IMPRISONED HOPE: SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS OF WOMEN DEPRIVED OF LIBERTY ON RESOCIALIZATION AND EDUCATION

Esperança Enclausurada: Representações Sociais de Mulheres em Situação de Privação de Liberdade sobre a Ressocialização e a Educação

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to analyze the social representations of women deprived of liberty regarding resocialization and education, grounded in Serge Moscovici's Theory of Social Representations. It is a qualitative, descriptive-exploratory study conducted in a female prison unit in the State of São Paulo (Brazil), involving 12 women serving semi-open sentences and engaged in educational activities within the prison context. Data were collected through a sociodemographic questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, and drawing tasks. The textual corpus was submitted to thematic content analysis and lexical analysis using IRAMUTEQ (*Interface de R pour les Analyses Multidimensionnelles de Textes et de Questionnaires*), enabling the identification of discursive classes and the construction of interpretative categories aligned with the adopted theoretical framework. The results indicate that resocialization is represented as a process of personal transformation, associated with the revision of values, reconstruction of life projects, and regaining social recognition. These representations are constructed amid tensions experienced in daily prison life, perceived as marked by stigma and mistrust. Education emerges in a dual dimension: as an opportunity for professional qualification and labor market reintegration, and as a symbolic strategy for restoring dignity and social prestige. It is concluded that education and resocialization are socially represented in an ambivalent manner, articulating expectations of individual transformation with structural constraints inherent to the prison context.

Keywords: Social representations; Prison education; Resocialization.

RESUMO

Objetivou-se analisar as representações sociais de mulheres em situação de privação de liberdade acerca da ressocialização e da educação, à luz da Teoria das Representações Sociais de Serge Moscovici. Trata-se de estudo qualitativo, de caráter descritivo-exploratório, realizado em uma unidade prisional feminina do Estado de São Paulo (Brasil), com 12 mulheres em regime semiaberto vinculadas

à escolarização no contexto prisional. A produção dos dados ocorreu por meio de questionário sociodemográfico, entrevistas semiestruturadas e elaboração de desenhos. O corpus textual foi submetido à análise de conteúdo temática e à análise lexical com auxílio do *software* IRAMUTEQ (*Interface de R pour les Analyses Multidimensionnelles de Textes et de Questionnaires*), possibilitando a identificação de classes discursivas e a construção de categorias interpretativas articuladas ao referencial teórico adotado. Os resultados indicam que a ressocialização é representada como processo de transformação pessoal, associado à revisão de valores, reconstrução de projetos de vida e retomada do reconhecimento social. Tais representações se constroem em meio a tensões do cotidiano prisional, marcado por relações percebidas como atravessadas por estigma e desconfiança. A educação emerge sob dupla dimensão: como oportunidade de qualificação profissional e reinserção laboral e como estratégia simbólica de recomposição da dignidade e do prestígio social. Conclui-se que educação e ressocialização são representadas de forma ambivalente, articulando expectativas de transformação individual e limites estruturais do contexto prisional.

Palavras-chave: Representações sociais; Educação prisional; Ressocialização.

INTRODUCTION

> This is hell.
>
> Today, in our time, hell must be like this: a large, empty room, and we, tired, standing before a dripping tap that has no drinking water, waiting for something certainly terrible, and nothing happens, and nothing continues to happen. How is it possible to think? It's no longer possible; it's as if we were dead. Some sit on the floor.
>
> Time passes, drop by drop.
>
> (Primo Levi, 1988, p. 20)

Drawing on the account of Primo Levi, imprisoned in the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp during World War II (1940–1945), this study aims to analyze the social representations of women deprived of liberty regarding resocialization and education, in light of the psychosocial framework of the Theory of Social Representations (TSR), put forward by Serge Moscovici from 1961 onwards. The reference to Levi's experience is not established as a direct historical analogy between distinct contexts, but as an ethical-reflective resource that enables a critical interrogation of the human condition in situations of incarceration, exclusion, and dehumanization, favoring the problematization of the symbolic, subjective, and social effects of deprivation of liberty on individuals.

In this context, education within the prison system is understood as one of the main strategies for human development and resocialization, especially with regard to incarcerated women, whose trajectories are permeated by multiple social, economic, and symbolic vulnerabilities. The provision of education in this space therefore demands a broader

and more inclusive perspective, both from society and the State, which is responsible for formulating and implementing public policies aimed at the population deprived of liberty. Recognizing these women's right to education — often rendered invisible, marginalized, and neglected — constitutes an ethical, political, and social imperative for building a society committed to human dignity, social justice, and equity (Nascimento; Silva, 2025).

Within the Brazilian legal framework, education is recognized as a fundamental social right. The 1988 Federal Constitution, in Chapter II, relating to fundamental rights and guarantees, includes education among social rights, alongside housing, health, food, work, and social security. Article 205 explicitly states that education, a right of all and a duty of the State and the family, must be promoted and encouraged with the collaboration of society, aiming at the full development of the person, preparation for the exercise of citizenship, and qualification for work (Brazil, 1988). In accordance with this constitutional provision, the Brazilian Penal Execution Law (Law No. 7.210/84) reaffirms the State's duty to guarantee access to education for people deprived of liberty, recognizing the individual serving a sentence as a subject of rights and as someone potentially capable of reconstructing trajectories, achieving symbolic reparation, and redefinition of identity (Brazil, 1984).

Given the centrality of education as a social practice that enables individuals to constitute themselves as agents of their own existence, it becomes fundamental to ensure access to knowledge for people deprived of liberty, enabling teaching and learning processes within penal institutions. In this context, education is configured as a space for the production of meaning, the broadening of horizons, and the critical elaboration of lived experience (São Paulo, 2015). When provided in a qualified and context-sensitive manner, educational support transcends the normative dimension of rights and plays a structuring role in human development, encompassing preparation for the exercise of citizenship, professional qualification, and the possibility of social reintegration (Santos, et al., 2024).

It is in this scenario that the TSR proves particularly fruitful as an analytical framework. According to Moscovici (2010; 2011), social representations constitute a specific modality of knowledge, socially elaborated and shared, whose central function is to guide behaviors, practices, and forms of communication among individuals. Grounded in the assumption of a profoundly relational human nature, social representations assume a central role in daily life, mediating the relationship of subjects with the social world, organizing interpretations, and guiding positions taken in relation to lived reality (Jodelet, 2001).

From this perspective, the condition of deprivation of liberty can trigger processes of biographical revision, reinterpretation of one's own trajectory, and the elaboration of new life projects, in which education emerges as a concrete possibility for reinterpreting experience (Sandes; Medeiros; Klinger, 2022). This movement is not limited to the individual sphere, since it is constituted at the

intersection of social relations, shared experiences, and institutional contexts that shape the ways in which subjects interpret themselves and the world around them. Socially anchored beliefs, values, expectations, and memories guide these women's interpretations of resocialization, while also expressing coping strategies, resistance, and identity reconstruction (Arruda, 2002).

The sociogenetic approach within the TSR allows us to understand subjectivity as a relational process, constituted in interaction with otherness and in shared symbolic systems (Jodelet, 2017). In this approach, the subject is conceived as a social being in permanent dialogue with others, and subjectivity departs from a privatized conception to be understood as a product of intersubjective processes, forged in communicative exchanges, social practices, and everyday experiences (Marková, 2003, 2017). Social representations thus operate as mediations between individual lived experience and the social fabric, conferring intelligibility to experiences and guiding positions and behaviors in contexts traversed by tensions and asymmetries of power.

By investigating these women's social representations of education and resocialization, this study seeks to analyze not only isolated discourses, but also the social practices that are structured around these systems of meaning. Social representations play a fundamental practical role, as they organize actions, justify behaviors, and support positions in the face of lived situations (Abric, 2001). Understanding how women deprived of liberty represent education and resocialization therefore allows us to identify how such representations support, challenge, or limit certain educational and institutional practices within the prison system.

This analytical approach also favors the understanding of the conflicts, tensions, and ambivalences that permeate the experience of incarceration, highlighting the clashes between a punitive, disciplinary, and exclusionary rationality and the possibilities for transformation embedded in educational practices (Santos et al., 2024). Conflicts, far from being residual elements, are integral to the intersubjective processes themselves and play a central role in the production of meaning and the transformation of social representations (Marková, 2017). The analysis of the narratives of incarcerated women makes it possible to understand how they negotiate meanings, elaborate contradictions, and produce interpretations about resocialization in an institutional context marked by control, stigmatization, and symbolic restrictions.

By prioritizing the perspective, speech, and experience of the subject, the study assumes that the knowledge produced emerges from listening to the experiences and interpretations that the women themselves construct about their trajectories and the barriers faced in the resocialization processes. In this sense, lived experience assumes centrality as an analytical category, allowing for an understanding of educational and social processes from the perspective of the subjectivities involved (Jodelet, 2017; Guareschi; Castorina, 2021).

Thus, the analysis of social representations makes it possible not only to understand how women deprived of liberty give meaning to education and resocialization, but also to rethink and improve the educational practices developed in the prison system. By making visible the symbolic, institutional, and relational barriers pointed out by the subjects themselves, the study offers relevant contributions to the improvement of resocialization processes, contributing to the formulation of educational practices that are more sensitive to the experiences, needs, and expectations of these women.

By articulating subjectivity, intersubjectivity, and social practices, this work reaffirms that resocialization processes cannot be understood in a linear or merely normative way. They require an interpretation anchored in lived experiences, established relationships, and the meanings produced by the subjects themselves in situations of deprivation of liberty, which reinforces the relevance of the Theory of Social Representations as a theoretical-analytical framework for investigations in the educational and psychosocial fields (Moscovici, 2011; Marková, 2003; Jodelet, 2001).

Resocialization and Education in Brazil

In Brazil, the provision of education in prisons, although a right guaranteed by the Penal Execution Law (Brazil, 1984), faces several challenges in its implementation, especially regarding the education of women deprived of liberty. The responsibility for combating crime and punishing offenders rests solely with the State, which establishes the guidelines for the functioning of the prison system. Guided by the purposes of sanctioning offenses, preventing new crimes, and resocializing offenders, this system advocates the restriction of liberty as a punitive measure. Thus, after being judged by the judicial sphere, the offender is sent to serve their sentence, which aims to enforce the judicial decision and establish conditions for their adequate social integration, remaining, for a determined period, under conditions of restricted liberty within a prison regime.

The semi-open regime is one of the modalities provided for by Brazilian legislation for serving a sentence after trial. Considering that each regime has its own characteristics, it is worth noting that, in the case of the semi-open regime, people deprived of liberty are allowed to work or study during the day, including outside the prison, and must return to the prison unit at night. This initiative aims to promote resocialization by encouraging work and study (Brazil, 1984).

Therefore, in order to improve the effectiveness of punitive processes in the country, the discussion should be broadened beyond what is implied by the resocialization and social reintegration of the individual, since the pedagogical conditions offered to people under conditions of restricted liberty should foster access to learning in ways that encourage individuals to recognize the relevance of education in their own reconstruction.

The consolidation of educational action within the prison environment contributes to the integration of individuals into the

workforce and empowers them to fully exercise their rights as citizens, enabling them to make significant changes in their identities, behaviors, and social interactions, ultimately resulting in lower rates of criminal recidivism.

As scholars point out (Figueiredo; Paniago, 2023; Rosolen; Pezzato, 2025; Lourenço; Onofre, 2011), at the beginning of the execution of the sentence, when they arrive at the prison system, people deprived of liberty are referred to as *reeducandas*[1]. According to the authors, this designation carries the notion of re-education, seeking to alter behaviors that have become naturalized in daily life as a strategy to promote social reintegration through educational engagement.

Therefore, the educational perspective, when linked to resocialization, aims to establish a positive and functional foundation that plays a fundamental role, since its positive influence on the subjectivity of the person deprived of liberty is recognized, as they come to perceive themselves within an expanded horizon of opportunity, recognition, and worldview (Vellasquez; Rocha, 2024). In this sense, it is up to "[...] the creation and implementation of public policies directed towards educational activity in contexts of deprivation of liberty, as a guarantee of a possible restoration of a dignified life for the incarcerated individual" (Lourenço; Onofre, 2011, p. 268**, our translation**).

Thus, an educational perspective sheds light on a vision of future conduct grounded in personal integrity, bringing the notions of dignity and fulfillment closer to the individual, as well as leading to a better return to coexistence in society, since schooling expands opportunities and improves the prospect of personal and professional growth for individuals under conditions of restricted liberty.

This text presents analytical excerpts from a broader research project, guided by a qualitative and exploratory approach based on the theoretical-methodological framework of the Theory of Social Representations - TSR (Moscovici, 2012), which sought to understand how women deprived of liberty think, feel, and act during the educational process within the environment of confinement. Through the contributions of Jodelet (2001), Antunes-Rocha (2012), and Sá (2011), the intention of this study was to scrutinize the meanings attributed to education as a means of resocialization that prompts individuals to modify their spheres of conduct (acting, thinking, and feeling).

METHOD

This research is situated within a qualitative approach, of a descriptive-exploratory nature, as outlined by Chizzotti (2000), and is grounded in the sociogenetic perspective of the TSR (Moscovici, 2011; Jodelet, 2001). This orientation made it possible to understand how

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[1] In the Brazilian penal system, the term reeducanda designates a person undergoing a process of re-education while serving a sentence. The term implies the institutional expectation of behavioral transformation through educational engagement.

subjects, situated in specific historical, social, and institutional contexts, construct, share, and update social representations that render their experiences intelligible and guide their daily practices.

The adoption of the sociogenetic psychosocial approach proved particularly pertinent in that it enables an analytical examination of the conflicts, tensions, and contradictions that permeate the constitution of subjectivities and the intersubjective processes involved in resocialization trajectories. By considering the historical, relational, and dynamic character of social representations, this approach makes it possible to unveil the interpretations and meanings attributed by subjects to their experiences, as well as to identify deeply rooted beliefs, values, and reference systems that function as guiding frameworks for their conduct, choices, and ways of acting in the social world (Arruda, 2017).

In the educational field, and more broadly in psychosocial studies, this framework has proven fruitful in accessing dimensions that go beyond the description of behaviors, allowing us to reach the symbolic, affective, and normative elements that structure social practices. By highlighting collective memories, institutional tensions, and socially anchored disputes over meaning, the sociogenetic approach to TSR contributes to a more complex understanding of formative and resocialization processes, revealing how subjects negotiate, resignify, and reinterpret their experiences in contexts marked by asymmetries, stigmas, and social challenges (Jodelet, 2011; Novaes, 2015; Vilas Boas et al., 2024).

The empirical study was conducted between the second half of 2023 and the first half of 2024 in a penitentiary in the interior region of the state of São Paulo, linked to the State Secretariat of Penitentiary Administration, designated for women deprived of liberty under closed and semi-open regimes. According to data from the National Secretariat of Penal Policies, the female prison population in Brazil was 45,259 women, with 8,658 in the state of São Paulo (SISDEPEN, 2022). During the study, the state of São Paulo had 11 penitentiaries, and the unit under study, according to data from June 2023, had a capacity for 724 inmates but housed 424, with 92 in the sentence progression unit (unit for inmates transitioning between regimes). Regarding education, 170 women in the unit were enrolled and active in school, with 17 in literacy programs, 69 in elementary education, 81 in secondary education, and 3 in higher education. These data provide a more accurate view of the educational dynamics in the aforementioned penitentiary in the interior of São Paulo.

The research was approved by the Research Ethics Committee for Human Subjects (Approval No. 5,866,519/2023; CAAE: 66092322.8.0000.5284**),** in accordance with Resolution No. 466/2012 of the National Health Council, observing the principles of autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice. The study was carried out with the formal consent of the prison unit's administration, which authorized its development within the institutional space and ensured the researchers' technical-scientific autonomy and academic

independence, without interference in the selection of participants, the conduct of interviews, or the analysis of data.

The inclusion criteria were established as follows: (a) being in a semi-open regime at the time of data collection; (b) having a educational trajectory within the prison context; and (c) voluntarily consenting to participate. Exclusion criteria considered were physical, psychological, or disciplinary impediments that prevented attendance at the planned activities.

It should be noted that the recruitment process was supported by the unit's pedagogical coordination, which presented the proposal to eligible women, emphasizing the voluntary nature of participation and the absence of any institutional repercussions in case of refusal.

The participants were previously informed about the research objectives, data collection procedures, potential emotional discomfort, and confidentiality guarantees, formalizing their participation by signing the Informed Consent Form. They were assured the right to withdraw at any time, without personal or institutional detriment.

Furthermore, the interviews were recorded, lasting an average of 1 hour and 15 minutes, and conducted in a designated private space within the prison unit. No prison guards were present in the room during data collection; only a member of the technical team (psychologist or social worker) was present to ensure privacy and minimize any sense of constraint. It is important to note that the interviews were conducted in accordance with the institutional constraints of the prison context, such as pre-authorized schedules, security protocols, and the availability of physical spaces, without these constraints interfering with the content of the interviews or the conduct of the investigation. The data were anonymized through numerical identification (Woman 1, Woman 2, etc.), ensuring the confidentiality of the participants. Considering the possibility of emotional distress, the unit's technical team and the researchers, qualified in Psychology, remained available for psychological support and referral, and no formal intervention was necessary throughout the investigation.

The biographical data of the group of women surveyed are described in Table 01.

Table 01 - Biographical data of the women participating in the research in a semi-open prison regime.

VARIABLES	TYPE	FREQUENCY (N)	PERCENTAGE (%)
Age	Up to 29 years old	2	16.7
	30 to 34 years old	3	25.0
	35 to 39 years old	4	33.3
	40 years or older	3	25.0
Ethnicity	White	7	58.3
	Mixed-race *(Parda)*	3	25.0
	Black	2	16.7
Education	High School	10	83.3
	Elementary Education	2	16.7

Marital status	Single	7	58.3
	Cohabiting	2	16.7
	Married	1	8.3
	Divorced	2	16.7
Number of children	None	2	16.7
	1 to 2 children	5	41.6
	3 to 4 children	1	8.3
	5 or more children	4	33.4
Type of crime	Drug trafficking	8	66.7
	Robbery	1	8.3
	Robbery and drug trafficking	1	8.3
	Robbery resulting in death (*latrocínio*)	1	8.3
	Not reported	1	8.3
Sentence time	Up to 5 years	4	33.3
	5 to 10 years	4	33.3
	More than 10 years	4	33.4
Typical participant profile	Woman, 36 years old, white, high school education, single, with two children, convicted of drug trafficking.	--	--

Source: Research data, 2024.

Given the complexity of the psychosocial elements surrounding the study of resocialization, data collection was carried out in two complementary phases.

In the first phase, in order to gather primary data on the psychosocial context of resocialization within the investigated group, the researchers approached the field through the use of sociodemographic questionnaires and drawings. Along these lines, guided by an anthropological perspective on data production from drawings (Garcia; Rodrigues, 2019; Kuschnir, 2016), participants were initially asked to freely draw something based on the terms: Education, Resocialization, and Life Project/Future. These terms were selected based on their close associations with the object of study and because they are widely known and experienced/lived (Jodelet, 2017) within the investigated group. Subsequently, at the end of each drawing, each participant was invited and encouraged to orally explain and justify what they had drawn. These explanations were recorded, transcribed, and used as one of the elements for iconographic analysis (Panofsky, 2007) of the drawings based on the theoretical framework of TSR.

In turn, in the second phase, individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with the same group on a voluntary basis (Poupart, 2014; Szymanski, 2011) aiming to further explore investigative dimensions related to:

1. Life Trajectory of the Participants;

2. Daily life in prison;

3. Education and Life Prospects.

These investigative dimensions were developed from the theoretical framework of the research, the literature review study, and further elaborated based on data from the first investigative phase.

With this understanding, to aid in the categorization and analysis of the content of the data collected, the free software *Interface de R pour les Analyses Multidimensionnelles de Textes et de questionnaires* (Iramuteq) – version 2014 – was used, which allows for statistical analysis of textual corpora. In this context, Descending Hierarchical Classification (CHD)[2] of the aforementioned software was employed and, subsequently, the data were interpreted grounded in the TSR (Theory of Social Representations). It is worth highlighting that, as guided by Leblanc (2015), the words of each class that crystallize in the Classification Dendrogram were read within the context of the sentences that were spoken (textual analysis), allowing the emergence of categories and subcategories for each class in harmony with the general meaning they presented.

Through these two investigative phases, analytical triangulation of the data was carried out (Apostolidis, 2006) grounded in the psychosocial theoretical framework of TSR, thus allowing us to shed light on the possible social representations of women deprived of liberty regarding resocialization and education.

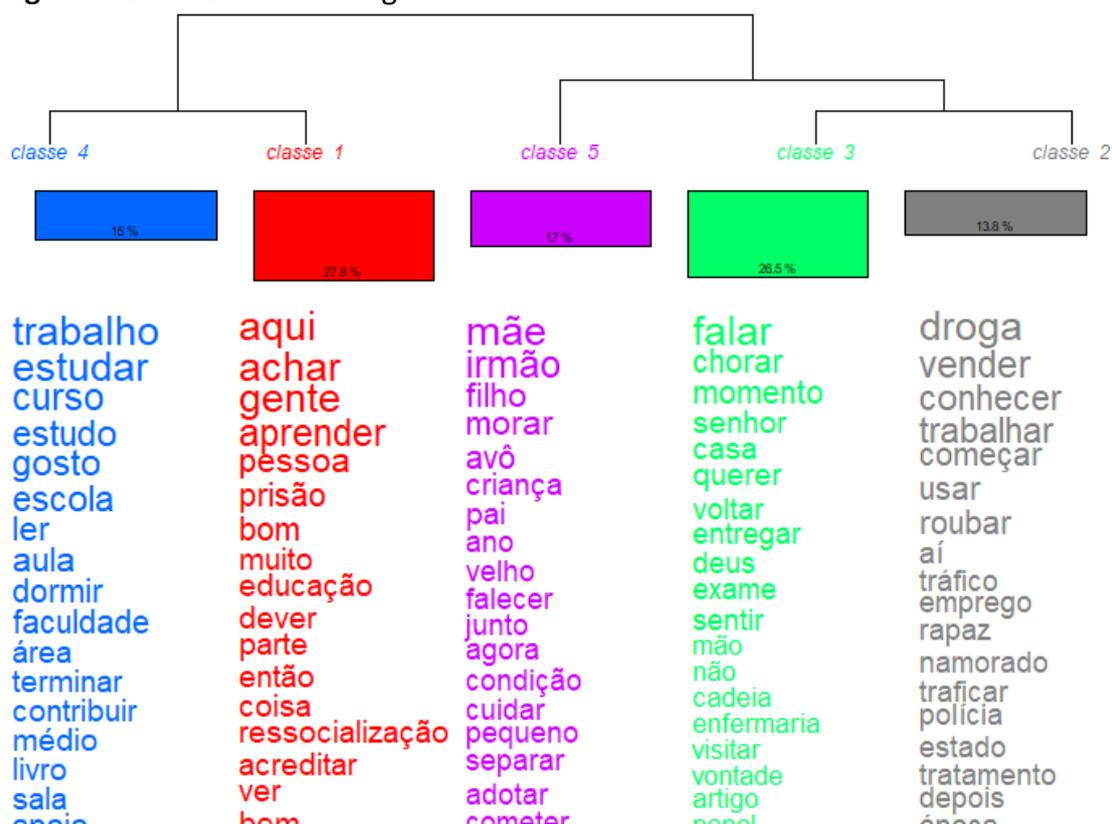**Presentation and Analysis of the Data**

Based on the processing of the 12 interviews in the Iramuteq software (Version 2014), the following was recorded: a total of 36,296 terms; 3,511 distinct forms; 773 terms with a frequency greater than or equal to three; and from a universe of 1,030 textual segments, 835 were analyzed, thus resulting in a utilization rate of 81.07%.

The analysis yielded five classes. In the dendrogram, from right to left, the first axis divides two classes (Class 4 – 15% and Class 1 – 27.4%) from the others, indicating a greater statistical distance from the remaining classes. At the other extreme, a second axis originates, immediately giving rise to Class 5 (17%). At the opposite extreme, a third axis begins, originating Classes 3 (26.5%) and 2 (13.8%), possibly indicating greater homogeneity in the content of these latter classes compared to the others. It is worth noting that the number of classes suggests a heterogeneity of content identified across the interviews. As illustrated in Figure 01:

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[2] In explanatory terms, **DHC** "is a type of cluster analysis that categorizes active words into lexical classes. The analysis considers the frequency and positions of active words in the text using data from word contingency tables" (Carvalho et al., 2020, p. 13, **our translation**).

Figure 01 – Class Dendrogram

classe 4	classe 1	classe 5	classe 3	classe 2
15 %	27.8 %	17 %	26.5 %	13.8 %

trabalho	aqui	mãe	falar	droga
estudar	achar	irmão	chorar	vender
curso	gente	filho	momento	conhecer
estudo	aprender	morar	senhor	trabalhar
gosto	pessoa	avô	casa	começar
escola	prisão	criança	querer	usar
ler	bom	pai	voltar	roubar
aula	muito	ano	entregar	aí
dormir	educação	velho	deus	tráfico
faculdade	dever	falecer	exame	emprego
área	parte	junto	sentir	rapaz
terminar	então	agora	mão	namorado
contribuir	coisa	condição	não	traficar
médio	ressocialização	cuidar	cadeia	polícia
livro	acreditar	pequeno	enfermaria	estado
sala	ver	separar	visitar	tratamento
		adotar	vontade	depois
		cometer	artigo	

Source: Research data, 2024.

In general terms, in Class 1 (27.4%), categorized as 'Survival in Prison', it became evident that the surveyed group reported their experiences upon entering the prison system, changes in daily life, and the institutional climate. Within this understanding, two subcategories emerge: 1. 'New Reality'; 2. 'Necessary Adaptations and Overcoming Challenges'.

Regarding the first subcategory, the analyzed fragments point to experiences of shock, fear, and disruption of reference frameworks upon entering prison. The accounts suggest a sense of institutional malaise, inscribed in a social fabric (Guareschi; Roso, 2021) structured by values, norms, regulations, restrictions, surveillance practices, and institutional conduct. Although such mechanisms are presented as aimed at maintaining security, order, and civility between inmates and staff, the participants describe them as elements that also contribute to the construction of a living space perceived as hostile, risky, and, in some cases, dehumanizing. As illustrated in the fragment:

> [...] So, this prison was very difficult for me today because I arrived in a very different reality. The people who talk, the conversations they have, those are no longer part of my world; so today I felt lost in here. [...] very painful, because I felt lost, because it wasn't my world anymore, it wasn't my reality anymore. [...] With the suffering experienced in prison, but through suffering we mature, so this prison is very difficult for me today,

every day here is very painful, very, very painful indeed (Woman 6).

The data from this subcategory indicate that, although the prison system officially claims to guarantee the safety of inmates and officers and maintains the establishment of prison units considered civilized (Brazil, 2022), participants report perceiving the environment as marked by insecurity, distrust, and fragile bonds, which are frequently described as authoritarian.

In light of Marková's (2017) psychosocial perspective, it is possible to interpret that the EGO-ALTER relationships, as narrated by the interviewees, are represented as marked by distancing, constant surveillance, and potential threat. In this direction, the analyzed fragments suggest that the social representations of resocialization and education are constructed in a simultaneously objective and subjective context of unease and suffering. In dialogue with Goffman (1975), it can be hypothesized that such experiences are understood as embedded in institutional dynamics that produce feelings of segregation and stigmatization, impacting how these women give meaning to their own resocialization process.

In turn, in the second subcategory of this class, the findings highlight daily adaptations that the inmates report making in order to survive in prison and face the contingencies imposed by the prison environment. According to the group investigated, as their time incarcerated passed, they reported having learned to resist and exist in this context — a process that can be interpreted, in light of Elias (1994), as a form of naturalization of the conditions experienced.

The testimonies indicate that this learning process involves dealing with recurring situations of violence in daily life and with restrictions related to privacy, drug use, sexual activity, interaction with family and friends, and freedom of movement. Initially, these experiences are described as associated with feelings of revolt and injustice in the face of the perceived degradation of the human condition. Subsequently, the accounts suggest the emergence of processes of conformity (Moscovici, 2011), resignation, and adaptation to the norms and morality established in the prison context. Furthermore, the development of patience and religiosity, mentioned by the participants, appear as symbolic resources mobilized to endure confinement and resignify the experience of incarceration.

In Class 4 (15%), entitled "Life Projects and Resocialization", the analyzed fragments point to the perspectives and expectations of the inmates regarding life after serving their sentence. The accounts refer to the idea of resocialization and reintegration into society. In conjunction with the data produced through the drawings, the empirical materials suggest the emergence of two complementary subcategories: (1) Transformations; (2) Adoption of a new lifestyle.

Regarding the first subcategory, the testimonies indicate that, when reflecting on resocialization, the participants associate it with the notion of transformation. For the group investigated, resocialization is described as abandoning practices and behaviors

considered socially reprehensible and developing lifestyles more in line with current social norms and expectations.

The accounts also reveal that this process involves a movement of self-reflection, often described as a revision of values, desires, feelings, and identities — elements that constitute "being situated in the world" (Heidegger, 1995, p. 239). From this perspective, the participants indicate that this transformation is perceived as a condition for expanding participation in public and private spaces and enjoying freedom.

Family support, access to work, education, and other social dimensions are mentioned as fundamental resources for the realization of this resocialization project, as illustrated by the drawings presented in Chart 01.

Chart 01- Drawings and explanations on transformations.

DRAWINGS	EXPLANATIONS
 (Drawing Woman 4)	In this drawing of the deaf, blind, and mute woman, right? And even here, during this time, I already feel liberated, free to form my own opinions, because now I want to have a voice, I want to, I don't know, have an active, present participation within society. I imagine myself doing something like that, maybe in volunteer work, I don't know. I already feel liberated during the semester because my mind has opened up, and I have my own business where I work, buses, a small park, socialization, fruit trees, which I think is very important. My home and my family, my mother, my son, my daughter, my two sisters, and my niece, who is my first niece, I thought I wouldn't have one. (Woman 4)
 (Drawing Woman 10))	Resocialization, for me, is a new beginning in life. I don't know how to differentiate it much, but for me, I see it as a way of not doing wrong things, of trying to start over, of trying to make a better life. The opinion is the same, of a new beginning, of the person trying to make a better life, of them seeking a goal, trying to work on their inner self, on their mind. (Woman 10)

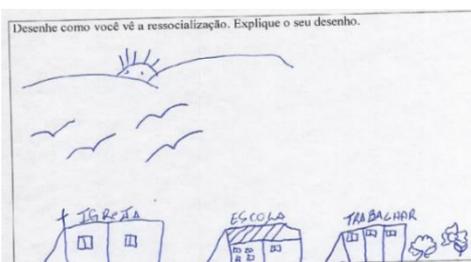**Source:** Research data, 2023.

It is noteworthy that, when contrasting the data from this subcategory with those analyzed in Class 1, the fragments suggest a relevant tension. Inner reform, described by the participants as a condition for the effective realization of resocialization, appears in coexistence with experiences narrated as marked by institutional practices perceived as dehumanizing.

According to the deponents, values, norms, and regulations that, in theory, should organize coexistence and ensure order, are experienced as associated with punishment, restriction of potential, and limitation of autonomy. In this sense, in light of Adorno's (1991) discussion, the findings allow us to problematize not only the normative dimension of resocialization, but also the concrete and symbolic conditions in which it is projected and experienced.

The data suggest that social representations of resocialization are constructed amidst ambivalences: on the one hand, the expectation of transformation and reintegration; on the other, the perception of an institutional environment that is sometimes described as more prone to disciplinary rigidity and hardening of relationships than to the promotion of emancipatory processes. This tension further complicates the realization of resocialization for this group.

Moving forward, in the second subcategory of this Class, it is revealed that the incarcerated women envision their post-prison lives as linked to a resocialization that enables a new lifestyle. Marked by optimism and the notion of "starting life anew" (Woman 10), the inmates emphasize the desire to build and rebuild their families, seek employment, continue their studies and, predominantly, orient their lives according to Christian ethical-moral principles and in conformity with the State. As illustrated by the drawings and explanations in Chart 02.

Chart 02 - Drawings and explanations on transformations.

DESIGNS	EXPLANATIONS
(Drawing Woman 2)	I drew several streets; I see myself this way, as if I had several options to follow, several paths to take. I can arrive here at this point and I have two sides to go to, either good or bad, or both good, and choose which one I want to go to, because I will always have a new opportunity, a new beginning, and that's it. (Woman 2)
(Drawing Woman 3)	Learning to go to church, praying to God more, because when I was out there I wasn't seeking God, and if I had sought God I don't think I would have been on that dark path I was on, that I pursued. (Woman 3)

Source: Research data, 2023.

In light of the drawings and explanations provided by the participants, the fragments suggest the presence of representational elements that associate resocialization not only with the reconstruction

of life, but also with the idea of regaining citizenship and expanding access to rights in society.

The statements indicate that this "resocialization process" is accompanied by stances that express the desire to adopt a new lifestyle, capable of restoring social credibility and recognition. In this sense, the participants mention as objectives obtaining employment or work, continuing their studies, and reconciling or establishing family ties.

Based on Weber (1999), it is possible to interpret that the social representations of resocialization, for this group, are not conceived as a process detached from individual responsibilities, but as a set of actions oriented towards the attainment or regaining social recognition, honor, and prestige. Thus, the data suggest that resocialization is symbolically linked to the possibility of being recognized as legitimate citizens in the social sphere.

Subsequently, in Class 5 (17%), categorized as 'Future: Return to Family', the inmates reiterate that their perspectives after leaving prison involve returning to their families "with their heads held high" (Woman 8) and, especially, resuming their studies and work. Along these lines, it is noted that when mentioning their children, the incarcerated women emphasize that they want them to have a future different from their own life trajectories and reaffirm that formal education, professional training, religious life, and employability can ensure opportunities that they did not have or even renounced. As illustrated by the drawings and explanations in Chart 03.

Chart 03 – Drawings and explanations on the return to family.

DESIGNS	EXPLANATIONS
(Drawing Woman 1)	When I leave here, the process of freedom, of getting out; so I'm managing to see everything with different eyes. I have a great relationship with my family today, and with my friends, with everything I see out there, and with the future I want for myself soon. (Woman 01).
(Drawing Woman 8)	Oh, I think about leaving, staying with my children, educating my children so they grow up to be upstanding citizens, to do good things. I want to study, I want to graduate, I want to achieve my goal, to get into administration, into the management of a hospital, I want to become a director, I want to make my plans happen, I have several plans in mind, I want to make all of this happen. I want to be a very fulfilled professional in what I do. (Woman 8)

Source: Research data, 2023.

The data indicate, with due caution, that although most of the female inmates investigated express optimistic perspectives when reflecting on the future and returning to their families, a portion of the group (20%) reports that this relationship is fragile and, at times,

marked by significant distance, which, according to them, hinders the possibility of relying on family support in their resocialization processes. Even so, even among those who describe weakened family ties, the desire emerges to build new affective relationships, form a new family, establish new friendships, and access new opportunities in a "new life" (Woman 6).

Additionally, 30% of the participants report that, although incarceration has caused physical separation from their families, they perceive positive changes in family relationships. According to these interviewees, the distance contributed to distancing themselves from "bad company" (Woman 12), drug use, and illicit activities. They also mention experiences of maturation throughout their sentence, associated with the strengthening of religiosity and the development of what they describe as a "desire to lead an upright life" (Woman 7).

In this context, family conflicts are portrayed as partially resolved, and the family comes to be represented as an important source of support and hope. As illustrated in the following excerpt:

> My relationship with my family was terrible, I was a terrible daughter; I was good outside the home, I was great with friends, but at home, terrible. My mother says that I am 8 years old today [...] I was reborn here and I fully agree with her now; imprisoned, my relationship has improved a lot, today I know things about my mother, I am her friend, and she is my friend, and my father too (Woman 1).

Cross-referencing the data from this class with those recorded in Class 4, it is found, in line with the study by Castanho, Dadalte, and Sherer (2020), that the family figures in the social representations of resocialization for the investigated group both as a source of emotional and economic support for them to cope with daily life in prisons, as well as a social institution providing support and protection for the social reintegration of these women after serving their sentences. Consequently, in the same understanding as previous studies (Junqueira et al., 2015; Frinhani; Souza, 2005), these data reinforce that for the resocialization process of former inmates to be successful, the State and civil society must attend to the reorganization of the families of former inmates and other psychosocial support networks in order to promote inclusion and non-recidivism.

In turn, in Class 2 (13.6), categorized as 'Behaviors that led to imprisonment', the investigated group records the actions that led to their incarceration. 66% of the women acknowledge that their imprisonment resulted from "wrong choices" (Women 4, 6, 7 and 8) stemming from factors associated with: dropping out of school, developing substance dependency, associating with "bad company" (Woman 4) — notably: swindlers, drug dealers, drug users — and family conflicts. As the fragment summarizes:

> The world isn't different, I think, from many who might be here, but initially my involvement with drugs started very early; in adolescence, at 11 or 12 years old, I already had that inclination, that tendency, that kind of

> influence sometimes even at the school gate. [...] I ended up living on the streets because I was already in a deplorable state, living on the streets and using a lot of drugs; I used crack all day, and all night I just drank and I wasn't eating anymore, I wasn't even doing my HIV treatment anymore, because I am a carrier of the virus (Woman 4).

Based on the report and in synergy with Carrilho (2017), Souza (2022), and Wacquant (2001), the data suggest that the social representations of resocialization, for this group, are articulated within a discursive field that involves both individual responsibilities and collective dimensions. The analyzed fragments indicate that, when reflecting on their trajectories, the participants mention personal responsibilities related to incarceration, but also point to structural limitations associated with the social and institutional conditions that pervade their trajectories.

In this sense, the accounts allow us to problematize possible weaknesses in the implementation of public policies and the guarantee of social rights, especially when they narrate previous experiences marked by vulnerabilities and restrictions on access to opportunities. In dialogue with Bauman and Donskis (2014) and Foucault (1975), it is possible to interpret that such representations are inscribed in a broader context of the centrality of punishment and the expansion of incarceration, even though this interpretation derives from the theoretical mediation with the empirical data analyzed here.

Thus, the findings suggest that the participants represent inequalities in the distribution of protection, security, and social care, understanding that such guarantees do not materialize homogeneously. In line with Arruda (2010) and Souza (2022), it can be hypothesized that these representations engage with historical processes of social inequality and stigmatization, which strain the realization of full citizenship for certain groups.

To conclude the analysis, in Class 3 (26.5%), categorized as 'Sufferings of Prison', the group brings to the fore the pain of being incarcerated. Predominantly, this class expresses content of an affective nature — feelings, emotions, and affects — developed by the incarcerated women during their daily social interactions within the prison; it is unanimously noted that the inmates reiterated the prison as a locus of sorrow where humiliation, suffering, fear, terror, the shock of reality, and the feeling of abandonment are present in a daily process of subjection to prison rules and interpersonal agreements among the detainees. As the fragments explain:

> It was here that I truly felt the drama I was talking about: Wow! What am I doing here?! Where have I ended up? I really suffered here. I went through a lot of humiliation in here. I spent days and weeks inside the cell. Not wanting to leave, because the girls, when you're pretty, with a good heart, the girls already look at you, and already like you, out of jealousy, for everything (Woman 2).

> Since I had never been arrested, I came here very scared because I didn't know what it would be like inside a prison. I was very frightened; I was crying, scared (Woman 3).

It can be observed that the content grouped in Class 3 adds to the information in Class 1 — categorized as 'Survival in Prison' — by indicating that, according to the group, prison constitutes a space of unease and loneliness. In other words, Classes 1 and 3 help in understanding the material and symbolic psychosocial context in which this group is situated and constructing its social representations of resocialization and education. In this sense, it is observed that this psychosocial context is woven from a broad and complex set of predominantly negative affective elements and, especially according to the women investigated, from a punitive prison culture in which EGO-ALTER relationships are marked by harshness and distrust/surveillance. This characteristic is consistent with the volitional aim of the women researched to "leave," "go outside," and "return home" (Women 3, 5, and 9) and never wanting to return to prison.

In broad strokes, the analyzed data allow us to interpret that, for the group of women deprived of liberty investigated, resocialization is represented as a transformative process involving an intimate reform of beliefs, values, and behaviors, aiming for greater harmony with society, the State, and especially with God — a dimension repeatedly evoked in the accounts. Simultaneously, the fragments indicate that this representation is constructed within a psychosocial context described as tense and permeated by conflicting social relationships. Within the EGO-ALTER relationship—particularly with regard to family, other inmates, and prison system staff—mentions of prejudice, stigma, and distrust emerge as hallmarks that permeate the resocialization processes.

In turn, education is represented under the dyad of opportunity and the recovery of social prestige/dignity. On a first analytical level, the data suggest that schooling is conceived as an instrumental opportunity for qualification and professionalization, aiming at reintegration into the world of work and the reconstruction of life after serving a sentence. On a second interpretative level, it is possible to infer that education is also signified as a strategy for the reconstruction of symbolic capital — in terms of distinction and recognition — allowing the participants to reclaim their place as legitimate citizens in the social sphere.

The analysis of representations of resocialization and education suggests that these symbolic constructions are organized amidst a tension between distinct modes of social thought regarding the functions of prison and school. On the one hand, the findings engage with a tradition that associates prison with punishment, repression, and social isolation (Garland, 2008). On the other hand, discourses emerge that link education to ideals of emancipation, enlightenment, and empowerment of the individual (Freire, 1996).

In accordance with Moscovici (2010), it can be understood that these representations are forged in a field of symbolic disputes — a true *kulturkampf* — in which distinct projects of subject, society, and state

confront each other. In this context, the present study suggests that the articulation between resocialization and education, as represented by the participants, reveals not only expectations of individual transformation, but also the structural tensions that permeate the state apparatuses responsible for its implementation.

In light of these points, and considering the complexity of the representational elements associated with resocialization and education, the discussion presented above was synthesized in Figure 02[3].

Figure 02 – QR Code summarizing the Social Representations of Women Deprived of Liberty on Resocialization and Education

Source: Research data, 2024.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The right to education, as guaranteed by the 1988 Federal Constitution, also extends to people deprived of liberty. In the empirical material analyzed, the implementation of this right emerges as a central element in the representations of resocialization constructed by the participants, especially when associated with the possibility of reconstructing trajectories and achieving social recognition.

The accounts show that education is signified as a path to inclusion, the expansion of opportunities, and personal development, linked to the reaffirmation of dignity and the reconfiguration of life projects. When understood as accessible and effectively implemented, it is represented as mediating the exercise of citizenship and professional qualification.

The evidence also indicates that, for these women, formal education goes beyond the curricular dimension. It is symbolized as a space for self-awareness, biographical reorganization, and reinvention of future expectations. In this sense, schooling emerges as a strategy

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[3] Access Figure 02 via this link: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1LMKIb-WXAIWjNaH8FGSi3xIzfRSEPhQJ/view?usp=drive_link.

for restoring social recognition — not only as a technical instrument, but as a possibility of re-entering the social world.

Thus, the representations analyzed suggest that the articulation between education and resocialization is not limited to preparation for work, but also involves the symbolic reconstruction of one's own condition as a subject of rights.

In addition, the findings suggest that the Brazilian prison system, as described by the participants, has limitations in achieving its resocialization purposes. The accounts indicate that the experience of incarceration can foster the incorporation of habits and dynamics specific to the prison environment, creating a gap between the standards experienced within the institution and those valued outside its walls.

Although the field of research on education and resocialization in contexts of deprivation of liberty has advanced in academic research, the results of this study support the claim that theoretical and empirical challenges persist, requiring further investigation. In this sense, the relevance of research that amplifies the voices and visibility of people deprived of liberty is reaffirmed, especially regarding educational processes and the concrete conditions of social reintegration.

The data presented here also allow us to problematize the conditions under which resocialization is envisioned and experienced, indicating that broader discussions can contribute to developing approaches that are more sensitive to the complexities of the penal system. In dialogue with critical literature (Carrilho, 2017), it can be interpreted that confronting mass incarceration and improving social reintegration policies constitute structural challenges that permeate contemporary debate.

Thus, this study suggests that the articulation between education, resocialization, and human dignity requires not only institutional investments, but especially continuous reflection on the assumptions and purposes that guide penal and educational practices, with a view to ensuring the fulfillment of rights and the expansion of possibilities for social reintegration.

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