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Incarcerated Motherhood and the Right to Education: A Pedagogical Scoping Review*

Elena Zizioli¹ - Chiara Meta¹ - Lisa Stillo¹ - Rita Marzoli²
Giulia Franchi¹ - Elisabetta Colla¹

¹ *Università di Roma Tre, Department of Education (Italy)*

² *Istituto Nazionale per la Valutazione del Sistema Educativo di Istruzione
e di Formazione – INVALSI (Roma, Italy)*

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elena.zizioli@uniroma3.it
chiara.meta@uniroma3.it
lisa.stillo@uniroma3.it
rita.marzoli@invalsi.it
giulia.franchi@uniroma3.it
elisabetta.colla@gmail.com

LA MATERNITÀ IN CARCERE E IL DIRITTO ALL'EDUCAZIONE: UNA SCOPING REVIEW IN PROSPETTIVA PEDAGOGICA

ABSTRACT

The paper, the result of a scoping review conducted within the framework of the PRIN «Phoenix. A New Kind of 'Rebirth' for Women and Children Living in Conditions of Marginalization», explores the condition of incarcerated mothers through a pedagogical and intersectional lens, with the aim of redefining educational and social services for women and children living in conditions of marginalization. Drawing on a rigorous and multidisciplinary methodology, the literature review identified 85 relevant international studies. The subsequent thematic analysis revealed seven core conceptual areas

* The paper is the result of a collaborative effort; however, for evaluation purposes, authorship is to be attributed as follows: paragraphs 1 and 4 to E. Zizioli and C. Meta; the paragraph 2 to R. Marzoli; paragraphs 3.1 and 3.7 to E. Colla; paragraphs 3.2 and 3.3 to G. Franchi; paragraphs 3.4, 3.5, and 3.6 to L. Stillo.

shared across the studies: social and institutional stigma; narratives and representations; systemic racism and intersectional perspectives; mental health and well-being; forms of agency and disempowerment; motherhood inside and outside prison; and prison policies. The findings highlight recurring critical issues across the various contexts examined: motherhood in prison emerges as an ambivalent space in which women negotiate their identities between institutional control and practices of resistance, within a penal system that remains largely inattentive to gender dynamics and the parental role of women.

Keywords: Educational needs; Incarceration; Intersectionality; Motherhood; Scoping review.

1. INTRODUCTION

This scoping review responds to a research need developed within the PRIN «Phoenix. A New Kind of ‘Rebirth’ for Women and Children Living in Conditions of Marginalization»¹. Specifically, the Roma Tre unit investigated female incarceration from a gender perspective, rethinking the role of pedagogical research in redesigning services for mothers that safeguard responsive parenting and re-signify care. Throughout the research process, the need for repositioning became evident, overcoming the persistent marginalization of pedagogical knowledge in a context that privileges legal-sociological approaches. The aim is to implement new forms of treatment that call upon pedagogy as a transformative science. One of the first research questions involved deconstructing the concept of vulnerability in order to revisit the complex and unresolved tension between guilt and responsibility/capacity for a new life. This means moving beyond the paradigm of «victimization-passivization», which persists in the current socio-political scenario dominated by global neoliberal economic dynamics (Castiglioni, Ronconi, & Zuffa, 2025).

Within this context, the patriarchal structure of society continues to codify a division of labor based on sex, assigning women irreplaceable care functions (Micromega, 2024). In the penitentiary system, female offenders are stigmatized as «non-conforming», with incarcerated mothers identified as «the guilty among the guilty» (Rutter & Baar, 2021). This results in a «double discrimination» that frames incarcerated women as «vulnerable»

¹ The project aims to propose a model of innovative service networks to support mothers and children in situations of marginalization and at risk of violence, involving three Italian universities: the University of Foggia, the University of Firenze, and Roma Tre.

subjects, perceived as incapable of agency. For these reasons, the scoping review focuses on the needs of incarcerated mothers, recovering the perspective of intersectional feminism to support processes of self-determination and the necessary transformation of services.

2. METHODOLOGY

This scoping review was conducted in accordance with established methodological principles to ensure rigour, transparency and reproducibility. Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) framework provided the overall structure of the review process. Levac *et al.* (2010) informed the refinement of the research question and the iterative nature of team discussions, as well as the balance between breadth and analytic depth. Reporting was guided by the PRISMA-ScR checklist (Tricco *et al.*, 2018) and, given the predominantly qualitative and exploratory nature of the included studies, by the *JBIManual for Evidence Synthesis* (Peters *et al.*, 2020), which is well suited to mapping heterogeneous evidence. Campbell *et al.* (2018) also shaped the development of the search strategy, taking into account the multidisciplinary, conceptually complex and terminologically inconsistent nature of social science research. Together, these frameworks ensured a systematic yet flexible approach, capable of capturing the conceptual, methodological, and disciplinary diversity of research on mothers in prison.

Research question

The following broad and exploratory question guided the review:

- What are the needs of mothers in prison and what services meet these needs?

This question was deliberately inclusive, allowing the review to capture various studies and perspectives. Motherhood in prison represents a critical intersection between gender, family, and criminal justice systems. Incarcerated mothers face challenges that extend well beyond the prison environment, influencing children's development, family stability, and broader social cohesion. Formulating the question broadly was consistent with JBI guidance (Peters *et al.*, 2020).

Inclusion criteria

Studies were included if they:

1. Focused explicitly on incarcerated mothers as participants or units of analysis.
2. Addressed the needs of mothers in prison and/or the services, programs, or interventions designed to meet those needs.
3. Employed any type of research design, empirical (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods), theoretical, or conceptual.
4. Were published in peer-reviewed journals, conference proceedings, or as recognised academic publications.

This broad approach is consistent with the exploratory purpose of scoping reviews (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Peters *et al.*, 2020).

Exclusion criteria

Studies were excluded if they:

1. Focused solely on prison management, administrative, or legal procedures without discussing mothers' needs.
2. Concentrated exclusively on medical or clinical aspects unrelated to psychosocial, educational, or social needs.
3. Were systematic reviews or scoping reviews, since this review aimed to map primary studies.

These criteria ensured that the review maintained its focus on the lived experiences of incarcerated mothers and the services that address their needs.

Search strategy

The search strategy was developed iteratively, with input from an academic librarian, and was guided by the principles of balancing sensitivity and precision (Campbell *et al.*, 2018). Searching in the social sciences is particularly challenging because of inconsistent terminology, the multidisciplinary nature of topics, and the diversity of methodological approaches. Campbell *et al.* (2018) recommend the meticulous use of Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT) and, where appropriate, proximity operators (e.g., NEAR) to refine search outputs. In this review, the search was conducted in Scopus (Elsevier), a multidisciplinary database with extensive coverage of peer-reviewed journals across social sciences, education, psychology, criminology, and health. Scopus was selected because of its breadth and

indexing depth. However, the reliance on a single database is a limitation; it was considered sufficient for an exploratory scoping review given the cross-disciplinary nature of the topic. The search was conducted in October 2025 using the following string in Title, Abstract, and Keywords (TITLE-ABS-KEY):

- Women AND motherhood AND prison.

This formulation was deliberately broad, in line with Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) emphasis on sensitivity at the early stages of a scoping review, but also manageable in scope. Unlike Campbell *et al.* (2018), who tested multiple concept groups and proximity operators, this simpler string yielded a relevant and sufficiently focused dataset. No temporal restrictions were applied, allowing the review to capture the historical evolution of the topic. Language restrictions were applied during screening, limiting the studies to English, Italian, Spanish, and French, which corresponded to the linguistic competencies of the review team. All retrieved references were imported into *Rayyan* for management, duplicate removal, and blinded screening. This ensured consistency and transparency in the initial review process.

Study selection

The initial search yielded 160 records. After removing four duplicates, 154 titles and abstracts were screened by six independent reviewers using *Rayyan*. Each reviewer made independent inclusion/exclusion judgments, and conflicts were resolved through open discussion, consistent with Levac *et al.*'s (2010) emphasis on iterative team dialogue. A total of 116 articles were retained for full-text assessment. Of these, 11 have been excluded because they did not meet the inclusion criteria, and 20 records could not be retrieved despite repeated attempts through institutional subscriptions and interlibrary loan services. Three independent reviewers assessed the remaining 85 full-text reports which met the inclusion criteria and were retained for the final synthesis. The selection process is illustrated in the PRISMA-ScR flow diagram (*Fig. 1*) (Tricco *et al.*, 2018).

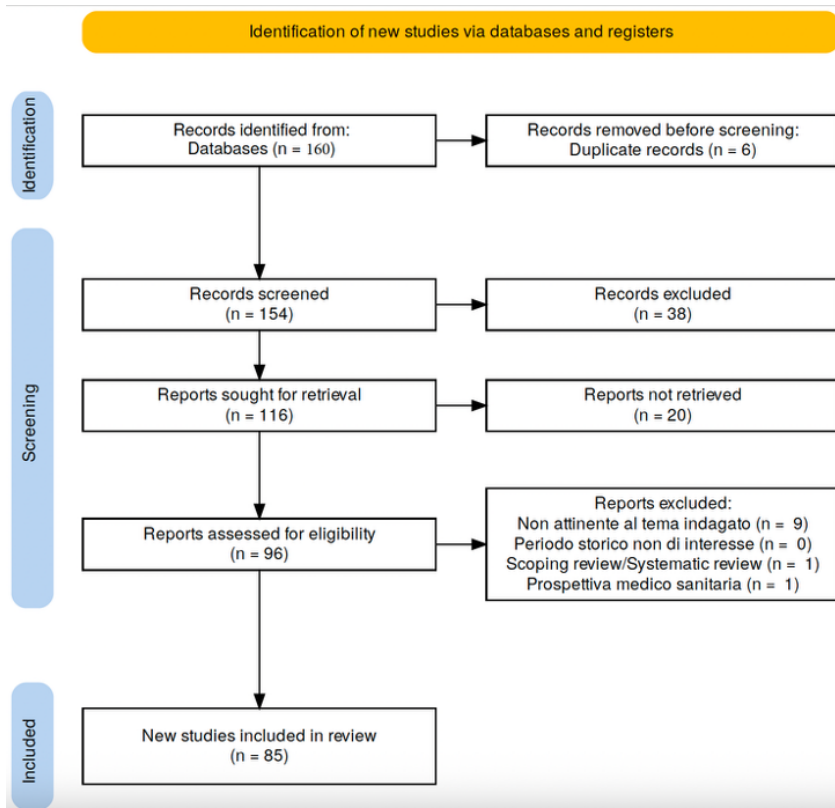


Figure 1. – PRISMA.

Data extraction

A standardised data extraction form was developed, adapted from the JBI template (Peters *et al.*, 2020). The form captured:

- Title, Author(s), year of publication and Journal.
- Key findings and themes.
- Relevance to the research question.

Data extraction was conducted independently by three reviewers. Discrepancies were discussed and resolved by consensus, which enhances rigour and reflexivity (Levac *et al.*, 2010). The full extraction table is presented in the *Appendix*.

Data synthesis

The synthesis followed a narrative and thematic approach, appropriate for heterogeneous evidence (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Peters *et al.*, 2020).

The process unfolded in two stages:

1. *Independent coding* – Three reviewers analysed the extracted data to identify preliminary themes, working inductively without a predefined framework.
2. *Consensus building* – Reviewers met to consolidate findings, resolving discrepancies through discussion. This iterative process reflects Levac *et al.*'s (2010) recommendation for collective interpretation.

The following seven themes emerged:

1. Identity, stereotypes, and social/institutional stigma.
2. Narratives, representations, and imaginaries.
3. Intersectional feminism and institutional racism.
4. Well-being and mental health.
5. Agency, disempowerment, and self-determination.
6. Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions.
7. Prison policies and rights.

These themes capture both material and symbolic dimensions of incarceration, reflecting the breadth of evidence from the included studies. Rigour was ensured through the involvement of multiple reviewers at each stage, using *Rayyan* for blinded screening, and systematic documentation of decisions. Campbell *et al.* (2018) argue that transparency in search and selection procedures is essential for credibility in social science reviews. The team also emphasised reflexivity, engaging in open discussions to resolve conflicts and critically reflecting on individual assumptions and interpretations. This practice aligns with Levac *et al.*'s (2010) call for iterative team dialogue to enhance methodological transparency.

In conclusion, this methodology reflects a rigorous, transparent, and iterative process guided by established frameworks. By combining broad eligibility criteria, systematic searching, multi-reviewer screening, standardised data extraction, and thematic synthesis, the review was able to map the breadth and complexity of the literature on the needs of incarcerated mothers. Following the methodological insights of Arksey and O'Malley (2005), Levac *et al.* (2010), Campbell *et al.* (2018), Tricco *et al.* (2018), and Peters *et al.* (2020), the review contributes to methodological practice in scoping reviews while laying the foundation for the results and discussion that follow.

This scoping review adopts a critical-interpretive, feminist-pedagogical stance on incarceration and motherhood, inspired by Haraway's (1988)

situated knowledges. Our Italian Phoenix-project team's experience in education and prisons shapes a necessarily partial reading. Aware of these potential biases, we used ongoing reflexive dialogue to make our positionality explicit and offer a transparent, critically reflexive mapping.

3. NARRATIVE-THEMATIC ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. *Identity and social/institutional stigma*

Among the recurring elements in the studies analyzed, the theme of social stigma associated with incarceration emerges with particular clarity. This stigma represents an additional form of «punishment» (Hector, 2020), as it reflects directly on the identity of incarcerated women, especially mothers, contributing to discrimination and interfering with maternal roles and parental capabilities (Alirezai & Latifnejad Roudsari, 2023). The risk of negative judgments toward incarcerated mothers is high, given the long-standing «virtuous» social expectations constructed in Western societies regarding what constitutes a «good mother» (Lockwood, 2018; Thongyou *et al.*, 2023; Umeh, 2024). When such social stereotypes are perceived as violated due to involvement with the criminal justice system (Easterling *et al.*, 2019), some studies highlight the emerging desire of women to break cycles of intergenerational stigma. However, this remains challenging due to a lack of support and recognition, as well as inadequate approaches to pregnancy and motherhood in prison (Fitzpatrick *et al.*, 2024). Specific analyses have focused on the psycho-emotional dimension of stigma internalized by incarcerated mothers, who experience interrupted and fragmented motherhood, when not entirely compromised by the prison environment, leading to significant distress, ambivalence, and enduring emotional harm long *after release* (Baldwin, 2018; Alirezai & Latifnejad Roudsari, 2023). In post-release studies, women's reintegration into the workforce is often described from a critical feminist desistance perspective, in which outcomes include shame, internalized stigma (especially among mothers), and marginalization within the labour market (Zhang, 2024). The stigma stemming from the intersection of motherhood and incarceration extends into legal and family matters, such as child custody disputes (Garcia, 2016). Female prison contexts in Cuba and Spain illustrate what has been termed a triple stigmatization of women, social, penal, and familial (Rodríguez, 2021). Another element consistently emphasized is the loss

of maternal identity, linked to experiences or anticipations of separation between mothers and children due to court-ordered removals, the pain of being deprived of parental rights, or uncertainty about the future (Abbott, Scott, & Thomas, 2023). Conversely, motherhood, both during incarceration and after release, may represent a salient identity that shapes and influences other identities (Barnes & Stringer, 2014). Often, mothers' desire to preserve their identity derives from forms of social control aligned with the idea of being «good prisoners» (Aiello, 2016).

Another emerging theme concerns the strategies employed by incarcerated mothers to sustain their identity, overcome stigma, protect their children from perceived risks, and conform to societal expectations. One example is «intensive mothering», a concept rooted in hegemonic ideals of white middle-class parenting (Freitas, Inácio, & Saavedra, 2016; Umeh, 2024). Other strategies to maintain parental identity include: delegating childcare to caregivers managed from a distance (Cunningham Stringer, 2020); caring for adult children (Lockwood, 2020); negotiating maternal identity through self-narration (Easterling, Feldmeyer, & Presser, 2019); or adopting self-surveillance practices and monitoring fellow incarcerated mothers in order to abandon habits deemed incompatible with motherhood, such as drug or alcohol use (Kilty & Dej, 2013).

Finally, studies on the concepts of pseudo-family and pseudo-motherhood, which substitute for the valuable pre-incarceration family roles, further illuminate women's strategic adaptations to imprisonment (Dillavou *et al.*, 2022).

3.2. Narratives, representations, and imaginaries

The studies reviewed converge in highlighting how motherhood in prison constitutes a privileged space for observing the construction and negotiation of narratives, representations, and imaginaries, operating at multiple levels. At the cultural level, media (Deckert, 2020) and television productions such as *prison series* (Wächter, 2019; DeCarvalho & Martínez-Carrillo, 2024) depict incarcerated mothers as ambivalent figures, distant from the model of the «good mother», marked by trauma and violence but also endowed with resilience and agency (DeCarvalho & Martínez-Carrillo, 2024). However, these representations often reinforce stereotypes that sexualize or marginalize incarcerated women, particularly those who are lesbian or transgender, situating them within a framework of naturalized deviance (Wächter, 2019). Far from being neutral, such portrayals sustain a punitive imaginary that legitimizes discriminatory disciplinary practices

(Deckert, 2020). At the level of self-narration, many women develop discursive strategies to reaffirm their identity and parental role, situating themselves within frameworks that challenge social and institutional discredit and stigmatization (Easterling *et al.*, 2018; Lockwood, 2018; Albertson *et al.*, 2019; Michalsen, 2019; Ferreira *et al.*, 2021):

Mothing in prison is narrated through stories that both resist and reproduce dominant cultural scripts of the 'good mother', revealing how incarcerated women negotiate stigma and reassert maternal identities. (Albertson *et al.*, 2019, p. 137)

Autobiographical narratives thus become tools of resistance and identity reconstruction, enabling women to renegotiate their self-image in opposition to public representations that reduce them to deviant or inadequate figures:

Storytelling provides incarcerated mothers with a means to make sense of disruption, to resist totalizing images of failure, and to reclaim fragments of maternal agency. (Michalsen, 2019, p. 210)

These findings are reinforced by the widespread use of life-story collection as a qualitative research method in this field (Moe *et al.*, 2014; Lockwood, 2018; Sandberg *et al.*, 2020), grounded «on the feminist narrative principles of bringing the stories of often marginalized groups to the center of discussion» (Lockwood, 2018, p. 158). Complementary approaches, such as projective techniques like *drawing-and-story* (Ferreira *et al.*, 2021), further enable forms of self-representation that are not only verbal but also visual.

3.3. *Intersectional feminism and institutional racism*

The critical perspective adopted by many of the studies reviewed underscores how motherhood in prison can be understood as an emblematic site of multiple oppressions and as paradigmatic of the intersections between gender, class, and race in the production of penal and social inequalities (Haney, 2013; Albertson *et al.*, 2019; Michalsen, 2019; Deckert, 2020; Ogrizek *et al.*, 2023). In several cases, there is explicit reference to the concept of intersectionality as theorized by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989; Michaelsen, 2019; Fitzpatrick *et al.*, 2024).

Further in keeping with Feminist approaches, insights from intersectionality helped to guide understanding of participants' multiple, dynamic identities

which influence their interactions with systems of power and oppression. (Crenshaw, 1989; Davis, 2008; Fitzpatrick *et al.*, 2024, p. 261)

Frequent reference is also made to feminist theories and, more specifically, to feminist criminology, as developed by scholars such as Meda Chesney-Lind (2013; Namondo Linonge-Fontebo & Rabe, 2015; Barton, 2017; Lockwood, 2018; Michaelsen, 2019; Zhang, 2024). Barton (2017, p. 6), for example, laments «the fact that there exists a lack of theoretical literature, feminist and critical, relating to the semi-penal institution». Michaelsen (2019), meanwhile, critiques white feminism for supporting carceral and punitive systems as solutions to women's victimization, and openly embraces Black and abolitionist feminism, interpreting prison as both a mirror and product of state oppression against Black women: «To reiterate, prisons and jails are not the root of the problem: They are only one of the manifestations of America's overwhelming criminalization of Black women, who are most overrepresented as victims» (p. 508).

The studies highlight processes of institutional racialization and class stigmatization, in which the maternal authority of poor and racialized women is systematically delegitimized, revealing how systems of discrimination and privilege are perpetuated rather than protective rights being safeguarded (Haney, 2013; Easterling & Feldmeyer, 2017; Albertson *et al.*, 2019; Deckert, 2020; Ogrizek *et al.*, 2023). Haney (2013) shows how in the United States, mother-child co-residence programs reproduce surveillance practices that disproportionately affect Black and Latina women, already historically subjected to public scrutiny regarding their parental role. Similar dynamics emerge in other contexts: Deckert (2020) examines New Zealand, showing how Māori women experience racial and cultural stigmatization that amplifies penal inequalities and limits recognition of their maternal role. In France, Ogrizek, Radjack, Moro, and Lachal (2023) analyze prison nurseries and highlight how women of foreign origin or from former colonies experience severe repression of cultural, religious, and linguistic traditions during pregnancy and early motherhood. Multiple forms of discrimination and marginalization related to class or specific vulnerabilities (Easterling & Feldmeyer, 2017; Albertson *et al.*, 2019; Sasaki *et al.*, 2024) emerge from the absence of specific policies and supports. So-called «protective» spaces end up classifying mothers according to normative criteria, while in closed environments such as rural areas, incarceration becomes a public mark that affects not only mothers but also their children and entire families.

3.4. *Well-being and mental health*

The right to health, reproductive justice, and women's well-being are profoundly complex aspects within the prison context, particularly when considering the lived experiences of incarcerated mothers. A substantial number of studies focus on women during pregnancy or in the postpartum period, highlighting significant gaps and the urgent need for structural interventions to ensure access to healthcare and to counteract political and social invisibilization. Women's bodies are frequently treated as objects of surveillance rather than as subjects of care (Mariano & Silva, 2018; Sufrin, 2018; Ogrizek, Lachal, & Moro, 2022; Abbott *et al.*, 2023; Slootweg & Mansilla, 2023). This dynamic prompts reflection on reproductive justice. Processes of additional discrimination and control emerge, often linked to women's origins and intersecting categories of race, social class, and health (Huang *et al.*, 2012; Hector, 2020), as already discussed in the previous section. Beyond these issues, the near-total absence of specific healthcare assumes extremely serious dimensions in terms of protection and prevention. For example, in Cameroon, women give birth without medical assistance, in unsanitary environments, and frequently lose custody of their children due to laws that are not respected (Diuana *et al.*, 2016). In Brazil, incarcerated women report a lack of gynecological care, specialist visits, and access to basic medication (Oliveira *et al.*, 2020). This is compounded by insufficient attention to mental health, both pre-existing and potentially developing during incarceration (Gregoire *et al.*, 2010; Dolan *et al.*, 2013; Burgess & Flynn, 2022; Moraes *et al.*, 2023).

The dimensions of trauma and emotional distress are repeatedly emphasized. Forced separation between mother and newborn, often occurring only hours after birth, generates what Abbott *et al.* (2022) describe as «ambiguous loss» and «disenfranchised grief», whereby women experience a profound rupture in identity. In Italy, Esposito (2015) identifies loneliness as «the true illness of prison», manifesting through depression, insomnia, panic attacks, and loss of meaning. Addressing the right to health therefore involves not only access to medical care but also the full recognition of women's subjectivity and self-determination, beginning with control over their own bodies and the ability to exercise reproductive choice. Breastfeeding, in this context, acquires a powerful symbolic value: it is both an act of care and a form of resistance. Mariano and Silva (2018) show that women experience breastfeeding as a «protective instrument» for themselves and their children, a way of affirming maternal identity in a hostile environment. Similarly, Huang *et al.* (2012) describe breastfeeding as «therapy», a space for emotional reconnection and self-reconstruction.

3.5. *Agency and disempowerment*

Across the reviewed studies, motherhood in prison frequently emerges as a deeply ambivalent and continuously renegotiated experience (Shamai & Kochal, 2008; Freitas, Inácio, & Saavedra, 2016; Easterling, Feldmeyer, & Presser, 2019; Cunningham Stringer, 2020; Dillavou *et al.*, 2022). It is subjected to forms of institutional, corporeal, and symbolic control (Ystanes & Ugelvik, 2020; Ogrizek, Lachal, & Moro, 2022). On the one hand, women seek to reaffirm their maternal role through gestures of care, resistance, and identity reconstruction; on the other, the prison environment imposes strict constraints that significantly limit their agency, generating disempowerment, frustration, and guilt, and posing numerous challenges upon reentry into society (Brown & Bloom, 2008; Boudin *et al.*, 2013). In several studies, agency is described as the capacity to negotiate maternal identity within a repressive context, where women do not merely endure imprisonment but attempt to redefine themselves through practices of care, affective rituals, relational strategies inside and outside prison, and everyday forms of resistance. In Belgium, for instance, mothers living with their children in prison nurseries experience «forced cohabitation,» marked by ambivalence: the privilege of proximity on the one hand, but a lack of autonomy on the other (Nuytiens & Jehaes, 2022). In France, motherhood is described as a «hybrid practice», situated between institutional rules and cultural traditions (Ogrizek *et al.*, 2023). Here, maternal action can assume a political dimension of resistance, with motherhood functioning as a form of affective survival and, at times, as an instrument for change (Shamai & Kochal, 2008). This dimension of cultural control reveals the many contradictions within the prison institution, where the stigma of the «good mother» is intertwined with that of the «culturally correct mother» (Aiello, 2016; Umeh, 2024). Disempowerment in motherhood thus manifests both through cultural-symbolic impositions of what it means to be maternal (Sandborg, Agoff, & Fondevila, 2020) and through practices that restrict women's autonomy. These include the separation of mother and newborn, shackling during labor, denial of breastfeeding, and constant surveillance – all of which intertwine access to healthcare and reproductive rights with the capacity for self-determination. The maternal body, as noted earlier, becomes an object of control rather than a subject of care: «Being shackled during labor made me feel like an animal, not a mother» (Clarke & Simon, 2013, p. 780). Cultural differences, moreover, are no longer recognized as legitimate (Oliveira *et al.*, 2020), but are instead silenced and denied.

3.6. *Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions, and trauma*

Among the many issues that emerge, the precariousness of interpersonal relationships developed during imprisonment holds particular importance, as it can exert negative influences not only in the present but especially in the future (Flores & Smeh, 2018). The processes of separation following childbirth or upon a child reaching a certain age also carry significant weight (Forsyth, 2003; Abbott, Scott, & Thomas, 2023; Thongyou, 2023). Several studies emphasize interventions designed to support motherhood during incarceration and to safeguard the well-being of both mothers and their children. These include programs to strengthen parenting skills (Koons-Witt, Huffman, & Wilson, 2021; Gallegos & Emerine, 2023), psychological and emotional support initiatives (Huber, Venegas, & Contreras, 2020; Moskvitina & Bovin, 2022), and greater attention to visitation practices. The latter can provide opportunities to sustain maternal identity beyond the condition of incarceration, creating spaces of affection and future-oriented planning, thereby legitimizing the maternal role (O'Malley & Devaney, 2016; De Medeiros *et al.*, 2022; Umeh, 2024). Other contributions stress the importance of building meaningful alliances with children's caregivers outside prison (Cunningham Stringer, 2020). In many of the studies reviewed, motherhood in prison is depicted as both contradictory and paradoxical: on the one hand, incarceration can provide a space for identity redefinition, resilience, and resistance; on the other, it is a profound source of suffering and frustration (Teather, Evans, & Sims, 1997; Merçil, 2017; Albertson *et al.*, 2019; Slootweg & Agüero, 2023).

3.7. *Prison policies and rights*

Among the articles analyzed concerning the female prison environment and specific services and programs, many highlight the need for policymakers to increase investment in reshaping the prison environment, making it less hostile to visitors and more supportive of interpersonal relationships (Flores & Smeh, 2018). Recommendations also emphasize the training of supportive staff and the promotion of non-stigmatizing, inclusive institutions (Morgan & Leeson, 2023), as well as a compassionate management of prison spaces (Baldwin, 2018). Further, several studies advocate for the creation of prison nurseries and for research on their impact on recidivism rates where they already exist (Campbell & Carlson, 2018). A recurring theme is the importance of gender-sensitive treatment. For example, in

Japan, rehabilitation programs focus specifically on trauma and parenting (Sasaki, Mochizuki, & Yoshihara, 2022); in Colombia, research highlights how prisons are primarily designed for men, relegating women to inadequate spaces (Ariza & Iturralde, 2017); in Ethiopia, the prison system has been designed without consideration of women's or mothers' specific needs (Gobena & Hean, 2019); and in Cameroon, the absence of adequate prison policies results in women's invisibilization and the denial of their rights (Linonge-Fontebo & Rabe, 2015). A legal study in four Brazilian states acknowledges progress in ensuring the rights of incarcerated women by increasing awareness of a previously invisible issue. However, it also emphasizes the persistence of inequalities, such as the phenomenon of «double incarceration», in which imprisonment extends de facto to children (Ventura, Simas, & Larouzé, 2015). In the Italian context, one study points out that the needs of incarcerated women receive little attention from both researchers and legislators, with motherhood (rather than women as persons) considered the primary female dimension in prison treatment strategies. More recently, the Council of Europe has elaborated «specific gender-sensitive policies», while in Italy, the *Stati Generali dell'Esecuzione Penale* broadened the debate beyond motherhood, incorporating issues such as vocational training, mental and physical health, empowerment, and the expansion of alternative measures (Grieco, 2023). Large-scale research in Brazilian detention centers underscores the urgency of addressing the life paths and both material and immaterial needs of incarcerated mothers and pregnant women, while also noting the challenges of conducting research in prisons due to strict limitations on permits and authorizations (De Medeiros *et al.*, 2022). Similarly, a study on Portuguese prisons highlights the dynamics of power and control in relation to female incarceration, with women's maternal experiences serving as lenses for exploring the broader «prison universe» (Mendes Braga, 2022). Studies conducted in the United States examine incarcerated mothers' perceptions of current treatment programs and their unmet needs. The findings indicate the necessity of interventions that incorporate the family dimension into existing programs addressing mental health, parenting, trauma, abuse, substance dependence, and anger management (Koons-Witt, Huffman, & Wilson, 2021). Mothers in prison experience greater parenting stress, particularly regarding their children's behavior, than those in alternative measures (Lai *et al.*, 2022). Following the Council of Europe's recommendations, France has sought to implement alternative measures to avoid incarcerating pregnant women and young mothers, recognizing the direct impact of maternal incarceration on children's cognitive and behavioral development (Sannier, 2018). Other contributions focus on feminist desistance and the specific

gendered barriers that make post-release reintegration particularly difficult for women. These include structural, familial, and individual factors that contribute to precarious labor market conditions (Zhang, 2024). While pregnancy or motherhood may act as incentives for women to desist from high-risk behaviors (Bachman *et al.*, 2015), significant challenges remain for mothers struggling with substance abuse or precarious housing and economic conditions.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The review and analysis of international scientific literature highlight the urgent need to address the situation of incarcerated mothers from a pedagogical perspective, still largely absent from research on women in detention yet crucial for rethinking educational and social interventions in prison and for guiding policies toward processes of emancipation and social reintegration for incarcerated women. Several central themes emerged that also resonate with the Italian debate. Chief among these is social stigma, which constitutes an additional form of punishment for mothers, undermining their parental capabilities, fueling feelings of inadequacy, low self-esteem, and failure, and reinforcing a culture of delegation. Nonetheless, the literature also identifies resources that can be activated and leveraged pedagogically, such as self-narration, which enables women to develop discursive strategies to reaffirm their identity and maternal role. Beyond a gendered perspective, the findings highlight the necessity of adopting an intersectional approach that considers the interplay of gender, class, and race in the reproduction of inequality and oppressive practices. Another theme that appears transversal yet deeply consequential is mental health, which directly affects the exercise of parental roles. Women's bodies are frequently objectified, subject to constant surveillance, and deprived of relational subjectivity and their centrality in the care process. Motherhood itself, as documented in the reviewed studies, emerges as a liminal space between resistance and identity reconstruction on the one hand, and disempowerment, frustration, and guilt on the other. This duality compromises maternal agency and the outcomes of social reintegration processes, making programs to support parenting – particularly post-release – urgent and strategic. Equally urgent are interventions aimed at adapting prison environments to mothers' needs, making them less hostile and more conducive to interpersonal relationships. The pedagogical perspective highlights the importance of both rethinking prison spaces and investing in

training and support programs that accompany women throughout and beyond incarceration. It is therefore necessary to overcome specific gender barriers through a multifocal approach capable of integrating individual, family, and structural factors. And this is what educational work must leverage, always identifying new trajectories, making breaks and recompositions, promoting the implicit and stimulating reflexivity. While pregnancy and motherhood can serve as incentives for desistance from high-risk behaviors, significant challenges persist among mothers struggling with substance abuse or precarious housing and economic conditions. Pedagogical design must thus aim to support incarcerated mothers in recognizing themselves as aware and responsible subjects, even amid suffering, in order to foster active participation and limit processes of victimization that, conversely, expose them to passivity, fragility, and dependence (Zizioli, 2021; Ronconi & Zuffa, 2023).

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APPENDIX 1

N.	AUTHOR(S)	TITLE	JOURNAL OR BOOK	YEAR	FOCUS OF INTERESTING	THEMES EMERGED
1	Michaelsen V.	Abolitionist Feminism as Prisons Close: Fighting the Racist and Misogynist Surveillance «Child Welfare» System	The Prison Journal, vol. 99, 4, pp. 504-511	2019	Intersectionality; abolitionism; racism; discrimination	2) Narratives, representations, and imaginaries; 3) Intersectional feminism and institutional racism
2	Kilty J.M. Dej E.	Anchoring amongst the Waves: Discursive Constructions of Motherhood and Addiction	Qualitative Sociology Review, vol. 8, 3, pp. 6-23	2012	Social construction of motherhood (good mother / bad mother)	1) Identity, stereotypes, and social/institutional stigma; 6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions; 7) Prison policies and rights
3	Flores N.M.P. Smeh L.N.	Arrested Mothers, Helpless Children: Motherhood and Interpersonal Relationships in Prison	Physis, vol. 28, 4, pp. 1-20	2018	Precariousness of relationships; redefinition of environments and services	6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions; 7) Prison policies and rights
4	DeCarvalho L.J. Martínez-Carrillo N.	A View from the Top (Dog): Intersections of Incarceration, Motherhood, and Trauma on Foxtel's Wentworth	Television and New Media, vol. 25, 1, pp. 3-18	2024	Imaginary; popular culture	2) Narratives, representations, and imaginaries
5	Obrinteschi Iancu I.D.	Being a Mother in a Mexican Prison	Revista Transilvania, vol. 11, pp. 82-89	2020	Incarcerated motherhood; maternal bonding in prison; long-term imprisonment effects	6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions
6	Smith P. Cullen F.T. Pickett J.T. Jonson C.L.	Coerced Motherhood behind Bars: Public Support for Abortion Access for Incarcerated Women	Criminology and Public Policy, vol. 0, 0, pp. 1-29	2024	Reproductive rights; abortion; physical and mental health of incarcerated women	4) Well-being and mental health; 6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions
7	Abbott L. Scott T. Thomas H.	Compulsory Separation of Women Prisoners from Their Babies Following Childbirth: Uncertainty, Loss and Disenfranchised Grief	Sociology of Health and Illness, vol. 45, 5, pp. 971-988	2023	Mental health; mother-child separation; loss of identity	4) Well-being and mental health; 6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions; 1) Identity, stereotypes, and social/institutional stigma

N.	AUTHOR(S)	TITLE	JOURNAL OR BOOK	YEAR	FOCUS OF INTERESTING	THEMES EMERGED
8	Fitzpatrick C. Hunter K. Shaw J. Staines J.	Confronting Intergenerational Harm: Care Experience, Motherhood and Criminal Justice Involvement	British Journal of Criminology, vol. 64, 2, pp. 257-274	2024	Intersectionality; stigma; social expectations; support staff in prison settings	3) Intersectional feminism and institutional racism; 1) Identity, stereotypes, and social/institutional stigma prison policies and rights
9	Campbell J. Carlson J.R.	Correctional Administrators' Perceptions of Prison Nurseries	Criminal Justice and Behavior, vol. 39, 8, pp. 1063-1074	2012	Recidivism reduction; prison nursery programs; mother-child co-residence in prison; comparative correctional treatment programs	7) Prison policies and rights; 6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions
10	Moe A.M. Ferraro K.J.	Criminalized Mothers: The Value and Devaluation of Parenthood from Behind Bars	Inside and Out: Women, Prison, and Therapy, vol. 0, 0, pp. 135-164	2014	Life stories; construction of motherhood; targeted support programs	2) Narratives, representations, and imaginaries; 7) Prison policies and rights
11	Cho A. Tasca M.	Disparities in Women's Prison Sentences: Exploring the Nexus between Motherhood, Drug Offense, and Sentence Length	Feminist Criminology, vol. 14, 4, pp. 420-440	2019	Disparities in sentencing between incarcerated mothers and non-mothers; increased social control over incarcerated mothers	7) Prison policies and rights; 5) Agency, disempowerment, and self-determination
12	Lockwood K.	Disrupted Mothering: Narratives of Mothers in Prison	Advances in Gender Research, vol. 25, 0, pp. 157-177	2018	Feminist narrative approaches; life stories of incarcerated women; construction of maternal identity	2) Narratives, representations, and imaginaries; 1) Identity, stereotypes, and social/institutional stigma; 3) Intersectional feminism and institutional racism
13	Sandberg S. Agoff C. Fondevila G.	Doing Marginalized Motherhood: Identities and Practices among Incarcerated Women in Mexico	International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy, vol. 9, 2, pp. 15-29	2020	Dyadic mother-child relationship; incarcerated mothers programs; maternal responsibility	6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions; 2) Narratives, representations, and imaginaries

N.	AUTHOR(S)	TITLE	JOURNAL OR BOOK	YEAR	FOCUS OF INTERESTING	THEMES EMERGED
14	Koons-Witt B. Huffman A.C. Wilson A.	Exploring the Perceived Helpfulness of Correctional Programs and Needs among Incarcerated Mothers	Journal of Offender Rehabilitation, vol. 60, 8, pp. 501-526	2021	Incarcerated mothers; parenting support; perceived needs	6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions; 7) Prison policies and rights; 5) Agency, disempowerment, and self-determination
15	Sasaki A. Mochizuki A. Yoshihara D.	Gender-Responsive Needs and Vulnerabilities among Incarcerated Mothers in Japan: Comparisons with Non-Mothers and Fathers	Feminist Criminology, vol. 17, 4, pp. 541-564	2022	Gender needs; vulnerabilities; rehabilitation	3) Intersectional feminism and institutional racism; 7) Prison policies and rights
16	Huber M.O. Venegas M.E. Contreras C.M.	Group Intervention for Imprisoned Mother-Infant Dyads: Effects on Mother's Depression and on Children's Development	Revista CES Psicología, vol. 13, 3, pp. 222-238	2020	Chilean prisons; maternal depression; group therapy	6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions; 4) Well-being and mental health
17	Gallegos M. Emerine J.	I Can Still Be Their Mom from a Distance: Understanding the Experiences of Incarcerated Mothers in a Faith-based Parenting Program in a United States Prison	Journal of Applied Communication Research, vol. 51, 4, pp. 404-423	2023	Parenting programs; nontraditional models	6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions
18	Umeh Z.	«I don't want them to see me like that»: Negotiating Motherhood through Prison Visitation	Feminist Criminology, vol. 20, 1, pp. 74-97	2024	Maternal identity; stigma; prison norms	6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions; 1) Identity, stereotypes, and social/institutional stigma
19	Thongyou M. Havanon N. Phongsiri M. Mattariganond D.	Incarcerated Mothers: Role Strain and the Redefining of Mothers' Roles	Journal of Mekong Societies, vol. 19, 2, pp. 66-91	2023	Motherhood separation; emotional support	6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions; 1) Identity, stereotypes, and social/institutional stigma; 7) Prison policies and rights

N.	AUTHOR(S)	TITLE	JOURNAL OR BOOK	YEAR	FOCUS OF INTERESTING	THEMES EMERGED
20	Deckert A.	Indigeneity Matters: Portrayal of Women Offenders in New Zealand Newspapers	Crime, Media, Culture, vol. 16, 3, pp. 337-357	2020	Media bias; indigenous women; gender	2) Narratives, representations, and imaginaries; 3) Intersectional feminism and institutional racism
21	Barnes S.L. Stringer E.C.	Is Motherhood Important? Imprisoned Women's Maternal Experiences before and during Confinement and Their Postrelease Expectations	Feminist Criminology, vol. 9, 1, pp. 3-23	2014	Salient identity; motherhood; empowerment	1) Identity, stereotypes, and social/institutional stigma; 7) Prison policies and rights
22	Zhang X.	Labor Market Reentry among White-Collar Female Ex-Prisoners in China: A Feminist Desistance Perspective	Feminist Criminology, vol. 0, 0, pp. 1-22	2024	Feminist desistance; stigma; reintegration	3) Intersectional feminism and institutional racism; 7) Prison policies and rights; 1) Identity, stereotypes, and social/institutional stigma
23	Merçil I.	La détention des femmes en Turquie et la maternité à l'épreuve de l'incarcération	Deviance et Societe, vol. 41, 4, pp. 620-655	2017	Motherhood; hope; survival strategies	6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions
24	Slootweg J.C. Agüero M.Á.M.	Latin American Women Prisoners and Motherhood: Totalitarian or Agency Experience?	Cuhso, vol. 33, 2, pp. 436-461	2023	Prison system; motherhood; reproductive rights	4) Well-being and mental health; 6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions; 7) Prison policies and rights
25	O'Malley S. Devaney C.	Maintaining the Mother-Child Relationship within the Irish Prison System: The Practitioner Perspective	Child Care in Practice, vol. 22, 1, pp. 20-34	2016	Irish prison; mother-child support	6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions; 7) Prison policies and rights
26	Teather S. Evans L. Sims M.	Maintenance of the Mother-Child Relationship by Incarcerated Women	Early Child Development and Care, vol. 131, 1, pp. 65-75	1997	Incarceration; mother-child bond	6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions; 7) Prison policies and rights

N.	AUTHOR(S)	TITLE	JOURNAL OR BOOK	YEAR	FOCUS OF INTERESTING	THEMES EMERGED
27	Sufrin C.	Making Mothers in Jail: Carceral Reproduction of Normative Motherhood	Reproductive Biomedicine and Society Online, vol. 7, 0, pp. 55-65	2018	Reproductive rights; self-determination; motherhood	4) Well-being and mental health; 7) Prison policies and rights
28	Aiello B.	Making Mothers: Parenting Classes in a Women's Jail	Contemporary Justice Review: Issues in Criminal, Social, and Restorative Justice, vol. 19, 4, pp. 445-461	2016	Remote motherhood; social control; conformity in motherhood	5) Agency, disempowerment, and self-determination; 1) Identity, stereotypes, and social/institutional stigma
29	Cunningham Stringer E.	Managing Motherhood: How Incarcerated Mothers Negotiate Maternal Role-Identities with Their Children's Caregivers	Women and Criminal Justice, vol. 30, 5, pp. 336-355	2020	Incarcerated motherhood; maternal identity; caregiver relationships	1) Identity, stereotypes, and social/institutional stigma; 5) Agency, disempowerment, and self-determination; 7) Prison policies and rights
30	Ferreira A.C.R. Rouberte E.S.C. Nogueira D.M.C. Maia R.S. Costa E.C. de Aguiar M.I.F.	Maternal Care in a Prison Environment: Representation by Story Drawing	Revista Enfermagem, vol. 29, 0, pp. 1-8	2021	Care; emotional experience	2) Narratives, representations, and imaginaries; 4) Well-being and mental health
31	Burgess A. Flynn C.	Maternal Mental Illness: Mediating Women's Trajectory through the Victorian Criminal Justice System	Women and Criminal Justice, vol. 32, 6, pp. 520-536	2022	Mental health; rights	4) Well-being and mental health; 6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions
32	Moraes L.F. Soares L.C. Raupp R.M. Monteiro D.L.M.	Maternity in Prison: Influence on Physical and Emotional Health	Revista Brasileira de Saude Materno Infantil, vol. 23, 0, pp. 1-9	2023	Healthcare access; wellbeing	4) Well-being and mental health

N.	AUTHOR(S)	TITLE	JOURNAL OR BOOK	YEAR	FOCUS OF INTERESTING	THEMES EMERGED
33	Albertson K. Renfrew M.J. Lessing-Turner G. Burke C.	Mother Figures behind Bars: Pregnant Women and Mothers in Prison in England and Wales	Motherhood in Contemporary International Perspective: Continuity and Change, vol. 0, 0, pp. 49-63	2019	Nursery units; rights; discrimination	3) Intersectional feminism and institutional racism; 6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions
34	Ashe F. Taylor C.	Motherhood and the Combatant Role: A Case Study of Women Politically Motivated Prisoners in the Context of Violent Conflict	Contributions to International Relations, vol. 0, 0, pp. 75-89	2023	Gender roles; political prisoners	1) Identity, stereotypes, and social/institutional stigma; 5) Agency, disempowerment, and self-determination
35	Haney L.	Motherhood as Punishment: The Case of Parenting in Prison	Signs, vol. 39, 1, pp. 105-130	2013	Intersectionality; discrimination; control	3) Intersectional feminism and institutional racism
36	Ventura M. Simas L. Larouzé B.	Motherhood behind Bars: The Struggle for Citizens' Rights and Health for Women Inmates and Their Children in Brazil	Cadernos de Saude Publica, vol. 31, 3, pp. 607-619	2015	Rights; public policy; resistance	7) Prison policies and rights
37	Baldwin L.	Motherhood Disrupted: Reflections of Post-Prison Mother	Emotion, Space and Society, vol. 26, 0, pp. 49-56	2018	Stigma; social pressure; reintegration	1) Identity, stereotypes, and social/institutional stigma; 7) Prison policies and rights
38	Alirezaei S. Latifnejad Roudsari R.	Motherhood Experiences of Incarcerated Pregnant Women: A Phenomenological Study	International Journal of Community Based Nursing and Midwifery, vol. 11, 4, pp. 257-269	2023	Pregnancy; ambivalence	1) Identity, stereotypes, and social/institutional stigma; 6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions

N.	AUTHOR(S)	TITLE	JOURNAL OR BOOK	YEAR	FOCUS OF INTERESTING	THEMES EMERGED
39	Lai C. Rossi L.E. Scicchitano F. Ciacchella C. Valentini M. Ciavarella C. Longo G. Caroppo E.	Motherhood in Alternative Detention Conditions: A Preliminary Case-Control Study	International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, vol. 19, 10, pp. 1-9	2022	Alternatives to imprisonment; parental stress	6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions; 7) Prison policies and rights
40	Sannier O.	Motherhood in Prison	Bulletin de l'Academie Nationale de Medecine, vol. 202, 1, pp. 21-31	2018	Social support; nursery; child impact	6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions; 7) Prison policies and rights
41	Freitas A.M. Inácio A.R. Saavedra L.	Motherhood in Prison: Reconciling the Irreconcilable	Prison Journal, vol. 96, 3, pp. 415-436	2016	Nursery; gender roles; pressure	1) Identity, stereotypes, and social/institutional stigma; 5) Agency, disempowerment, and self-determination
42	Rodríguez L.T. Cuba L.D.P.	Motherhood of Women Deprived of Freedom in Cuba: Sociological and Legal Reflections from a Gender Perspective in Cuba	Onati Socio-Legal Series, vol. 11, 6, pp. S21-S47	2021	Prison motherhood; stigma; gender gap	1) Identity, stereotypes, and social/institutional stigma; 7) Prison policies and rights
43	Shamai M. Kochal R.-B.	«Motherhood starts in prison»: The Experience of Motherhood among Women in Prison	Family Process, vol. 47, 3, pp. 323-340	2008	Motherhood; transformation; identity	1) Identity, stereotypes, and social/institutional stigma; 5) Agency, disempowerment, and self-determination; 6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions; 7) Prison policies and rights

N.	AUTHOR(S)	TITLE	JOURNAL OR BOOK	YEAR	FOCUS OF INTERESTING	THEMES EMERGED
44	Linonge-Fontebo H.N. Rabe M.	Mothers in Cameroonian Prisons: Pregnancy, Childbearing and Caring for Young Children, African Studies	African Studies, vol. 74, 3, pp. 290-309	2015	Cameroon; policy gap; invisibility	3) Intersectional feminism and institutional racism; 4) Well-being and mental health; 6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions; 7) Prison policies and rights
45	Dillavou J. Kreager D.A. Greenfelder T. Zhang Y.	Mothers Inside and Out? Pseudo-Families and Motherhood in a Women's Prison	Crime and Delinquency, vol. 0, 0, pp. 1-23	2022	Prison dynamics; pseudo-motherhood; resilience	1) Identity, stereotypes, and social/institutional stigma; 5) Agency, disempowerment, and self-determination; 6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions; 7) Prison policies and rights
46	Easterling B.A. Feldmeyer B. Presser L.	Narrating Mother Identities from Prison	Feminist Criminology, vol. 14, 5, pp. 519-539	2019	Identity; narrative agency; stigma	1) Identity, stereotypes, and social/institutional stigma; 2) Narratives, representations, and imaginaries; 6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions
47	Nunes L.R. de C. Deslandes F.S. Jannotti C.B.	Narratives on Mothering Practices in Prison: The Crossroads between the Prison System's Discursive Order and the Discursive Order of Care	Cadernos de Saúde Pública, vol. 36, 12, pp. 1-11	2020	Motherhood; resistance; disempowerment	1) Identity, stereotypes, and social/institutional stigma; 5) Agency, disempowerment, and self-determination; 6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions; 7) Prison policies and rights

N.	AUTHOR(S)	TITLE	JOURNAL OR BOOK	YEAR	FOCUS OF INTERESTING	THEMES EMERGED
48	Sapkota D. Dennison S. Allen J. Gamble J. Williams C. Malope-Rwodzi N. Baar L. Ransley J. Renae McGee T.	Navigating Pregnancy and Early Motherhood in Prison: A Thematic Analysis of Mothers' Experiences	Health and Justice, vol. 10, 1, pp. 10-15	2022	Vulnerability; motherhood; institutional limits	1) Identity, stereotypes, and social/institutional stigma; 5) Agency, disempowerment, and self-determination; 6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions; 7) Prison policies and rights
49	Forsyth C.J.	Pondering the Discourse of Prison Mamas: A Research Note	Deviant Behavior, vol. 24, 3, pp. 269-280	2003	Stigma; social pressure; narratives	1) Identity, stereotypes, and social/institutional stigma; 2) Narratives, representations, and imaginaries; 6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions; 7) Prison policies and rights
50	Moskvitina M.M. Bovin B.G.	Psychological Characteristics of Convicted Pregnant Women	Psychology and Law, vol. 12, 1, pp. 15-29	2022	Complex motherhood; psychological support	4) Well-being and mental health; 6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions
51	Easterling B.A. Feldmeyer B.	Race, Incarceration, and Motherhood: Spoiled Identity among Rural White Mothers in Prison	Prison Journal, vol. 97, 2, pp. 143-165	2017	Spoiled identity; stigma; race	1) Identity, stereotypes, and social/institutional stigma; 3) Intersectional feminism and institutional racism; 6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions
52	Järveläinen E. Rantanen T.	Realisation of the Principle of Normalisation in the Adoption of ICTs in a Women's Prison: A Finnish Qualitative Study	Journal of Criminology, vol. 57, 3, pp. 334-351	2023	Prison life; technology; relationships	7) Prison policies and rights

N.	AUTHOR(S)	TITLE	JOURNAL OR BOOK	YEAR	FOCUS OF INTERESTING	THEMES EMERGED
53	Brown M. Bloom B	Reentry and Renegotiating Motherhood: Maternal Identity and Success on Parole	Crime and Delinquency, vol. 55, 2, pp. 313-336	2009	Post-release; stigma; barriers	1) Identity, stereotypes, and social/institutional stigma; 5) Agency, disempowerment, and self-determination; 6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions; 7) Prison policies and rights
54	Hayes C.M. Sufrin C. Perritt J.B.	Reproductive Justice Disrupted: Mass Incarceration as a Driver of Reproductive Oppression	American Journal of Public Health, suppl. 1, vol. 110, S1, pp. 21-24	2020	Reproductive justice; body control; racism	4) Well-being and mental health; 5) Agency, disempowerment, and self-determination; 7) Prison policies and rights
55	Clarke J.G. Simon R.E.	Shackling and Separation: Motherhood in Prison	American Medical Association Journal of Ethics, vol. 15, 9, pp. 779-785	2013	Maternal rights; ethics; abortion	2) Narratives, representations, and imaginaries; 4) Well-being and mental health; 5) Agency, disempowerment, and self-determination; 7) Prison policies and rights
56	de Medeiros A.B. Silva G.W.S. Lopes T.R.G. de Carvalho J.B.L. Caravaca-Morera J.A. de Miranda F.A.N.	Social Representations of Motherhood for Women Deprived of Liberty in the Female Prison System	Ciência & Saúde Coletiva, vol. 27 (12), pp. 4541-4551	2022	Experience of motherhood; separation; pain; double punishment	5) Agency, disempowerment, and self-determination; 6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions; 7) Prison policies and rights
57	Mendes Braga A.G.	So Much Sea: Entrances, Routes and Locations of a Research in a Portuguese Prison	Revista de Estudos Empiricos em Direito, vol. 9, 0, pp. 1-36	2022	Motherhood; power; prison lens	5) Agency, disempowerment, and self-determination; 7) Prison policies and rights

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58	Bachman R. Kerrison E.M. Paternoster R. Smith L. O'Connell D.	The Complex Relationship between Motherhood and Desistance	Women and Criminal Justice, vol. 26, 3, pp. 212-231	2015	Motherhood; recidivism; marginality	6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions; 7) Prison policies and rights
59	Ogrizek A. Radjack R. Moro M.R. Lachal J.	The Cultural Hybridization of Mothering in French Prison Nurseries: A Qualitative Study	Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry, vol. 47, pp. 422-442	2023	Prison culture; motherhood; control; cultural hybridization	3) Intersectional feminism and institutional racism; 5) Agency, disempowerment, and self-determination; 7) Prison policies and rights
60	Cooke B.J. Farrington D.P.	The Effects of Dog-Training Programs: Experiences of Incarcerated Females	Women and Criminal Justice, vol. 25, 3, pp. 201-214	2015	Relational and identity rehabilitation; animal-assisted developmental psychotherapy therapy; gender lens	3) Intersectional feminism and institutional racism; 6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions; 7) Prison policies and rights
61	Gobena E.B. Hean S.C.P.D.	The Experience of Incarcerated Mothers Living in a Correctional Institution with Their Children in Ethiopia	Journal of Comparative Social Work, vol. 2, pp. 30-54	2019	Maternal exclusion; marginality; support	6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions; 7) Prison policies and rights
62	Biela-Cywka M.B.	The Functioning of Mother and Child Homes in Poland	<i>Chapter in:</i> Search of Academic Excellence: Social Sciences and Humanities in Focus, vol. 2, pp. 81-88	2022	Health rights; parental support	4) Well-being and mental health; 6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions; 7) Prison policies and rights
63	Mariano G.J.S. Silva I.A	The Meaning of Breastfeeding in Prison	Texto & Contexto Enfermagem, vol. 27, 4, pp. 1-11	2018	Child in prison; breastfeeding; care	4) Well-being and mental health; 6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions; 7) Prison policies and rights

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64	Gregoire A. Dolan R. Birmingham L. Mullee M. Coulson D.	The Mental Health and Treatment Needs of Imprisoned Mothers of Young Children	Journal of Forensic Psychiatry and Psychology, vol. 21, 3, pp. 378-392	2010	Mental health; nursery units	4) Well-being and mental health; 6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions
65	Dolan R.M. Birmingham L. Mullee M. Gregoire A.	The Mental Health of Imprisoned Mothers of Young Children: A Follow-up Study	Journal of Forensic Psychiatry and Psychology, vol. 24, 4, pp. 421-439	2013	Mental health; child separation	4) Well-being and mental health
66	Ogrizek A. Lachal J. Moro M.R.	The Process of Becoming a Mother in French Prison Nurseries: A Qualitative Study	Maternal and Child Health Journal, vol. 26, pp. 367-380	2022	Mental health; stigma; agency	4) Well-being and mental health; 5) Agency, disempowerment, and self-determination; 6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions
67	Friedman S.H. Kaempff A. Kauffman S.	The Realities of Pregnancy and Mothering While Incarcerated	Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law, vol. 48, 3, pp. 365-375	2020	Nursery units	5) Agency, disempowerment, and self-determination; 7) Prison policies and rights
68	Gaté J.	Le droit d'être mère en prison	Soins Pédiatrie/ Puericulture, vol. 36, 287, pp. 20-23	2015	Legislation; alternatives	7) Prison policies and rights
69	Huang K. Atlas R. Parvez F.	The Significance of Breastfeeding to Incarcerated Pregnant Women: An Exploratory Study	Birth, vol. 39, 2, pp. 145-155	2012	Breastfeeding	4) Well-being and mental health; 5) Agency, disempowerment, and self-determination; 6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions

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70	Lockwood K.	The Ties That Bind: Stories of Women in Prison Who Are Mothers to Older Adult Children	<i>Chapter in: Mothering from the Inside: Research on Mothering and Imprisonment,</i> pp. 105-125	2020	Bond with adult children	1) Identity, stereotypes, and social/institutional stigma; 5) Agency, disempowerment, and self-determination
71	Grieco S.	The Women's Treatment in Criminal Enforcement	Rassegna Italiana di Criminologia, vol. 17, 2, pp. 105-113	2023	Alternative measures	7) Prison policies and rights
72	Ystanes V. Ugelvik T.	«They tell me i'm dangerous»: Incarcerated Mothers, Scandinavian Prisons and the Ambidextrous Penal-Welfare State	British Journal of Criminology, vol. 60, 4, pp. 892-910	2020	Social services; agency	5) Agency, disempowerment, and self-determination; 7) Prison policies and rights
73	Garcia J.	Understanding the Lives of Mothers after Incarceration: Moving beyond Socially Constructed Definitions of Motherhood	Sociology Compass, vol. 10, 1, pp. 3-11	2016	Stigma	1) Identity, stereotypes, and social/institutional stigma; 5) Agency, disempowerment, and self-determination
74	Wächter C.	Wentworth and the Politics and Aesthetics of Representing Female Embodiment in Prison	<i>Chapter in: The Palgrave Handbook of Incarceration in Popular Culture,</i> pp. 655-669	2020	Representations; imagery	2) Narratives, representations, and imaginaries
75	Nuytiens A. Jhaes E.	When Your Child Is Your Cellmate: The «Maternal Pains of Imprisonment» in a Belgian Prison Nursery	Criminology and Criminal Justice, vol. 22, 1, pp. 132-149	2022	Nursery; agency	5) Agency, disempowerment, and self-determination; 6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions

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76	Berry M. Johnson T. Severson M. Postmus J.L.	Wives and Mothers at Risk: The Role of Marital and Maternal Status in Criminal Activity and Incarceration	Families in Society, vol. 90, 3, pp. 293-300	2009	Predictive factors	1) Identity, stereotypes, and social/institutional stigma; 5) Agency, disempowerment, and self-determination
77	Hector J.	Women and Prison	<i>Book</i>	2020	Reproductive health	4) Well-being and mental health
78	Ariza L. Iturralde M.	Mujer, crimen y castigo penitenciario	Politica Criminal, vol. 12, 24, pp. 731-753	2017	Prison policies	7) Prison policies and rights
79	Diuana V. Corrêa M.C.D.V. Ventura M.	Mulheres nas prisões brasileiras: tensões entre a ordem disciplinar punitiva e as prescrições da maternidade	Physis, vol. 27, 3, pp. 727-747	2017	Agency; control	5) Agency, disempowerment, and self-determination; 6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions; 7) Prison policies and rights
80	Esposito M.	Women in Prison: Unhealthy Lives and Denied Well-being between Loneliness and Seclusion	Crime, Law and Social Change, vol. 63, 3, pp. 137-158	2018	Wellbeing; socialization; loneliness	1) Identity, stereotypes, and social/institutional stigma; 4) Well-being and mental health
81	de Oliveira K.R.V. dos Santos A.A.P. de Oliveira Vieira M.J. Pimentel E. Comassetto I. Silva J.M.O.	Women Prison Inmates' Perceptions of Access to Health as a Tool for Resocialization	Revista Enfermagem, vol. 28, 0, pp. 1-6	2020	Healthcare; reproductive health; pregnancy	4) Well-being and mental health
82	Vannier M.	Women Serving Life without the Possibility of Parole: The Different Meanings of Death as Punishment	Howard Journal of Crime and Justice, vol. 55, 3, pp. 328-344	2016	Life sentence; dehumanization; motherhood loss	1) Identity, stereotypes, and social/institutional stigma

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83	Almeda E.	Women's Imprisonment in Spain	Punishment and Society, vol. 7, 2, pp. 183-199	2005	Child wellbeing; nursery units	6) Motherhood inside and outside prison: relationships, cohabitation, contradictions
84	Jeffries S. Chuenurah C. Rao P. Park M.J.Y.	Women's Pathways to Prison in Kenya: Violence, Poverty, Familial Caretaking and Barriers to Justice	Women's Studies International Forum, vol. 73, 0, pp. 50-61	2019	Predictive factors	1) Identity, stereotypes, and social/institutional stigma
85	Diwana V. Ventura M. Simas L. Larouzé B. Correa M.	Women's Reproductive Rights in the Penitentiary System: Tensions and Challenges in the Transformation of Reality	Ciência & Saúde Coletiva, vol. 21, 7, pp. 2041-2050	2016	Healthcare access; reproductive health	4) Well-being and mental health

RIASSUNTO

L'articolo, frutto di un lavoro di scoping review, condotta nell'ambito del progetto PRIN «Phoenix. A New Kind of 'Rebirth' for Women and Children Living in Conditions of Marginalization», esplora la condizione delle madri detenute attraverso una lente pedagogica e intersezionale, con l'obiettivo di ridefinire i servizi educativi e sociali destinati a donne e bambini in situazioni di marginalità. Dalla revisione della letteratura, adottando una metodologia rigorosa e multidisciplinare, sono stati individuate 85 studi internazionali di interesse. La successiva analisi tematica ha fatto emergere sette nuclei concettuali comuni agli studi: lo stigma sociale e istituzionale, le narrazioni e le rappresentazioni, il razzismo sistemico e la prospettiva intersezionale, la salute mentale ed il benessere, le forme di agency e disempowerment, la maternità dentro e fuori dal carcere, le politiche penitenziarie. Quanto emerso documenta alcune criticità comuni ai diversi contesti oggetto di studio della letteratura analizzata: la maternità si configura come spazio ambivalente, in cui le donne negoziano la propria identità tra controllo istituzionale e pratiche di resistenza, all'interno di un sistema detentivo poco attento alla dimensione di genere e al ruolo genitoriale delle donne.

Parole chiave: Bisogni educativi; Carcere; Intersezionalità; Maternità; Scoping review.

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