantially affected by mental illnesses and chronic disorders also associated with early mortality[19].

Regarding the experience and environment for newborns in prison, the availability of nurseries in Brazilian female prisons is supported by Law No. 11,942 of May 28, 2009. However, it is not practicable in all states[2]. Furthermore, some Brazilian settings have mother-child units. Notwithstanding this, these units are only an extended prison. In Ezeiza, Argentina, the proposal is presented as a daycare center since the child stays with the mother in the daycare center and, si-

multaneously, in the prison system. At night, the child is under the care of family members[2].

In this context, regardless of the outcome, the maternal dyad will be harmed since the mother-child's incarceration enhance the sentence and damages both. As a result, mothers understand the responsibility and value of the maternal role of being a mother in the prison system since it teaches and establishes new horizons, in most cases making them "re-socialized" women ready to exercise motherhood extramurally[2,19,20].

The peripheries are presented as a support for contextualizing the centrality of representational elements, as they sustain the core and give it meaning. The first periphery (Upper-Right Quadrant/URQ) infers, at first, the mother's and children's suffering and fear before the universe of a prison system, reverberating in the separation of the maternal dyad. Secondly, the verbal components evoked emphasize how pain and lack of assistance in this prison routine progressively exacerbate suffering.

The evocations of this periphery (Upper-Right Quadrant/URQ) can relate the feelings named to the suffering of pregnant and breastfeeding women in the prison system since these are counterbalanced by the presence of low-frequency elements with high evocation terms, leaning on the central core[21].

The helplessness directed towards the mother and child in the prison system directly impacts the experience outside of deprivation of liberty since the disrupted family network of these women is a tenuous factor, therefore, cruel to the needs of these children in an extramural environment. Women's imprisonment leads to declining family ties and financial segment, reflecting the departure of the children from the bars and the lack of guardians, which excludes subjects from society. These findings also corroborate the mother's blaming of the child's suffering and the inability to perform her role[22].

Less critical for social representation, terms with a low evocation frequency are found in the second periphery (Lower-Right Quadrant/LRQ). However, the words in that table directly reflect the representational context, even in the women's individuality or uniqueness, as they show elements of how hard it is to be a mother in the prison system from the daily life of the setting.

The time to be served by women who committed a crime to society must only be directed to imprisonment. However, this compliance comes with violence in the most diverse segments experienced by women in the prison system. The

female gender is violated when addressed as the male gender since equality is uneven because of the differences in all aspects. This context is further burdened by the lack of conjugal visits for women in the state of RN, and convicts' rights to sexuality are infringed, besides the lack of necessary assistance due to women's peculiarities and needs – such as hygiene, food, reproductive cycle, mentioning the menstruation period, among other aspects that are not respected, inherent to the human dignity of western women. Thus, the causes mentioned lead female inmates to "be raped" to the full extent of this term[23].

Regarding mandatory adoption in the female prison system – when the six months of coexistence between the mother and child have elapsed and in the absence of relatives who receive the child's guardianship – this process can also be visualized/characterized as violence against women concerning motherhood, which is affirmed before the terms identified in the second periphery and the participants' statements. Violence is configured in such a way that children leave the mother's conviviality for the unknown; thus, the unfamiliar, in representational and parental terms, whether family or foster home. This fact breaks the bond and violates women's individuality, besides the child, since it is affected considerably[24].

Added to this periphery is the encapsulated mother's suffering when mentioning the incarceration of their child or, for some, as dual imprisonment or being arrested twice, with a content of regret, learning, considering the influence of incarceration on the child, with maternal deprivation. This fact can be observed from the mother-child dyad rupture, shown in the bias of transgression and deviation as a lesson for the mother and a reason for learning, which directly reflect on the "imprisoned child", who, without fault, is serving a sentence, at first, in prison with his mother. In another stage, the child lives outside the prison, without maternal and, often, family members' support[25].

The contrast zone (Lower-Left Quadrant/LLQ) reveals terms evoked by fewer people – that is, pregnant and breastfeeding women and those who have experienced pregnancy in the prison system – with important representational meanings since they reinforce the central core and the variation with the representativeness of subgroups.

The longing and distance referred to in this quadrant are linked to the separation of the mother from the child after the sixth month of

life, a period imposed by Law No. 11,942 of May 2009, which refers to the breastfeeding time, going against the law of national and international health organizations on the benefits of keeping exclusive breastfeeding until the age of two[14].

Additions to the contrast zone are abandonment, loneliness, and the difficulties of women deprived of liberty in the female prison system. Female incarceration disrupts family ties and friendships, further restricting women in society. The predisposing factors for the abandonment of women by bonds include the socioeconomic profile of family and friends, the distance of prisons from the urban area, besides the stigmas attributed to this setting and the established prejudice, excluding them from social life and exacerbating the suffering in the face of the imposed loneliness[26].

We would like to reinforce that this event is reflected in the biopsychosocial sphere of the mother-child maternal dyad, which substantially impairs the child's cognitive process and escalates the suffering of the mother-woman in this setting[27]. Evidently, besides the driving factors of maternal suffering in the prison system, the rupture scheduled for the sixth month of the child's life contributes intensely to the hard price to pay for the crime committed in the Brazilian prisons and is considered with sentence-maximizing factors.

Final considerations

This paper evidenced that the social representations of pregnant and breastfeeding women who would experience pregnancy in deprivation of liberty in the prison system regarding motherhood showed feelings and generalized meanings of "being a mother in prison", which direct the core of meanings for the mother-child dyad's maternal suffering with separation. When associated with maternity, the female prison system transposes imprisonment and enhances the woman's sentence for the crime committed since the singularities of pregnancy and puerperium are compromised by the factors along the prison's lines.

Therefore, it is necessary to fully implement the laws and social, educational, and health policies that govern the female prison universe, together with the expanded and humanized perspective of professionals and society on the studied public. Also, regardless of the crime committed, the female convict woman is a human being with singularities and needs. Thus, prison health teams should urgently enter women's prisons and implement the principles of the Unified Health System (SUS).

Furthermore, this study had some limitations, such as difficulties in the field of research regarding the authorization to enter the prisons to conduct the research. The restriction on not being able to establish a weekly data collection routine, given the specifics of the prison system, such as armed escort for the transfer of women, other activities in the prison spaces, fights between inmates, and alarm due to rebellion, are some examples of the difficulties.

Collaborations

AB Medeiros, GWS Silva, TRG Lopes, JBL Carvalho, JA Caravaca-Morera and FAN Miranda participated in the design, writing, critical review, and final approval of the paper.

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