cadernos pagu (55), 2019:e195502
ISSN 1809-4449

Between Prison Borders and Folds: Tracing Cartographies on a Feminist Ethos*

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Abstract

In this article, we discuss the notion of borders and how affection and trust-based relationships woven into our research trajectories allow us to debate the crossings between prison, gender and our insertions as researchers. The analysis is conducted by our cartographic researches in female and male prison units in the city of Rio de Janeiro. By thinking about gender as an analytical category and also as a constitutive element of daily management and of bodies in the prison context, we discuss the moralities and forces that produce femininity, masculinity and relationships in this context, and address the challenges and possibilities for a feminist cartography in/of prison.

Keywords: Cartography, Prison, Gender, Frontier, Feminism.

* Received on 14 August 2019, accepted on 26 August 2019. Translated by Thaís Camargo.

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http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/18094449201900550002

So as to situate our cartographies

The ideas proposed in this article result from our research and internship supervision trajectories in several prison units. These are closed and semi-open[1] male and female prisons in the city of Rio de Janeiro. Our work and our relationship with prison originate in the field of Social Psychology and began in 2010. Since 2015, we have discussed the challenges and perspective of cartography in this field. It is further worth noting that gender and sexuality have been central axes in the task of following subjectivation processes produced in/through prison. Our movements through prisons followed different paths: from studies that entered the system through the specific bureaucracy of project assessment and approval by Research Centers[2], up to experiences built through partnerships with the State Secretariat of Prison Administration (SEAP, in Portuguese), specifically through the "Life Project".[3]

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[1] In Brazil, prisoners in "closed" prisons remain confined at all times, while those in "semi-open" prisons leave during the day to work or study and return at night. Prisoners are entitled to "regime progression", i.e., from more restrictive to less restrictive sentences over time. (Translator's note)

[2] The Rio de Janeiro State Secretariat of Prison Administration (SEAP-RJ) has a Research Center (CEP, in Portuguese) which manages research requests, authorization, systematization and follow-up within the state prison system. In order to receive the authorization that enables entry into the units, researchers must turn in a series of personal and project-related documents that are analyzed by the CEP, which, in turn, forwards them to the prison unit(s) and the Secretary so that all may issue statements saying they are not opposed to the research. After this process, the request must also be sent to the criminal court to obtain its consent and authorization.

[3] The Life Project is linked to and coordinated by the SEAP Psychology Coordination. Its goal is to discuss health and citizenship through lectures from external and internal SEAP partners on a multitude of topics. The project takes place in different male and female units and each year classes are formed to which prisoners may sign up. If they attain the minimum required attendance, they receive a certificate of participation which, despite not counting toward a reduction of their sentence, does guarantee a positive note in their records. The following year, graduates may, if they wish, be monitors of the next class's activities. Our participation in the project sought to raise discussions regarding

Seeking to insert our reflections into the field that discusses prison porosity (Cunha, 1994; 2003. 2008; Padovani, 2015; Godoi, 2010; 2015), we propose the construction of cartographies of/in prison which follow its movements as it overflows its physical structures. Thus, our incursions into prison take place within the units, but we also seek to follow what happens on the outside: communications between "inside" and "outside" materialized in family and intimate visits; the experiences narrated by persons who have already served their sentences and, now, are, as is usually said, "free" (though freedoms and imprisonments are constantly produced and evanesced inside and outside of prison); the construction of militant bonds and networks produced by individuals who have been in prison, their family members and so many others whose lives were, in some way, marked by prison – including our own. In an attempt to follow prison and what is entangled with it within, without and in-between its walls, we also sought to discuss the ways in which gender operates as a crucial element in rendering visible the movements and relationships woven in and through prison borders, thinking of "inside" and "outside" in terms of their coextensive nature (Silva, 2004).

Thus, the concept of border seems to us to be crucial in understanding not only the flows within and through prisons, but also our positions, as researches, when confronting them. The interpretation of "border" produced by *chicana* (Mexican or Latin American migrants, or descendants of these migrants, in the United States) feminists such as Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) is, thus, crucial to us. Anzaldúa discusses border territories, the state of transition from one world to another and how one should not consider territories merely as separate spaces, since there are *in-betweens* which no longer operate within a "one *or* the other" key, creating a new place that intersects them. Writing in a language

sexual and gender diversity and regarding parenthood and families, with a different format, privileging discussion circles and workshops on the the chosen themes.

that is neither English nor Spanish, but a little of both, she expresses that, as a *mestiza*:

> I, a *mestiza*, continually walk out of one culture and into another, because I am in all cultures at the same time, *alma entre dos mundos, tres, cuatro, me zumba la cabeza con lo contradictorio. Estoy norteada por todas las voces que me hablan simultáneamente*. […] As a *mestiza* I have no country, my homeland cast me out; yet all countries are mine because I am every woman's sister or potential lover. (As a lesbian I have no race, my own people disclaim me; but I am all races because there is the queer of me in all races.) I am cultureless because, as a feminist, I challenge the collective cultural/religious male-derived beliefs of lndo-Hispanics and Anglos; yet I am cultured because I am participating in the creation of yet another culture, a new story to explain the world and our participation in it, a new value system with images and symbols that connect us to each other and to the planet. *Soy un amasamiento*, I am an act of kneading, of uniting and joining that not only has produced both a creature of darkness and a creature of light, but also a creature that questions the definitions of light and dark and gives them new meanings (Anzaldúa, 1987:103).

The border as a point of contact, an in-between, works, for us, as a methodological bet. If, as Vera Telles (2013:44) tells us, following the movements that take place in these in-betweens enables us to "catch the frictions engendered in the passages of these porous borders", it is precisely the inclination toward identifying these frictions and the processes that constitute/deconstitute/reconstitute them that calls us, here, to consider prison based on what is permeable in its walls, elements which are discursively mobilized as the materialization of the division between two "worlds". A cartography of/in borders would, thus, be a cartography of existential border territories, and the border is mobilized as a device, a gear that produces subjects, practices, discourses, the said and the not said (Foucault, 1999) to

the extent that they enable us to view the continuities and discontinuities that articulate inside-outside, prison-street, researcher-researched, enabling us to follow processes, affections and relationships woven within and through prison.

Gender, sexuality, affection, family, interpersonal relationships, experiences with oneself and with the world, processes for managing bodies and State processes enable us to think of the hard/flexible pair which cuts across sujectivation and singularization processes in contact with prison and which makes it possible to consider prison based on what separates, but also what is perpetuated; what is forbidden, but may become possible; what is already established, but may be altered; what was not, but may become.

In this article, we will compose *a* cartography of our cartographies, which is not intended as total or totalizing. Through the paths we tread, we encounter barriers, possibilities, potentialities, surprises, tensions… We attempt to invoke and follow them.

Mapping a feminist *ethos*: seeking coalitions, commonalities and transversalities

> "One does not resist the coloniality of gender alone"
> María Lugones (2014:949)

Discussing the possible paths for the construction of a decolonial feminism and the ways in which coloniality and modernity compose and cut across gender relations, Lugones (2014) argues that the decolonial feminist task implies, firstly, identifying the colonial difference and emphatically resisting the epistemological habit of ignoring or erasing it. With this, she draws attention to the ethical and political need for pushing the boundaries of what is understood by "subject" and "object" in the dynamic of socio-scientific productions. In our research, we seek the production of what Lugones terms a "coalition logic", that is, mobilizing research strategies and devices which oppose the

dichotomous and dichotomizing logic of colonialism (and of a certain socio-scientific tradition).

Natália Padovani, in excavating feminist productions, from Simone de Beauvoir to Lélia Gonzáles, including her own experience as a white *latina* with curly hair in an event at a university in the southern United States, points to how the discussion of "us" and "them" underlies discussions in the social sciences – even if, often, prison studies view gender discussions as addenda, ignoring the fact that

> categorizations of us and them have been and are created through power devices which produce differences and asymmetries between subjects localized in relationships as "us" and "those" (often unwanted) "others" (Padovani, 2017:7).

According to the author, ignoring the processes that forge these categorizations would be to maintain and reproduce the asymmetries that divide "us" – in this case, researchers – from "others" – in this case, "the researched". If we refer to these two authors' discussions, it is because their reflections and proposals mirror the methodological and epistemological tenets of cartography. The cartographic posture is committed to a maximum sense of responsibility (Lugones, 2014) in which power plays and disputes that approximate "us" and "them" become clear as an essential part of the very exercise of thinking and of knowledge production.

Thus, mapping prison implies, instead of circumscribing and specifying actions, expanding them and seeking to address distinct processes and movements. Although our studies and activities are mainly focused on imprisoned persons, prison unit workers occupy an important place in the field of analysis/intervention, which has implications for the forces and flows of our paths. This is because we understand that, in order to map prison, we must follow the different groups it cuts across. It is, therefore, a constant exercise in disorganizing oppositions between "us" and "them", seeking

points of contact that also enable us to more clearly view distances. Thus, our relationships with workers from several segments, their relationships with prisoners, the relationships among prisoners and between prisoners and their family members compose the fabric that is woven in the institutional day-to-day and in which we insert ourselves in some way in our incursions into the units.

Based on our theoretical-political-pedagogical framework, we risk provoking the notion of intersectionality, using Gilles Deleuze's (1991) concept of fold, understood as a force which creates paths for producing subjectivity territories. Rosane Neves da Silva (2004) signals that

> The Deleuzian concept of fold enables us to call into question both the production of subjectivity – in the sense of the constitution of certain existential territories – and the modes of subjectivation, understood as the process through which the bend or curvature of a certain type of balance of power is produced which results in the creation of certain existential territories in a specific historical formation. The fold expresses the invention of different forms of relationship with oneself and with the world over time […] each historical formation will "fold" the balance of power that cuts across it differently, giving it a particular meaning. (Silva, 2004:55).

This perspective has enabled us to consider processes, the "midpoints" between points/inflections, the variability of lines that go beyond constant parameters (Deleuze, 1991). Thus, we observe/participate in flows that fold in different surfaces of intensity, based on several simultaneous, historical and mobile crossings.

Rosi Braidotti (1996; 2005), discussing Deleuze's contributions from a feminist perspective, states that it is necessary to produce an "alternative relational geography" which takes as its starting point the "diasporic identity of multi-located subjects, and not a unitary subject position", as well as a "new geography of power relations" (Braidotti, 2005:10). This way, the fold helps us to

consider which geographies are possible, which arrangements are viable and potent, which forces and crossings are (self) produced in/with hard lines, flexible lines, escape lines.

In one of our studies, we interviewed persons in female units whose bodies and trajectories could, in a way, be considered to be within the field of transexualities. That is, the persons did not necessarily identify as trans, but their gender performances were dissident with regard to the normative matrix of sex-gender-sexuality, which produced differences in the ways in which these persons crossed and were cut across by "criminal", police and prison organizations and establishments.

Despite the terrible forms of violence these persons experienced in prison, especially as a result of a lack of recognition of their rights, their dignity and their gender identity, they also express some of their tactics for claiming their existence within the deprivation of freedom, affirming their lives through negotiations of substances, money, affection, desires. These negotiations had specific contours and intensity within prison and, often, were experienced and narrated in ways other than those which medical-health-psychological framings establish with regard to the delimitation (borders) of which bodies are trans, and how.

If, for some of these persons, "dyke" was the term that designated their experiences, for others, this term did not fully capture their experiences and bodies, but the term "trans" was also not mobilized as the one that best describes and narrates these bodies. The conditions of possibility for the construction of these strategies and narratives of self are folded by the articulations of gender, class, race, economic condition within prison, performance, prison time, countless lines that constantly cut through and modify each other. Multiple arrangements and geographies are more or less possible for creating these strategies and, in this way, the notion of fold seems potent for considering how these arrangements are constantly formed and reformed. If, on the one hand, prison operates forms of violence which render the experiences of dissident bodies fragile, if not invisible – whether they are dykes, trans or any other designation –, on the

other, these same bodies find arrangements and agreements that make it (sometimes minimally) possible for them to be and live as they are.

The difficulty or the impossibility of giving shape and name to certain practices, bodies and desires within the prison system imprints resistences, recalcitrance, not only confrontation. So much so that it forces the director, psychologist or prison officer, and maybe the latter in a more organic and accurate manner, to call upon us to try to provide some consistency, in referring them to our interviews, to that which they find strange and are unable to even name. Into the interviews come those persons who are recognized by their peers as trans or homosexual, when LGBT groups exist, and those who escape gender norms, often the only possible recognition.

Thus, with these experimentations of ways of being, it becomes possible to think of folds between the hard prison lines which serialize, classify, probe subjects, affection and relationships, and more flexible lines, which find gaps in the institutional harshness, producing, thus, a fabric of norms, mechanisms, subversions, potencies – articulations between policies of death, violence and suffering, and affective policies, of pleasure and intimacy.

From Lugones' proposal for the construction of methodologies committed to the situationality of knowledge, two points seem relevant to our discussion: 1) the need to create and mobilize methodologies which enable the production of difference to be in the field, or *be* the field, of inquiry; and 2) the potency of a methodological work conceived based on multiplicity, on paradigms other than that of separation between "us" and "them, but committed, at the same time, to unveiling the us's which produce asymmetries and transform difference into inequality, identifying which forces and disputes configure conditions of possibility for being a subject, being a researcher, being a prisoner, being a prison system worker. Thus, it was not our task to establish that those we interviewed should see themselves or identify as trans – which would curtail the multiplicity of experiences that they

expressed and would mean following our own classification, which was not even produced by them. But at the moment in which these persons' gender performance was defined by us as a field of inquiry in the prison context and became a research object, we were called upon to also think of our own gender performances, as well as the crossings of race, class, even nationality which are articulated in these establishments and in their borders, in our trajectories and in relationships with these persons.

If, as Deleuze (2004) points out, even in seemingly-solitary tasks, such as writing a text or research, we are "peopled deserts", and if the coalition ethics that Lugones proposes is extended to and interwoven with, as she says, its "peopled basis", it makes no sense to think of a study's academic production and methodological paths in terms other than that of multiplicity, of collaborative production. To us, this implies both drawing common plans (Kastrup; Passos, 2013) with those who compose/decompose/recompose our research and our field, and betting on exchanges and collective productions between researchers. As for the latter, the collective production of studies and texts resulting from them are more than mere chance, but a political bet on the construction of a research policy which is considered an essentially collective work. A device which has been essential for operationalizing collective analyses and trajectories is the joint formulation of ways of inhabiting prison borders, that is, the permanent discussion of which tools to use in our actions, as well as the shared used of field notes, seeking to bet on polyphony as a path for knowledge production.

Still on the subject of polyphony, the goal of cartography, mobilized by the ethical-aesthetic-political paradigm (Rolnik, 1993) is to investigate processes without resorting either to the verticality that divides researcher/holder of knowledge and interviewee/research object, or to the horizontality which presupposes false symmetries and equalities. Here, we see a potent fold between feminist methodological proposals and cartography. Based on the notion of transversality (Guattari, 2004), it is possible to build a cartographic ethos (Kastrup; Passos, 2003)

committed to the construction of strategies that, by following processes, intensify the coexistence of differences between researcher and researched for the construction of a commonality. This common plan, instead of being homogeneous, speaks of the cohabitation of heterogeneities of position, race, class, gender, generation, locality. If this commonality were homogeneous, we would be hiding unequal and asymmetric power relations, and, as Lugones (2014:945) points out, erasing "the very possibility of feeling – reading – the tense inhabiting of social difference". Transversality reveals to us certain readings of/in the interplay of difference, inequality and equality that cuts across researchers and "researched", so that, in prison, we must operationalize arrangements that enable us to introduce tension to "us" and "them" for the construction and intensification of the heterogeneity of encounters.

Mapping prison, in prison, through prison

If working with cartography is walking on the "unstable limit between what is common and what is different" (Kastrup; Passos, 2013:267), to map is to follow forces, movements and flows, that is, the tensions that cut across one another in the field, and it is in the in-betweens and in the loops of the weaves created by these tensions that life and research take place. Bicalho, Rossotti and Reishoffer (2016) start from the idea of "Order-preserving institutions" in order to discuss the challenges of this methodological proposal. With Order being "a recent invention as a government strategy" (Bicalho; Rossotti; Reishoffer, 2016:87), prisons can be thought of as devices that operated and act *in the name* of Order, incarcerating those who represent a threat to the instituted. Thus, they ask: "is there a possibility for constructing a commonality – capable of producing relationships of trust – in institutions whose purpose is to produce a cohesive (read: subjected) society?" (Bicalho; Rossotti; Reishoffer, 2016:90). If, on the one hand, as Maynar Leite (2014) points out, "predominantly rigid and vertical relations of power/knowledge tend to put

communication in service of control, to enable crossings and to prescribe more crystallized and individualized modes of subjectivation", on the other, we must find the possible loopholes. Cartography bets on these loopholes for the creation of trust bonds which enable a co-construction of research, also betting on another conception of subjectivity, which leads to the emergence of forces which singularize in the face of serialization, which multiply in the face of homogenization.

But how does one find them, or rather, produce them? If they are what enables the establishment of trust and affection, it is also only through trust and affection that they may be produced. One must consider, however, that, despite the possibilities of producing these loopholes and openings, producing continuities is difficult, and the effects on the field itself are hard to track, because they are rapidly drowned in the violent fabric that produces prison and that the prison produces. Our paths through prison give us some clues as to how fissures may be opened, and here we follow some of the processes for establishing trust and affection that enabled some important tensions to be produced, some more provisional, others more intensely supported. Our different entries into prison, as well as the paths we followed outside its walls along with former prisoners, family members and networks of anti-prison activists, and/or activists for the rights of incarcerated individuals, created and expanded a tangle of relationships involving us, prisoners and their sisters, uncles, girlfriends, ex-girlfriends and also a series of defense and rights-enforcing institutions and public agencies. The creation of bonds of affection with persons inside the prison mobilized and demanded the creation of other bonds, with other persons, within and outside prison units. The effects of the production of these loopholes and affections expand, even if timidly, in referrals, connections, life-affirming articulations, such as when the relationship established with a prisoner and the unit's directors enables the construction of a cultural project inside the prison; when a prisoner sees in us the possible articulation between her health demand and a mental health equipment. And further, when we weave affections and friendships with former

prisoners and family members which enable us to produce, with them, brochures on rights of prisoners and their family members which provide them with tools to demand their rights; when it is through us that a prisoner is able, for the first time, to have his birth certificate in his hands and to learn that he was born at home and not in a hospital. Also when we are the ones who find an old girlfriend and are able to obtain from her photos of a daughter of an individual who has not heard any news in years.

The relationships of trust and intimacy that are produced in/through/despite prison and which enable us to follow/construct processes and affections appear not only as an epistemological issue, but as an ethical issue for cartography. When Sade, Ferraz and Rocha (2013) write about the clue of trust in cartographic research, they point to trust as an *ethos* to be cultivated over the process, based on a field of non-determination in which people may (or may not) engage themselves. For this, the authors propose overcoming the practice of contracts when establishing bonds, as happens with Informed Consent Forms, and betting on a hiring regime, in which these bonds are produced in an articulation with the procedural and collective dimension of research. In prison and in its borders, thinking of agreements commonly stipulated in such a document has instigated us. Which conditions of possibility enable one to engage, or not engage, in the field of non-determination which can produce trust? How to guarantee confidentiality when the security dynamics of these institutions generally do not permit intimacy? How to guarantee consent when, in many occasions, people come to us, researchers, without having been consulted about the nature and purpose of our encounters? It is not necessarily that we stopped using informed consent forms in our studies. We use them in some; in others, we choose to do without them, including through formal requests to Ethics Review Boards. Whatever the situation, what interests us is to discuss in what ways ethics asserts itself in a research relationship that is necessarily asymmetric, but concerned with the co-production of knowledge and of a shared plan.

Another element that is generally naturalized in research contracts in anonymity. Vinciane Despret (2001) calls into question the erasure of the complexity of the ethical dimension in the discussion of anonymity, which is easily closed once it is decreed, questioning how forms of omitting the names of people in research also mean omitting their capacity to affirm themselves as producers of knowledge on themselves and on the world, and to be recognized for it. To Despret, this process guarantees a certain authority to the researchers as the author of what is intellectually formulated, (re)producing asymmetries.

Writing, in this sense, even through a signature, evokes and renders visible the discussion on trust, not only based on informed consent forms, but on the entire production of papers which move through cells, courtyards, units, streets and persons, and which materialize communication flows, relationships and affections produced in/through prison. Two interlocutors in our research paths help us to reflect on this theme. Lóri, in a conversation about the 9 years she spent in prison, provides some clues about this when, while signing the informed consent form, she says she "understands" that it is "part of research" – she majored in Social Sciences, which means she was already familiar with the term and with the discussion on research ethics – but that, it if were up to her, there would be no need to sign it. At another moment, she says she would like to read the final research text, not because she does not trust what will be written, but because she wants to see if she is able to make any other contributions. That is, she says that the paper and that which is written upon it, despite being "part of research", do contain nor delimit the quality of the relationship of trust we established – and this is why, to her, reading the "final text of the research" does not have the purpose of scrutinizing the text in search of mistakes or wrong interpretations of what she may have said.

In turn, Raquel, a 67-year-old former lawyer and former prisoner, who served a sentence of nearly 13 years, and who has been free for more than 10 years, specifically discusses the name under which she will be presented in the research, bringing to the

fore Vinciane Despret's discussion of anonymity. When she receives a copy of a text prepared for an examination and gives her feedback through a letter, which she signs as "Raquel", the name through which she (self-)narrates in that text, and not her "real" name, she speaks not only of her engagement in/for the research, but also of how she herself produces the research on a daily basis. She is clear that if, on the one hand, the research does not exist without her and her "real" name, it also does not exist without Raquel, because it is only through Raquel that, in that research, she narrates herself, prison, and her experience.

Thus, if, on the one hand, the discussion on the meanings of signing informed consent forms within the prison context consider how accused and/or imprisoned persons' relationships with Justice, with the technical team, with the prison administration are mediated by papers, with a need to re-establish trust beyond them, on the other, it may be through signing a paper that one reiterates and gives meaning to the experience of being/having been in prison. The paper may be what attests their relationship with the judiciary and the prison administration, and may also be responsible for a transfer, a note of absence or a report that denies a progression to a less restrictive sentence, and, further, an instrument through which one speaks of oneself and one attests and materializes the prison experience. Raquel shows the interplay between making oneself visible and hiding oneself through a "real" or "fictitious" name – an interplay that speaks to the forces and conditions that permit (or not) that one narrate an experience, an experimentation, a life. In this letter, signing with the name that gives her a place within the research, she mobilizes a potency for action, setting in motion what is shared: the encounter between herself and the researcher.

On the other hand, since prison is more than just encounters, we recover a bitter moment of non-encounter of which we are reminded to this day by prisoners when we visit a specific unit. During a Life Project activity, in an attempt to go beyond incarceration to provoke a reflection regarding other ways in which their freedom was curtailed in their life trajectories and their

relationships with their families, drug trafficking, church, school, we brought images of locks as triggers. The group participants were deeply troubled by the small paper locks, pointing out that we had only brought closed locks, with no images of an open lock or keys with which to open them. Based on their resistance, understood as a recalcitrance (Latour, 2000), that is, "the capacity that objects have to disagree with that which is said of them, raising new questions, introducing tension to knowledge and practices" (Sade, Ferraz and Rocha, 2013:289), we realized how insensitive the activity preparation had been: they see locks every day; that is all they see, as they pointed out. The activity, which was meant to be, in some way, freeing, became, even if unintentionally, a space for reproducing imprisonment. To us, the locks would enable us to discuss several other questions beyond prison; to them, they only reiterated and reaffirmed prison. Their horror surprised us! In what way did that shock move us? To what extent, in the intensity of that encounter, did we mobilize the "situated knowledges" of which Donna Haraway speaks? Did we exercise the "contestation, deconstruction, passionate construction, webbed connections" (Haraway, 1995:585) to which she refers? Looking at these dislocations and affirming them as part of research means also affirming a feminist *ethos* based on which we recognize asymmetries and differences, and this recognition is the starting point for understanding power relations.

Loops in the borders: kneadings between researchers, psychologists, speakers, visitors

Referring once more to Glória Anzaldúa's discussion on being in the border, in our migrant paths (of non-forced migrations), a series of kneadings were also produced in us, by us and upon us, thus forming loops, points of contact and of crossings between different forms/readings/means for inhabiting prison. Maynar Leite (2014) recounts that, in order to produce a cartography of(in) prison, she constructed the device "foreigner-chameleon", through which she constituted herself as a researcher

in that field. She recounts that, on the same day, she was identified as a "prisoner" by a prisoner and as an "employee" by someone who worked for the institution. It was by moving through these existential territories that she was able to construct a shared plan and "create devices or follow the flow of that which is mobilized during the process" (Leite, 2014:802).

The many entries we had in prison differently inform who we are and what places we occupy, which necessarily leads to different relational possibilities and also demands the construction of strategies and devices which enunciate and constitute us. At the prison gates, being a researcher or being "part of the Life Project" implies different receptions and relationships, demanding different roles. The internal communications (IC) through which requests are forwarded imply distinct looks and analyses by the officers: when it is a research authorization, the looks are more attentive and go over the many pages which hold different signatures, authorizations, dates and statements of non-opposition to the research; for the Life Project, the smaller amount of pages often makes it so only the names of those present are checked. It is worth noting, however, that these are not inescapable rules, and it is possible that the exact opposite procedure takes place. In both cases documents are delivered along with identity documents and, then, the doors are closed, only to be opened after some time, when we are then able to enter through the first gate.

Inside the gates, the first visits to prison units require that an officer accompany us to the place where we will carry out the research. We noted, at times, that there are certain dynamics which call on us to tell the officers if we know the prison system, if we know *what prison is* – these dynamics are weakened, at least in tone, when we in some way show that we know the unit, that we have been to other prisons, that there is some *legitimacy* to our our presence there and that we have (some) knowledge of the system's dynamics. But, even then, the fact that we are female researchers (and female psychologists) also ties us to certain places, such as "mothers of prisoners", who "let them get away with everything", that is, a little contemptible, a little naive.

Further, other hierarchical processes also take place at the gates when we present ourselves or enter a unit we already know. During the study with trans individuals and with individuals with dissident gender performances, in a male unit[4], two of us were present with a male researcher from UERJ – all three members of the research team – and the officers asked us, young women, who entered before the other researcher, if we would not await "the professor" before entering. The two of us, who had been to the unit many times before, in fact more than the other researcher, were automatically read as "students", "subordinates" to the man who accompanied us. To the officer, we answered merely no, that we would go ahead because we already knew the unit. As speakers in the Life Project, in a different male unit, another episode stands out. The three of us were there, an adviser, a Master's student and a PhD student, along with other researchers, all women, entering the unit to carry out a workshop for the project, when an officer asked "who's your coordinator[5]?" Stunned, the professor stated: "no, no, we coordinate ourselves".

[4] In Rio de Janeiro, incarcerated trans women are sent to male units, even if SEAP's Resolution n. 558, issued on 29 May 2015, also allows them to be transferred to female units, if that is their wish. However, currently, there are no cases of trans women serving their sentences in a female unit in the state. This discussion is also currently marked by the complicated decision issued by Supreme Court Justice Luís Roberto Barroso, in June 2019, in which he either forces trans women to be transferred, denying them their right to choose, or excludes them from awaiting trial or serving their sentences in female units, depending on whether or not they have undergone gender confirmation surgery. This decision is therefore also based on outdated definitions from the biomedical field regarding what delimits trans bodies. On the subject of trans women in male units in Rio de Janeiro, we suggest reading Vanessa Pereira de Lima's (2018) Master's thesis titled "O que o Papai do Céu não deu, a ciência vende: feminilidades de mulheres trans e travestis em privação de liberdade", in which she questions and politicizes the discussion on mixed units, including in this definition supposedly male prison units in which trans women are held.

[5] In Portuguese, as in other Romance languages, there are male and female versions of nouns related to professions. In the original, the question "quem é o coordenador de vocês?" makes use of the male version of coordinator, implying

Our identification as psychologists is a label that makes us familiar, unlike researchers from other areas. Natália Padovani (2015), an anthropologist, discusses how her presence was considered strange because anthropologists are not part of the unit staff, so that it was not clear to everyone what, effectively, an anthropologist's work was in that context. In our case, the issue was less the fact that we were psychologists than a difficulty in differentiating our presence as researchers from the usual attributions of psychologists who are part of the technical staff – attributions that are strongly linked to judicial demands regarding the production of documents that are significantly important to serving a sentence, in the progression to less restrictive sentences and in the relationship established between the prisoner and Justice. Marisa Rocha and Anna Uziel (2008) point out that the psychologist arrives at the field with circumscribed demands, always with a focus on the individual dimension, never the political or institutional. Psychology, in its composition as an institution for professionalizing experts on the subject/individual, affirms itself as an area of knowledge and action edified on markedly gendered elements and instituts itself as a science of care, with mainly female practitioners. This also mobilizes and produces expectations of certain care and listening practices – practices which, historically, mark the gender-producing relationship, among other crossings, between psychology and prison.

Thus, both professionals in the system and prisoners positioned themselves toward us with the expectation that our readings and practices were based on knowledge (and powers) of a hegemonic, individualist and normatizing psychology, and were even at times stunned that "we did not seem like psychologists", since we based our relationships with people on other paradigms, expectations and readings. As we have pointed out, a common occurrence, for example, is for a prisoner to be called upon to

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the expectation of a *male* authority over the female researchers. (Translator's note).

participate in a research activity, whether an interview or group, and then come to us without having been informed of the reason why they were called. This is what happened with Inês and Carolina, mother and daughter who, upon being called to participate in an interview, and not having been informed of the reasons why they had to leave their cell and go to the security's office, where the interview would take place, believed they were going to talk to their lawyer. The frustration upon not seeing their lawyer, with whom they greatly needed to discuss their cases and their situations in the unit, had to be dissolved, little by little, so they could make the most of that space as a possible space for discussing their experiences. At the end of the conversations, with both already happy with the talk, despite not having encountered the expected lawyer, Carolina says that "it was much better talking here than with the psychologist". When she found out she had been talking to a psychologist, she was very surprised, saying that that conversation and those questions did not at all resemble the conversations and questions that usually took place when she met the psychologist. It is important to note how the attributions of psychologists in the prison system, often marked and cut across by the constant need to produce reports and to formulate criminological exams, delimit and narrow the possibilities of their professional work, so that, even if the professional desires to go beyond these attributions, they see themselves run over by court demands and by the precarious working conditions.

As can be seen, psychologists and researchers were two positions whose borders were blurred at many moments, whether in the sense of creating demands and expectations related to a psychological or psycho-social care, whether in the sense of our actions and activities being compared to those promoted by psychologists who were members of the technical staff. Thus, we had to play with these positions and follow the movements that made us, at times, psychologists, at others, researchers, and at still others, speakers in the Life Project. Over time, and as the work was developed in the different units, other relationships were woven with prisoners and workers, and other ways, that do not

include or compose *being a researcher* or *belonging to the Life Project*, became possible for entering the prisons. In a male unit, based on friendships woven during the process of writing and launching, in 2017, the book of short stories written by a prisoner we met in 2016 in a Life Project workshop, one of us was also able to enter the prison as a *special visit*, as the *book's editor*[6], without even the need of any other type of identification.

As a *special visit,* the director's office sent a paper to the gates, indicating the name of the visitor and the visited, as well as the cell where they were located. This paper then had to be delivered to the security staff, which often meant delivering it to a security *faxina.*[7] This procedure made it possible to produce a *pass*[8] which would be sent to the gallery entry and, from there, would be taken to its destination by a *faxina*. These encounters through *special visits* took place in the Public Defender's office, or in the waiting room of the unit's technical staff.

Gwenola Ricordeau (2012) discusses how the term *visit* speaks, at once, of the act of visiting and of the classification of the person whose body crosses the prion gates as relative or friend of a prisoner. Being a *visit*, in this case, did not lead to a scrutiny of the body through invasive searches because the *special* informed that this was not, in effect, a *visit*. There was no identification, it

[6] The book was written while he was serving a closed sentence and, after we met, we became his connection with the publisher that accepted to publish his book. A crowdfunding campaign raised the needed funds to edit, produce and publish the book and to purchase copies of the book which were distributed in all 52 prison units in Rio de Janeiro. The book was also launched at a Book Fair in 2016, but without the author's presence, because he did not receive a court authorization to leave prison. The book was also later launched inside a prison unit, at an event in which the unit's theater company presented sketches taken from the book. In this event, the author was present.

[7] *Faxina* is how prisoners who work in the prison unit are called.

[8] The *pass* is generated by the security team and contains the prisoner's name, photo and cell, as well as the reason they are being called (visit, technical support, lawyer, public defender). It is with a *pass* that the prisoner may leave their cell and move around the unit, except for the *faxinas*, who have greater conditions of movement.

was not a relative or a friend whose relationship of friendship had been woven prior to prison. If Natália Padovani (2015; 2017) was informed that she had to be *either* a researcher *or* a visit *or* a pastoral agent, in this case, there was a merger of the special-researcher-speaker-editor visit. And, thus, there was not the same *suspicion* regarding this body. It was a visitor, but not a *visit*.

However, being a woman, a friend of a prisoner and visitor, based on different entries, still led to some important gendered crossings. Both the visited and the staff asked if "your husband doesn't mind that you come here?", even without knowing if there was a husband. If, to the book's author, in his words, the question spoke to the *respect* he had, the officer, in turn, questioned the legitimacy of that relationship, in which hugs were the form of greeting, jokingly discussing the fact that a prisoner in a male prison was hugging a woman.

There is, therefore, a series of inspections and forms of scrutiny of the body of a young woman who enters a male prison and maintain a friendship with a young male prisoner, which enables her to enter the galleries. It was common to hear cries of "woman in the gallery!" – a cry to which the prisoners reacted by covering their shirtless bodies, at times putting their hands behind their backs and greeting the visitor.

In that same male unit, at many times, we were also questioned, especially by prison officers, regarding the clothes we wore in our visits. Specific colors, straps and sizes should be avoided *for our safety.* One day, when we were at a unit along with a colleague, a young researcher who was studying Psychology at UERJ and was part of our research group, he was informed by the officers that, because he was wearing black clothes, he could be mistaken for an officer by the prisoners if there was a confusion or rebellion, which could lead him to be attacked in some way. He should likewise not wear white (worn by the prisoners) or green (worn by *faxinas*) because, in a similar situation, he could be mistaken for a prisoner and, thus, "would have to run". Elements such as generation and gender performance – the fact that he was young and performed a

masculinity that did not meet common standards – intersected to make him the target of officers' warnings and mockery.

If, to us, women, the indications of what to wear had the goal of *protecting* us, especially at that prison, where many men were serving sentences for sexual crimes, the warning to a man had the goal of *threatening* him, to put him in the fierce masculinity dispute that took place at that establishment. We thus see how, in the border territory inside/outside, prisoner/researcher, student/officer, the gender device is folded in complex ways in the relational fabric of power, in an articulation with race, class, generation, sexual orientation. On the prison surface, these folds are also produced by hard discursive and practical lines which seek to make bodies and subjectivities docile.

The kneadings researchers-psychologists-speakers-visitors configure different demands, disputes and barriers: if we were researchers, there were disputes because we were from the "outside", foreign to the daily work of unit employees; if we were psychologists, we were either set apart from the prison unit psychologists, or received demands for a therapeutic relationship with the different actors; if we were speakers, the unit's psychologist opened the doors to us, since the Life Project was linked to the SEAP Psychology Coordination; if we were visitors, it was possible, on the one hand, to access other spaces in the prison, but, on the other, the relationship with a prisoners was seen as the target of a certain kind of specific control.

The mobilization of Security as a device for managing the institutional day-to-day and as an element that cuts across the possibilities for establishing bonds and walking across prison takes place differently according to how we are read in each circumstance. In the same way as the border device, the security device operates as a gear which delineates certain practices and possibilities based on, and according to, the bonds produced in the research-intervention itself, as white women, researchers, psychologists, speakers, visitors, non-prisoners, non-family members, friends, colleagues. Countless folds form and reform

who we are and who we are made to be, differently flexing Security.

In this sense, if friendship and trust relations produced in prison make it so security can become a secondary element, these same relations are what lead gate officers, when we left a closing party for the Life Project carrying flower pots gifted to us by prisoners, to comment "you're crazy to take something from inside here home, I would not take anything from here to my home".

It is, on the one hand, *distrust* which delimits, for example, that a research be restricted to a female unit's security office and that the choice of who will be interviewed, carried out by the officers, take into consideration "the calmer prisoners" so we would not "be scared", all "for our safety". A certain mocking tone present in the statement, articulated to the mobilization of the notion of Security, creates specific conditions of possibility for the production of a research based on the idea of the encounter (Leite, 2014), so that Security, as a device, produces certain modes of doing research in prison (Leite, 2014) – but it is the cartographic inclination itself which allows us to see that, if this is the way the field is delineated, these are the processes we must follow and whose dynamics we must unravel.

Security, thus, also speaks of policies for controlling and managing bodies, violently falling upon certain bodies in certain territories, articulated with the rationalities which produce certain policies of life and death – much more of death than life – in the city. Prison, as a mechanism which, in the punitive gears, becomes a privileged locus for the production and maintenance of racism and of a necropolitics (Mbembe, 2016) that kills back, poor bodies in the peripheries, mobilizes Security as part of a process of colonial policy, underwriting the social problems it purports to solve (Davis; Dent, 2003). The denaturalization of this paradigm must thus be carried out based on our feminisms, committed to the anti-racist struggle. Here, the inspiration comes from Angela Davies, according to whom prison can be thought of as "a contingent historical institution" which "enables us to think today about the intersections of punishment, gender, and race within

and beyond the borders" (Davis; Dent, 2003:526). Still according to the authors, the prison itself is a colonizing institution – and we must start form that in order to understand the creation of new imprisonment models and certain security policies, and how easily they spread, always considering "the deeply gendered character of punishment [which] both reflects and further entrenches the gender structure of the larger society" (Davis, 2017:66).

What we propose is a policy of prison research committed to the creation of collective forms of knowledge production that are supported by friendship and trust relations in its research-intervention and which, more than *transforming* reality, intend to create it, co-create it, invent it; to consider the field based on the gendered, racialized and territorialized processes which produce difference, inequality, proximity and affection, and which seek the possible loopholes that make it possible, despite/through/around prison, for people to live and resist without erasing the processes of violence and violation which structure the prison institution. We inhabit prison in different ways and intensities, based on multiple kneadings, going back to Anzaldúa, which concern not different "identities", but a non-homogeneous amalgamation of readings of ourselves which group together and fold themselves in a plural, unexhausted, and unpredictable way. Kneadings which produce bonds, friendships and intimacies which change, cut across and affect lives and borders. Our commitment, as a feminist commitment, bets on the construction of shared senses, on combating racism and other forms of violence, on the struggle for de-territorialization of institutions which divide us and push us away from the potency of life.

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