

Agata Matysiak-Błaszczyk

Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań [matysiakblaszczykagata@gmail.com]

The image of the motherhood among female prisoners and their early socializing experiences of family life *

Abstract: The imprisonment of female criminals together with their minor children in the Polish institutionalized penitentiary system, despite its lengthy history, still raises more or less justified doubts as to its resocialization value for the imprisoned women and the socialization consequences for their minor children staying in the prison environment for several years. The environment is not identical from the perspective of both the mothers and their children. It is not burdensome with regards to experiencing these restrictive conditions, due to the efforts which are made. However, these efforts are not always successful for the women in post-penitentiary phase. In this article, the author attempts to show the imprisonment conditions and, in particular, to characterize women staying in them, actively fulfilling their maternal roles towards their children during their stay in prison, and much too often only at that time and in these conditions.

Key words: motherhood, prison isolation, socialization.

.....

* The issue of motherhood in prison has been the subject of my scientific interest and empirical verification for a number of years. This article presents a fragment of the research on the image of motherhood in the perception of isolated women serving a prison sentence a child/children, a broader description of the issue was published in the monograph entitled *Więzienne macierzyństwo. Studium socjopedagogiczne*, Poznań 2016

Introduction

Motherhood is a complex and evolving process of fulfilling the social role of the mother, which is determined both historically and culturally. Maternal love and the quality of the child care and upbringing strongly determine the child's acquisition of social competences and the process of becoming a social person. During motherhood women manifest different attitudes towards their children, positive, neutral but also negative, which may and do result in this maternal stigma for the rest of their children's lives (Błasiak, 2019, p. 115). The depreciation of the value of motherhood and the deprivation of motherhood is particularly unfavorable for the development of children, as shown by a number of studies including by K. Dzwonkowska-Godula (Dzwonkowska-Godula 2015, p. 60).

Motherhood in the past thirty years has become a subject of interest of such scientific fields as: psychology, sociology, cultural anthropology, as well as pedagogy. Within the framework of the undertaken research on motherhood, four interrelated research trends can be distinguished, which include: motherhood as an institution, motherhood as a subjective and social experience, maternal subjectivity (identity), and maternal agency (Gawron, 2016, p. 23–24). The discourse undertaken in this article will be embedded in a narrative dedicated to the four identified problems. However, I shall pay particular attention to the early biographical – socializing experiences of motherhood of incarcerated women, who are “burdened by a stigma of their own actions, and their life and development have also been shaped by [...] often unfavorable and hazardous factors” (Fajfer-Kruczek, 2016, p. 264). The combined syndromes of negative subjective and environmental factors of imprisoned women contribute to numerous difficulties in associative fulfillment of maternal roles. An additional factor hindering the fulfillment of maternity scripts is the fact that women are placed in prison Mother and Baby Units (MBUs) where first-time offenders, adolescents, penitentiary recidivists, with various experiences in caring for a child/children, often associated with neglecting maternal duties towards children, or even abandoning them. Some mothers exhibit inappropriate maternal attitudes, are ineffective in their parenting skills, show low interest in the child because of the negative emotions associated with isolation, are not sufficiently or not at all prepared for the socially acceptable role of a mother.

The prison Mother and Baby Units enable women to perform maternal duties and in this category, according to the research material collected by the author, there are female inmates who cherish the value of motherhood under the prison roof so to speak, but there are also those for whom the child was an authentic means in the process of their rehabilitation, after all, there were also those for

whom the fact of being an active mother in these conditions and situations became an opportunity to treat their motherhood instrumentally (Matysiak-Błaszczuk, 2016, p. 257).

Prison as a subject and environment of research project implementation (methodological note).

At the stage of conceptualizing the research, the author was strongly convinced that the biographical past of prison mothers has fundamentally influenced their present, while the presence of convicted women and their children in penitentiary isolation will strongly determine their future. I decided, following Renata Szczepanik's suggestion, that the legitimacy of qualitative research "lies in the possibility of reaching those properties and areas of reality that are concealed, difficult to capture (and describe) using quantitative methods. The most important feature of qualitative research is its openness. It has a threefold dimension, as it concerns the level of data collection, the selection of the research sample and the attitude of the researcher" (Szczepanik, 2015, p. 46).

The research, the results of which will be partly presented in this article, lasted for three years (with breaks), the first stage of the research consisted in a detailed review of all the materials made available by the head of the examined penitentiary unit – the Mother and Baby Unit at the Krzywaniec Penitentiary. In the second phase of the research was conducted in-depth expert interviews with the staff of the Mother and Baby Unit. 12 mothers serving prison sentences out of 15 women found at the ward at the time agreed to an in-depth narrative interview. During the interviews, the author presented the narrators with their aim and the manner of conducting the research, striving to create an atmosphere of kindness. The author's intention was that women should not feel as if they were "interrogated", but to make them willing to tell the story of their lives at their own free will. In retrospect, it can be said that this objective has been achieved (Matysiak-Błaszczuk, 2016).

The narratives of imprisoned women performing maternal roles in isolation are about their lives and experiences are a personal reconstruction and interpretation of their own biographical scenarios. As a researcher, the author was also interested in the determinants of the course of individual biographical scenarios, e.g. their life choices, functioning in various social groups, adapting to changing living conditions, making risky decisions with regard to exiting difficult life situations, coping with and in various existential and social problems as well as situations of losing strength. The biographical reconstruction of the subject allowed to find breakthroughs in the biographies of convicted female mothers. The interpretation points also allowed for the reinterpretation of the past and

present of the studied women and for the analysis of the projected future by prison mothers. The author of the study was interested in the processability of the events of the surveyed mothers, recreating individual biographical scenarios, indicating both their cultural and social entanglements in the conditions of disturbed social order. The course of life of female prisoners in the phase of active early maternity related to the reconstruction of individual ways of coping with the changing social reality, structural differentiation and attempts to adapt to the conditions of isolation with the recognition of the perspective of biographical scenarios after the period of isolation in prison of the women under study (Matysiak-Błaszczuk 2016).

The biographical method was used in this study, which can be identified as a variation of the pedagogical monograph method. A monographic study consists in documenting, to a sufficient extent, that it is a good, effective solution to what is expected of it or proving that its functional form fails. In this sense, a monographic study of an institution of penal isolation should reveal whether, and to what extent, it fulfills in its current form, the expectation of the rehabilitation of the prisoners serving their sentences within it and whether allowing female prisoners to serve their sentence with their children fulfills this expectation more effectively than if they were prevented from actively fulfilling their maternal roles by separation from their children 0 to 3–4 years of age. In order to document reliably the quality of the rehabilitation function performed towards such women by the penitentiary institution, and especially its determinants (which are in many different determinants of this effectiveness), it is also worth to have an insight into social biographies of such women in order to reveal whether and to what extent they document with their course the possession of such women: necessary subjective competences to perform their socialization function towards their children 0 to 3–4 years of age, their identification in the course of their active maternal care towards children staying with them at the Mother and Baby Unit, the possibility of continuing care and socialization of their children after leaving prison. From a cognitive point of view, it is therefore worthwhile to follow their early, current, and expected further biographical fate with a view to irreversible prisonization of their social biographies (Modrzewski 2014).

These are the questions – issues – which can be examined in a monographic form on the one hand: a monograph of a penal institution as an institution obliged to carry out the function of rehabilitation of women incarcerated in it with the “use” of their maternal situation, on the other hand, a biographical monograph of such mothers showing their previous biographical experiences and their prospective, i.e. pedagogical forecast, character taking into account the current reality of their life situation (family, environmental, and possibly professional). the possibility of gaining support of various kinds (from the state – its institutions and society – the local community) in the period after being released from prison (Matysiak-Błaszczuk 2016, p. 123).

Motherhood in isolation – subjective and objective experiences of incarcerated mothers

In the public perception, mothers are associated with “soft” qualities such as love, tenderness, sensitivity, gentleness, reliability, protectiveness, and sacrifice for the benefit of others. According to S. Rydz, nowadays a woman is expected to find her sense of happiness and fulfillment in close relationships, especially in marriage and child care (Rydz 2014, p. 247). Family roles most often performed by women, take the form of “expressive-integration” tasks, consisting in providing children with care and protection, and satisfying their emotional needs during the socialization process, thus basically activating socialization mechanisms (Dzwonkowska-Godula 2015, p. 58; Kowalski 1974, ch. VI). The childbirth and upbringing of children is considered to be the fundamental task, duty, and goal in women’s lives, regardless of the at times vastly different subjective characteristics of women (Dzwonkowska-Godula 2015, p. 59). The socialization significance of the mother lies in her constant presence, in the fact that she is the agent of the socialization mechanisms activated towards the child, especially during infancy but exclusively. The mother stimulates the socialization of the child’s behavior and has a significant impact on the child’s internalization of cultural patterns of expected behavior. Her various activities, such as presentation of objects, naming, demonstrating behavior patterns, have a chance of being permanently embedded into the child’s behavior, and most often it happens that the mother protects the child from unpleasant experiences by creating existentially safe situations for them, with few exceptions (Lis 1992, p. 60).

Women are burdened with the social responsibility for the multi-faceted development of the child, they are socially stigmatized by being branded as responsible for situations of child’s educational failure or signs of deviant behavior. The role of the mother is also idealized, because it is assumed that fulfilling maternal roles and tasks evokes only positive emotions, rarely referring to the negative aspects of motherhood, such as: psychological and physical overload of mothers, giving up one’s own needs and desires, subordinating one’s life to the rhythm of life of all family members, especially children, lack of social consent to experiencing fatigue, aversion or anger. According to B. Budrowska’s motherhood can be compared to a total institution, because in the course of the socialization process women internalize norms and values concerning the tasks and duties resulting from playing the role of a mother, they have an “imprinted” message about who they should be and when they decide on parenthood (Budrowska 1997, pp. 304–305).

Being a mother is linked to internal and external control aimed at assessing whether women correctly fulfill their maternal roles. Other members of society

make social assessments a woman is deeming them either “good” or “bad” mothers. The totality of motherhood also includes the routineness of actions taken by women, the strictly planned daily agenda, the organization of tasks undertaken and their unpaid nature. Some women subject themselves to social maternity scripts, but others use rebellious mechanisms and fight against prevailing, often stigmatizing stereotypes. Motherhood, despite many socio-cultural changes, still plays a leading role in shaping women’s identity. A woman without children is quite commonly perceived as incomplete (Ostrouch 2004, p. 34).

The experience of motherhood is filtered out in a specific way in the experiences of women becoming and being mothers (Bartoszewicz 1999, p. 97). M. Kościelska, examining various levels of satisfaction with motherhood and how they affect the image of the child, created a classification of patterns of maternal childcare. And so, Group A featured mothers who were well adapted to motherhood and who showed high satisfaction with motherhood. The source of satisfaction for women was the very fact of becoming a mother, having contact with the child both while providing care and in play, proper fulfillment of household duties and the ability to reconcile them with other activities (Kościelska 1998, p. 64). Group B included mothers having difficulties adapting to motherhood, who, however, began to function well with time. Immediately after giving birth, they showed great satisfaction with motherhood, but the problems with organizing the day and caring for the child reduced their satisfaction with motherhood. They felt mental and physical overload, but over time (after a few weeks) they began to function well in their maternal roles and increased their competence and skills in child care and nursing (Kościelska 1998, p. 65). Group B included women poorly adapted to motherhood, with little satisfaction with their new social role. Taking care of a child proved to be a substantial problem for them. Childbirth and breastfeeding were mentioned as difficult experiences. They manifested chronic fatigue, complained about sleep deprivation, and experiencing weakness. They were unable to reconcile their previous duties with the new ones, related to fulfilling their maternal roles. They felt a deep isolation from their previous environment and lifestyle. They were afraid of losing their jobs and falling into financial problems. Their maternal competence has remained low. The dominant emotions associated with having contact with the child are, above all, high tension, anxiety, irritation, lack of patience, little warmth directed at the child. The image of the child in the opinion of mothers was pejorative, and above all it referred to: small amount of a child’s sleep during the day and to a short sleep, child’s ailments, e.g. stomach aches, infantile colics or constipation. Women falling into this category very often left their children in the care of other people, rarely played with the children, and more often performed duties related to child care (Kościelska 1998, p. 67). In the presented characteristics of motherhood images we can find a clear correlation between the level of satisfaction with motherhood and the evaluation of the relationship the women established with their children.

Mothers, who have properly adapted to their new role, consider the contact with children to be pleasant, while women who have difficulty fulfilling their maternal duties define the contact with the child as problematic (Kościelska 1998, p. 68).

Mothers, who perform maternal roles in prisons, are most often the main caretakers of children, thus they contribute to shaping the image of the socialization process in their early stages, in which the original form of socialization they trigger towards their children has a significant impact on the development of children's biographical scenarios in the near and long term of their lives. This factor successfully competes in shaping their biographies with others such as: their subjective vital characteristics, the characteristics of their growth environments and the characteristics of the social situations they experience.

Experiencing active motherhood in the narratives of incarcerated women.

The experience of fulfilling maternal roles in institutional and penitentiary environments is permanently inscribed in the biographies of incarcerated mothers. Human experience is very much subjective, individual in meaning, which finds its expression in the form of women's life stories – narratives. The analysis of the narrative is one of the important methods for discovering the meanings assigned by the persons reporting them to the events they experience and provoke (Matysiak-Błaszczyk, Włodarczyk 2004, p. 98). The life stories of women serving prison sentences and remaining in the phase of active motherhood are a function of the narratives recorded in their memory and experience. Let us read into the excerpts from the lives relating to the maternal experience of imprisoned women.

...I'm here in Krzywaniec with my son, he's less than a year old. He was born in the Grudziądz prison. The baby's healthy. I was pregnant at the time I got arrested but didn't find out about it until the preliminary examinations – I was 2 months pregnant then. It was a shock. I immediately had thousands of thoughts going through my head. This is a difficult situation for me. I don't remember three months of my life – it's such a stress. I missed having contact, closeness, I wrote letters. I am critical of myself [...]. In my opinion, the child's development is correct, he started walking when he was 10 months old, I was separated from my child for 3 weeks due to the ongoing court proceedings. My son was sick at the time, I suppose, out of longing for me. Women should not be separated from their children. My son took the adaptation to prison life badly. (Angelika, 28, mother of five).

This type of narration of convicted mothers shows that most of them only found out about their pregnancy when they were sent to prison. In numerous cases the narrators did not know who the father of the child was. In the pre-isolation period they led a lifestyle accompanied by alcohol, drugs, and risky

sexual behavior, which undoubtedly influenced the course of pregnancy and the health condition of children after their birth.

...At the time of my arrest, I didn't know I was pregnant with my second child. I found out about it they put me in jail in Ł... I was devastated... it was a shock. I was in Ł... until I was 7 months pregnant, then they took me to Grudziądz. I had to do a DNA test to establish paternity at the Grudziądz prison. I made them when Olaf was 8 months old. The child's father denies paternity. I didn't know who the child's father was. You know what it's like when you're young... [smiles] (Ewelina, 27, mother of two; daughter born in isolation).

Convicted mothers, as is clear from their many narratives, began initiating risky behaviors at an early stage of life, it was the period of junior high school (usually at this stage they also finished their education), which resulted in premature motherhood, school "death" and experiencing numerous addictions. Before their imprisonment, they had already often fulfilled their maternal roles, but due to negligence relating to the exercise of their function as caregivers and educators of their children, as well as putting them at risk (leaving them unaccompanied, using violence against them), mothers' parental rights were restricted or they were deprived of them.

...I had my first child when I was 15. In 2003, they took my children away. After this tragedy I had a breakdown and didn't want to live... [cries] – I decided to drink away the pain. I have limited parental authority and had a family probation officer because I abused alcohol and left my children unattended. My children were placed in an orphanage. Then the court deprived me of my parental rights. My children are currently in different foster families. I have a council flat, I did not work before the arrest, I used to live off social welfare benefits. I can't count on the help of my family or anybody else. Before I was incarcerated, I had contacts with people from criminal circles. I fought and beat up my neighbors, friends, usually after drinking. I don't want to talk about why I'm here... because it was because of my stupidity... [goes silent for a moment] I don't visit children in institutions or foster families because I'm in prison. When I was serving a prison sentence I got pregnant with the P. R., and you could say that we are in a loose relationship now. My sixth child was born in the Grudziądz prison. In 2012, I asked the Court to suspend my sentence because I was pregnant and wanted my child to be born on the outside. The court refused, and I didn't want to give birth in prison. I've been drinking alcohol since I was 13, and that's my problem, that's why I'm here. I would drink till I passed out, it lasted for a year... [goes silent for a moment] I know one thing, alcohol has ruined my life and is my biggest enemy... [cries] I feel bad in prison, I don't agree that I have to do anything, everything annoys me. Piotruś is a good child, but he often whines, screams, cries, does what other kids here do. Sometimes I get tired of everything... [cries] My inmates get on my nerves, I often argue with them, sometimes about meaningless things. (Magdalena, 35, mother of six, sixth child born in isolation).

Mothers living in isolation are certainly not examples of performing maternal roles perfectly. Prison staff constantly has to ensure that convicted mothers properly perform their role as mothers and that the child does not become an instrument used to achieve rehabilitation goals. The biographies of imprisoned mothers clearly show that in establishing an emotional bond between the mother and the child, the conditions of a total institution are undoubtedly important. A woman in these conditions functions as a prisoner. She needs to comply with the prevailing regulations, accept the architectural conditions, be controlled by prison staff, her behavior and reactions are largely determined by the situation in which she finds herself, maternal roles are often used to alleviate the nuisance of imprisonment or to avoid punishment for unregulated behavior. Many attempts have been made in total institutions to create a prison "scenery" that would resemble a family home, but as the narrative of incarcerated women shows, "prison will never be home". The stories of their lives told by women allow us to conclude that these women function in two roles that are difficult to reconcile – mother and the incarcerated person. This situation creates a number of the problems they experience, which often have negative consequences for the formation of the biography of a child who participates in the process of early-stage socialization in the conditions of a total institution, thus internalizing the norms and principles of the world in the prison environment.

The conditions of a total institution create a different type of socialization, which can be defined as a personalized socialization of women actively fulfilling maternal roles. Incarcerated mothers and their children, in the course of socialization processes, as a result of social, cultural or personality factors affecting them in prison, may, after being released, realize various biographical patterns, not necessarily those assumed for the intention of rehabilitation, and their subjective choice and actual experience will depend not only on their previously formed subjective traits, but above all on the real events they actually experience in environments often saturated with criminogenic properties.

Early family socialization experiences of imprisoned mothers.

The value of family life, biological family and family affiliation traditionally places it among the most valued in the Polish society and continuously exposes it in the empirically documented canon of values declared and actually nurtured by Poles, regardless of age, gender, stratification, or territorial location (Modrzewski, Matysiak-Błaszczyk 2013, p. 26). This is confirmed by sociological research that has begun in the past century and continues to this day¹. The family is a system

.....

¹ The precursors of research in this area were W. Thomas and F. Znaniecki (1976), published for the first time in the years 1916–1920, and an example of their continuation were diarist initiatives

in which there are permanent changes, to a greater or lesser extent affecting the constitution of family biography (Kuryś 2011, p. 7). In W. Świętochowski's view, family members are treated as elements of a group in which the behavior of one person inevitably affects the remainder of its members. So each member of the group influences all others, and they in turn influence it (Świętochowski 2014, p. 26).

Nowadays, families all over the world are in the midst of significant transformations, often associated with: moral revolution, progressive process of secularization, emancipation movement, popularization of mass culture, widespread use of contraceptives or acceptance of alternative forms of family life (i.a. Kwak 1994, 2005; Slany 2008; Skowrońska-Pućka 2016; Błasiak 2019). Therefore, today we have a big problem with the conceptual operationalization of everything that comes into being after the break-up of the traditional family and what we observe, diagnosing its contemporary – modern and even postmodern emanations as fundamental, partly dominating, not only in our society, patterns of nurturing the values of family life. (Modrzewski 2016, p. 20). A number of contemporary research reports indicate that today the value of traditionally modeled and understood family life is depreciated (see, i.a.: Bauman 2000; Giddens 2001; Derbis 2003; Marody, Giza-Poleszczuk 2004; Libiszowska-Żółtkowska 2007; Hołyst 2013–2014; Jędrzejko 2015, Ściupider-Młodkowska 2018), qualified and referred to as a crisis of family life, a family crisis or a crisis of the family, which in late modernity or early postmodernity appears and perpetuates a real – explicit – social family problem (see i.a.: Merton, Nisbet 1971; Eitzen 1974; Sztumski 1977; Frieske 1987; Kwaśniewski 2003, 2006; Królikowska 2006; Miś 2007; Frysztacki 2009; Durka 2010; Urry 2015; Karaszewska, Silecka-Marek 2016; Spętana et al. 2016, Harwas-Napierała, Bakiera 2018).

This depreciation of the traditional value of family life is particularly present in the socialization experience of female prisoners. The family is a primitive social group in which we grow up, we learn the 101 of social life, we shape our character and personality, we learn to live according to the principles of the axionormative order. It is significant – according to A. Skowrońska-Pućka – “that regardless of the way it functions and the quality of the functions it performs, as well as the ties between its members, the family is considered to be one of the social groups which have a strong influence on human experience and determine its future functioning” (Skowrońska-Pućka 2016, p. 139] The life stories of the

.....

and their editing undertaken by J. Chałasiński (1931, 1938, 1949, 1969 and many others). Recent research reports showing selected aspects and examples of cultivating this value in its traditional consideration – see the collective paper ed. by L. Dyczewski and D. Wadowski (2009, especially part III), and in late modernity, or postmodernity: L. Kocik (2006). As regards socially nurtured values – see, i.a.: E. Pietrzak, R. Szczepanik, Ł. Zaorski-Sikora (2011); *Wartości i normy w życiu Polaków. Komunikat z badań* (2005). Compare also: Z. Frączek (2011), in particular: A. Jasińska-Kania (ed.), 2012, *Wartości i zmiany. Przemiany postaw Polaków w jednoczącej się Europie*, Warsaw, as cited in: Modrzewski, Matysiak-Błaszczuk 2013, p. 26.

women serving a prison sentence with their child (or children) indicate that the early socialization experiences of upbringing in the family of origin had a strong and determining impact on their current and experienced situation of isolation. The narratives of imprisoned women cited in this part of the article indicate that the dysfunctionality of the families in which they socialized significantly influenced their criminal life scenarios (Matysiak-Błaszczuk 2016).

I come from a single-parent family – my parents split up. My father would drink too much and start rows. When I was 8 years old, he was sent to the prison in Sztum. At that time, the mother met her next partner with whom she has lived ever since in a common-law marriage. I have a brother, Kamil (24), currently he's in prison in Sztum for drugs. My younger sister (16) lives with my parents, studies, she doesn't work. The atmosphere in the family home wasn't good. I don't remember anything good about the contact with my father, the rows, and arguments with my mother... [goes silent for a moment]. My father would beat my mother. Whenever he beat my mom, he would push me away. At the age of 8, I moved out of the house to my mother's family home. I lived with my grandmother. At the age of 11–12, I tried drugs, started smoking, drinking alcohol [...]. (Agnes, 29, mother of two, son born in isolation).

Among the women living in prison isolation with their children, the vast majority came from pathological families, where there was a problem with the parents' alcoholism and negligence with regards to the care-giving and educational functions. From the life stories of incarcerated mothers, a model of the maternal role emerges, which is most often reproduced from the family of origin, and a woman's lack of a proper model of the role of the mother affects the level of her adaptation or lack thereof to maternal activity [Skafiriak, 2016, p. 429–430]. A few selected female narratives showing the indicated socialization transmission of the model of the maternal role are presented below.

I come from a pathological family. Both of my parents abused alcohol. They didn't take care of their children. (Magdalena, 35, mother of six)

After I was born, until I was 5 I stayed with my mom... uh (an alcoholic). It's hard for me to talk about it, but I've been... um, uh, a victim of physical abuse. (Ilona, 28, mother of a single child)

At the age of 3, my mother divorces my father, who did not care about the family [...]. My mom met another partner who would drink and beat my mother and us [...]. I feel like a black sheep when I'm at home... it's sad... (goes silent for a moment). (Paulina, 29 years old, mother of two)

My father, under the influence of alcohol, took his life by stabbing a knife into his heart right before of my eyes... (cries), I was 17 then. Earlier he stabbed my

mother [...] I started to abuse alcohol after my father died. (Dorota, 24, mother of a single child born in isolation)

I come from a family where my mom was unemployed and my dad worked part-time. I have 12 siblings... uh, yes, I know, there's a lot of us. (Marlena, 29, mother of a single child born in isolation)

My family is an alcoholic father who has a high-school education and a mother who has a university degree and who is not addicted to alcohol. I have no siblings. (Sylwia, 22, mother of a single child born in isolation)

My parents are the father of whom I have both good and bad memories. When I was two months old, they put him in prison. He's a recidivist. My mother is a normal, decent woman (Ewelina, 30, mother of three)

The disorganization and dysfunction of the narrator's families of origin contributed to the fact that the process of their early socialization often took place under the conditions of educational or rehabilitation institutions.

I come from a single-parent family. When I was 4, my parents split up. My father drank a lot. When I was 12, my mother died and they sent us, me, and my siblings, to an orphanage. (Elwira, 35, mother of five, fifth child born in isolation).

Women who find themselves in a difficult situation of fulfilling their maternal roles in prison conditions often come from multiple children families, with low socio-economic status.

I come from a family where my mom was unemployed and my dad worked part-time. I have 12 siblings... uh, yes, I know, there's a lot of us. (Marlena, 29, mother of a single child born in prison)

I have six siblings... (Ewelina, 30, mother of three)

I have five siblings with whom I have no contact. (Magdalena, 35, mother of six)

At the age of 3, my mother divorces my father, who did not care about the family. I have a biological sister, two step-brothers and probably one more sibling from my father's side. My mom met another partner who would drink and beat my mother and us. The mother got pregnant and gave birth to my brother. (Paulina, 29, mother of two, her second son was born in prison).

The life stories of imprisoned mothers indicate that in the population of female prisoners, various subcategories of them appeared during active motherhood. Among them there are only children, as well as those with a dozen or more siblings, women from pathological families and so-called good homes,

women who did not finish primary school but also those who received higher education, women who have committed a crime on their own, as well as those who have operated within the structures of organized crime. These include those from standard family environments or those “recruited from a deep, pathological suburb where it would be difficult to determine the baby’s father” – as also indicated by H. Reczek (Reczek 2009, p. 228–229).

Among the narrators there were women who were convicted, sentenced, and awaiting incarceration, recidivists, first time offenders and juveniles. Women who have led a parasitic lifestyle and were deprived of parental authority or had limited authority over their own the children. In the population of prison mothers, we often find those who did not plan to get pregnant, experiencing it as a random occurrence, something beyond their control and of which they were not fully aware and something they did not fully accept. The incarcerated mothers can potentially be a source of children’s health problems. This group of mothers often includes alcoholics, drug addicts, HIV-positive women and women carrying venereal diseases (Reczek 2009).

The analysis of the biography (life history) of women prisoners allows the identification of certain properties that are undoubtedly typical for all the biographical portrayals presented above. These are: women coming from homes where, according to most analyzed life histories, the syndromes of unfavorable factors accumulated, which influenced the biographical scenarios of incarcerated women. The results of the conducted research also indicate that the families of origin of the surveyed women manifest a multitude of problems not only in the social and material sphere, but in the educational and control sphere as well. The parents of the “protagonists” of the narratives would very often stay home not having a job, so it can be assumed that they had a lot of time to control their daughters, but they showed passivity with regard to the processional dissociation of their children. The “yearning for love” manifested by the women in their youth resulted from the emotional deprivation on the part of their parents, and its negative consequence was the need to satisfy the need for love with casual partners. Among the studied women love often turned out to be a traumatic and biographically negative experience for them (Norwood 2019), because they committed criminal acts out of love for “toxic” partners (most often involved in a criminal lifestyle), in an uncontrolled manner gave birth to children, which were often taken away from them and transferred to childcare institutions (orphanages) or foster families by decision of the judicial apparatus. Among the wards of Mother and Baby Units, there are homeless women who will need a place to live after leaving prison. It is impossible to present all the narratives of prison mothers in this article, taking into account all the important factors that influenced the trajectory of their lives.

It is worth emphasizing that the institution of a prison Mother and Baby Unit gives women the opportunity to have a dignified experience of motherhood and

build a bond between the mother and her child. Motherhood in these conditions may constitute a value for a woman who has a chance to change her previous criminal ways, but it may also be treated by her as “tactical prison motherhood” in which the child will only be a means in her rehabilitation project, and women will use the fact of being a mother to gain better conditions of imprisonment without significant consequences for their biographical post-penitentiary perspective. These two facets of active motherhood in prison experienced by a specific category of women are undoubtedly an important cognitive challenge and a decisive premise for shaping penitentiary policy and rehabilitation practice towards them, which justifies the need for further research monitoring, including tracking mothers and especially their prison children as a fundamental source of evidence to justify the continuation or modernization of this practice of imprisoning women who are in a situation of active motherhood with their children.

References

- [1] Bartosz B., 1999, *Współczesne macierzyństwo: szansa czy zagrożenie dla kobiety?*, [w:] *Oblicza macierzyństwa*, (red.) D. Kornas- Biela, Lublin.
- [2] Bauman Z., 2000, *Ponowoczesność jako źródło cierpień*, Warszawa.
- [3] Błasiak A., 2019, *Między (nie)obecnością a zaangażowaniem. Rodzicielstwo rekonstruowane w ponowoczesności*, Kraków.
- [4] Budrowska B., 1997, *Macierzyństwo: instytucja totalna?*, [w:] *Od kobiety do mężczyzny i z powrotem. Rozważania o płci w kulturze*, (red.) J. Brach-Czaina, Białystok.
- [5] Chałasiński J., 1931, *Drogi awansu społecznego robotnika. Studium oparte na autobiografiach robotników*, Poznań.
- [6] Chałasiński J., 1938, *Młode pokolenie chłopów. Procesy i zagadnienia kształtowania się warstwy chłopskiej w Polsce*, t. 1–4, Warszawa.
- [7] Chałasiński J., 1949, *Życiorysy górników*, Katowice.
- [8] Chałasiński J., 1969, *Młode pokolenia wsi Polski Ludowej. Pamiątki i studia*, Warszawa.
- [9] Derbis R. (red.), 2003, *Niepokoje i nadzieje współczesnego człowieka. Człowiek w sytuacji przełomu*, Częstochowa.
- [10] Durka G. (red.), 2010, *Współczesna rzeczywistość w wybranych problemach społecznych*, Kraków.
- [11] Dyczewski L., Wadowski D. (red.), 2009, *Tożsamość polska w odmiennych kontekstach. Tożsamość osób, zbiorowości, instytucji*, Lublin.
- [12] Dzwonkowska-Godula K., 2015, *Tradycyjnie czy nowocześnie? Wzory macierzyństwa i ojcostwa w Polsce*, Łódź.
- [13] Eitzen D.S., 1974, *Social Structure and Social Problems in America*, Boston.
- [14] Fajfer-Kruczek I., 2016, *Psychospołeczne uwarunkowania wczesnego wspomagania rozwoju dziecka przebywającego z matką w izolacji penitencjarnej*, „Psychiatria i Psychologia Kliniczna”, 16(4).
- [15] Frączek Z., 2011, *Pokoleniowe przemiany społecznej świadomości wartości rodziny*, Rzeszów.

- [16] Frieske K. (red.), 1987, *Socjologia problemów społecznych. Teoria a rzeczywistość*, Wrocław.
- [17] Frysztacki K., 2009, *Socjologia problemów społecznych*, Warszawa.
- [18] Gawron A., 2016, *Macierzyństwo. Współczesna literatura, kultura, etyka*, Łódź.
- [19] Giddens A., 2001, *Nowoczesność i tożsamość*, Warszawa.
- [20] Harwas-Napierała B., Bakiera L., 2018, *Oblicza współczesnej rodziny. Wybrane aspekty*, Poznań.
- [21] Hołyst B., 2013–2014, *Zagrożenia ładu społecznego*, t. 1–2, Warszawa.
- [22] Jędrzejko M.Z., 2015, „Zwariowany” świat ponowoczesności, Warszawa–Milanówek.
- [23] Karaszewska H., Silecka-Marek E., 2016, *Sytuacje trudne w perspektywie jednostkowej i społecznej*, Poznań.
- [24] Kocik L., 2006, *Rodzina w obliczu wartości i wzorów ponowoczesnego świata*, Kraków.
- [25] Kościelska M., 1998, *Trudne macierzyństwo*, Warszawa.
- [26] Kowalski S., 1974, *Socjologia wychowania w zarysie*, Warszawa.
- [27] Królikowska J. (red.), 2006, *Problemy społeczne w grze politycznej*, Warszawa.
- [28] Kuryś K., 2011, *System rodzinny wobec zmian rozwojowych*, Poznań.
- [29] Kwak A., 1994, *Rodzina i jej przemiany*, Warszawa.
- [30] Kwak A., 2005, *Rodzina w dobie przemian. Małżeństwo i kohabitacja*, Warszawa.
- [31] Kwaśniewski J. (red.), 2003, *Badania problemów społecznych*, Warszawa.
- [32] Kwaśniewski J. (red.), 2006, *Badania problemów społecznych. 2*, Warszawa.
- [33] Libiszowska-Żółtkowska M. (red.), 2007, *Czego obawiają się ludzie?*, Warszawa.
- [34] Lis S., 1992, *Proces socjalizacji dziecka w środowisku pozarodzinym*, Warszawa.
- [35] Maciarz A., 2004, *Macierzyństwo w kontekście zmian społecznych*, Warszawa.
- [36] Marody M., Giza-Poleszczuk A. (red.), 2004, *Przemiany więzi społecznych*, Warszawa.
- [37] Matysiak-Błaszczuk A., 2016, *Więzienne macierzyństwo. Studium socjopedagogiczne*, Poznań.
- [38] Matysiak-Błaszczuk A., Włodarczyk E., 2004, *Macierzyństwo za kratami*, „Pedagogika Społeczna”, nr 2–4.
- [39] Merton R., Nisbet R., 1971, *Contemporary Social Problems*, New York.
- [40] Miś L., 2007, *Problemy społeczne. Teoria, metodologia, badania*, Kraków.
- [41] Modrzewski J., 2014, *Prizonizacja przestrzeni społecznej. Między praktyką zniewalania a mirażem bezpieczeństwa osobistego*, „Pedagogika Społeczna”, nr 3.
- [42] Modrzewski J., 2016, *Socjopedagogika. Studia – szkice – refleksje – wspomnienia*, Poznań.
- [43] Modrzewski J., Matysiak-Błaszczuk A., 2013, *Odmiany współczesnego polskiego problemu rodzinnego*, [w:] *Rodzina. Młodzież. Dziecko. Szkice z teorii i praktyki pomocy psychopedagogicznej i socjalnej*, (red.) M. Piorunek, J. Kozielska, A. Skowrońska-Pućka, Poznań.
- [44] Norwood R., 2019, *Kobiety które kochają za bardzo*, Poznań.
- [45] Ostrouch J., 2004, *Nieuchwytnie. Relacje matek i córek w codzienności*, Olsztyn.
- [46] Pietrzak E., Szczepanik R., Zaorski-Sikora Ł., 2011, *Aksjologia życia publicznego*, Łódź.
- [47] Pospiszył K., 1986, *Psychologia kobiety*, Warszawa.
- [48] Reczek H., 2009, *Oddziaływania wychowawcze w Domu dla Matki i Dziecka przy Zakładzie Karnym nr 1 w Grudziądzu*, [w:] *Kobieta w więzieniu – polski system penitencjarny wobec kobiet w latach 1998–2008*, (red.) I. Dybalska, Warszawa.
- [49] Rydz S., 2014, *Specyfika roli kobiecej – matka i samotna matka*, [w:] *Psychologia rodziny*, (red.) I. Janicka, H. Liberska, Warszawa.

- [50] Skowrońska-Pućka A., 2016, *(Przed)wczesne macierzyństwo – perspektywa biograficzna. Diagnoza, Pomoc, Wsparcie*, Poznań.
- [51] Slany K., 2008, *Alternatywne formy życia małżeńsko-rodzinnego w ponowoczesnym świecie*, Kraków.
- [52] Skafiriak B., 2016, *Próba prezentacji konkluzji na temat więziennego macierzyństwa w dyskursie naukowym pedagogiki socjalizacyjnej Profesora Jerzego Modrzewskiego*, [w:] *Pedagogika w społeczeństwie – społeczeństwo w pedagogice. Księga jubileuszowa poświęcona profesorowi Jerzemu Modrzewskiemu w 70. rocznicę urodzin*, (red.) A. Matysiak-Błaszczyk, E. Włodarczyk, Poznań.
- [53] Spętana J., Krzysztofiak D., Włodarczyk E. (red.), 2016, *Od wykluczenia do wsparcia społecznego. W przestrzeni współczesnych problemów społecznych*, Kraków.
- [54] Szczepanik R., 2015, *Stawanie się recydywistą. Kariery instytucjonalne osób powracających do przestępczości*, Łódź.
- [55] Sztumski J., 1977, *Problem społeczny jako przedmiot badań*, „Studia Socjologiczne”, nr 3.
- [56] Ściupider-Młodkowska M., 2018, *Miłość w epoce Ja. Studium socjopedagogiczne*, Poznań.
- [57] Świętochowski W., 2014, *Struktura systemu rodziny*, [w:] *Psychologia rodziny*, (red.) I. Janicka, H. Liberska, Warszawa.
- [58] Thomas W., Znaniecki F., 1976, *Chłop polski w Europie i Ameryce*, Warszawa.
- [59] Urry J., 2015, *Offshoring*, Warszawa.