Men and women's prisons in the Portuguese press: The gender of punishment

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Abstract

Since prison life is out of common people's sight, the media have a particularly important role in legitimating or, conversely, de-legitimating public discourses and policies about punishment, incarceration and rehabilitation. In the present study, our analysis was grounded in 83 news, 55 of these about men prisons, 24 about women prisons and 4 news about public policies in general, although having specificities about men's and women's prisons published in a Portuguese national newspaper between 2005 and 2014. The analysis suggests that, with very few exceptions, gender is an important issue in the media construction for men's and women's prisons and male and female inmates; gender norms of masculinity and femininity are essentialized, justifying different practices of control in prison policies. Dangerous, violent, resistant and manipulative male inmates call for prison policies based on risk control and managerialism, whereas docile and reliable female inmates call for policies grounded on rehabilitation

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but also security. Apart from this representation, our analysis also shows that the news, in general, tends to align with a reformist approach, failing to interrogate the wider role of imprisonment in social control or to discuss its alternatives.

Introduction

Mass media is, nowadays, particularly important in presenting the "spectacle" of punishment. In the 1970s, Foucault (1977/1995) argued that the "spectacle" of punishment would end with the birth of the modern prison, but his prediction was not verified. Instead, this spectacle has been "institutionally reallocated and symbolically elaborated in new cultural and social forms, particularly profuse through reality shows and TV series" denoting the contemporary "pornography of law and order" (Wacquant, 2015: 14). Several authors have made connections between critical criminology and media/cultural studies suggesting that the media construct and disseminate ideological discourses about prisons and inmates, which reinforce the dominant political view (e.g. Jewkes, 2007).

There are few studies on the media representations of prisons, and the existent ones have neglect the gender issue, focusing on the representation of the institution in general (Marsh, 2009, 2013; Mason, 2006). On the other hand, previous studies that have directly analyzed penitentiary institutions with a focus on gender, have analyzed either women's (Allspach, 2010; Carlen and Tombs, 2006; Carlen and Worrall, 2004; Cunha, 2002; Hannah-Moffat, 2010; Kruttschnitt et al., 2013; Trammell, 2009) or men's prisons (Bandyopadhyay, 2006; Jewkes, 2005; Karp, 2010; Messerschmidt, 1993; Rymhs, 2012). Therefore, one of the main goals of the present study was to compare the ways in which men and women prisons are presented in the same newspaper and to check whether these accounts reproduce the traditional norms of femininity and masculinity. Given the absence of studies on media representations of Portuguese prisons, the present study also aims to analyze their specificities in this country, if existent. We were concerned with two major topics: how prisons and inmates are generally depicted and which prison policies are favored by the media. Specifically, what kinds of functions do media representations of prisons address themselves to or construct? Are prison policies related with the current political and economic situation in these representations? Which roles do prison administrations play in media representations?

We shall begin by describing the Portuguese context in what concerns the prison institution, namely, the current facilities conditions and public policies, and then proceed to reviewing gender studies that approach the topics of prisons and inmates.

Portuguese prisons: Between punitiveness and new public management

There is a consensus in criminology literature that the "punitive turn" in penal policies that took place in late 1980s in USA (e.g. Wacquant, 2003, 2009), but also clearly swaying some European countries policies like UK (Garland, 2001), are now affecting countries like Portugal. It should be noticed that Portugal was one of the first countries to abolish death penalty in the 19th century and, during the 20th century up to the 1990s, Portuguese penal policies were generally following a humanist philosophy based on the respect for the dignity of the person (CEDRSP, 2004; Guerreiro, 2013). Recently, however, this philosophy has been losing its weight in line with the just-mentioned global punitive turn.

Indeed, although maintaining the emphasis on the ideal of re-socialization, the rights of the inmates and still resorting to alternative measures to the prison sentence (Leite, 2011), we may consider that Portugal presents now several signs of increased punitiveness. Specifically, they are apparent in: (1) the increased imprisonment rate, (2) the highly selective incarceration, (3) the reduction of the welfare state, and especially the influence of New Public Management (NPM). The NPM became more notorious after 2011 with the restrictions on the welfare state (limitation on public heath, decrease in salaries, increase in taxes) imposed by the previous right-wing Government, a fierce supporter of economic austerity, and the Troika (the European Commission, European Central Bank, and International Monetary Fund's committee that ruled Portuguese economy between 2011 and 2014), which imposed several measures aimed at containing the Portuguese economy.

In fact, we can see that between 2005 and 2014 (the period of our corpus) the prison population rate has increased in 9.7%, beginning in 2009 and persisting until now (Aebi et al., 2015). From 2009 onwards, the prison population grew by 31%, (Maculan et al., 2013). In 2014, Portugal was the 10th country of Europe with more prison overcrowding, with 112 prisoners per 100 places, above the European average of 93.6 (Aebi et al., 2015).[1] Several factors have contributed to this situation, specifically, the "war on drugs" policies and the restrictions to parole granting in the 1990s (measures that were fed by the "insecurity" discourse; see Wacquant, 2009), the high number of preventive prisoners, which has increased in the last decades (Fernandes and Silva, 2009; Leite, 2011).

In what concerns the second sign of punitiveness, highly selective incarceration, it relates to the abovementioned imprisonment trend. Rather than a proportional increase in all population sectors, the present high levels of incarceration refer to an increase in particular social groups, such as ethnic minorities and poor or homeless people (Cunha, 2002; Fernandes and Silva, 2009). For example, official data on current inmates' school levels show that 3.6% are illiterate (3.3% men and 7.2% women), 27% have completed four years of schooling, and 24.9% six years of schooling. Only 2.6% have a university degree, the majority being foreigners (6.1% male foreigners vs. 1.7% Portuguese male and 8.1% female foreigners vs.

2.8% Portuguese female). Women are in a disadvantaged position in what concerns pre-trial detention (23.9% of women vs. 15.8% of men) similar to foreigners, presumably non-integrated immigrants (31.5% foreigners vs. 16.4% Portuguese) (DGRSP, 2015). For a better understanding of these data, it is important to present the actual numbers of the inmate population. In 2015, in a country with 10 million of inhabitants such as Portugal, there were 11.094 national male inmates, 2.266 foreigner male inmates, 633 national female inmates and 229 foreigner female inmates in all the 51 national facilities (DGSP, 2015).

Finally, in what concerns the latter signs of increased punitiveness, reduction of the welfare state and the influence of NPM, we must note that NPM policies are generally associated to a greater autonomy of prison administrators and the implementation of a "competitive" and "market-based administration," which means contracting out services to private suppliers and emphasizing measurable goals (Boin et al., 2006). In fact, since 2011, Portuguese public policies have been shaped by the austerity measures imposed by the Troika. As Catherine Moury and André Freire (2014) noted, policy changes during Troika supervision were often guided by an economic logic, based on efficacy and efficiency criteria (Santos, 2014). At the prison administration level, such economic logic is observable in the policies aimed at reducing the cost per prisoner, for example, by hiring private contractors for prison food provision and healthcare (Dores et al., 2013). Moreover, the implementation of an official long-term plan launched in 2004 to renew the old and degrading prison facilities was abandoned in nearly all cases, as a result of this austerity orientation.

The deterioration of Portuguese prisons' conditions, due to lack of public financing, is consistent with the general reduction of the welfare state in the country. During the period of 1993 to 2009, Portugal was already one of the most unequal countries in EU, appearing among those with higher poverty rates (Rodrigues et al., 2012).

Altogether, the policies mentioned above had a considerable impact on Portuguese prisons, having led to overcrowded and degrading facilities and to severe violations of the prisoners' basic rights.

We shall now turn our attention to gender issues in criminological research and to the ways male and female inmates and prisons have been portrayed in the literature.

Constructing femininity and masculinity in crime and in the prison institution

Early studies on sex differences presented men as tending to be aggressive, and women as passive and caring (e.g. Maccoby and Jacklin, 1974). Consequently, women who have committed crimes were considered either sexually abnormal (more precisely, masculine, lesbians) or mentally disturbed (e.g. Gelsthorpe, 2004; Seal, 2009, 2010). This view persists in widespread beliefs about femininity,

and women's violence is still concealed and mystified in the current legal and scientific discourses (Cardi and Pruvost, 2011; Trammell, 2009). For instance, women who killed their newborns were typically considered to be mentally affected by hormonal changes following childbirth (Saavedra and Cameira, 2017). Recent studies have tried to deconstruct these essentialist discourses, by showing that women, alike men, are capable of aggressive and violent acts (e.g. Hannah-Moffat, 2002; Saavedra and Oliveira, 2016; Seal, 2010). Nonetheless, such masking of women's violence by means of psychologizing and pathologizing their criminal acts (Cardi and Pruvost, 2011) is still observable in the penal system and prison institution (Allspach, 2010; Carlen and Tombs, 2006; Chartrand, 2015; Pollack, 2005).

In what concerns gender studies on men inmates, there has been an effort to deconstruct the ways in which inmates use traditional norms of masculinity in order to survive their custody. Some of these studies have focused on the amplification of masculine traits resulting in a hyperviolent, hypersexual and dangerous image of the male inmate (which, incidentally, has contributed to create the traditional image of the prison institution in the public; Curtis, 2014; Messerschmidt, 1993). Prison masculinity is graded according to a hierarchy of penal offences in which sexual offences are little rated and organized crime or armed robbery stay at the top (e.g. Karp, 2010; Ricciardelli et al., 2015). Prison masculinity is also measured through individuals' (hypermasculine) "public façade" (Karp, 2010: 66) built by means of physical aggression or through the formation of gangs with other inmates (Karp, 2010).

In fact, these studies propose that hypermasculinity is not an intrinsic characteristic of male prisoners, but, it is performed due to "prisoners perceptions of risk and their calculated efforts to produce safety and manage the uncertainties of prison life" (Ricciardelli et al., 2015: 493). In fact, other research has shown that, because prison life frequently demonstrates the mutable nature of gender categories (Rymhs, 2012), the prison experience in men often challenges inmates' beliefs in male dominance and their assumptions on the dichotomous construction of gender (Bandyopadhyay, 2006). What these studies seem to show is that due to the performative nature of gender, displaying exaggerated or, conversely, understated masculine behavior (doing gender) is an important means of survival in prison (Jewkes, 2005; Karp, 2010; Messerschmidt, 1993).

In spite of the abovedescribed deconstructions, essentialist gender discourses continue to prevail in media discourses about the prison institution with the resulting emphasis on men prisoners' hypermasculinity (Marsh, 2009, 2013) and the perception of women prisoners as incapable of violence as well shall see also in this study both in men's and women's prison.

Bearing in mind the gendered discourses on crime and incarceration, as well as the situation of Portuguese prisons described above, in our study, we analyzed the discourses conveyed in a series of reports on these subjects extracted from a popular Portuguese newspaper.

The present study

Corpus and analysis

To collect the news reports, we chose the daily national newspaper *Correio da Manhã* because it is the one that provides the widest coverage of crimes and criminal justice proceedings (Machado and Santos, 2009) and it attains the largest circulation of any daily newspaper in Portugal (APCT, 2015). The newspaper has no explicit political affiliation (one could say it has a slight right-wing orientation) and is very popular among the working class and low middle class and thus, having a certain impact in shaping their opinions.

The terms used for search in the newspaper website were the Portuguese words for: "female prisoners" and "male prisoners," "women's prison," "men's prison," "prisons," "Odemira prison," "Santa Cruz do Bispo prison," "Tires prison" (the only three exclusively female prisons in Portugal) "intimate visits" and "suicide in prison." News cover the period ranging from January 2005 to December 2014, which enabled us to have a more extensive corpus for analysis. We then selected all the news and reports concerning life/events in prison. The final data set comprises 83 news, 55 of these about men prisoners (including two extended reports) and 24 about women prisoners (including five extended reports,) and 4 news about public policies in general although having specificities about men's and women's prisons.

For analyzing the news content, we used the Thematic Analysis method, (Braun and Clarke, 2006), which enabled us to capture both the semantic meanings and the latent meanings, i.e. to describe and summarize data as well as to interpret and interrogate data.

Although we grounded our analysis in an inductive approach, which meant coding the news without trying to fit them into a pre-existing theoretical idea, we were informed by a critical (e.g. Foucault, 1977/1995; Wacquant, 2003, 2009) and feminist positioning (Carlen and Worrall, 2004; Hannah-Moffat, 2010; Messerschmidt, 1993). Inductive approach emphasizes the active engagement of the researcher in the process of analyzing the data. Thus, coding was approached as a fluid and flexible process that evolved as the analysis progressed, being at times more recursive than linear. Grounded in this methodology, we found an almost dualistic construction about men and women inmates—men are generally represented as violent and women as reliable and good working. A dualistic construction about men and women prisons was also found—men prisons are generally depicted as degrading and women's as positive environments with several activities. Prison policies are also frequently mentioned in the news, and they are related to the previous representations of inmates and prisons, although the discourses are not so clearly polarized in what concerns men and women representations, presenting, instead, some ambiguities. According to this analysis, we organized the excerpts in two main themes: Men's Prison, Male Inmates and Prison Policies and Women's Prison, Women Inmates and Prison Policies. Inside each of these big

themes, we distinguish three sub-themes related to inmates, prison organization and their conditions and prison policies.

Men's prisons, male inmates and prison policies

The prison institution for men: Institutional violence

In general, the news stories convey a representation of prison as "hell," i.e. a "brutal violent environment" (Marsh, 2009, 2013) with the sole exception of a news in the corpus, which depicts it as a "holiday camp," manifest in the title: "Luxury: Prisoners entitled to cable television, including Sport TV" (28 July 2009). This report criticizes what is seen as inmates' privileges—in the case, their access to cable TV at cheaper prices than the general population. This construction is associated to a punitive discourse of prison as retribution, characteristic of the neoliberal penal state (Wacquant, 2009), which tends to disregard the prisoners' human rights (Quigley and Godchaux, 2015).

Apart from the abovementioned news, all the other stories describe what may be considered as open violations of human rights (Quigley and Godchaux, 2015). For example, some refer to the European Prison Observatory Report (Dores et al., 2013: 4), which mentions "wet cells, plaster falling from the walls, broken windows, lack of artificial lighting [and] old mattresses." These problems are corroborated by an extract, which denounces "the lack of conditions in the cells, the lack of quality in the food and even the fact that there are rats in the prison, according to the prisoners," together with the consistent denial of paroles (7 October 2012). In 13 January 2008, the newspaper reveals:

> There are still 656 cells in Portuguese prisons where inmates have to place their feces in buckets, given the absence of a sanitary system in the cell. Upon his nomination to the Justice Office, Alberto Costa promised to eradicate the problem, as one of his priorities, having established the deadline of December 2007 (...) Also according to the Minister of Justice, at the beginning the present legislature, there were 1431 cells short of sanitary facilities.

These ill conditions are easily framed by what Ben Crewe (2011) called the "deliberate abuses and derelictions of duty" which go beyond the "inherent features of incarceration," adding unnecessary suffering or humiliation to the deprivation of freedom. These news are consistent with data presented by several human rights reports (e.g. CPT, 2013; Dores et al., 2013) and clearly contradict the Portuguese Penal Code's (2013) emphasis on human dignity.

Ill imprisonment conditions are also mentioned in 17 news covering inmates' protest actions like hunger strikes, riots, refusal of adherence to health programs and lawsuits against the State. Such actions often protest against prison food (e.g. "One hundred inmates refused to lunch yesterday at Pinheiro da Cruz prison in protest against the 'little variety and poor quality' of the canteen products"—9

November 2011), reforms on prison internal regulation, restricting visits and forcing prisoners to spend more time in closed cells (e.g. Prisoners rebel, 1 February 2011), or, less frequently, the consistent denial of parole requests by the Parole Board (in Portugal, the Penalties Execution Court) (e.g. "about 170 inmates of Paços de Ferreira prison, who complain about irregularities committed by the Penalties Execution Court concerning parole granting, will sue the state"—4 September 2012).

Violence is one of the prison features that attracts media attention the more due to the drama involved and consequent increase in audience (Jewkes, 2007). However, it must be recognized that our news do not simply explore this commercial aspect of violence, but they ultimately legitimate inmates' resistance by denouncing the ill material conditions and institutional violence that motivate it.

Male inmates: Violent resistance, danger and manipulation

Contrary to Mason's (2006) findings, we believe *Correio da Manhã* does not construct male prisoners as inhuman, nor even as equally violent among themselves. Male inmates are portrayed simultaneously as victims of the inhuman and degrading conditions of prison, and as social agents who actively, and often violently, protest against the lack of prison conditions and violation of their rights but also show violent interaction between them and attacks to prison guards. For example, during the prison guards' strike in 2009, *Correio da Manhã* published several news on prisoners' protests but as the extract below suggests, the violence of the prisoners—their "revolt" and "assault to a deputy chief" are not presented as gratuitous:

> The second strike of prison guards started yesterday and confirmed the high degree of dissatisfaction existing in prisons. (...) Deprived of private visits [due to the strike], the inmates began to mutiny, resulting in assault to a deputy chief in the Prison of Leiria, and burning bins in the prison of Coimbra. (18 July 2009)

Although, at times, the news about protests and riots associate these to specific wards where more dangerous inmates are kept, other news also show that resistance to prison norms or conditions involve a large number and even the majority of prisoners: "Almost 100% of the inmates of the Prison of Santa Cruz do Bispo, Matosinhos, which has about 620 prisoners, refused to have lunch and dine yesterday (...)" (22 May 2014). This kind of news shows a certain concern to give readers a measure of the contestation, but also, of its potential risk.

Other excerpts stress the violence of the protests and other violent conflicts among prisoners, always using the "dangerous masculinity" discourse about inmates (Curtis, 2014), i.e. always assuming that all prisoners are hyperviolent, hypersexual, and dangerous.[2] In our corpus, the "manipulative and dangerous" discourse was by far the most frequent. Dangerousness qualification is conveyed through the emphasis on violence in protests and riots but also in the relations between prisoners and guards: "A fight between rival groups over drug business

leadership in the prison, has triggered several other clashes, which, caused five injuries—among them a prison guard" (19 June 2010).

We also found eight news that constructed inmates as deceitful and manipulative (as identified by Curtis, 2014), for instance, through 12 reports showing that they resort to creative ways to bring drugs and cell phones to the prison facilities: "Leiria: creativity in prison. Mobiles go in the soup" (16 May 2008). Another news reports the attempt of an inmate to conceal seven mobile phones and 200 grams of hashish in his prosthesis: "The inmate had come for a consultation in Lisbon and asked to go to the toilet where he placed the articles in the prosthesis" (9 September 2013).

In sum, in what concerns men's prisons, the news often recognize the institutional violence existing in facilities. In what concerns men inmates, they are generally depicted as violent and manipulative.

Prison policies for men: Conflicting discourses of human rights, risk control and managerialism

The newspaper discourse on prison policies seems more ambiguous than the topics analyzed above. On one hand, it highlights the need for greater respect for the human rights of prisoners but, on the other hand, it recognizes the need for risk control: "The minister liked what he saw. The Prison Services 'Ninjas' were created nine years ago and have the mission to escort dangerous or high-risk inmates. They also operate inside prisons in riots containment" (27 October 2005).

More than 20 news stories denounce typical outcomes of the new managerialist prison administration. For example, a report of an initiative in the prison of Linhó, says:

> 'It is mainly hygiene products those which inmate miss the most', the prison director, João Quintans, told the CM newspaper. Items like shampoo, toothpaste, shaving machines, and some sweets as well, were placed in gift bags and then offered to inmates. All these items were provided by private companies, thus, the initiative did not entail costs to the Prison facility. (21 December 2007)

Indeed, what this extract shows is that inmates often lack essential hygiene products and have to buy these themselves in the prison shop.

Prison degrading conditions seem to attract the newspaper attention more than rehabilitation programs; indeed, the latter were totally absent in our sample of news. We may consider this absence a revealing bias given that, in the last decades, several programs were effectively implemented on Portuguese prisons including several psychotherapeutic programs for specific problems/groups such as drug addicts, sexual or domestic violence offenders. The absence of reference to the rehabilitation topic in male prison seems to construct a subject who, consistent with the violent/dangerous representation described above, is not amenable to rehabilitation (see e.g. Dunphy, 1999; Gelsthorpe, 2004).

Furthermore, the newspaper is ambiguous in what concerns human right policies. Although it highlights the violence of prison degrading conditions, on the other hand, the news rarely report undue use of force by guards (only one story refers to the abusive use of taser). However, guards' violence was recently denounced by organizations such as the European Prison Observatory: "in practice, the use of force is indiscriminate, without any sort of professionalism or respect for the physical integrity of the prisoners; force becomes legitimate whenever institutional order is arbitrarily declared to be at risk" (Dores et al., 2013: 37).

In the same line of thought, it is startling that only two news from a corpus covering 10 years of prison events mention suicide. One about a 22 years old inmate who hanged himself in a private cell (PJ is investigating the suicide of a young inmate, 17 November 2013); and another of a suspicious death of a 22 years old inmate found dead "without apparent signs neither of violence nor of suicide" (21 November 2006). Notwithstanding, official records show that suicide numbers in Portuguese prisons are higher than the EU averages (Aebi et al., 2015) and the Annual Report of Internal Security (SSI, 2012) identifies, for example, 13 suicides in 2012 and 22 in 2014 (SSI, 2014).

Therefore, the way prison policies are referred do not convey a consistent position of the newspaper's about the inmates' rights: on one hand, they highlight some structural aspects of institutional violence, like ill prison conditions, apparently supporting inmates' rights, but, on the other hand, they tend to conceal the absence of respect for these rights in what concerns direct violence by guards and others forms of violence that can result in suicide, for example. Significantly, they also completely ignore instances of public investing in rehabilitation programs.

Women's prison, female inmates and prison policies

Women's prison: Positive custody and rehabilitation

Women prisons are generally portrayed in a positive manner, as places of positive custody and rehabilitation, even if some few exceptions (3 in 26) to this general discourse also emerged in our corpus.

Examples of the presentation of prison as a positive environment are the reports of marriages inside prison. Significantly, such reports appear always in news about female prisons, never about men prisons. As noted by Jewkes (2004), they involve a certain degree of drama or unexpected and convey a positive image of prison life to the readers:

> Teresa and Alexandre met in one of Porto's courts and began a romantic relationship that could look old fashioned as it developed through letters. Eventually, they married to each other in order to 'facilitate reciprocal visits and other formalities'. Marriage was celebrated in Santa Cruz do Bispo prison facility followed by a big feast. Ricardo (their son) was conceived in the second intimate visit. (11 February 2007)

However, the most striking example of a positive image of prison, since it reinforces the idea of equal rights, is given by the following excerpt in relation to one marriage of same-sex people:

> Patrícia and Teresa, two lesbians, share a past of thefts and confinement. They are both currently serving a sentence in Santa Cruz do Bispo prison. Last Monday, they celebrated the first marriage of same sex persons in the history of Portuguese prison system, in Matosinhos jail. They were officially authorized to occupy the same cell in the 'mothers' house' reserved to inmates with young children. (29 May 2014)

The same news also mentions the problems of getting married outside the prison walls: "They had the chance to choose between getting married in Town Hall or inside prison. They preferred the second option so that they would not be seen in handcuffs outside the prison where they serve time" (29 May 2014). It must also be stressed that Santa Cruz do Bispo women's prison is the only Portuguese prison partially funded by a private entity and is presently recognized as one of the best prisons in Portugal.

Topics, such as, cells' ill conditions, deficient health service or bad quality food, presented as human rights violations and institutional/state violence, are totally absent from the news about women's prisons. Direct and violent forms of resistance such as protests and riots are also virtually absent from these news. Only one of the 26 news reports refers to women's resistance related to a prison guards strike:

> About 30 female inmates of Santa Cruz do Bispo facility, rallied and refused to be locked in their cells on this Sunday. The guards that were on duty at the time, doing minimum services during strike, delivered the inmates' meals, floor by floor, to prevent further developments. (1 November 2011)

This excerpt confirms previous studies on this matter suggesting that women are less likely than men to participate in riots or collective protests (Carlen and Worrall, 2004). Nevertheless, we found another news about inmates, men and women, who claimed (not violently) their civil rights: "There are inmates in Tires and Santa Cruz do Bispo female prisons, and Lisboa, Chaves, Carregueira, Paços de Ferreira, Montijo e Vale de Judeus male prisons who want to vote" (30 August 2014). Other two news referring to women prisons report non-violent claims of rights: the right to have intimate visits for gay prisoners and the extension of age of children staying with their mothers in prison to three to five years (21 June 2008).

Women inmates: Docility, good-workers but...

Previous studies suggest that women commit more disciplinary offences than men, such as violence or physical altercations with other women, escapes, unauthorized

transactions and disobedience and disrespect (Carlen and Worrall, 2004). Notwithstanding, in our corpus, female inmates are almost always represented as docile and teachable bodies, passive agents, wholly in line with a normative discourse of "femininity" (e.g. Bosworth, 1999). However, we found two stories that noted women's capacity, alike men, of physical or verbal violence: One stories is related to one women from the upper class (Doing time for having commanded the murder of her husband, 8 April 2008) "Maria das Dores resorted to other inmates' hairdressing and manicure services in Tires prison. Once she told them she couldn't pay and she was threatened to death." The other story is related to a woman who had killed her offspring:

> (. . .) the homicidal mother is an isolated cell to avoid retaliations from other inmates. The same situation occurred, for example, with Joana's mother. Leonor Cipriano was kept isolated from other inmates in Odemira prison after having killed her daughter, in 12 September 2004, in Figueira, Portimão. (26 December 2012)

In general, the nearly inexistent violence in female prison news is, as mentioned above, consistent with a long tradition of invisibilization of women's violence and resistance (e.g. Hannah-Moffat, 2002). On the other hand, recent research shows how state violence in women's prisons is made invisible through routine practices and educational and training programs (e.g. Allspach, 2010; Chartrand, 2015). However, in contrast with Allspach's study (2010), which revealed the frustration and criticism of female inmates' towards the inclusion of treatment programs in custody, the narratives portrayed by the news, highlighted the positive effects of these occupational activities as in this report about work in female prisons:

> The work is very rewarding (. . .). Taking into account the situation that I'm currently living, it's much easier to go through prison now. When I left, time began to run faster. I had no experience at all with flowers, it's a farm work, hard, but I'm not afraid of work. It is always beneficial. (22 April 2007).

The extract presented above depicts the importance given to helping women to endure the "pains of imprisonment" (Sykes, 1958) and, hence, the concern with "humane containment" or "positive custody" in the case of female inmates.

   Adding to the invisibility of violence, the news perpetuate the standards of normative femininity by associating the inmates' occupations with the domestic sphere (fashion design, sewing and kitchen) and with traditionally "feminine" roles, such as motherhood. These are in fact the occupations ascribed to female inmates in prison, but the fact that they become a motive for news reporting reveals the media concern in conveying such image. The "feminization" and "domesticization" of female inmates (e.g. Dunphy, 1999; Gelsthorpe, 2004) reinforce the essentialization of womanhood and tend to homogenize women by

emphasizing certain feminine "traits," such as reliability and capacity for hardworking:

> Ana Paula Sousa, from the haute couture company The Pazo said that the work of prisoners 'is amazing'. 'After the first week of work I decided to install machines for them to do everything from cutting the packaging. And the result is in sight. In addition to the quality of work, people are very creative and reliable. (25 September 2006)

It also seems that the newspaper tends to emphasize more companies helping women than companies helping men. Although there is a reference to a private company's project in a male prison in 2006, as reported in the piece below, the topic is completely absent from the subsequent news of the corpus: The sub-director of Prison Services recognizes that "the Santa Cruz do Bispo women prison project is important" and that "there is the possibility to repeat the experience in other facilities, with a similar situation being presently planned for a male prison" (25 September 2006). Both in women and men prison work, the advantages for companies seem very important (there is a lot of unemployment but there is also a great lack of staff. It is useful for us and gratifying for them, Rosado Luz explains; 22 April 2007), especially because, similar to other countries (Carlen and Worrall, 2004), inmates are poorly remunerated.

> Catarina Rocchi, responsible for this work in prison project, informed that the inmates working in the services area, 48 in average, received a base of 3.40 euros per day, with the possibility of making a maximum of 200 euros per month. (25 September 2006)

The news also emphasize the importance of the motherhood role for better coping with the psychological dimensions of prison violence, such as loneliness and boredom:

> It will be good to be a mother in here because it will help passing the time. It would be difficult when he [the child] has to leave, [but] I will see him on visits with the father who is now leaving prison. (Report in 11 February 2007)

The emphasis on the loneliness of prison experience (see extracts below) counters previous studies highlighting the importance of women's relational bonds in prison as resistance processes (Cunha, 2002; Foster, 1975; Giallombardo, 1974; Owen, 1998).

> Silvia Duarte, 30, enjoyed freedom as someone who delights herself with the simple act of drinking coffee from a glass cup. Her first probation coincided with her birthday. 'In here you learn to define longing to feel the lack of a hug, the smell. The voice on the phone is not enough', she complained. (...) Life in prison also taught Silvia what living alone is. 'You do not make friends,' she complained. (11 December 2005)

Women prisoners are presented as able to be rehabilitated through self-regulation. Using an essentialist discourse, they are constructed as docile, affectionate and

most of all, teachable (with very few exceptions). Both theirs and the companies'
narratives show they respond to the expectations of society in what concerns
adaptation to the rules. They are presented as good workers and able to "adhere
to middle-class white normative ideals of motherhood" (Hannah-Moffat, 2010:
199), being regulated by the ever-present motherhood condition. Thus, female
rehabilitation is only considered within traditional gender bounds, using tradition-
al feminine roles and occupations.

Prison policies for women: Conflicting discourses of positive custody, rehabilitation and security

The policy most focused by the news on women prisons clearly relates to positive
custody and rehabilitation and includes labor/occupational, cultural/entertainment
activities and others (see, e.g. Carlen and Tombs, 2002; Hannah-Moffat, 2010;
Kruttschnitt et al., 2013). Therefore, this news portray what Carlen and Tombs
call "the myth of in-prison rehabilitation," which contributes to revive psycholog-
ical explanations of crime and obscure the "mixed economy of the thera-punitive
prison" (2006: 339).

   The news about female rehabilitation/reintegration of prisoners are interwoven
with a security-logic discourse over the goal of "humanizing prisons." For exam-
ple, the Minister of Justice is quoted in a statement about the separation of chil-
dren   from their mothers in prison, after completing three years of age:
"Humanization is one of the objectives of this government, but we must know
how to do it safely" (13 December 2005).

   In another news, the limits to human rights policies are clearly drawn by the
Portuguese Board for Prison Services in a quote about the issue of conjugal visits
for gay couples: "these special visits 'are not a right but a concession' which may or
may not be granted" (28 November 2011).

   Finally, there are no mentions to suicide in women's news, suggesting that the
news conceal institutional violence. However, in official reports, the number of
suicides is not separated by sex and since we do not know the real numbers of
women suicide in prison, we cannot establish the dimension of this potential con-
cealment (SSI, 2012, 2014).

   Although, in the case of news on women prisons, we can find a more homog-
enous discourse about policies than in those on men prison, in their case, focused
on rehabilitation, some preoccupation with security and a tacit agreement with the
"need for limits in equal rights" policy, often become apparent when the stories
approach this topic.

Conclusion

This analysis suggests that traditional technologies of control, as deterrence,
through the spectacle of punishment (Foucault, 1977/1995), coexist with new
forms of control through routine practices and educational and training programs

(e.g. Allspach, 2010; Chartrand, 2015) in contemporary prisons (Cunha, 2014). However, these technologies are presented by the media under analysis in a highly gendered way; with some very few exceptions, the reproduction of traditionally dichotomic norms of femininity and masculinity becomes evident either in the representation of male and female inmates as well as of the respective prison environments. Prisons for man are, generally, presented as a "hell," whereas prisons for women are presented as quite places where good relations are promoted (marriages, for example) but where some loneliness is present although less prominently. We must, also, emphasize that while male inmates are constructed more or less heterogeneous (some as dangerous, some as manipulative and some as simply claimers of their rights), female prisoners are constructed as a more homogenous group with the few exceptions of mothers who kill their children or those who do not ensue from the lower classes that prevail in most prisons.

The above representations of prison and inmates settle the ways news refer to prison policies. On this matter, news convey conflicting discourses of security (generally concerning to men's prisons and justified by the need to contain the violence inherent to those prisoners), managerialism (especially in men's prison but also to a certain degree in women's prison), positive custody (especially in women's prison in relation to the idea of rehabilitation) and claims for human rights (both for men's and women's prison). The readers are, thus, confronted with a distorted and confusing image about prison and inmates, which will not probably contribute to a positive re-integration in society (mainly for male inmates).

Even when focusing on the human rights of the (male) prisoners, the news tend to align with a reformist approach, failing to interrogate the wider role of imprisonment in social control or to discuss its alternatives (Mathiesen, 1986). As Sparks and McNeil (2009: 3) have noticed: the recognition of prisoners as bearers of civil rights did not extend to "questions of social control [nor does it] contests over the scale and uses of imprisonment and its alternatives."

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Notes

1. In her ethnographic study at North Correctional Institution (NCI), Anna Curtis (2014) explored the dimensions and implications of the 'dangerous masculinity' construction of inmates. Using stories and observational accounts, the author identified the following three subtypes: "Bogeymen," "Violent Animals" and "Manipulative and Dangerous."

2. The women expressed frustration about the contradictions of combining penal with
   treatment practices and articulated their disappointment about the federal govern-
   ment's promises of 'empowerment' as they felt that what was being implemented
   were in fact penal practices' and 'The interviewees reported that few programs were
   available to enhance their economic self-sufficiency' (Allspach, 2010: 714).

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