MORPHOLOGY OF THE SOCIAL NETWORK OF JUDICIALIZED ELDERLY: ANALYSIS OF INSTITUTIONALIZATION AND CIVIL CURATORSHIP

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ABSTRACT
This qualitative study investigates the morphology of the social network of judicialized older adults, making an analysis of institutionalization and civil guardianship, focusing on older adults living in the Lar dos Velhinhos in Viçosa, Minas Gerais, Brazil. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with nine participants, including older adults whose care was judicialized through civil guardianship or institutionalized by court decisions, as well as caregivers responsible for their well-being. The results indicate that the institutionalization of the elderly results in a significant strengthening of internal ties, both with the caregiver team and with other elderly people, with 75% of the interviewees highlighting this characteristic. At the same time, there is a weakening of ties with the family and a lack of frequent visits from family and friends, both reported by 50% of the interviewees. In addition, although the feeling of welcome in the institution is also high (75%), half of the elderly express a desire to participate in external activities, indicating a need for greater interaction with the environment outside the institution. It is concluded that the institutionalization of the elderly in the Home for the Elderly strengthens internal ties, but weakens family ties, revealing the need for greater interaction with the external environment.

Keywords: Elderly Person. Social Network. Judicialization of Care.

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INTRODUCTION

Population aging is a global reality that brings with it significant challenges, especially about the care and protection of the elderly. In the Brazilian context, the increase in life expectancy and the demographic transition have driven debates about public policies and care practices aimed at this portion of the population. In particular, the judicialization of the care of elderly people in nursing homes in long-term care institutions such as the Lar dos Velhinhos, in the city of Viçosa in Minas Geras, emerges as a complex issue that needs careful analysis.

The present research is justified by the need to understand how institutionalization and civil guardianship impact the social network of the elderly in court. The analysis of social interactions and relationships inside and outside institutions is essential to ensure the integral well-being of these individuals. By identifying the strengthening of internal ties and the weakening of external connections, this research aims to provide subsidies for policies and practices that promote the maintenance of family and social ties, as well as the inclusion of older people in external activities, ensuring that their fundamental human rights are respected and that their quality of life is improved. Thus, the main objective of this research is to understand the dynamics of social interactions and relationships of the elderly in nursing homes at the Lar dos Velhinhos.

To this end, the structuring of this text is shown in five sections. The first is the introduction, in which the theme, the justification for the research, the objectives, and the characterization of the sections of the text were identified. The second section brings the literature review, addressing the concepts of social network, institutionalization and civil curatorship. In turn, the third section details the methodology used in the study. Next, the results and discussions are presented, in which the morphology of the social networks of the elderly who had their care judicialized and who live in asylum in a long-term care institution was analyzed. The fifth section is composed of the conclusions of the research and, finally, the references are indicated.

THEORETICAL-CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
SOCIAL NETWORK

Portugal's (2006) social network perspective is based on four central elements of social networks: the actors (collective or individual), the interactions between individuals, the ways in which networks are structured, and the patterns established by virtue of these relationships.

In this sense, the interaction between social actors, through the qualitative analysis of networks, provides an explanation for social behavior. Relational analysis allows us to study how actors are conditioned by the social fabric that surrounds them, but also how they are able to influence and modify the network according to their interests.

According to Portugal (2006), there are 3 types of networks: intimate networks, interaction networks and exchange networks, and all of them must conjugate and articulate actions, through nodes, ties and norms that govern them. The interactions called bonds can be strong, weak, normal, discontinuous, or even interrupted, conflictual and ambivalent, depending on the social context in which the actor is inserted, either because he has been socially conditioned to a certain context, or because of his predilections or preferences.

Thus, the qualitative analysis of the social network of the elderly person who had their care judicialized, either through institutionalization or through civil curatorship (interdiction), is extremely important. The social fabric that involved it before and after judicialization and the respective knots, ties and norms that were fought before and after judicialization will be able to assess whether its fundamental human rights were respected at the time of judicialization.

The morphology of social networks will be operationalized, according to Portugal (2006), considering: Who? or the forms (The knots and the ties); What? or the content of the network flows (Instrumental and Expressive); How? or the norms that regulate actions (Reciprocity, Obligation, Equality and Autonomy).

INSTITUTIONALIZATION

Among the non-family options for the care of the elderly, the oldest is the asylum institution, whose origin dates back to Ancient Greece. Currently, however, these institutions are often associated with negative images and prejudices, and are often seen as places where the elderly are left to wait for their time to die (Christophe and Camarano, 2010; Novaes, 2003; Born, 2001; Davim et al., 2004).

Two consequences of the strong stigma surrounding this type of care are the low supply of residential institutions for the elderly and the reduced number of elderly people living in them. In addition, in Brazil, although these institutions are part of the social assistance network, in general, they arise in response to the needs of the community (Born and Boechat, 2006) and not as a result of a long-term care policy. This omission by the State hinders and inhibits inspection and explains, to a large extent, the problems in the quality of the services offered (Giacomin and Couto, 2010).

For Born (2001), in Brazilian society, nursing homes are associated with poverty, neglect and abandonment of the elderly by families. Recurrent feelings of guilt and failure are faced by relatives who take their elderly to live in this type of institution (Camarano and Scharfstein, 2010).

As a consequence, families only seek an institution for their family members when they exhaust their capacity to care (Karsch, 2003). It is still common to perceive that living in a Long-Term Care Institution for the Elderly (LTCF) means breaking ties with family and friends. In general, the institution ends up being held responsible for situations of abandonment that, in fact, already existed before the elderly person arrived at it.

According to the understanding of Da Silva *et. al* (2023), the institutionalization of the elderly is one of the oldest alternatives used as a solution to care for elderly people with partial or total loss of autonomy. Despite all the problems that hospitalization in a nursing home can cause, it is the most sought-after care resource, especially for seniors with dementia.

Although it is true that a considerable percentage of elderly people without family ties (single, widowed without children, etc.) are institutionalized, the family is one of the main resources to prevent or postpone hospitalization in nursing homes. However, many elderly people who live in nursing homes have families. Thus, knowing your family ties is a fundamental issue.

Popularly, the hospitalization of an elderly person in a nursing home can have connotations of abandonment. In this sense, caring for the elderly at home continues to be the preferred option for both the elderly and family caregivers. Currently, homes for the elderly are considered places of support capable of responding to the diverse and heterogeneous needs of the elderly when community life does not satisfy them (Bayter and Ramos, 2016).

However, from a historical point of view, the option for residential care emerges from the concept of asylum. Asylum institutions were designed in the context of traditional care, assumed by the primary family group, a function that was partially assumed by these institutions, when trying to alleviate the social problems derived from poverty (Zalai *et. al.,* 2024; Nighat *et. al.,* 2024; Ghafoor *et. al.* 2024). With the increased need to provide care for dependent individuals, especially older adults with dementia and severe limitations in basic activities of daily living, these institutions also became an option to relieve families who needed to care for older adults with severe disabilities.

There is a consensus that family care does not end with hospitalization in the nursing home (Frahm *et. al.,* 2010). Many studies agree that, in general, the decision to admit an

elderly person to a nursing home was made after a long period of home care and during a period of crisis. Most caregivers experienced mixed feelings about their older relative's admission to a nursing home because of feelings of burden relief, along with feelings of guilt over not being able to continue fulfilling their "duty of care" (Teng *et. al*, 2020; Vaismoradi *et. al.,* 2016).

This emotional conflict does not automatically end with the admission of the elderly to a nursing home; occasionally, it can increase, generating significant damage to mental health and affecting the relationship between the family member, the elderly resident, and the institution's employees (Koppitz *et al.*, 2017).

CIVIL CONSERVATORSHIP

According to Ferreira and De Loreto (2024), in order to understand the roots of the discussion about curatorship in the Brazilian legal context, it is necessary to consider that, after the arrival of the Portuguese in the year 1500, the country adopted the laws of Portugal, developing its own laws only years later. According to Pequeno (2020), curatorship in Brazil has had legal support since the Philippine Ordinances, promulgated by King Felipe I in 1603. These Portuguese norms remained in force until 1916, when the first Civil Code of the Brazilian Republic was instituted, which was replaced only in 2002, according to the aforementioned author.

The Philippine Ordinances followed the same line as the Alphonsine Ordinances, providing for the curatorship of prodigals and mentally capped. This regulation was similar to that of the Alphonsine Ordinances, determining that, if the judge knew that a sandwich could cause damage to the person or property, he should hand it over to the care of his father, who would guarantee his protection and manage his assets (Rodrigues; Crispino, 2019).

The authors also point out that in the Philippine Ordinances, people with mental disabilities were treated by the police in a similar way to ferocious animals. There was an article that specified that the police should contain the danger posed by mad people in the same way they did with ferocious animals.

From 1916 onwards, Brazil adopted a Civil Code established by Law No. 3,071, of January 1, 1916, which remained in force from 1917 to 2002. In the first Brazilian Civil Code, people with intellectual disabilities were considered absolutely incapable, described as insane of all kinds, and were subject to curatorship.

Originally, the Civil Code of 2002 classified people with mental disabilities as absolutely or relatively incapable, according to the degree of discernment they had to perform acts of civil life.

In the context of the time, the New Civil Code represented progress by recognizing that, depending on the degree of discernment of the person, he could be considered absolutely or relatively incapable. There was also an update in the terms, referring to this population as people with disabilities and people with illnesses (Ferreira; de Loreto, 2023). Despite the advances, the Civil Code, in its original version, did not recognize possibilities of autonomy for curators, especially for those with mental health issues, as understood by Rodrigues and Crispino (2019).

Major legal changes have occurred in the field of curatorship debates since the enactment of Law No. 13,146, of July 6, 2015 – Brazilian Law for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (Statute of Persons with Disabilities). Right at the beginning, the law changes the legal concept of a person with disabilities. According to Pequeno (2020), *"Thus, the concept of a person with disabilities is changed and expanded, relocating the focus from the subject to society and enhancing functionality to the detriment of disability".*

The statute defines the characteristics of the subject to be characterized as disabled:

> Art. 2 A person with a disability is considered to be one who has an impediment of a physical, mental, intellectual or sensory nature, which,
> in interaction with one or more barriers, may obstruct their participation full and effective in society on equal terms with others
> people.
> Paragraph 1 - The assessment of the disability, when necessary, will be biopsychosocial,
> carried out by a multiprofessional and interdisciplinary team and will consider: (Term) (See Decree No. 11,063, of 2022)
> I - the impediments in the functions and structures of the body;
> II - socio-environmental, psychological and personal factors;
> III - the limitation in the performance of activities; and
> IV - the restriction of participation. (BRAZIL, 2015).

Article 4 of the Statute of Persons with Disabilities recognizes that people with disabilities have the right to enjoy the same opportunities as others, without suffering discrimination. Next, Article 6 addresses the legal capacity of these persons, stating that:

Art. 6 Disability does not affect the full civil capacity of the person, including towards:

> I - to marry and form a stable union;
> II - to exercise sexual and reproductive rights;
> III - to exercise the right to decide on the number of children and to have access to adequate information on reproduction and family planning;
> IV - to preserve their fertility, with compulsory sterilization being prohibited;
> V - exercising the right to family and family and community life; and

> VI - to exercise the right to custody, guardianship, curatorship and adoption, as adopter or adoptee, in equal opportunities with the others people. (BRAZIL, 2015).

In the context of the issue related to curatorship, this implies that a person with a disability cannot be submitted just because he or she has it; It is essential to demonstrate that her condition makes it impossible for her to manage the acts of civil life. In "Chapter II: Equal recognition before the law", curatorship is treated as follows:

> Article 85. The curatorship will only affect acts related to the rights of patrimonial and business nature.
> Paragraph 1 - The definition of curatorship does not reach the right to one's own body, to the
> sexuality, marriage, privacy, education, health,
> work and voting.
> Paragraph 2 - Curatorship is an extraordinary measure, and must be included in the sentence the reasons and motivations of its definition, preserving the
> interests of the curator.
> Paragraph 3 - In the case of a person in a situation of institutionalization, when appointing
> curator, the judge must give preference to a person who has a relationship of nature family, affective or community with the curator. (BRAZIL, 2015).

As of 2015, after the enactment of the statute, the Civil Code began to consider as absolutely incapable only individuals under 16 years of age, and as relatively incapable:

> Article 4 - They are incapable, in relation to certain acts or the manner of exercise: (Text given by Law No. 13,146, of 2015) (Validity)
> I - those over sixteen and under eighteen years of age;
> II - habitual drunkards and drug addicts; (Text given by Law No 13.146, of 2015) (Term)
> III - those who, for transitory or permanent reasons, cannot express his will; (Text given by Law No. 13,146, of 2015) (Term)
> IV - the prodigals.
> Sole Paragraph. The capacity of indigenous people will be regulated by legislation special. (Text given by Law No. 13,146, of 2015) (Validity). (BRAZIL, 2015).

Thus, the distinctions between absolute and relative curatorship are abandoned, and curatorship is understood as a mechanism intended to protect while preserving the rights of the person under curatorship.

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

In order to achieve the objectives proposed in this research, in addition to a literature review, considering scientific articles from various areas of study that can contribute to the understanding of aging from a gender perspective and the judicialization of elderly care, the field research itself was carried out, aiming to analyze aging from the perspective of gender,

characteristics of the profile, motive and consequences of judicialization. The survey was carried out in 2024, with elderly people who live institutionalized in the non-profit foundation, called Lar dos Velhinhos, established in the city of Viçosa in Minas Gerais.

Data collection was carried out through interviews, in which a semi-structured script was applied to the elderly who live institutionalized, as well as to the professionals who work with the care of the elderly, totaling 9 people, being: 1 Director of the Institution, 1 Nurse, 1 Social Worker, 1 Nutritionist and 5 Elderly, 3 women and 2 men.

The social network variables identified were the following: nodes (individuals or entities), ties, content, and norms.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
THE MORPHOLOGY OF THE SOCIAL NETWORKS OF THE ELDERLY WHO HAD THEIR CARE JUDICIALIZED

The 5 elderly people who had their care judicialized were interviewed and, after identifying themselves, were questioned with question number 1 of block ii – social networks: characteristics and morphology: "How did their institutionalization affect their social relationships?", resulting in the following responses:

> Interviewee 1: "Cut. Because no one knows. Nobody knows I'm here, my compadres from Rio don't know."
>
> Interviewee 2: "It distances friendships a little, my children also distance them because they work and can't keep coming, but I talk on the phone with my boys almost every day."
>
> Interviewee 3: "Yes. He pushed him away, right?"
>
> Interviewee 4: "He pushed his relatives away a little..."
>
> Interviewee 5: "He pushed away the friendships that he had a lot of friendship abroad. He pushed it away."

The analysis of the interviewees' answers, based on the perspective of the social network of Portugal (2006), reveals a significant impact of social networks on their relationships. According to Portugal, social networks are made up of four central elements: the actors (collective or individual), the interactions between individuals, the structure of the networks and the patterns established in these relationships. By applying these concepts, we identified notable changes in respondents' bonds and interactions.
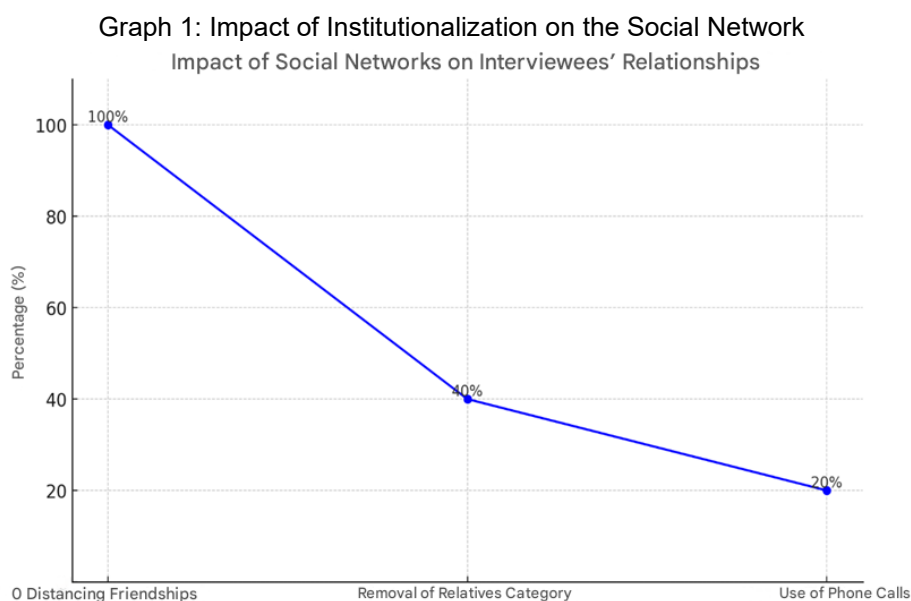
In terms of distance from friendships, it was observed that 100% of the interviewees (5/5) reported that their friendship ties were interrupted or weakened after the judicialization

of care. This distancing represents an alteration in the networks of intimates, where previously strong ties have become weak or even broken.

In addition, 40% of the interviewees (2/5) mentioned a distance from relatives, indicating a change in the interaction networks. These family ties, which may have been strong or normal, have been weakened, reflecting a change in the norms of reciprocity and obligation that governed these relationships.

On the other hand, only 20% of respondents (1/5) highlighted the use of phone calls to keep in touch with their family members. This data reveals that, despite the difficulties, some social actors still manage to maintain instrumental and expressive ties through telephone communication, although these ties are less frequent and more fragile.

Graph 1 below clearly shows the intensity of the impact in each category, highlighting significant estrangement from friendships, followed by estrangement from relatives and, to a lesser extent, the use of phone calls to maintain contact.

Graph 1: Impact of Institutionalization on the Social Network

Impact of Social Networks on Interviewees' Relationships

Source: Prepared by the authors (2024).

These results show that the judicialization of care, whether through institutionalization or civil curatorship (interdiction), profoundly impacts the morphology of the social networks of the elderly (Song, *et. al,* 2023). The nodes and ties that make up these networks are altered, affecting the reciprocity, obligation and autonomy of the actors involved. This change in the social fabric can be analyzed to understand whether the fundamental human rights of the elderly were respected at the time of judicialization, as suggested by Portugal (2006).

Question No. 5 of the same block of questions wished to investigate with the elderly interviewed and judicialized if "there was any change in social ties after the judicialization of care", the answers to this question were as follows:

Interviewee 1: "I had too much friendship. Many compadres. Now they don't... They know I left Rio, right? They don't know I'm here. I have affiliated, I have many compadres. I had a lot of friendship. My godmother was too friendly. Then after he came here, he cut off these friendships a little because no one knows. Nobody knows."

Interviewee 2: "Friendships from abroad are all very far away."

Interviewee 3: "We stay away from family and colleagues in the church..."

Interviewee 4: "You can't go out for a walk or go to mass, that's not good."

Interviewee 5: "I get very stuck... I liked to go back and forth and now I can't."

The analysis of the interviewees' answers, based on the perspective of the social network of Portugal (2006), reveals that there was a change in social ties after the judicialization of care. By applying these concepts, we identified notable changes in the nodes and loops of the respondents' networks.

As in the previous results, it was observed that 60% of the interviewees (3/5) reported a withdrawal from friendships after the judicialization of care. This distancing, as previously observed, represents an alteration in the networks of intimates, where the previously strong ties have become weak or interrupted.

In addition, 20% of the interviewees (1/5) mentioned a distance from the family after judicialization, indicating a change in the interaction networks. Additionally, 40% of respondents (2/5) highlighted the impossibility of participating in social activities, such as walking or going to mass, which indicates a significant restriction in their social interaction networks. This impossibility represents an interruption in the expressive and instrumental flows of these networks, showing how the norms of equality and autonomy have been altered.

Finally, 20% of respondents (1/5) expressed a feeling of being trapped, without the freedom to move and socialize as before, showing an alteration in autonomy and the ability to maintain active social ties. This feeling shows a change in the knots and ties that make up the social networks of these individuals, affecting their ability to influence and modify the network according to their interests.

These results show that the judicialization of care has a profound impact on the social networks of the elderly, altering the established patterns of interaction and negatively affecting the ties and knots that make up these networks. According to Panas (2024), the

qualitative analysis of the social networks of the elderly shows that the judicialization of care causes a weakening of social ties, leading to isolation and a decrease in meaningful interactions. Graph 2, as shown below, reveals in a tabular way the results that were found in the research:

Graph 2 – Impact of the Social Network after the Judicialization of Care

Impact of the Judicialization of Care on the Social Networks of Interviewees
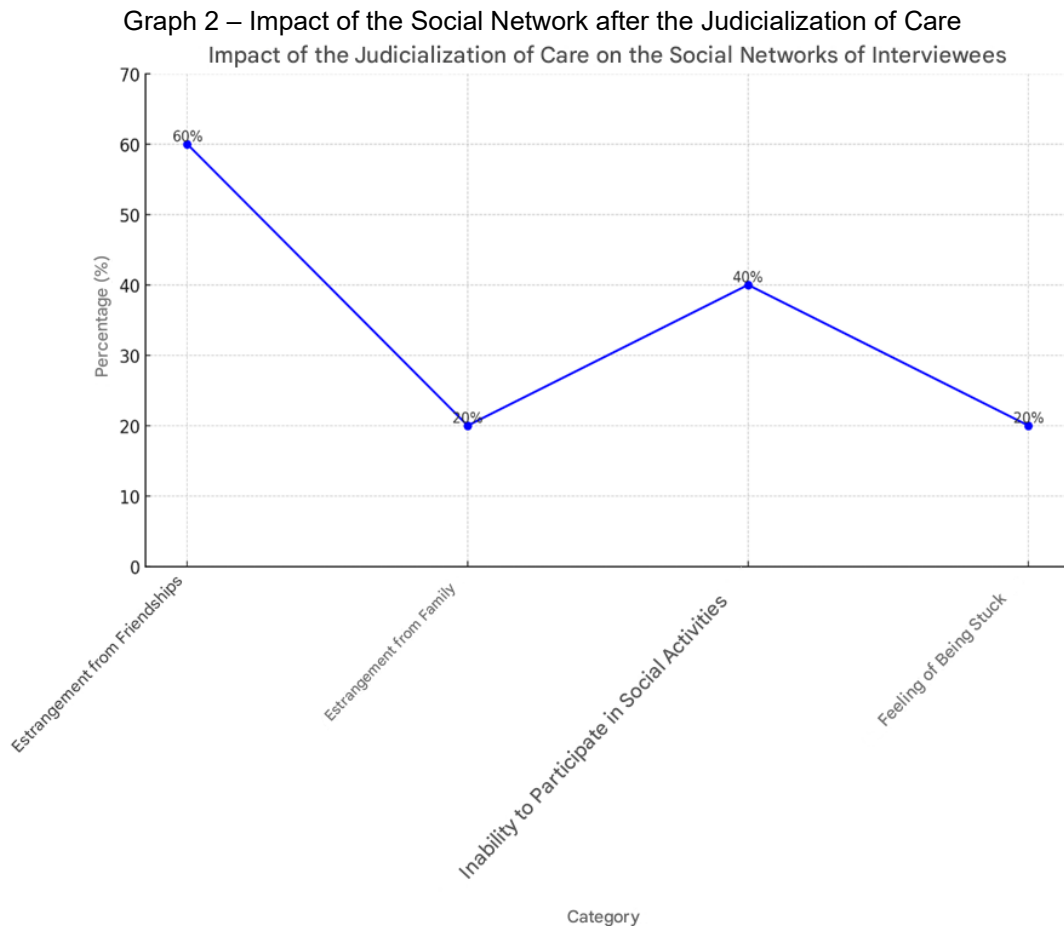
Source: Prepared by the authors (2024).

The graph clearly shows the intensity of the impact in each category, highlighting significant estrangement from friendships, followed by inability to participate in social activities, estrangement from family, and feeling stuck.

As for the support public that works in the care of the elderly and were interviewed, the social network of the elderly, after the judicialization of care, can be characterized as follows:

> Interviewee 1: "I think that from the moment they are here, their network here is stronger. Because they start to trust the whole team. So what happens? They make a bond with the caregivers, with the work team and with themselves among themselves. One elderly man calls the other uncle. They form a family here. So, like this, everyone depends on the other. I think that when one lends a hand to the other, then they have lunch. So, one goes to fetch, the one who has more skill, fetches water for the other. So, like that, they make their family. It's a family bond. Some have some resistance. But most achieve everything. Between them, here, the bond is very strong. Therefore, if one is sick, they worry. If one goes to the hospital, they

worry. How are you in the hospital? Is he doing well? When will it return? Know? That concern, you see that it is a family concern, a volunteer concern. And when, outside, the family, what happens? Little comes to visit. Sometimes, I have to stay on my cell phone, asking, practically begging (...)"

Interviewee 2: "So, I think that their dealings with us, the employee, we became his family, I see them very loving. I think it's very strong, very reliable. They even consider us more as family than the family that comes to visit. And they love the visits, you know, sporadic. Visits that are not familiar. I also feel that they feel very welcomed and as for the family, they get more stuck. Over time, the ties with the family do weaken. I have only three elderly people that I receive from friends, former neighbors. Few, then, would be a minority, for sure. But I don't think they're sad about that either. It's as if it were like that, a relationship that they created here. And then, already in the part of going out for a walk, I see that they really miss a church, a bar, a farm, a club, a forró."

Interviewee 3: "I think it's much stronger here. I notice some caregivers like this, the care they have is different when a family comes. When you go to hug, it seems that the bond is close, you know? That middle and correct hug. It is just like that. I think it's weakened out there. And here inside the bond is strong. It's like an elderly woman, who the two stay together, sleep in the same room, they fight about slamming the door, about one wanting to knock on the other, but then, at dinner time one takes the hand from the other and helps to climb the stairs, right? Cute. So, I think it becomes a family, like that. And abroad, the relationship they had before, the family that is fragile, but for example, friends they had abroad? Some still come here, but I think it's not enough. So, I've been here for a short time, right? I even want to work on this issue of strengthening, of a friend I came here, of them to go for a walk to have this family life, but I think it's weak. I don't know if it's because of their knowledge, of knowing that they can come here. I don't know if we need to publicize more. Sometimes they ask to go to mass. Something like that, which I think is also a negative side, that I think we can't throw all the activities in here. Like this, there is celebration, so you don't need to go out to go to mass. Let's do an activity here, you don't need to do it outside. I think we have to look a little more outside for them to leave, I think that would be good for them. Here with institutions there are, for example, the celebrations that come through the church that is only Catholic, only Catholic, evangelical I have not yet seen."

Interviewee 4: "Here I think it's very good, but in other institutions where I worked, there were many who threw the elderly there and said: only call me if I die. Many changed their phone numbers, we couldn't get in touch. It was very sad. "

The analysis of the interviewees' answers, based on the perspective of the social network of Portugal (2006), revealed to the public of care for the elderly that institutionalization also had a significant impact on social networks.

It was observed that 75% of the interviewees (3/4) reported a strengthening of internal ties in the institution, both with the team of caregivers and with other elderly people. This strengthening reflects the creation of new networks of intimates, where bonds are often strong and stable. The elderly form a kind of family within the institution, with interactions based on reciprocity and mutual obligation.

On the other hand, 50% of respondents (2/4) mentioned a weakening of ties with the family. This change indicates a modification in the interaction networks, where family ties become weak or interrupted, affecting the norms of reciprocity and obligation that governed

these relationships. In addition, 75% of the interviewees (3/4) expressed a feeling of welcome in the institution, showing that the new networks of intimates provide an environment of support and trust. However, 50% of respondents (2/4) highlighted the lack of frequent visits from family and friends, reflecting a change in the established patterns of their exchange networks.

Finally, 50% of respondents (2/4) expressed a desire to participate in outside activities, such as going to church or going for a walk. According to Liang (2023), this need for external interaction indicates that, despite strong internal ties, there is a lack of expressive and instrumental flows that only activities outside the institution can provide (Huang *et. al,* 2024). Graph 3, as shown below, reveals in tabular form the results that were found in the research:

Graph 3 – The social network of the elderly after judicialization from the point of view of the supporting public.
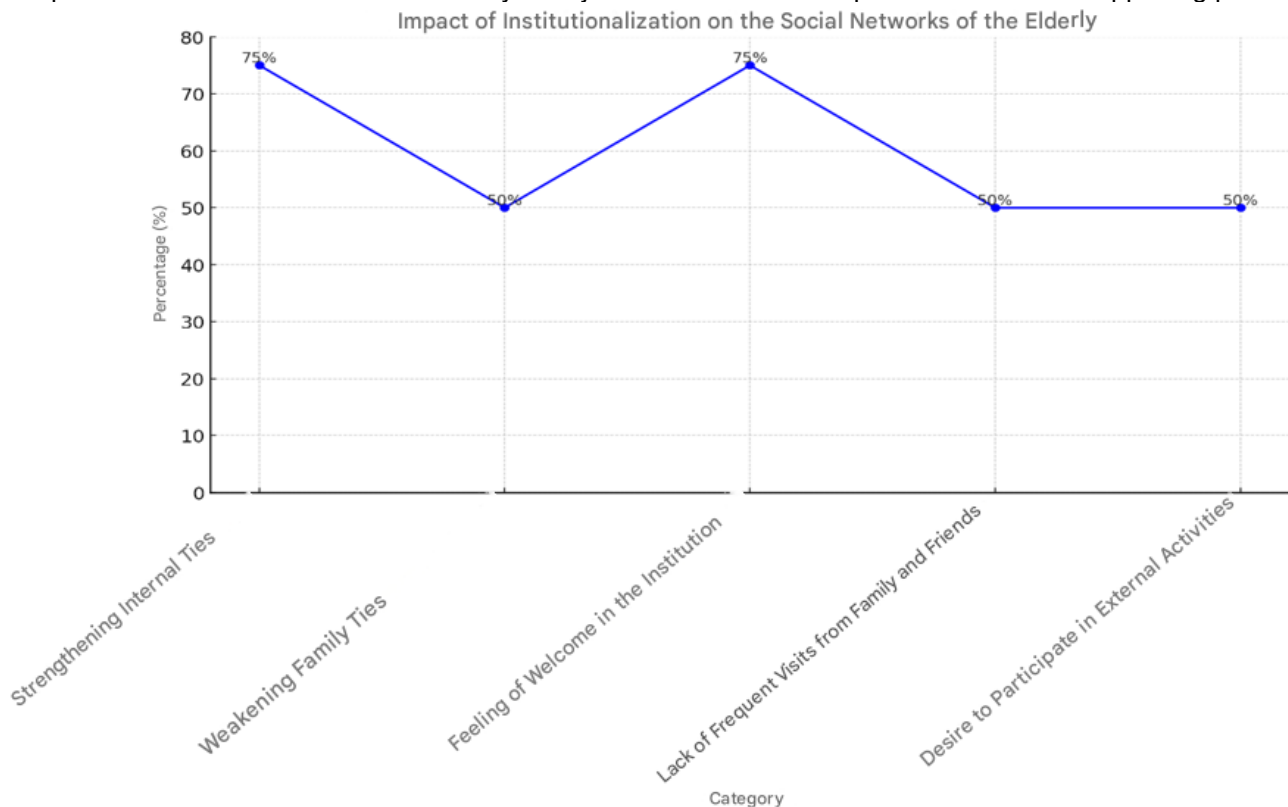
Source: Prepared by the authors (2024).

The graph clearly shows that the institutionalization of the elderly results in a significant strengthening of internal ties, both with the caregiver team and with other older adults, with 75% of the interviewees highlighting this characteristic. At the same time, there is a weakening of ties with the family and a lack of frequent visits from family and friends, both reported by 50% of the interviewees.

In addition, although the feeling of welcome in the institution is also high (75%), half of the elderly express a desire to participate in external activities, indicating a need for greater interaction with the environment outside the institution. These observations suggest that, while the internal social network of the elderly is strengthened, their external connections tend to weaken, highlighting the importance of balancing these two aspects to promote integral well-being.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The answers of the interviewees revealed a significant impact of the judicialization of care on the social networks of the elderly. The analysis shows that both friendship and family ties were severely affected, with the majority of respondents reporting a weakening or disruption of these ties. The structure of the social networks of the elderly has changed substantially after judicialization.

There was a clear shift in interaction patterns, with a decrease in meaningful interactions and a reduction in participation in external social activities. Within the institutions, the elderly found new support networks with the team of caregivers and among themselves. This resulted in stronger and more stable bonds, providing a welcoming environment and emotional support.

Despite internal support in institutions, many older adults expressed a desire to participate in outside activities such as going to church or going for a walk, indicating a gap in exchange networks that only activities outside the institution can satisfy. The results highlight the need for policies that promote the maintenance of the social networks of the elderly in court, both inside and outside the institutions. This includes measures to strengthen family and friendship ties, as well as encouraging social activities that promote social integration. It is important to recognize the limitations of this study, such as the sample size and the generalizability of the results. Future research can further explore the impact of specific interventions on improving the social networks of older people in court.

However, as *a policy making*, it is suggested to use technology to promote strong social networks for elderly people in court. As technology has played a fundamental role in keeping people connected, regardless of the physical distances that separate them, the policy proposes a platform for making video calls, allowing a closer and more frequent contact of the elderly in court with their families and their entire social network outside the institution through a digital project called Digital Connection 60+. It is expected to reduce loneliness, improve mental health and strengthen family and friendship ties, providing a more supportive environment for the elderly in legal proceedings.

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