

## **1. Género, feminismos e estudos sobre as mulheres**

OC - (22691) - WOMEN, DRUGS, PRISON PROFILE AND PATHWAYS OF WOMEN INCARCERATED IN ITALY AND IN PORTUGAL

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### **Introduction**

In Europe, women constitute approximately 5% of the prison population. Fewer women than men engage in criminal activities and the types of crimes differ by gender. Women are often incarcerated for drug-related crimes.

### **Objective**

The study examined the profile and trajectories of women facing drug related issues in four prisons in Portugal and Italy.

### **Method**

This study employed a mixed method, including questionnaire to all incarcerated women in prison in Milano, Porto, Torino, and Venezia, in-depth interviews with selected inmates, informal interviews with staff and research diaries.

### **Results**

A total of 309 questionnaires were completed alongside 48 in-depth interviews. Most women were nationals of the countries where the prisons were located; around one fifth were foreigners; 22% identified as ROMA. Women were on average 42 years old, were married or divorced and 82% had children. 43% of women were imprisoned for drug-law offences and an additional almost 20% were in prison for acquisitive crimes to support their drug use. A significant number of women had used substances in their lives. Between 24% and 34% of respondents had experienced some form of violence, including sexual abuse. These adverse experiences were related to their future mental health problems and deviant trajectories. For many, entering prison was challenging; however, for some, it signified an opportunity to break free from chaotic lives and make changes.

### **Discussion**

Social marginalization and adverse experiences, including sexual violence, were common among many women, although they were not a homogenous group. The prison's role was an experience of isolation and additional marginalization, but it was seen also as an opportunity.

### **Conclusions**

The study concluded with a proposal of a gender-transformative approach in health and social interventions within and outside prison to improve the conditions and facilitate the reintegration of incarcerated women with drug-related problems.

**Palavras-chave : droga, mulheres, prisao**