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Board games in prison: an explorative case study

Giochi da tavolo in carcere: uno studio di caso esplorativo

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ABSTRACT This article examines the "Giocare Dentro" project, an Italian initiative that introduced board games into the prison system as an educational practice. Developed by Gabriele Mari and his team, the project aims to use board games to promote cognitive, emotional, and social skills among people in prison. Despite the restrictive and isolating nature of the prison setting, a closed institution marked by marginalisation, over the years board games have proven to promote communication, self-reflection, and conflict management. Where the penitentiary educational approach views education as serving disciplinary purposes, the project offers a different perspective, using play as a form of empowerment and personal growth. Through a structured interview with Mari, this case study highlights the complexities and potential of a board game-based project in prison, providing important insights on how to replicate the experience in other prison contexts.

KEYWORDS Prison; Board Games; Play-Based Education.

SOMMARIO Questo articolo approfondisce il progetto "Giocare Dentro", un'iniziativa italiana che ha introdotto i giochi da tavolo nel sistema carcerario come pratica educativo. Sviluppato da Gabriele Mari e dal suo team, il progetto mira a utilizzare i giochi da tavolo per promuovere le abilità cognitive, emotive e sociali tra le persone detenute. Nonostante la natura restrittiva e isolante del contesto carcerario, un'istituzione chiusa segnata dall'emarginazione, nel corso degli anni i giochi da tavolo hanno dimostrato di poter promuovere la comunicazione, l'auto-riflessione e la gestione dei conflitti. Dove l'approccio educativo penitenziario vede l'educazione come funzionale a scopi disciplinari, il progetto offre una prospettiva diversa, utilizzando il gioco come forma di *empowerment* e crescita personale. Attraverso un'intervista strutturata con Mari, questo studio di caso mette in luce le complessità e le potenzialità di un progetto basato sul gioco da tavolo in carcere, fornendo importanti indicazioni su come replicare l'esperienza in altri contesti carcerari.

PAROLE CHIAVE Carcere; Giochi da Tavolo; Educazione Ludica.

1. Introduction

This article examines a play-based experience developed by Gabriele Mari, an educator, game developer and designer, and his team within the project "Giocare Dentro" (Playing Inside), a board game-based project implemented in prison, which focuses on promoting structured play as an educational practice within this setting. After presenting the theoretical framework concerning the concepts of play, "lifelong playing", and the challenges associated with the prison context, the case study is presented in a discursive format, employing a structured interview. The article concludes with some considerations based on the critical analysis of this specific experience and the interview.

2. Play, Lifelong learning and Lifelong playing in any context, including prison

According to Johan Huizinga (2002), play is a pre-cultural experience, predating culture. For example, children create their own games and play regardless of the presence of an adult to "teach" them how to play. Moreover, despite often being associated with childhood, play is not exclusive to that stage of life; it plays a fundamental role in the development of the individual and extends throughout a person's life, representing as a sort of "lifelong playing" (Farné, 2005; 2024). There is no age at which one can be considered beyond play experience: at every stage of life there are playful dimensions and experiences. As adults, what we call "play" refers to any activity we choose to engage in freely, for enjoyment and well-being (Farné, 2005; 2024). From this perspective, we can regard sports as a cultural form of play, and likewise, the same concept can certainly be extended to board games, both traditional and modern.

Play is a fundamental element of the process of civilisation (Huizinga, 2002); it contributes to the development of rules and social structures that later become integral to cultural life. Additionally, Gregory Bateson (1996) described play as an important form of social interaction and communication that transcends mere enjoyment, contributing to the development of social and cognitive skills. He introduced the concept of play as "meta-communication", suggesting that, through play, people communicate not only content but also the rules and dynamics of the interactions themselves. This implies that play allows for the establishment and understanding of boundaries defining acceptable behaviour, fostering mutual understanding among participants. Thus, play is a practice in which relationships and meanings are continuously negotiated, explored, and renegotiated.

Roger Caillois (2016) attempted to classify play activities and proposed six characteristics that define play: freedom (play is a voluntary activity, and participants choose to engage freely); separation (play takes place in a time and space distinct from everyday life); uncertainty (the results of play cannot be pre-determined); rules (every game is governed by a set of rules that define how it should be played, establishing the modes of interaction and the conditions for winning or losing); non-productivity (play is an activity that has no productive goal); simulation (play often involves elements of representation, where participants assume roles or scenarios that may differ from reality). While these categories may require revision and expansion today, they offer an interesting perspective on play in its many forms. For example, play creates an "alternative" dimension, enabling an experience that allows us to break free from the present, the "here and now", and everyday roles, thereby facilitating the exploration of new, expected, unknown, or unexpected dynamics. In addition, Caillois (2016) analysed play's structure by introducing the distinction between "paidia" (free, spontaneous play) and "ludus" (regulated, structured play). These concepts represent the two extremes of a spectrum, illustrating the evolution of play from a more unstructured activity to a complex, rule-governed cultural form.

Play is often utilised for purposes that are not necessarily related to enjoyment. For this reason, it is essential to distinguish between "original" playful activities (fun-oriented) and educational activities conducted in the form of play. To clarify these two different ways of understanding play, Aldo Visalberghi (1958) distinguished between "ludic" activities and "game-like" activities. In ludic (or playful) activities, the aim of the game and the end of the game are the same. Participants engage in the game for fun, without external goals: ludic activities self-define. On the other hand, game-like activities can be viewed as experiences that adopt a ludic form, although the aim of the game does not correspond to that of the activity (enjoyment). In this case, the objective lies outside the game and may include learning outcomes. The objective remains external to the act of playing and is typically determined by others.

The "pedagogy of play" emphasizes the educational value of this experience: it aims to promote playful and sports activities based on an educational intent and concerns the advancement of play culture and its practices within the educational process. Through this experience, players "look at themselves and their world through the category of the possible, typical of play, according to which reality is what it looks like, but it could also be different" (Farné, 2005, p. 180). Through direct experience in play (free, uncertain, simulated), the idea of the possible emerges, along with the potential for change, which is an important pedagogical category. According to Farné (2005), "lifelong playing" could be regarded as a meaningful aspect of education. Could lifelong playing have the same value in prison? And is it possible to develop an (educational) play experience even in prison?

As defined by Erving Goffman (2003), the prison is a closed and total institution[1] characterised by many social barriers, including interpersonal dynamics tainted by prison logics and subcultures, marginalisation and stigma, social isolation, and narrowed, stereotyped social roles. Indeed, often a single role prevails, that of the "prisoner". Persons in prison are forced to live within a problematic social microcosm that is radically different from the one they experienced before entering prison. The very nature of prison as a "total institution" – where individuals are isolated from broader society and subjected to rigid structures – creates significant barriers to fostering environments conducive to meaningful play. The potential of play – for everyone, including adults – is very interesting on an educational level. In such a setting, play might be reimagined not just as a recreational activity, but as an opportunity for emotional relief, self-reflection, and interpersonal relationships, as well as a space for experimenting, all essential in mitigating the effects of isolation and marginalisation that characterise prison life.

Moreover, education in prison is not without its ambiguities (Decembrotto, 2024). Its philosophy, when not limited to a disciplinary function, stands in stark contrast to prison logics (UNESCO, 1995). Indeed, education is most often seen as a tool of incarceration technology, essentially a technology of power, an instrument used to control, organize, and amplify the power of bodies, that Michel Foucault (2008) defined as disciplinary technology. This means that within a prison context, it cannot be assumed that concepts like "education" carry the same meaning as they do outside, as full human development, emancipation, empowerment, and openness to possibilities. However, this should not lead to the conclusion that it is impossible to offer meaningful play experiences in prison; rather, as will be illustrated in the following, these experiences cannot be developed without awareness of the context in which they occur and the associated challenges. In terms of its potential, play can work as a counter-narrative to the dominant prison logic.

One final point. The play experience discussed in this article is limited to board games, both traditional and modern. Traditional board games are typically associated with abstract strategy

[1] A "total institution" refers to a setting (comprising both a structure and an order, e.g. prison or asylum) where a group of individuals, sharing similar circumstances, is isolated from the rest of society for an extended period and leads a life that is confined and systematically regulated by an authority (Goffman, 2003).

games (e.g., chess, checkers, backgammon). On the other hand, modern board games are more complex to define (Sousa & Bernardo, 2019). In general terms, a board game is a structured form of play involving rules, objectives, and components, typically (though not necessarily) played on a flat surface. A distinctive feature of board games is that players are central to the experience (Parlett, 1999). Each game is characterized by specific goals that provide direction for gameplay. Board games can serve as a medium through which players engage in strategic thinking, social interaction, and skill development. As such, they not only entertain but also reinforce essential life skills, reinforcing the idea that play is a vital component of human development. Playing modern board games appears to improve cognitive and executive abilities (Martinez et al., 2023), including logical thinking, problem solving and short-term memory; but also social skills, including relationship and emotional skills. Often board games require players to interact with one another, fostering social dynamics such as cooperation, competition, and negotiation.

3. Context and methodology

"Giocare Dentro" (translatable as "Play Inside") is a board game-based project began in 2015, following the experience of structured play activities with young people with autism who were involved in board games, carried out by a group of educators from the "La Pieve" social cooperative[2]. On that occasion, the team of educators adopted the TEACCH method[3] (Mari, 2018), an educational strategy designed for teaching children with autism. The educators began referring to themselves as "play-based educators", as their educational practice focused on the systematic use of board games as a playful mediator and on their facilitation of play activities. These educational activities are characterized by a strong pedagogical intentionality, which can be briefly described as a commitment to promoting the individual's development and well-being. In the "Giocare Dentro" project, this expertise is transferred and adapted to a radically different context: the prison.

The project is implemented within the Ravenna prison, a medium-security institution that accommodates both convicted individuals and those awaiting sentencing. The prison houses approximately 80 people in total, half Italian and half of non-Italian nationality (sometimes considered as such, even if born in Italy, because they do not have citizenship). This institution is relatively small compared to the average size of prisons in Italy and does not appear to suffer from the problem of prison overcrowding. From July 2015 to February 2023, "Giocare dentro" produced 171 game sessions, amounting to a total of 342 hours of gameplay. During these sessions, 103 board games were introduced and played. A total of 65 individuals aged between 19 and 61 (with an average age of approximately 28 years) participated, all men from various national backgrounds. The average attendance per session was about 9 players out of 12 available places (2015–2019). However, following the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused a prolonged suspension of activities in all Italian prisons, attendance decreased to 6 players out of 8 available places (2020–2023). Currently, the project is on standby, awaiting resumption.

To the best of our knowledge, there is no research on this type of educational approach in a prison context. Consequently, this paper presents the results of a preliminary exploratory research, which highlights the strengths, limitations, and potential of introducing board games into a prison context. One of the key strengths of exploratory research is its inherent flexibility,

[2] https://cooplapieve.it/

[3] Treatment and Education of Autistic and Related Communication Handicapped Children.

enabling researchers to adapt methods and objectives as new insights emerge during the study. This adaptability informed the selection of this research methodology.

Nonetheless, exploratory research has well-documented limitations, the most significant of which is its inherent subjectivity. Moreover, it is often characterised by a lack of rigorous methodological standards. This study employs a structured interview with the founder of this initiative, Gabriele Mari, a play-based educator and game designer. To gain a deeper understanding and analyse the effects as perceived by the participants, further research utilising a mixed-methods approach (both qualitative and quantitative) would be essential. For example, gathering player feedback would be invaluable. However, this is particularly complex in a prison context due to the necessary authorisations for collecting the opinions of individuals deprived of their liberty (Decembrotto & De Rocco, 2023).

Despite these limitations, the exploratory approach offers significant advantages in this context, particularly its capacity to uncover new ideas and perspectives. Its adaptability makes it especially suited to challenging environments like prisons, where logistical, social, and institutional constraints often hinder traditional research methods. The value of this research lies in its ability to illuminate a potentially significant educational and playful experience.

4. “Giocare dentro”: the interview

The following text consists of the text of the questions (Q) posed by the interviewer and the answers (A) provided by the respondent, Gabriele Mari. The interview was conducted in written form to enhance the clarity and precision of the content and terminology used.

Q: Ten years ago, in 2015, the experimental project “Giocare dentro” was launched, aimed at introducing board games within the prison of Ravenna. How did the idea of a recreational workshop in prison come about?

A: In 2015, as an educator for the “La Pieve”, a social cooperative, I began experimenting with the use of structured games, particularly board and role-playing games, in educational contexts related to disability and autism. This approach was later extended to workshops held in summer recreation centres and school classes: it became evident that the relational dynamics fostered within these groups through games were largely comparable. The activity generated an informal and enjoyable atmosphere, elicited a high level of engagement among the participants, and encouraged communication, interaction, and mutual understanding. When the opportunity arose to propose a new course within the penitentiary institution, it seemed natural to extend our playful approach and test it with a new type of group: people in prison.

Q: In your experience, under what conditions does board gaming represent an educational practice? And why is it also directed at adults?

A: Board games are activities that facilitate the development of cognitive, relational, and ethical skills. Through play, individuals engage in reasoning, evaluate options, and make decisions. Interaction with others occurs through cooperative or competitive means, depending on the game, and players navigate these interactions within a framework of rules that necessitates respect for others and adherence to the game’s normative structure. The primary condition that makes board games a particularly fruitful educational practice is the deliberate selection by an educator of specific games whose mechanics and dynamics align with the educational objectives set forth. Board games are also suitable for adults because they serve as a comprehensive form of entertainment that can accompany every stage of life. The misconception that games are solely for children stems from an outdated societal perspective and a limited understanding of the extensive range of game offerings designed specifically for adults, encompassing both complexity and thematic content.

Q: How are the board game sessions structured in prison?

A: The board game sessions for the “Giocare dentro” project are structured as weekly meetings lasting two hours each. Each cycle of sessions typically lasts about three months, with

variable breaks between cycles depending on the needs of the prison and the bureaucratic situation related to activating the workshops. Each session accommodates a maximum of 15 people and is conducted by two play-based educators from the "La Pieve" cooperative. To participate, people in prison must apply through course registration forms and wait for approval from the Director. The sessions are held in a room designated for workshops, which is equipped with a few tables and chairs. The selection of games (ranging from 5 to 20 boxes) is brought into the prison each time by the play-based educators, who must subject the materials to standard security checks. Within the room, the two educators can set up and run two separate games in parallel or form a single game group, depending on the number of participants, educational needs, and inmate preferences. During a two-hour session, generally, 2 or 3 different games are played at each table. In addition to explaining the game rules, the educators supervise the group or, upon request from persons in prison, participate actively as players.

Q: Why might a person in prison choose to participate in this activity? And if it happens, how does their motivation change over time?

A: Initially, many people in prison choose this activity out of simple curiosity or to pass time differently. Fundamentally, any offered course is seen as an opportunity to escape boredom. However, for those who remain engaged, motivation evolves into some of the primary forms of enjoyment described by Hunicke, LeBlanc, and Zubek (2004) in "MDA: A formal approach to game design and game research"[4]: some appreciate the fellowship, which involves interaction with others as a moment of mutual understanding; others enjoy the challenge of testing their abilities and demonstrating their worth; and some simply enjoy the escape (submission) – at least virtually – of an activity that allows them to "think about something else" in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.

Q: How would you describe the context in which this educational and recreational experience takes place? What opportunities and limitations have arisen over the years?

A: The prison of Ravenna is a small institution with a capacity of 83 places (almost all occupied). The building dates back to the early 1900s and has structural limitations and inadequate, cramped and poorly lit spaces, as noted in the Antigone last report (Miravalle & Scandurra, 2023). The room where the game sessions are held is a shared space used for other courses as well, often left in disorder, dirty, and cluttered with other materials. The tables are evidently repurposed from elsewhere and lack sufficient comfort. Chairs are often insufficient in number due to being missing or broken, so people in prison bring stools directly from their cells to sit. The main logistical limitation is the lack of a locked cabinet to store game boxes between sessions. This proposed implementation, seen as an initial step for project development, has never been achieved despite repeated requests.

In terms of human resources, the context is characterized by high turnover: with people in prison awaiting trial and serving sentences of up to 5 years, there is frequent turnover. This means that the group participating in the "Giocare dentro" project lacks the stability needed to establish a long-term gaming path. New members often require the reintroduction of beginner games, while the departure of more experienced participants disrupts the planned progression of game complexity. Additionally, another limitation is the poor communication with the educational department of the facility, with whom initial hopes for direct interaction, particularly in defining objectives and monitoring progress, were not realized.

Q: The prison is marked by a repetitive, alienating routine with few incentives. Recreational activities, when permitted, are often considered merely a pastime. However, this project presents a structured proposal with appropriate times and spaces for board gaming. What compromises have been made to maintain the enjoyment aspect while ensuring that the educational dimension related to experimenting with potentially new situations is not lost?

A: Board games are inherently enjoyable, and this aspect must be preserved both to attract newcomers and to maintain motivation for those already attending the course. The games used

[4] MDA stands for "Mechanics, Dynamics and Aesthetics"

in the project are what are known in the Anglo-Saxon world as COTS Games, Commercial Off The Shelf Games, regular board games found in stores, designed primarily for general entertainment rather than educational purposes. The educational value of a game is realized through its use. This is where the skill of the educational facilitator comes into play: having a clear objective and understanding that a particular game, through its mechanics and dynamics, works towards that goal. In this way, players will primarily experience enjoyment during the game, but will also be working, more or less consciously, on the competencies that the chosen game targets.

Q: What types of learning can be facilitated by board games (e.g., socio-relational or cognitive)?

A: Cognitively, board games facilitate the acquisition of knowledge, learning content, and keeping primary functions (from visual perception to language, from reasoning to abstract thinking) and life skills (problem-solving, decision-making, critical thinking, and creative thinking) in practice. Games also stimulate skills related to executive functions: emotional self-regulation, flexibility, planning, attention, response inhibition, and memory.

Emotionally and relationally, gameplay addresses self-awareness, emotional and stress management, empathy, effective communication, and the ability to interact effectively with others and establish functional relationships.

Moreover, the ethical dimension should not be underestimated: games teach respect for oneself and others through adherence to rules, becoming a metaphor for the normative structure that underpins and regulates any community and social interaction. Within a detention context, this aspect gains even greater significance.

Q: Board games also involve challenges and sometimes conflicts. How are these elements addressed and managed when they arise in prison?

A: Conflict is a fundamental element of structured games: conflict between players in competitive games, and conflict between players and the game itself in cooperative games. Competition is highly prevalent in prison life, where individuals often seek to appear strong and superior. This latent competition sometimes leads to friction, conflicts, or even physical altercations. This potential conflict, implicit and latent, can sometimes manifest as a state of perpetual anxiety and discomfort.

In contrast, conflict within board games is explicit, direct, and regulated. When players sit down to a game, they know that the goal is to win by outmanoeuvring others. The shared rules explain how to achieve one's objective and interact directly with other players (or rather, against them). The goal, the rules, and possible actions within the game are clear from the start: players understand that others will attempt to hinder and challenge them according to the rules. Accepting this regulated conflict is both liberating and stimulating: liberating because one can engage in direct conflict with another player for strategic convenience or personal dislike, while still being protected by the rules ("Sorry for attacking you, but it's part of the game!"); stimulating because conflict can showcase abilities that one might not otherwise have the chance to display ("You may be bigger than me, but I'm a better strategist, and you've never beaten me at this game").

Throughout the numerous sessions of the "Giocare dentro" project, it has never happened that a conflict sparked during the game spilled over into real life. Apart from some complaints and numerous jokes, all game conflicts have been resolved within the confines of the rules. In fact, it often happens that game conflicts, even when intense, have diffused previous real-life tensions, allowing players to understand each other better and sublimate their differences and misunderstandings through gameplay. Game conflict can thus serve as a prevention mechanism for actual physical conflict.

Q: Are there metacognitive moments for reflecting on the board game experience? How are they developed?

A: The approach intentionally adopted by the project from the beginning has been one of maximum informality. The main metacognitive moment occurs at the end of each game session

when the educational facilitator, assisted by the participants, tidies up the game components to prepare for the next game. During these moments, conversations naturally arise that review the steps of the game and comment on its outcome. Amidst the spontaneous dialogue among players, the facilitator seeks to guide the discussion towards specific points of interest to gain feedback on the inmates' experience. Typically, three themes are addressed: the rules (to ensure understanding), game strategies, and the emotions experienced during the game, giving space to various perspectives.

Even during gameplay, especially in more established groups, players may spontaneously reflect on the group interaction ("If you cheat, it means not only do you disregard the rules but also us, who are trying to follow them. If you keep cheating, you don't deserve to be here with us; you might as well go back to your cell") and the analogies between game situations and external experiences ("I drew a Knife card: you know you shouldn't give me sharp objects, or I'll end up causing trouble...").

Q: An important methodological aspect of this proposal involves expanding accessibility and participation in any educational context, including prisons. Today, the themes of inclusion have a prominent place in discussions about games and the need to create "safe spaces" where everyone can feel welcome. How are these aspects connected to board games, and how can this vision be concretized in prison?

A: Inclusion means first and foremost ensuring that everyone can participate in social activities, in this case, gaming activities. This involves considering the unique characteristics that various people in prison bring to the gaming group: some may have visual impairments, attention issues, language barriers (if they are non-native speakers of Italian or cannot read), or lack experience with structured games. The primary concern is to ensure accessibility by creating a shared environment where everyone feels welcomed and free to express themselves without judgment: simple games that are quick to explain and play, with good interaction between players to stimulate relationships, preferably without text on game components, and based on different skills so that everyone, in rotation, can excel.

The second step is to design a pathway that gradually increases the complexity of the games offered to keep engagement and motivation high, balancing the level of challenge with the participants' skill levels to maintain the group within the "flow" experience described by Mihály Csíkszentmihályi (1990) in "Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience".

Q: Throughout this interview, several aspects hint at the role of an educator (play-based educator) in a board game proposal in prison. Could you elaborate on the role and competencies of this professional figure?

A: The role of the play-based educator is a specialization that originated within the La Pieve Cooperative to enhance the use of structured games in educational contexts. Their role involves designing gaming experiences (courses, workshops, events, training) that use board and role-playing games (both commercial and modified, simplified, or self-produced) to achieve predetermined educational objectives.

The primary competency of the play-based educator is in-depth and practical knowledge of games, including their quantity and intrinsic characteristics (mechanics, dynamics, skills stimulated). Additionally, the play-based educator must be able to conduct and facilitate gaming activities in various group sizes and contexts (schools, disability, autism, specific learning disorders, recreational and social centres, prisons, elderly care).

5. Conclusive remarks

The project challenges the traditional view that sees playful activities as simply time-fillers or pastimes and does so in a context that is itself challenging for its own organisational structure. The board game is proposed as an opportunity for personal and relational development and in prison this assumes particular significance, given the limited or non-existent opportunities

available in this setting. Board games – within a framework of enjoyment – can mitigate some of the negative effects of incarceration and Gabriele Mari lists some interesting positive aspects based on his decades of experience.

Autonomy in games is expressed through the players' ability to make decisions, choose their actions, and influence the course of the game, all within a context of voluntary participation, free from external constraints. The play-based educator plays a crucial role in this process by balancing challenge with the necessary skill requirements, thereby promoting active and rewarding participation during the sessions. Within the game context, participants are encouraged to view conflict not as an obstacle, but as an opportunity to exercise their agency. This approach enables them to confront and resolve differences within the game, which not only reduces tension but also facilitates deeper reflection on their emotional responses and behaviour in conflict situations. Moreover, the moments of feedback and informal reflection that follow the games, or that may spontaneously emerge during gameplay, provide players with additional opportunities. In these spaces, they can discuss strategies, emotions, and rules, thus internalizing their gaming experiences. This leads to the independent management of the dynamics of the gaming group, as shown by the example of the reprimand for the cheat, in which an ability to self-regulate the group emerges. These interactions extend beyond the gaming context, potentially transforming into new relational modalities that enrich interpersonal dynamics even outside the gaming sessions. All of this reveals a potential that board games share with other forms of play, such as sports, particularly significant in relation to the dynamics (both relational and power-related) and the logics of the prison system.

Finally, it is important to reflect on the role of the play-based educator, a key figure of a board game-based project: they are not only facilitators of play, but professionals who design play experiences aimed at educational objectives. This role requires specific competencies, such as in-depth knowledge of games, an understanding of group dynamics, and awareness of the needs of various contexts (school, disability, prison, etc.), in addition to the typical skills of an education expert. The educational event is never accidental but is the result of intentionality: even during a play experience (including board games), intentionality is expressed as much at the relational level as it is in that temporal dimension, always oriented towards the future and the possibilities that characterises the educational relationship.

In conclusion, many questions remain unanswered. A board game project in prison highlights the potential for fostering emotional intelligence (perceiving, evaluating, understanding, using and managing emotions) and interpersonal skills among people who have often been denied such opportunities. What potential transformative power could it have in the context? And what impact might it have on the lives of the participants, particularly regarding their relationships with their families? Is there a risk that it could become yet another instrument of "disciplinary technology" (Foucault, 2008), used for the control and regulation of human behavior, instead of serving as a tool for empowerment? Conversely, how can it create spaces of freedom and opportunities for free experimentation within the realm of play? These are all open questions for further research in the area.

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