

3-18-2014

Motherhood Bound by State Supervision: An Exploratory Study of the Experiences of Mothers on Parole and Probation

Kaitlyn Robison

University of South Florida, robison1@mail.usf.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/etd>



Part of the [Sociology Commons](#)

Scholar Commons Citation

Robison, Kaitlyn, "Motherhood Bound by State Supervision: An Exploratory Study of the Experiences of Mothers on Parole and Probation" (2014). *USF Tampa Graduate Theses and Dissertations*.
<https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/etd/5116>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the USF Graduate Theses and Dissertations at Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. It has been accepted for inclusion in USF Tampa Graduate Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@usf.edu.

Motherhood Bound by State Supervision:
An Exploratory Study of the Experiences of Mothers on Parole and Probation

by

Kaitlyn J. Robison

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
Department of Sociology
College of Arts and Sciences
University of South Florida

Major Professor: Michelle Hughes Miller, Ph.D.
Jennifer Friedman, Ph.D.
Elizabeth Aranda, Ph.D.

Date of Approval:
March 18, 2014

Keywords: Community corrections, reentry, identity management, negotiation

Copyright © 2014, Kaitlyn J. Robison

DEDICATION

At this moment, this thesis feels like the contents of my whole heart, soul, and brain. As my heart, soul, and brain have all been shaped by my family, my thesis is dedicated to them. Without my mother, I am certain I would not be who I am today. The motivation necessary for finishing one of the most challenging projects I have taken on (so far) comes predominantly from her—from hearing her tell me over and over again, “Kaitlyn, your work is important. Your work has the potential to change lives. YOU have the potential to change lives, and you WILL change lives.” I just keep thinking, Mom, “We share DNA”, and when I remember this, I know you are right. And to my Grandma, another amazing woman who listened to me every day on the phone, or pacing around my apartment, talking about how I was unsure that I even had any brain cells left. Over countless plates of homemade biscuits n’ gravy, she would tell me, “It’ll all work out.” Those words got me through. The faith and support of my family and friends is unparalleled and because of them, this thesis happened. So thank you all, with such strong people beside me I know that even if I do not change the world, I have the strength to try.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I cannot imagine having a more supportive thesis committee guiding me through this turbulent process. Dr. Michelle Hughes Miller, I am not sure how you put up with all of my panicked emails. You instilled the confidence and inspiration in me that was needed to produce this research. Your words of encouragement as well as your critiques will continue to shape me as a researcher, a teacher, a student, and a person. Dr. Jennifer Friedman, I will never forget the day you told me, “You’re going to be fine, this is good stuff.” You made sure that I was doing quality research—something I could always be proud of. Dr. Elizabeth Aranda, in my first course of graduate school, you encouraged me to jump feet first into conducting research. You inspired me to find an issue I was passionate about, and regardless of the potential obstacles, to tackle it head on. Each one of you made this project possible and I can only hope that I have made you proud.

My cohort is an incredibly diverse group of individuals and it took me about four months to realize that we each have a unique skill that allows us to support each other while our own individual worlds seem to be falling apart. Despite multiple mini-breakdowns, vent sessions in the office, and too many cups of coffee to count, we got each other through. My best friend, sushi VIP partner, and sounding board Blake Martin, what will I do without you in the cubicle next to me? I fear the day when I am unable to roll my chair back, ask “Does this make sense?”, read a page to you, and hear you say, “Yep, now keep writing.” Good thing for the Internet, cell phones, and planes!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables	ii
Abstract	iii
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Chapter Two: Review of the Literature	4
Motherhood	5
State Supervision	9
Stigma and Stigma Management	12
Social Support and State Supervision	16
Chapter Three: Methodology	22
The Recruitment Site	24
The Recruitment Process	25
Analysis	26
Chapter Four: The Participants.....	28
Chapter Five: Findings	31
The Challenge: Conflicting Responsibilities	32
Tool 1: Social Support	38
Tool 2: Stigma Management through Management of Openness	46
Tool 3: Repairing Damage to Identity through a Redefinition of “Good Mother”	51
Chapter Six: Discussion	56
Chapter Seven: Conclusion	62
Policy Implications	66
Suggestions for Future Research	67
References	68
Appendices	73
Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter	74
Appendix B: Interview Guide	75

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Participants	30
--	----

ABSTRACT

With an influx of women entering the incarcerated population comes an increase in the number of children who have a mother serving time. As these mothers are released from prison or jail they immediately enter into the parole or probation system. This research focuses on the experiences of these women within state supervision, but also on what it means to be a mother. Through thematic analysis of 8 in-depth interviews with women who are currently on or were recently released from probation or parole, this study explores how women manage the combined identity of “mother under state supervision.” There are many instances of direct conflict that result from the combined identity of “mother under state supervision.” In order to deal with this conflict and manage their combined identity, the women use a multitude of tools. This analysis focuses on three of those tools: social support, managing openness, and redefining ways to be good moms. What has emerged from this analysis is the complex nature of navigating the combined identity of “mother under state supervision” and the tools that this particular group of women have used to do so.

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

The United States is in an era of mass incarceration. The U.S. is home to 5% of the world's population, but to 25% of its prisoners (NAACP 2013). As males make up the majority of the prison and jail populations, much research has been directed towards the *male* experience of incarceration and state supervision. However, I focus in this thesis on women who have been incarcerated, particularly mothers, because while women make up the minority of the population in the system, the incarceration rate of women has surpassed that of men every year since 1981 (Moe 2007). Just in the 1980s, the incarceration rate of women tripled while men's merely doubled (Kline 1993). As of 2010, more than one million women were under the supervision of the criminal justice system in some way: 112,797 in prison, 93,300 in jail, 712,084 on probation, and 103,374 on parole (The Sentencing Project 2012). There are two areas of policy reform that have been suggested as accounting for this increase in women's rate of incarceration: the War on Drugs and the feminization of poverty. The War on Drugs has resulted in a greater enforcement of drug laws and an increase in the penalties for drug offenses (Belknap 2001). Women tend to be nonviolent offenders—so while the War on Drugs has greatly impacted both men and women, it has impacted women more intensely, resulting in a sharp increase in their incarceration for drug law violations (Law 2009). The feminization of poverty suggests that the increase in poverty, along with the decrease in public assistance for the poor, has resulted in an increased involvement of women in economically based crimes (Campbell et al 1998).

I am particularly interested in mothers under state supervision, because as a result of the influx of women entering the prison population, the number of children who have a mother serving time is also growing. In 2007, the prison system was made of 65,600 mothers who reported having 147,400 children; 90% of the children had been living solely with their mother prior to her incarceration (Glaze and Maruschak 2008). This is an 80% increase in the number of children with an incarcerated parent since 1981 and a 131% increase in the number of children with a mother in prison (Mignon and Ransford 2012). Women are more likely than men to be their children's primary caretakers prior to incarceration; therefore, they face a myriad of challenges regarding their children while incarcerated (Schram 1999). Maintaining contact with their children while incarcerated is often very difficult—according to a Bureau of Justice Statistics (Mumola et al 2000) report, 54% of incarcerated mothers never have a visit from their children. There are fewer prisons for women than for men, resulting in an increased chance that families may have to travel great distances to visit (Mignon and Ransford 2012). The incarceration of a mother, in most but not all cases, disrupts the lives of the children far more than if the father was to be incarcerated (Datesman and Cales 1983).

After being released from incarceration, many individuals enter a period of parole or probation. As the number of mothers leaving prison and jail increases, it follows that the population of mothers under state supervision has also expanded. A majority of women who are primary caretakers prior to incarceration aim to regain full custody of their children and step back into the role of primary caretaker (Dodge and Pogrebin 2001). What has emerged is an exponentially increasing population of mothers who, after a period of incarceration, have now become mothers on parole or probation.

As this unique and under-researched population of women under supervision of the criminal justice system rapidly increases, it is necessary to understand their experiences. The literature is specifically lacking in exploration of the experiences of mothers who are under state supervision. My research begins to fill this gap by exploring how mothers on parole or probation manage the demanding and important responsibilities that come with both motherhood and state supervision. My study will contribute to our understanding of the consequences of mass incarceration policies on mothers within the system—specifically, how they manage the responsibilities and challenges that come with being a mother under state supervision.

CHAPTER TWO:

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

As the women in my study simultaneously experience the identities of mother and parolee/probationer, my research is informed broadly by both the motherhood and state supervision literatures, which I present below. Within the motherhood literature, the social construction of the “good mother” (Choi et al 2005), intensive mothering (Hays 1996), racialized ideals of mothering (Collins 1994), and research focusing on criminal mothers (Coontz 1992; Moe and Ferrao 2008; Opsal 2001), is most pertinent. I will also discuss the institution of state supervision (Opsal 2011), as well as the multitude of barriers that individuals, especially women, face while on parole or probation (Petersilia 2003; Richie 2001; Dodge and Pogrebin 2001; Fox 1982). A specific barrier faced by individuals with a criminal record is the potential for stigmatization; therefore I consider stigma and stigma management generally (Goffman 1963; Hogwarth 2006), as well as in the context of a criminal record and state supervision (Uggen et al 2006; LeBel 2012; Schmitt et al 2002; Carpenter et al 2010; Harding 2003; Opsal 2011). To complement the discussion of the challenges faced by probationers/parolees, I also include research that details tools of successfully reentering society. A primary tool is social support, including but not limited to family support (Vera Institute of Justice 2011; Flavin 2004; O’Brien 2001; Barreras et al 2005), social services (Pearl 1998; Holtfreter et al 2004), parole officers (O’Brien 2001), employment (Freudenberg et al 2005; Servan and Mittlemark 2012), and residential reentry programs—programs in which the client lives in a house run by the

organization—or “halfway houses” (O’Brien 2001; Harm and Phillips 2000). Collectively, my study is informed by these bodies of literature but also attempts to fill the gaps that emerge within each.

Motherhood

A woman with children will have different experiences than a woman without children, and this will result in a differently constructed identity (Heisler and Butler Ellis 2008). However, it is not just the personal experience of being a mother that can influence such identity construction. Societal role expectations, such as the financial provision aspect of parenthood, as well as interactions with others and messages from others also shape the identity of the mother (Heisler and Butler Ellis 2008). Choi, Henshaw, Baker, and Tree (2005) suggest that this social construction of motherhood “sets the standard for what is a ‘good’ mother (and therefore a good woman) and what is a ‘bad’ one” (2005: 168). For this reason, women use the idea of the “good mother” as the standard by which to measure themselves and to measure others (Ussher 1989). In order to maintain the “face” of a “good mother,” through conversations and comparisons, a woman may construct a self-identity that comes close to matching the socially agreed upon ideas regarding motherhood (Heisler and Butler Ellis 2008). The image of a “good mother” is often linked with the “intensive mothering” paradigm (Hays 1996). This paradigm emphasizes complete selflessness of mothers, expecting mothers to “devote limitless time, energy, and resources to their children’s development while disregarding any self-interest that may conflict with children’s needs and desires” (Sousa 2011).

The construction of the “good” or “bad” mother is wrought with racial biases. Solinger (1994) suggests that Black single mothers are deemed deviant whereas White single mothers are considered different but redeemable. All mothers are *not* created equal; however, all mothers are

held accountable to these ideological standards. The Eurocentric view of White middle-class motherhood affects the lives of all women, regardless of race or class, as they too are held to these rigid standards. This focus is highly problematic because it assumes that *all* mothers have some degree of economic security that extends to their children and that all mothers enjoy the racial privilege afforded to White, middle-class women. White motherhood ideology ignores the unique challenges that mothers who are not White or middle-class may face (Collins 1994). Collins (1987) argues that the mothering in Black culture does not always take place within a private, nuclear family household, as racial oppression has often denied Black families the resources to support such a family. She also claims that the strict sex-role segregation commonly found in White families is less prevalent in African American families. Finally, the notion that to be a “good mother” means making motherhood a full-time occupation and depending on men economically is less characteristic of African American families (Mullings 1986; Dill 1986; Carby 1987). Collins proposes that, “work for Black women has been an important and valued dimension of Afrocentric definitions of Black motherhood” (1987: 279).

“New Momism,” a term coined by Douglas and Michaels (2004), speaks to the intense pressure that women are under to be the perfect mothers. Interestingly it is not just their partners or the media placing this pressure on women, but they themselves who have internalized the intensive parenting ideals and constantly work to uphold them. Douglas and Michaels (2004) suggest that while women are no longer required to be subservient to men on a social scale, as they can sometimes “choose” to enter the workforce or stay at home with the children, the idea that a woman can “choose” whether to have a child or not is just false:

...the only truly enlightened choice to make as a woman, the one that proves, first, that you are a “real” woman, and second, that you are a decent, worthy one, is to become a mom and to bring to child rearing a combination of selflessness

and professionalism that would involve the cross cloning of Mother Teresa with Donna Shalala (Douglas and Michaels 2004: 5).

Mothers are held solely responsible for the actions, behaviors, health, and well-being of their children, even far into the child's adulthood. This is often associated with the concept of "mother-blame" (Ladd-Taylor and Umansky 1998). Mothers hold a stressful position in US society, as they are constantly expected to be perfect and to raise perfect children.

The hegemonic image of motherhood is central to the construction of gender, and maternal role expectations for women do not exclude women who have been incarcerated (Coontz 1992). As incarcerated mothers, these women hold a unique position; they have the identity of "mother," but they cannot fulfill the responsibilities of motherhood in traditional ways, which according to Berry and Eigenberg (2003) produces role strain. As the maternal role is closely linked with a woman's sense of identity (Simon 1992), incarcerated or formerly incarcerated mothers find themselves in a bind: the "master status" of criminal overtakes the status of mother (Faith 1993; Girshick 1999; Zalba 1964).

Moe and Ferraro (2008) conducted life-history interviews with thirty women in prison. Fifteen of these women were White, seven were African American, three were Latina, two were American Indian, and three self-identified as biracial. The majority of the sample indicated that they had little to no legitimate income prior to incarceration. The researchers suggest that these women in particular viewed motherhood in two ways: as a valuable social status that requires that women uphold hegemonic standards of motherhood, and as a practical obligation in which they must provide for their children, which in many instances is made difficult due to poverty, abuse, and drug use. They emphasized the social significance placed on motherhood and the idea of the "good mother." In this regard, the researchers assert that the respondents viewed as good mothers absolutely devoted to their children, therefore they were able to see themselves

positively. Throughout many of the interviews the respondents claimed that, in a way, it was their desire to be good mothers that drove them to commit the crimes for which they are imprisoned. They also expressed guilt about being absent from their children's lives. Moe and Ferraro argue that, "regardless of their circumstances, the women retained their motherhood status. In most cases, doing so provided comfort, motivation for change, and resistance to the social stigma placed upon them" (Moe and Ferraro 2008: 147).

In Opsal's (2001) general exploration into the experiences of women on parole, the link between motherhood and parole emerged. The motherhood identity served as a way for the women to repair the damage to their identity caused by their parolee, criminal, or felon status. The women often constructed themselves as good mothers despite acknowledging that others may not consider them to be the typical "good mothers." Opsal (2001) contends that, "Indeed, the mothering practices of many of these mothers have been demonized by media and the public. However, the women in this study often worked to reject the label of 'bad' mother, reconstructing their experiences with their children using different criteria" (2001: 104). Many of the women asserted that despite their criminal behavior they provided materially for their children as well as offered them knowledge about being strong, autonomous, and responsible. In essence, the women reconstructed the characteristics of a good mother, giving them "a more valid connection to the socially coveted role of mother because it gave them an opportunity to recast their past and present mother self on their own terms" (2001: 105).

The literature on motherhood provides interesting but insufficient insight into the experiences of women who are both mothers *and* women under state supervision. While all mothers are held to a particular, impossible to reach standard, the difficulty in achieving that

standard is further compounded by the responsibilities of parole or probation, the issue I turn to next.

State Supervision

An individual can be placed on probation or parole after having served a prison or jail sentence, or merely by court order without having been in either. While under the supervision of parole or probation, the individual is often required to report to a parole or probation officer regularly and must abide by certain conditions. These often include submitting to mandatory drug and alcohol testing, engaging in drug/alcohol counseling, maintaining full-time employment or schooling, and not possessing a firearm or weapon, to name a few. Any violations of the terms can result in a prison or jail sentence. The institution of state supervision has changed drastically in the past two decades. State supervision is intended to be a helpful institution; it aims to provide support and structure for those reentering society but also to serve as a form of supervision (Opsal 2011). However, many experts argue that its function has transformed from that of rehabilitation and reintegration to surveillance and risk management (Feeley and Simon 1992). A study conducted in 1994, while seemingly outdated, is representative of the growing trend of women being re-convicted and incarcerated for technical parole and probation violations. In this study, 22% of women were returned to prison for technical violations, whereas only 17% were convicted for the commission of new crimes (BJS 1994). It is arguable that many violations can result from the difficulty of managing the responsibilities of probation and parole.

While men and women in general face many obstacles to fulfilling the requirements of parole or probation, it becomes even more difficult in regards to other social characteristics, such as race, class, gender, and specifically the intersections of race, class, and gender.

Intersectionality is a specific way of understanding social location in terms of multiple and intersecting systems of oppression (Crenshaw 1991). Specifically, it is an “analysis claiming that systems of race, social class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, and age form mutually constructing features of social organization...” (Collins 2000: 299). Intersectionality is a theoretical framework that can be used to better understand the experiences of people who hold doubly, and even triply oppressed positions. Women who have a criminal record arguably experience forms of oppression due to their gender as well as their criminal status. Women of color and/or women of lower socioeconomic status may experience oppression due to the combination of their race/ethnicity, class, gender, and criminal identities.

Women who have been incarcerated are typically young, unmarried, of lower socioeconomic status, and women of color. While the likelihood of imprisonment for women is 1 in 56, the chance of a woman being incarcerated varies significantly by race. In 2010 the likelihood of incarceration for Black women was 1 in 9, 1 in 45 for Hispanic women, and 1 in 118 for White women (Project 2012). Nearly two thirds of women in jails and state and federal prisons are Black, Hispanic, or of other non-White ethnic groups (Richie 2001). Additionally, the majority of incarcerated women are young, poor, and undereducated. The median age is 35 while about 35% have incomes of less than \$600 per month and 64% do not have a high school diploma or GED (Richie 2001, WPA 2003). They also have more childcare responsibilities, fewer job skills, less prior work history, a higher rate of substance abuse, and often have a history of abuse by family members and significant others (O’Brien 2002). These data reflect significant variability yet patterns of economic and social vulnerability in the population of women under state supervision

The difficulty of adhering to the requirements of probation and parole is exacerbated by the discrimination that often comes with a criminal record. Whether an individual has been incarcerated or was merely sentenced to a period of probation, the predominant view of researchers is that, “A criminal conviction—no matter how trivial or long ago it occurred—scars one for life” (Petersilia 2003: 19). Individuals with criminal records often face restrictions on employment, parenthood, voting, eligibility for public assistance and housing, financial aid for higher education, and so on. Richie (2001) asserts that, “typically, they face considerable hardships, difficult circumstances, and insufficient opportunities for stabilization” (2001: 370). Pager (2007) proclaims that a person’s race, especially for African Americans, can negatively impact employment prospects and, when combined with a criminal record, decreases chances of finding stable employment significantly. While attempting to lead productive lives, women on parole or probation may be excluded from the job market and judged for past criminal behavior (Dodge and Pogrebin 2001). Through their analysis of interviews with 54 women on parole, Dodge and Pogrebin (2001) found that one of the biggest problems the participants mentioned facing is finding well-paying employment due to their lack of job skills and criminal history. Furthermore, almost half of the respondents discussed the exacerbation of their difficulties because of loss of familial contact. Women without family support who are trying to be successful in society must become their own support systems; however, “success in the community is very much dependent on the belief that they will be accepted in society” (Dodge and Pogrebin 2001: 51). Finally, many of their respondents felt stigmatized and looked down upon by their peers because of their criminal label (Dodge and Pogrebin 2001). This finding leads to an additional but decidedly different obstacle that individuals with a criminal record in general, and mothers under state supervision in particular may face: stigma.

Stigma and Stigma Management

As community members engage in harsh moral judgments, few efforts are made to reintegrate the offender into the community, “and the person, not the deed, is labeled as bad” (Braithwaite 1989). The stigma associated with a criminal record can inform and further exacerbate many of the institutional barriers discussed previously. It is important to generally understand the construct of stigma because there is much research that supports the notion that criminal women in general, and criminal mothers in particular, hold a stigmatized position.

It is impossible to discuss stigma without referring to the classic work *Stigma* by Erving Goffman (1963). Goffman purports that when an individual is considered to have an attribute or characteristic that is deemed “bad, or dangerous, or weak” (1963: 3), other people reduce them from “a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one” (1963: 3). Goffman argues that the processes of social construction are central to stigma, and that stigma is “a special kind of relationship between an attribute and a stereotype” (1963: 4). In this line of thinking, stigma arises as a divergence between “virtual social identity” (how an individual is perceived by society), and “actual social identity” (the attributes the person truly has) (1963: 2).

Another important term that is used throughout the literature and will emerge in the present study’s analysis is “mark” (Jones et al 1984). The term “mark” is used to describe, “a deviant condition identified by society that might define the individual as flawed or spoiled” (Yang et al 2007: 1525). An abundance of research has been done regarding the stigmatized identities of people with certain “bad” attributes and how they manage those identities. What is largely agreed upon is that stigma is a social construct and that what is defined as a “good” or “bad” attribute in a society varies within the structural and cultural boundaries (Goffman 1963). There is the perspective that race/ethnicity is stigma which argues that those who are non-White

are perceived as different from and unequal to White individuals. From this perspective, “race reduces the identity and the potential of those seen as ‘raced’: they are spoiled or blemished by the racist gaze” (Howarth 2006). Howarth (2006) also argues that race produces and reproduces material inequalities, and has its roots in a past run rampant with prejudice, exclusion and poverty.

Stigmatized individuals often employ a plethora of techniques to aid in managing the effects of stigma. Some individuals are able to “pass,” to conceal their trait or attribute that could result in a stigmatized identity. The person may unwittingly pass or knowingly pass; regardless, this is one management technique often used if possible. Stigmatized individuals sometimes attribute the signs of their stigmatized failing as a sign of another, less stigmatized attribute. For example, “a hard of hearing person may intentionally style her conduct to give others the impression that she is a daydreamer, an absent-minded person, an indifferent, easily bored person” (Goffman 1963: 104). Another technique involves full disclosure—instead of attempting to hide the stigmatized attribute, an individual may choose to voluntarily disclose him or herself. In this case, the person goes from trying to manage information about his/her stigma to trying to manage an uneasy social situation.

One particular area of interest for researchers studying stigmatized identities is the stigma of a criminal record. In Goffman’s terms, this stigma is perceived to be related to a character trait. Researchers have generally found that individuals who reenter society after spending time in prison or jail have a particularly hard time due to their criminal status (O’Brien 2001; Richie 2001; Travis 2005). The label of “criminal” is deeply discrediting to many social groups in the United States; it not only speaks to past mistakes but is also thought of as an indicator of future behavior. As noted earlier, former felons have difficulty finding employment; in addition, they

have difficulty acquiring housing, taking out loans, and even maintaining some of the basic rights of a US citizen like voting (Uggen et al 2006).

It is also arguable that those with a criminal record may suffer from a multitude of stigmatizing conditions (LeBel 2012). A large portion of formerly incarcerated individuals are minorities, suffer from substance abuse, mental illness, or are living with HIV/AIDS, which can result in stigma on multiple levels (LeBel 2012). According to Fox (1982) female parolees often suffer from low self-esteem and can further suffer from feelings of inferiority and vulnerability (Bill 1998). Additionally, women with children suffer more than men from the stigma associated with incarceration, as society tends to view criminal women as unfit and indifferent mothers (Kauffman 2001; Teather et al 1997). As the majority of mothers on parole and probation are women of color, this population is arguably triply stigmatized based on race, gender, and criminal status. Stigma is not only experienced by the formerly incarcerated; the children of such individuals, as a result of deferred stigma, can also be labeled and experience shame and discrimination. Popular beliefs that children are often a reflection of their parents, “the apple does not fall far from the tree” for example, can influence the ways others think of and behave towards children who have had an incarcerated parent. As Carpenter, Harris, and Graham suggest, “they are seen as ‘bad seeds’ that are predisposed to engage in illicit activities themselves” (Carpenter et al 2010).

In reaction to or in avoidance of stigma, many ex-convicts employ stigma management techniques. Harding (2003) explores the ways in which male parolees managed their ex-convict identity while searching for employment. He found that the men did not disclose their identity (similar to Goffman’s “passing”), fully disclosed their identity (similar to “covering”), or only disclosed their identity conditionally. The majority of the men, when asked if they had been

convicted of a felony, lied out of fear of being disqualified from a job. For those who engaged in full disclosure, they provided the context of their status while presenting articulate and confident selves in order to defy the stereotypes. Others only revealed their ex-convict status once they felt they had proven themselves enough to diminish the effect (Harding 2003). Men and women alike experience stigma and employ stigma management techniques; however, as the literature suggests, the amount of discrimination experienced due to a criminal record is often higher for women, especially mothers.

Utilizing interviews from her 2009 study, Opsal (2011) extended her exploration to the stigma management techniques and identity work of female parolees. She found that for the most part, these women understood that others view them as part of a stigmatized group, but that they did not see themselves in the same way. Despite living under the constant supervision of the state, the women challenged the public identity imposed on them by recasting their past, present, and future selves. They avidly denied the notion that “bad people who do bad things end up in prison”—asserting that it is not that simple, but that ending up incarcerated is a messy, complicated process, one in which good people can get caught up. They also disassociated from their past substance-using selves and narrated stories of self-transformation. Additionally, many women identified as mothers for the present and future and reconstructed the characteristics of good mothering to recast their past selves (Opsal 2001).

While Opsal’s research begins to address the question of stigma and stigma management of women on parole and probation within the context of motherhood, much more work needs to be done to understand *how* (rather than *why*) women manage stigma in conjunction with motherhood. The fear of potential stigma and the stigma experienced by female ex-offenders can affect and be affected by their motherhood status. The general difficulties of managing

being a mother under state supervision, and the specific effects of stigma, can be lessened or increased by the existence or absence of social support. Social support can be a tool by which to handle stigma; it has the potential to protect these women from stigma or to help them better cope with the stigma that results from being on parole or probation. Having such potential for influencing the experiences of mothers on parole or probation makes social support within the context of state supervision an important concept to explore.

Social Support and State Supervision

In her in-depth interviews of 42 formerly incarcerated women, Richie (2001) unearths some of the main barriers for the successful reentry of women after a period of incarceration. Treatment for substance abuse, proper health care including mental health resources, educational and employment services, safe and affordable housing, and child advocacy and family reunification, were among the highest concerns of women upon reentry to their communities (Richie 2001). To address these issues, researchers consider the ways formerly incarcerated women access and utilize social support.

As exemplified by Dodge and Pogrebin (2001), social support is a fundamental mechanism by which success under state supervision can be impacted. The majority of women who have spent time in prison or jail and subsequently been placed on probation or parole are mothers. With motherhood comes an added difficulty to successfully reintegrating, as regaining custody, repairing broken relationships, and focusing on the responsibilities that come with state supervision are urgent and stressful (Morton and Williams 1998). As Richie (2001) finds,

The combination of the competing demands may seriously interfere with successful reintegration: The woman will need an apartment to regain custody of her children, she will need a job to get an apartment, she will need to get treatment for her addiction to be able to work, and initial contact with her children

may only be possible during business hours if they are in the custody of the state (Richie 2001: 381).

Richie (2001) continues to suggest that trying to manage such competing needs without the presence of social support can seriously hinder a woman's chances for success.

Family is one form of social support that can have an impact on an individual's ability to balance conflicting responsibilities. A report released by the Vera Institute of Justice, directed towards educating corrections officers as well as parole and probation officers about reentry, emphasizes the importance of family ties. The report argues that, "upon release, many individuals go home to communities characterized by poverty and the associated problems of crime, violence, substance use, and HIV/AIDS or other chronic illnesses. Under such difficult circumstances, support from a social network can help motivate and guide positive behavior" (Vera Institute of Justice 2011). Flavin (2004) emphasizes the importance of strengthening former offenders' social capital by recognizing their ties to family networks in order to reduce recidivism. Flavin (2004) suggests that strong family ties can result in greater social capital, the "networks, shared norms, values, and understandings that facilitate cooperation within or among groups and access to important resources" (2004: 209-210). Families have the potential to play an important role in the reintegration of offenders into the community as they can provide additional resources, such as time, money, and emotional support. Flavin (2004) concludes that families "are very effective in providing support and interrupting negative sequences" (2004: 211).

Similarly, from her interviews of women out of prison, O'Brien (2001) suggests that family support is critical to many women, but that the nature of imprisonment and the stigma associated with a criminal record causes many women to lose all contact with their families, placing them at a severe disadvantage (O'Brien 2001). Similarly, Barreras, Drucker, and

Rosenthal (2005) propose that, “Criminal justice involvement impacts the life of a family in deep ways: it strains them financially, disrupts parental bonds, separates spouses, places severe stress on the remaining caregivers, leads to a loss of discipline in the household, and leads to feelings of shame, stigma, and anger” (2005:168).

Community based social services can also serve as an important form of support for individuals under state supervision. Pearl’s (1998) study of women on parole and probation found that women who utilize social services such as substance abuse programs, employment services, residential reentry programs, and mental health services are far less likely to recidivate and if they do, their first recidivistic arraignment is much later than those who do not. Similarly, Holtfreter, Reisig, and Morash (2004) found that the availability and use of state capital (state-sponsored programs and services) has a significant effect on recidivism for female probationers and parolees. However, their findings also suggest that poor women are more likely to fail while on community supervision (Holtfreter et al 2004).

In her aforementioned study of eighteen women who had been out of prison for a varying amount of time, O’Brien (2001) unveils a multitude of resources that can impact a woman’s successful reentry. One resource in particular that helped some of the women balance the grueling responsibilities of parole was a supportive parole officer. These parole officers did not make exceptions for the women, but they expressed more interest in the other parts of the women’s lives, such as motherhood, school, employment, and their general wellbeing. The women note feeling as if they could rely on their parole officers for support rather than seeing them wholly as an extension of the punitive criminal justice system (O’Brien 2001). With the changing nature of parole and probation, this is an interesting point to note. Despite the ever-

increasing caseloads of today's parole and probation officers, it is important to consider the impact that such officers can have on their charges.

As obtaining and maintaining stable employment is one of the largest barriers individuals with a criminal record face, it seems to follow that having employment can be an important facet of social support. Being employed is not only often a requirement of parole or probation, but it is also necessary to survive. A study conducted by Freudenberg, Daniels, Crum, Perkins, and Richie (2005) focusing on post-release factors for 476 women and 491 male adolescents, offers statistical support for the importance of employment. The researchers found that for every \$100 increase in weekly salary (up to \$500), there is a 24% reduction in the likelihood of recidivism. They elaborate, suggesting that, "post-release employment and job income were associated with lower rearrest rates, drug dealing, and heavy drug use for young men and with lower rearrest rates and lower heavy drug use for women" (2005: 1732).

Servan and Mittelmark (2012) provide an international perspective to reentry in their analysis of five interviews conducted with incarcerated or formerly incarcerated women in Norway. Aside from family, friends, and supportive parole officers, the women heavily emphasized the importance of employment. They referenced the requirements of employment for parole, but they also mention the stability that comes with employment, specifically having a structured schedule—a set time and place to be everyday—as well as a productive way to spend their time to avoid the temptation of illicit behavior (Servan and Mittelmark 2012). Employment can provide the necessary income for survival, structure, accountability, and productivity as well as help parolees and probationers meet the requirements of their supervision. Without employment, parolees and probationers can be considered as technically violating the conditions, or may feel the need to revert to criminal professions in order to survive. As such, employment

is arguably a strong form of social support and a pathway to overcoming the barriers that result from a criminal record.

As previously mentioned, finding suitable housing is another major obstacle that individuals with a criminal record must attempt to overcome. There are many policies that limit the ability for ex-convicts to obtain housing and these restrictions further complicate the reentry process. The existence of residential reentry programs, or sometimes called “halfway houses,” can provide an individual with stable, affordable, and transition-focused living. These houses can be considered another form of social support as they often make transitioning into the community and balancing the responsibilities of probation or parole slightly easier. O’Brien’s (2001) empowerment-focused analysis of the previously mentioned formerly incarcerated women reveals the pertinence of stable housing to successful reintegration. While some women were able to stay with family members or significant others, others detailed their experiences in halfway houses. The halfway houses facilitated reentry in that the residents did not need to depend on others for support and could focus on recovery and employment (O’Brien 2001). Based on their interviews with 38 women who had served prison sentences, Harm and Phillips (2000) suggest that the availability of halfway houses could aid in decreased recidivism. When women were asked, “What would have helped you stay out of prison?” 5% of their interviewees mentioned halfway houses (Harm and Phillips 2000). An evaluation of a residential reentry program, Grace House in Chicago, found that within the first five years of operation, only 20% of women who had formerly been residents returned to prison, in comparison to the Illinois state recidivism rate of 43.7%. O’Brien (2002) suggests that, “a safe residential setting like Grace House provides women with the time and structure they need to address emotional issues related to their incarceration as well as previous traumas, and information and resources for taking the

steps toward obtaining employment” (2002: 13). As the literature suggests, the availability of stable housing, particularly in the form of residential reentry programs, can greatly improve one’s chances of successfully reintegrating into society and of balancing the strenuous requirements of state supervision.

The social support literature regarding state supervision provides an abundance of research that can better illuminate both the struggles and the tools for success for people on probation and parole. It not only focuses on the hardships that individuals must attempt to overcome, but it also focuses on the ways in which people can be successful. I build on the social support literature by exploring the hardships and successes of mothers under state supervision specifically.

CHAPTER THREE:

METHODOLOGY

Over a period of approximately two months, I conducted interviews with eight mothers who were either on parole or probation at the time of the interview, or had recently been released. The interviews were recorded with a smart-phone recording application and lasted between 45 minutes and ninety minutes. Signed informed consent was waived per IRB requirement; however, each participant was given a copy of the consent form and chose a pseudonym by which to be identified. The primary purpose of my research was exploratory—generally aiming to understand the experiences of these mothers under state supervision, but specifically to understand how they manage the responsibilities associated with the identities of mother and parolee/probationer.

As my goal for this study was to understand the experiences of these women, interviewing was the most logical method of obtaining information. According to Weiss, “interviewing gives us access to the observations of others. Through interviewing we can learn about places we have not been and could not go and about settings in which we have not lived (1994: 1). Interviewing was also appropriate for fulfilling another objective of my research: providing female offenders with a voice and an opportunity to speak about their lives from their perspectives. As Opsal argues, “This method is particularly suited to female offenders given that their voices have been, and continue to be today, marginalized or silenced in a great deal of sociological and criminological research” (2001: 28). The interviews conducted were semi-

structured—there were approximately ten guiding questions focusing on life history, experiences of probation or parole, motherhood, and motherhood in the context of probation or parole. For example, I started the interview by asking the participations to “Please tell me a little bit about your life” and then continued on to ask about their experiences with state supervision, “What was your first meeting with your parole or probation officer like?” (Refer to the Appendix for the complete interview guide). The guiding questions were meant to do just that, to provide some direction for the interview but to allow for comfortable, conversational dialogue. Mason (2002) explains that in semi-structured interviews, there is an interaction between the interviewer and respondent, and that the interview is focused on the “construction or reconstruction of knowledge more than the excavation of it” (2002: 63).

It is important to mention and reflect on my positionality as a researcher. I am a White, economically privileged, educated woman without a criminal background. I am also not a mother. I interviewed both White and non-White mothers from varying socioeconomic statuses, with the majority of the participants from a lower class than mine. I did not explore the level of education of my participants, however the literature suggests that the majority of incarcerated or previously incarcerated women are undereducated (Richie 2001; WPA 2003). While I hold a relatively valued position as a White, upper-middle class, highly educated individual without a criminal record, my participants hold stigmatized positions as ex-convicts who are also mothers. As Best (2003) suggests, a researcher’s biography (including race, sexuality, class, age, gender, etc.) impacts the actual fieldwork as well as the interpretation and analysis of the fieldwork. Sandra Harding (1987) also argues that in order to be reflexive, a researcher needs to remain aware of one’s own biography throughout the entire process. I attempted to remain continually conscious of how my biography may impact the data collection and interpretation processes by

establishing myself as “an unknowing questioner whereby respondents often responded by explaining experiences or ideas in a more in-depth fashion.” (Opsal 2001: 39). Initially, I suspect my biography may have impacted responses in earlier interviews because I was not yet established in the organization and I may have been seen as more of an outsider. However, as I increased my involvement with the agency and the women residents, I established greater rapport with the women in the program. During later interviews I believe I may have been seen as more as an advocate, friend, and confidant, leading to richer interactions.

In order to participate in my research project, respondents needed to be women over the age of eighteen, identify as mothers, and be currently on parole or probation at the time of the interview or have been recently released. The label “mother” was purposely left undefined on the recruitment flyer because I wanted to interview women who self-identified as mothers rather than women who felt they met the standard definition of mother, as this definition is problematic and limiting. This allowed me to talk to women who had custody of their children, those who did not have custody, those who had deceased children, and those who had given up one or more child for adoption. Being “recently” released from parole or probation was also left unspecified. Many of the women had been on and off parole or probation for most of their lives; therefore, even if they had been off for years the experience was still an important part of their lives. This allowed me to speak with women who had been off parole or probation for upwards of five years and to those who were currently under state supervision.

The Recruitment Site

The program from which the participants were recruited is a faith based, not for profit, reentry organization for women recently released from jails and prisons in a southern state. The

program is not formally linked with the parole/probation system, but it works symbolically with the system in that successfully completing state supervision is a priority for residents. At the core of the program is the focus on self-exploration, asserting that only through a strong relationship with God and focus on one's own issues, can one wish to forge a better life path. The program director and program founder frequently visit jails and prisons in the area, speak to inmates, and give their information to those who wish to apply to the program. The application process is simple: a woman may call the program director, explain her situation, and if she has a way to come up with the rent (either on her own or from family/friends) and there is a room available, she will be accepted. If there is not room available in the main house, there are a number of satellite houses (houses associated but not directly linked with the program) that may have room. There can be up to three women in the main house, four in the graduate house, and six in the primary satellite house. Children and significant others are not allowed to live in any of the homes but can schedule visits. The level of independence varies at each house, with the main house being the most supervised and structured, and the graduate house allowing for the most freedom. Because all of my respondents were affiliated in some way with this recruitment site, it is possible that the site's particular emphasis on personal responsibility may have influenced some of the respondent's responses during my interviews.

The Recruitment Process

The recruitment method employed was snowball sampling. I created a flyer and distributed it to residents at the main house and to the program director. I also asked the residents to spread the word to other women in their church groups, addiction-counseling classes,

and to their friends. Some women, upon reading the flyer, immediately asked to set up an appointment time, while others called me to schedule the interview.

An important part of my recruitment process was offering incentives or reimbursement for participating in my study. Each participant received a \$15 Wal-Mart gift card, which I mentioned in conversations about the study and also advertised on the recruitment flyer. As suggested by the literature, the majority of individuals who experience incarceration, probation, or parole are economically disadvantaged. I also predicted that time would be a valuable commodity to potential participants, as they are constantly attempting to juggle a plethora of responsibilities, therefore giving me an hour or more of their time may be a hardship. I strongly believe that the gift card provided a worthwhile incentive for individuals to participate in the interview. As a potential incentive, I also recognized that the gift card could serve as a form of coercion. To mitigate the coercion I always gave the participant her gift card at the beginning of the interview. I also stressed that if at any time the interview became overwhelming, she could end it but still keep the gift card. Another important reason for offering an incentive is inspired by Opsal's (2001) justification, "Prisoners have historically been exploited by researchers. By this, I mean that this population of individuals were rarely reimbursed for their participation in research while in prison or were persuaded to participate in research" (2001: 37). While Opsal (2001) refers to prisoners, I feel that this justification is equally applicable to individuals under state supervision.

Analysis

After each interview I transcribed the audio files and made notes throughout the transcriptions as I began noticing interesting themes. I also wrote up short memos that served as

summaries of the stories as well as my notes regarding the larger connections. These research notes helped me rework the interview guide in preparation for the next interview. After completion of all of the interviews I began analyzing the data using thematic analysis. I documented any recurrence, repetition, and forcefulness I found in the transcriptions and looked for any potential answers to my research questions (Owen 1984). One specific research question that the data spoke to was the question of how these women manage the responsibilities of both motherhood and state supervision. Inspired by this line of inquiry I then re-analyzed the data, looking for anything that spoke to the larger questions of identity negotiation and management and the role of intersectionality. I frequently consulted the literature, looking for consistencies as well as deviations in my own data. I not only looked for the frequency of which something was mentioned, but also the ways in the women talked about certain experiences as they vocalized their thought processes and decision-making. What emerged was an analysis of the repetition of themes, while exploring the intricate experiences of my respondents who were mothers on parole or probation.

CHAPTER FOUR:

THE PARTICIPANTS

While the women I interviewed are all similar in that they are mothers who have been on parole and/or probation and they have all been (or currently are) residents of the recruitment site, it is important to stress that they are also quite heterogeneous. As will be shown in the following section, these women vary in age, race/ethnicity, social class, experience with the criminal justice system, family life, and so on. Although the paths that led them to be under state supervision may differ, all of them have the shared experience of motherhood, state control, and surveillance. My research does not attempt generalizability, but rather focuses on the complexities of the women's social life. Because of the heterogeneity of the sample, I was able to learn much about the different kinds of tools at these women's disposal for navigating motherhood and state supervision. The purpose of the demographic table, (see Table 1) is to give the reader a broad overview of the group, while also attempting to highlight both the similarities and differences in their lives. As a group, the mean age is 46, with ages ranging from 34-59. The women have an average of 3.5 children, ranging from two to five children. The race/ethnicity of the participants varies, as do the experiences they describe as children and adolescents. Some, but not all, of the participants mention having parents with drug and/or alcohol addiction and being abused (either physically or mentally) by parents or significant others. All of the participants mention struggling with drug abuse at some point in their lives and

have lengthy histories of state supervision. Being raised by or merely being in contact with parents with addiction and having experiences of abuse and drug use are potential explanatory variables for criminality as well as current challenges to good mothering that the participants face. The individuals will be more specifically introduced as I present their voices throughout the analysis.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

<u>Name</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Race/ Ethnicity</u>	<u>Ages of Children</u>	<u>Employment</u>	<u>Residence</u>	<u>Class as Child</u>	<u>Parents with addiction?</u>	<u>Experienced Abuse?</u>	<u>Drug Abuse?</u>	<u>Time Under SS</u>
<u>Marilyn</u> ¹	59	Hebrew Sicilian ²	24, 26, 29, 35, 40	Full-Time	Own home	Upper/ middle ³	No	Parental	Yes	On and off since 40s
<u>Kiara</u>	50	White	27, 28	Disability	Residential reentry home	Lower	Yes	No mention	Yes	On and off since teens
<u>Delilah</u>	50	Black	10, 16, 29	Disability	Residential reentry home	Middle	No	Significant other	Yes	On and off since teens
<u>Lucinda</u>	47	Black	12, 13, 17, 21, 26	Full-Time	Own home	Middle	No	Significant other	Yes	On and off since teens
<u>Susan</u>	44	Black	12, 22	Full-Time	Residence reentry home	Lower	Yes	Significant other and parental	Yes	On and off since teens
<u>Tina</u>	43	Black	17, 18, 23, 26	Disability	Own home	Middle	No	Significant other	Yes	On and off since teens
<u>Jeannie</u>	42	White	14, 19, 22, 23	Full-Time	Residential reentry home	Lower	Yes	Significant other and parental	Yes	On and off since teens
<u>Anne</u>	34	White	3, 16, 18	Disability	Residential reentry home	Middle		Significant other and parental	Yes	4 months

¹ All names are pseudonyms

² All descriptions of race/ethnicity are self-identified by the participants

³ “Class as child” is also self-identified

CHAPTER FIVE:

FINDINGS

My respondents, as mothers under state supervision, never know if parole or probation might make it difficult for them to fully tend to the responsibilities of being a mother. This is where one can see the unique situation that mothers under state supervision hold. The requirements of supervision are meant to apply equally to everyone, regardless of age, race, family structure, or other obligations. Requirements like frequent check-ins with a parole or probation officer, drug and alcohol testing, addiction counseling, community service, and full-time employment, rarely take into consideration other commitments—including family commitments—and must always be prioritized. As I previously discussed, socially constructed obligations of motherhood rely on complete selflessness, prioritization of the children, and intensive mothering (Choi et al 2005; Hays 1996). What results is a competing and very complex negotiation that has to occur between taking care of children and honoring expectations under state supervision. Such prioritization can be complicated as the consequences of getting caught violating probation/parole means that they reassume their status as felons. Yet, to not honor their identity as mothers by prioritizing state supervision can result in extreme guilt and feelings of failure.

In an attempt to manage these responsibilities as they are embodied by the identities of mother and parolee/probationer, what has emerged is a unique process of negotiation. The first emergent theme focuses on instances of conflict that arise as a result of the combined identity of

“mother under state supervision”—specifically the tug-of-war between the responsibilities associated with being a mother and the responsibilities of state supervision. They consistently find themselves in situations in which the identity of parolee/probationer conflicts with their identity as mother and they must negotiate, often through difficult prioritization. The themes that follow these instances of conflict can be characterized as tools that the women have used to manage these combined responsibilities and identities. One of the tools they use is social support; the amount of social support these women feel they can rely on influences this process of negotiation. The women also negotiate their openness regarding their parolee/probationer identity as a way to either better manage potential stigmatization or, in some cases, to foster a more positive identity through teaching others. The final tool that is discussed below is the reworking of ways to be a “good mother.” In an attempt to repair some of the damage done to their identity by their parolee/probationer identity, the mothers redefine ways to go about being good moms. I discuss instances of conflict and each of the tools below.

The Challenge: Conflicting Responsibilities and Identities

Mothers who have been on parole and/or probation are in a constant state of negotiation as a result of the conflict between parole/probation responsibilities and motherhood responsibilities. Each of the participants, at some point throughout the interview, mentions at least one instance in which her responsibilities to the state and responsibilities to her children have conflicted. The majority of the women place emphasis on the notion that parole/probation must be the priority, because if they violate by placing their children first, they run the risk of being sent to jail or prison, away from their children. These women believe they are required to compromise their mother identity in favor of their parolee/probationer responsibilities.

However, the mothers never fully do this—they only suspend it temporarily to fulfill their responsibilities to the state, but with the mindset that they are doing this in order to be better mothers, to be “present mothers,” by which they mean not being mothers in prison or jail.

Lucinda is a Black, 47-year-old mother of four who has been off of probation for five years. She is constantly busy—she works all day, every day, and throughout the interview she receives multiple calls from work and from her children. Lucinda talks about how challenging it was to balance all of her obligations when she was on probation,

...I remember one time my daughter had a PTA meeting at her school and the parents can go if they want, of course most kids when they're younger want their parents to go. But I had to meet with my officer before and the PTA meeting was going to start soon after so they were really close together. So I said you know I'm gonna go to my PO first and then we'll leave there and go to your school but when we got to the school the meeting was over. But I had to prioritize that because probation was the most important. Because if I didn't do that, she would have to go back with her dad and I'd go to prison.

Here, Lucinda emphasizes the importance of placing probation first, above all else. However, she remains mindful of the fact that her child is expecting something of her as a mother—she is expecting that she come to the meeting. Probation is also expecting something of her—that she check in with her probation officer. If she does not check in she could be considered as technically violating and, as she mentions, she would go to prison and her daughter would be sent to live with her father. While Lucinda does in fact choose probation over her child, this does not come without consequence, as she is aware that she is disappointing her daughter.

Delilah is a Black, fifty-year-old mother of two whom at the time of the interview was out on bond for violating probation with a prostitution charge. Throughout the interview she shows me pictures of her sons and talks avidly about her faith in God. Delilah mentions a time when her probation responsibilities directly conflicted with her ability to mother, causing the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to become involved. Her ten-year-old son came

home from school by bus, and if there was not an adult to meet him at the bus stop, he would be taken back to school. This happened multiple times because Delilah had to meet with her probation officer twice a week in the afternoon, around the time her son would be getting home from school. As a result, DCF became involved, thinking that the child was being neglected. After confirming with her probation officer that Delilah was only absent in the event of probation responsibilities, DCF relented. However, she still had to pay a neighbor to meet her son to keep DCF satisfied. Delilah reflects on this difficult decision saying,

So then when I meet with my officer I worry about my son, and I think maybe I shouldn't meet with my officer and get my son instead, and then I think 'well I'll get caught and I'll go to jail'. No matter what I'm gonna get in trouble with someone, either my officer or DCF. So I had to pay my neighbor so much money a month, for when I go see my officer twice a week, I pay her \$10 a week to meet him at the bus stop. Two days out of the week.

Here, Delilah's probation responsibilities not only conflicted with her motherhood responsibilities but they also caused her financial strain. Like many of the other mothers, Delilah faced this conflict frequently and deciding which responsibilities to tend to involved negotiating her responsibilities in multiple domains.

Marilyn, a Hebrew-Sicilian 59-year-old mother of five and grandmother of four, holds her infant grandchild in her arms throughout the interview. She discusses her experiences as both a mother and grandmother on probation and difficulties she has faced. She talks frequently about how she feels she has let her children down through their lives because of her addiction and bouts in jail and prison. Her children were older when she started her criminal career, and as a result Marilyn states that managing the responsibilities was a bit easier. If a child needed to go to an appointment and Marilyn was unable to take him or her because of probation, there was an older child that could most often tend to that. Though Marilyn asserts that her older children

made the negotiation between mother and probationer easier, she talks extensively about her grandchildren and the struggle of being an involved grandparent on probation. She sees herself as “half grandma, half mama,” as she is extremely involved in the raising of her grandchildren. Marilyn has been required to miss many important events due to probation restrictions, including events important to both her children and grandchildren. Marilyn divulges the biggest challenge,

Not being able to do certain things or go certain places because I was on house arrest and they wanted me to go places. My grandson’s graduation, things like that, I couldn’t go, and not only when I was on house arrest. I couldn’t go to a bunch of stuff because I had to go to work and community service and all of my NA meetings and meetings with my PO. I mean you can, but sometimes you don’t have enough time to put in notice and a request and you gotta be in at a certain time. And I mean I missed his graduation! And that’s my grandson, but I still helped raise him. And I could tell that everyone, my kids included, held it against me.

In Marilyn’s case, probation has not only emotionally conflicted with her identity as a mother, it has also conflicted with her identity as a grandmother. Marilyn was able to fulfill what she considered to be the most basic responsibilities of a mother due to the support of her older children, however there was still an emotional support aspect that she was forced to abandon. She experienced guilt from herself and resentment from her kids as she missed graduation, an event that she, her children, and her grandchildren all view as incredibly important.

Tina, like Marilyn, talks extensively of the extreme guilt that comes with having to choose state supervision over family. Tina is a Black, 43-year-old mother of four who manages the household she shares with her children, fiancé and soon to be father-in-law. All while being interviewed, Tina folds laundry, cooks lunch, and cleans. She talks quite a bit about her loving and encouraging mother, and how such support was necessary for both her successful completion of parole and maintenance of her mother identity. She indicates that even her mother could not replace her in the eyes of her girls—that even though her girls were well cared for throughout her

prison and parole term, she still missed out on some of the important experiences. During the discussion of the conflict between state supervision and mothering, Tina mentions,

There was a lot of stuff when I was on parole and probation that I couldn't do with my kids, a lot of places I couldn't go with my kids. Some of the team meetings and stuff with my girls, I couldn't go because I was on house arrest or I couldn't leave the state. Regardless of what it was, getting permission was hard, unless you were going to work or church. You know what I'm saying. I lost out on a lot of that stuff. Sometimes you know my girls got bitter, because they was like 'oh my mama's gonna be there cheering for me', you know how Black girls be. So they got bitter because I couldn't go. And when I could go, you know I'd be lookin' so fly, hair done, nails done, me and the kids used to be fly. And my mama, she's fly too, but you know she's an old lady so she be at the games screaming and cheering, but it wasn't the same.

Despite ensuring the care of her children through family support, Tina still expresses the feeling of guilt and the feeling that she is still unable to do everything she needs to do as a mother. Her children have a babysitter or someone to take them to the doctor, but sometimes due to parole/probation they do not have their mother to support them.

Tina also expresses the difficulties she had always putting probation first. Tina, mentioned earlier,

Being on probation, going by all their rules, having them tell me what I can and cannot do. Especially when it came down to my children, you know half the time I didn't give a fuck, excuse my language. You know, I'd say screw the system a lot, and thank God I never got caught, because I didn't want the anger and the grudge from my girls. They put me on a pedestal so high up that I didn't want to disappoint them.

Guilt, fear of disappointing her daughters, and anger towards the system provided enough motivation for Tina to ignore the rules and risk violation. Throughout her interview Tina frequently mentions how her girls perceive her, even through her drug addiction. She discusses in depth how they have always idolized her, loved her, and have been reluctant to see any fault in her. It is clear that as a mother, she does not want to let her girls down or appear to be less than what they believe her to be. This desire to live up to their standards is powerful enough to override the responsibilities of parole. She is unwilling to compromise how her daughters see

her and is willing to risk violation to uphold their expectations of her as their mother. Her identity as a mother is much more important to her sense of self; she is still aware of the potential consequences that come with getting caught but at times, disappointing her daughters seems too harsh a punishment to bear.

It is not only the potential for disappointing one's children that can prompt mothers under state supervision to risk violation—the threat of danger to one's children is also powerful, as illustrated by Jeannie below. Jeannie is a White 42-year-old mother of four children, two of which she placed for adoption. She talks enthusiastically about her recovery throughout the interview and shows me her 6 months clean chip. She details a specific memory from when she was on probation and had sent her two sons to live with other family members; one son was staying with her sister in Alabama. Jeannie relied on her sister, who was also a drug addict, to care for her son because she felt she had no other choice. Her son called her one night saying that his Aunt and Uncle were fighting and throwing around drug paraphernalia, and begged her to come pick him up as soon as possible. Technically Jeannie could not leave the county, let alone the state, but her son needed her. This is only one instance when Jeannie had to make a very difficult decision.

When I had to go get my son and risk violating...that was the worst. Because as a mom I had to get my kid out of there, but it was a risk and if I got caught I was going to prison. I had to, both of them was equally as important and they're both equally as demanding, so yeah. But if I don't do the probation then I won't be a mom because they're going to lock me up.

She recognizes the risks of breaking the rules, but in this instance the threat to her child outweighed the threat to her freedom. While she did get her son, she mentions that this was not an immediate decision. She was incredibly hesitant to leave and wanted to wait until the morning to call her probation officer and file a request for permission to leave. It took much

coaxing and assurance that they would not get caught from her husband to finally prompt her to get her son. She also states that she was only at her sister's house for approximately five minutes, enough time to collect her son, before she demanded that they leave. As she relays this story she expresses feelings of intense fear—the fear of getting caught and being sent to prison. However as she explains, as a mother, it was her responsibility to get her child out of a potentially dangerous situation.

Collectively, the examples and discussions of the constant conflict between mother and parolee/probationer responsibilities begin to hint at an important identity negotiation for these women: how to manage their identities as mothers despite the demands of the parole and probation system. These demands ask that they prioritize their parolee/probationer identity, suspending their motherhood responsibilities temporarily; the very act of trying to mother can actually jeopardize their ability to mother. To help them with these choices my respondents mentioned three specific tools: social support, stigma management, and redefining motherhood. In particular, my respondents frequently talked about the role of social support, though, as Jeannie's story attests, this strategy to manage conflicting responsibilities has its own embedded challenges for the women.

Tool 1: Social Support

A key tool for managing the negotiation between mother and parolee/probationer is social support. As mothers on parole or probation are required to constantly negotiate the responsibilities associated with the mother and the parolee/probationer identities, the presence of people who can provide support can make it much easier and more successful. Each participant directly mentions systems of support. When confronted with a situation in which they must

choose parole/probation over their children, many women state that having family members who could watch their children while they tended to their other responsibilities made the decision easier to make. Some women mention the close relationships they had or have with their parole/probation officers and their ability to lean on them for emotional support. A few also mention the importance of understanding employers and the opportunity to join residential reentry programs. It is imperative to stress that these participants in particular have an advantage over the population of mothers on parole or probation as a whole: they are associated with a highly supportive reentry program, therefore they already have more access to resources than the average mother under state supervision.

Throughout the discussion of how she manages both responsibilities of mother and parolee, Tina consistently mentions her mother as imperative to her success. She even claims initially that she did not need to prioritize,

No, because I have a strong support system and a loving mother. She has always been there for me, if I ever had to take my kids somewhere she would go with me or she would take them if I couldn't. When I had to go somewhere she would be with them. Having that strong support system was really important. I wouldn't have been able to successfully complete anything without my family.

Tina continues on to mention that her children were able to stay with her mother while she spent 21 months in prison and throughout that time her mother also brought her children to see her every week, a powerful motivator to get out on early term for good behavior. Additionally, Tina notes that, "My mama never turned her back on me, never told my kids nothing bad about me, regardless of what was going on...she doesn't put me down. She spent her life savings to get me off drugs." Through financial, caregiving, and emotional support, Tina's mom aided in her ability to manage being a mother on parole.

Community support was a second form of social support mentioned by many of the respondents. Community support is found in probation/parole officers, employers, and residential reentry programs. Each has the potential to “make or break” women’s experiences as mothers on parole/probation. Probation/parole officers are discussed as major providers of emotional support, without being lenient or allowing the women to bend or break the rules to better manage their motherhood responsibilities. Rather, their dedication and attempts to get to know the women as something other than parolees/probationers seems to provide the women with another outlet for advice regarding state supervision *and* motherhood. While discussing her experience with her probation officers, Lucinda mentions one in particular who had a major impact on her life in both realms,

She talked to me about my life, my daughter’s father, my daughter was 7 years old and her dad brought her back to me and gave her back to me because he had had custody of her, and he turned her back over to me after I got clean but while I was still on probation. And my officer was kind of afraid for me because she knew I was nervous. And she asked, ‘how do you feel about having your child?’ but she was very helpful. She guided me through a lot of things. I remember going in and telling her and crying, saying ‘I don’t know if I can be a good mom because she’s not afraid of me, she talks back to me, she just acts like she’s my sister instead of my child’ and she talked me through that and told me about her experiences with her child and the things I could do to make that relationship better. Every time I went in she would ask me how me and my daughter were doing, saying she would stop by that day. And sometimes she would stop by and bring her child so we could all spend time together. So she was very involved.

Because of her probation officer’s interest and involvement, Lucinda was not required to hide her mother identity even in the probation setting. Her mother identity and probationer identity clearly merged when her probation officer talked to her about issues related to being a mother. Rather than having to attempt to forget about her mother identity while dealing with probation, both pieces of her identity were present and she was able to obtain emotional support.

Some participants mention the importance of supportive employers throughout their experiences of being mothers under state supervision. These employers provided support by being flexible and understanding when it came to issues related to parole/probation and also motherhood. Specifically, Jeannie reflects on her time in jail and her decision to join the residential reentry program upon release,

While I was there I made the decision to go to [reentry program] because my job was still promised to me and I've been with the same job for four years. I work for a Christian lady...and I knew that Rachel⁴ and Martin would still let me come back to work, that wasn't even a question.

Jeannie frequently discusses the importance of getting clean so she could avoid violating probation and being sent to prison, away from her children. By providing her with the assurance that she would have stable employment when she graduated from the reentry program, her employers gave her the encouragement she needed to join the program, begin recovery, and decrease her chance of reoffending/violating probation and being taken from her kids.

In addition to family, probation/parole officers, and employers, the respondents also cite residential reentry programs or supportive living environments as important forms of support. Specifically, the reentry program from which many of these participants were recruited is frequently mentioned. The way in which the program is characterized as supportive is interesting to note because the emphasis is not placed on being supportive of the mother identity directly, but rather indirectly. This program, as discussed previously, does not allow the women to have their children with them while living in the main, graduate, or satellite houses. The focus is placed on physical and emotion recovery, spiritual transformation, and self-betterment. The philosophy is that in order to be a better person in the future, the women need to focus on

⁴ All names are pseudonyms

themselves rather than on all of the other people in their lives, including children. While it may not seem as if the program provides support for the mother identity initially, its focus on long term recovery and completion of parole or probation is perceived as a form of support for both. When asked how she handles being away from her children, Delilah expresses feelings of loneliness and disappointment in herself as a mother. However, she follows with,

But by me living here will make my probation so smooth and easy because I don't have to play motherhood, only every two weekends, not everyday. I can walk a straight line and be successful. Put God first, my probation second, and everything else will follow.

Like the others, Delilah is constantly mentioning how important it is to successfully complete probation so she can be a present mother. She feels that living away from her children for a short time will be better in the long run, as she will be able to more easily complete probation without having to focus so much on the responsibilities that come with being a mom.

Anne, a White 34-year-old mother of three, tells me about her three year old son who provides her with much of the motivation she needs to be successful in her recovery. She sees the no-children policy of the reentry program as a blessing in disguise. Despite her initial reluctance to join the program because of the policy, Anne frames the experience in a positive light. Her original graduation date from the program was March; however, complications with her family support structure forced her to move up her graduation to January. Her son was staying with her sister and brother-in-law, but they felt they could not handle a young child anymore. Anne began making the arrangements to graduate and find a place of her own when, luckily, her mother offered to step in and keep her son. Anne was then faced with another tough decision—should she continue on with her plans to graduate early, or should she stay in treatment and away from her son a bit longer? When reflecting on her decision to stay in the program until March, Anne says,

What probably scared me when I was looking for a place to live if I left in January, it wasn't the fear of using, because I don't want to use, it was just the thought that I wouldn't be able to focus on myself, and right now that's what I need to do. I know it sounds selfish of me but right now I have to be selfish for my own sake and for my son's sake, because if in the long run, if I don't do this right the first time and don't get as much treatment as I've been getting, it's not going to hurt me it's going to hurt my son.

Anne had the option to move out and get her son back, but she chose to utilize the support from the program to move further in her recovery. In this way, Anne sees the reentry program's no-children policy as helping her manage the responsibilities that come with being a mother and recovering addict—an identity that led to her probationer identity—as her probation resulted from drug charges. She characterizes her choice as being able to focus more on herself, but for the benefit of her child.

As support is an important aspect of balancing the demanding responsibilities that are associated with being a mother under state supervision, it would follow that a lack of support could be just as influential. With a lack of support comes the exacerbated difficulty of balancing these responsibilities. Some of the women, due to their lack of support and responsibilities to the state, mention having a harder time handling both. Kiara, a White fifty-year-old mother of two and grandmother of five, specifically felt the struggle so much that she gave her child up for adoption because she felt that without the support she could not adequately manage being a mother and a probationer. This was not uncommon; three of the women have children that were either voluntarily put up for adoption or were forcibly taken by the state.

While many of the participants discuss having support to varying degrees, Kiara mentions having little to no support. From a young age Kiara has been on her own, leaving her home at fifteen years old. She asserts that she has never felt like she has had any support in her life. She was absent from her children's lives until very recently, and her ex-mother-in-law is

raising her oldest daughter while the youngest was put up for adoption. Kiara talks about the difficulty of being a mother, an addict, and attempting to be a successful probationer. When asked about how she managed it, she says,

My youngest one, I was in jail at the time and after I got out I put her in [DCF] When I got out I tried to do everything I was supposed to do, but I could never pass a drug test, so what I did was I just signed her up for adoption. I didn't have anyone, no family, my dad had moved to Connecticut with my stepmom. I only had family out in Arizona that I wasn't really talking to. So I called [DCF], tried to do the right thing, went through the program, and while I was on probation they came to my job and arrested me. So I called [DCF] and they picked her up.

Here, Kiara discusses the difficulty of identity negotiation without community or family support. Because of the lack of support, she felt that the only way, or perhaps the best way to manage was to give her child up. Years later Kiara served four months in prison, during which time she had no contact with her family or her children. While she is involved with her children now, she mentions frequently that she has a hard time claiming her identity as a mother due to her absence. However, she also asserts that she put her youngest up for adoption because she could not successfully complete probation and stay out of jail while also caring for a young child. As a whole, Kiara declares that the responsibilities of both were too much for her and that her youngest daughter was better off with another family, that she was doing the “right thing” by calling DCF.

While the concept of social support emerges within all of the conversations, there is an arguable racial distinction between the amount, forms, and reliability of social support discussed. It is important to note, however, that these differences could be the result of some other factor or a combination of factors, and the sample size does not allow for generalizability. Tina and Delilah, two of the self-identified Black participants, directly mention the importance and reliability of family support in managing their identity. Tina references her mother's constant

care and emphasizes the reliability of that source of support, claiming that her mother has never turned her back on her. Delilah talks extensively about her deceased husband and the role he played in getting her through the early years of motherhood and probation. Conversely, only one of the White women, Anne, spoke highly of their family. The other white respondents do not perceive family support to be as reliable, but instead present it as far more tenuous or even absent. Marilyn's family ostracized her when she became a mother at eighteen and offered no support through her involvement with the justice system. Kiara's family was similarly absent from her life and is not referred to as a dependable source of support. Also interesting, but not generalizable, is the reference to the importance of stable employment in balancing motherhood and state supervision. Jeannie and Marilyn, both White women, talk extensively about their reliable employment history and their supportive employers. In contrast, few of the Black women indicate that employment was a reliable source of support. Lucinda serves as a departure from this overgeneralization, referencing the flexibility of her employer as pertinent to her successful negotiation. All of the participants talk about support but it is the *way* that they talk about it, especially in terms of its reliability, that slightly varies.

In summary, family and community support is an important tool for these mothers who have been on parole or probation. Having support in the form of family, probation/parole officers, employers, or reentry programs can increase the likelihood that the woman will be able to more easily manage the competing responsibilities of motherhood and parolee/probationer identity. However, having support does not necessarily make for a flawless transition. There are still emotional responsibilities that the mothers feel towards their children, and if they feel that they are not living up to the expectations of themselves, their children, or society in general, guilt can result. Along with that guilt comes the third issue discussed by the women: managing

stigma, and its relationship to negotiating the competing responsibilities and identities of motherhood and parolee/probationer. In particular, since accessing social support required the mothers to self-identify as in need due to their dual identity, these actions opened the door for stigmatized responses.

Tool 2: Stigma Management through Management of Openness

Stigma is a concept that emerges throughout the interviews, however it emerges in an interesting way. Rather than discussing all of the ways in which they feel stigmatized, the women speak more extensively about openness—specifically how open they are with people about their parole/probation identity. Openness is discussed as a spectrum, with their openness varying based on the situation. Managing their openness is a tool that the women discuss using to better handle the difficulties that come with being a mother under state supervision. The data illustrate that one identity never completely replaces another identity—that these women are constantly aware of both “mother” and “parolee/probationer” when they make decisions. In the instance of openness, this still holds true. As discussed in the last section, some of the mothers were open so as to gain social support from their family and/or community. Here, some of the respondents express that they are open with other people in the event that they can help someone else. In addition, the mothers choose when to pass and when to be open as it relates to their children: they may hide their parole/probation identity if they believe it can affect their children negatively, and they may be open or not with their own children. Indeed, being open with their children varies among the respondents: some mention being open so their children can learn and avoid their mistakes, while one participant talks less about her experiences in order to save face

as a mother. In yet another way, a negotiation takes place, specifically the negotiation and management of openness regarding the parolee/probationer identity.

Some of the women note that despite the potential stigma, they have come to terms with the decisions they have made by being open about their stories and attempting to help other people. Openness and helping others has been a way to accept themselves and move forward. Like many of the others, Marilyn discusses being open with people about her criminal and drug history in the event that they can learn from and appreciate her story. In such cases, it is through the experiences linked with her probation identity that she feels she can help others. She does not volunteer the information to just anyone though, as she recognizes the potential for stigma. When asked if she has ever felt that she could not share her story with someone, Marilyn relays,

Strangers or people that I really don't, I mean I can be open with you because you understand and you're studying it and you don't judge it. But people who I feel like don't have any interest or concern, no. Sometimes I'll share with someone in the street if I feel like they can learn from it, but just to tell anybody, no way, because I don't feel it's their business. A lot of people don't know how to really appreciate what I'm telling them. The people who do appreciate it though, I tell everything.

Her criminal record and drug history are pieces of her life experience that Marilyn is not ashamed of. However, she is very cognizant of the stigma associated with such a history. She feels comfortable sharing her story with people whom she does not believe will judge her and who can potentially benefit from hearing her story of struggle and success. In regards to her children, she wants to expose them to her own mistakes so that they can learn. She explains that, "I'm really open about everything especially with my kids. I let them know because it is a cycle. I'm very blessed because my kids aren't on drugs, and I pray that my grandchildren never will be, I hope that they see what I've gone through and they avoid that path." Despite being relatively open, Marilyn also mentions that she specifically attempts to hide her identity from her

grandchildren's friends or classmates. Along with others, she fears the potential stigmatization, shaming, and labeling that her grandchildren could face if the wrong people find out about her past.

While Marilyn mentions hiding her identity from certain people who may judge her, fear of primary stigma is not discussed as intensely as the fear of deferred stigma. Tina does not feel the need to hide her identity for her own sake, claiming that many of the people around her have been in the system before, therefore they would not have cause to judge her. Tina fears the potential deferred stigma that could result if certain people learn of her criminal record and drug use. Hiding her identity is not for her own protection, then, but rather for her children's. Like Marilyn and Lucinda, her children's schools are kept in the dark about her parolee/probationer identity. While discussing her openness (or lack of) about that part of her identity, Tina elucidates her lack of openness with a cautionary tale,

One of the other kids in my daughter's school's mama was in prison, and when people found out they would kinda make fun of the girl you know, the mom was in prison for a bunch of stuff, a bunch of prostitution and drug charges I know that. So the other kids would make fun of the girl and tell her she was gonna end up like her mama. So I guess yeah, I never volunteered any information to the school, because I didn't want my girls getting made fun of cause of what I had done and getting harassed for it, and I don't think my kids really told their friends for the same reason probably.

While she asserts that neither she nor her children have experienced the shaming backlash of her criminal record, Tina is aware that it could happen if certain people find out, most notably the school. In this instance, she is not very open about her identity, despite being open with other people.

At the other end of the spectrum is Anne, who attempts to hide her experiences in order to save face as a mother to her children. Anne has three sons: the oldest currently lives on his own but lived on and off with his mother and grandmother over the years, the middle child lives

with his father, and the youngest has been in Anne's care since his birth three years ago. Her older sons are aware of her experiences to an extent, as they usually had to be informed if she was in jail or needed to report to probation. In general though, she does not speak openly with them about her drug or criminal history. They are able to piece some things together because of their age, but she does not volunteer any information unless she feels it is absolutely necessary. She does this in order to maintain some of their respect, to ensure that they still see and respect her as a mother. While discussing the extent to which she is open with her family Anne states,

My youngest, he's still too young to understand what's been going on so that's good. I don't want him to know. I mean my other boys know because they've had to, I mean when I went to jail I had to tell them why. But if I don't have to tell them something I don't. I don't want them thinking of me like a criminal and a drug addict. Because if they do, how will they respect me? I'm their mother. I'm not supposed to mess up like that. How can I tell them not to do certain things when I'm the one who's been getting in trouble? I'm not gonna be a hypocrite. But I have to be if I want to protect myself as their mom. Everyone tells me that I need to be open with them so they can learn from my mistakes, but I'm not convinced that it works that way. Maybe a little bit, but they don't need to know every little thing I've done just so they can learn from it. All they need are the basics, don't hang out with drug dealers, don't do drugs, and get out of abusive relationships.

In contrast to Marilyn, Anne does not feel that her children would benefit from having extensive knowledge of her past. She attempts to teach them what she considers to be the basics but feels that she can accomplish that without revealing everything. She also feels that her identity as a mother would greatly suffer from their knowing. From Anne's perspective, in order to protect her identity as a mother—someone who deserves respect—she must hide certain things. When her youngest son is old enough to understand what has been going on, Anne wishes to keep as much knowledge from him as possible, continually managing her openness.

A slight variation emerges between the White participants and the Black participants regarding their openness about their identities. As a whole, the women who discuss being less

open to people in their community more extensively are White. Jeannie and Marilyn both mention keeping the probation part of their identities hidden if they feel that someone may judge them. The Black women seem to be slightly more open with their peers and those in their community, such as Tina, who mentions that the people around her would not judge her because many of them have been involved with the justice system. Openness with potential employers about being on parole/probation is also another interesting dissimilarity. None of the White women mention feeling that they need to keep that part of their identity hidden while searching for employment. In fact, Jeannie asserts that being open has actually opened employment doors for her,

Like being on probation sometimes helped me, because they would have this doubt but when I explained to them my record and say, “but I’m a recovering addict and I’m not under the influence and I’m doing all of my probation stuff, so I don’t live like that, I’m a different person, if you would give me a chance I won’t disappoint you” and they’re usually like “that’s crazy to me because most people won’t come out and be so open about it”, so they open the door for me.

In direct contrast is Susan’s explicit discussion of hiding her criminal record when seeking employment, “I’ve ‘accidentally’ checked ‘no’ on the question that asks if you’ve ever been convicted of a felony. They don’t wanna hire no criminal, even if it was for something stupid, they don’t care. They see that check and think you ain’t reliable.” While none of the women except Susan mention this, they also do not mention being particularly open with employers. Lucinda once again serves as a departure, as she felt that she could be open with her employer.

In order to negotiate the conflict between identities and responsibilities, the women manage their openness about their parolee/probationer identity. In some instances, they may be open about their identity with other people if it has the potential to benefit someone else, but they may feel the need to hide that part of their identity if it could negatively impact their children in the form of deferred stigma. Negotiating openness also occurs during interaction with family

members. As they negotiate their identities through social support and negotiating openness, another tool these women talk about using is the redefinition of the ways by which they can enact the role of the socially constructed “good mother.”

Tool 3: Repairing Damage to Identity through a Redefinition of “Good Mother”

Mothers who have the experience of being under state supervision hold two positions which conflict not only in the associated responsibilities, but also in the societal perceptions of value. Motherhood is a highly valued identity; it is generally considered to be a noble and respected identity (Douglas and Michaels 2004). Contrastingly, the parolee/probationer identity is one that is not respected and tends to be stigmatized. As these women talk about themselves as mothers they often discuss the ways in which they have been good moms, despite the perceptions that may come with having a criminal record in regards to the ability to parent. The mothers express that their number one priority is their children—the defining characteristic of the socially constructed “good mother.” However, out of perceived necessity these women redefine the ways to go about being a good mom. They have reengineered a kind of motherhood that works for them, but may look different to those who do not share their combined identity of “mother under state supervision.” Through their performance of motherhood, they reject the stigma associated with their dual identity.

In her own way, each mother refers to the prevailing notions of what it means to be a “good mother.” They are aware of the hegemonic definition and seem to aspire to reach it. When asked what she characterizes as a good mother, Kiara declares, “I think a good mother is someone who puts their kid before anything else, their job, their relationships, their friends, themselves, all that kind of stuff. A mother is supposed to be completely selfless, the kid is

always supposed to come first.” Kiara’s definition is representative of not only the other mothers’ definitions, but also the societal standard of motherhood as discussed by Choi, Henshaw, Baker, and Tree (2005), Hays (1996), and Sousa (2001). While they strive to attain this standard, the mothers frequently mention the ways in which others may believe them to be lacking, most often associated with their experiences linked to their parole/probation identity. However, the women still consider themselves to be good moms—they just achieve good motherhood through unconventional means.

It is a mother’s responsibility to teach her children the proper, socially acceptable way to think and behave (Sousa 2011). If a child acts out, the mother is often blamed (Ladd-Taylor and Umansky 1998). Sharing knowledge with and teaching one’s children is arguably a core part of being perceived as a respectable mother. As previously exemplified by Marilyn, being open about her experiences with her family is thought of as a positive avenue for teaching. When asked if she feels that mothers who have not had her experiences with the criminal justice system have the same definition of motherhood, Marilyn responds,

I think we all do, we all want what is best for our kids. But those people out there, those people who haven’t had to deal with the stuff I’ve dealt with, they may *think* they’re being good moms because they do what they’re told they’re supposed to do, but they’re not giving their kids any knowledge [emphasis hers]. Now me, I’ve got knowledge. I’ve got all types of knowledge. Mostly knowledge about what not to do, but that’s still valuable stuff right there. I know some of the signs of a spiraling life and I think I know enough that if I see one of my kids or my grandbabies going down that path, I’ve got the knowledge to step in and try to help. And I’ve passed that down to my kids. They may not see it that way, because they still hold grudges, but they also know some of the signs that they can look for in their own kids and hopefully help. Knowledge is powerful. It’s very important.

Marilyn is conscious of the fact that she may not be doing what all the “other moms” do, but that she actually has something that they do not: knowledge. She elaborates further, explaining that she can not only recognize the signs of bad decision-making, but that she has passed this down to

her children so that they may also be able to identify such behaviors. Additionally, she mentions that her children have experienced life with a mother on probation and know how difficult it is therefore they may be less apt to make similar choices. The knowledge she has acquired and then passed down to her children is one way in which she sees herself as a good mother because she is teaching and ultimately protecting her family.

Some of the mothers mention selling drugs, their bodies, and stealing in order to support their families, using these behaviors to fulfill what they saw as one dominant responsibility of motherhood—providing for their children. In her opinion, Tina meets the standard of adequately providing, however the way in which she accomplishes it may not be considered acceptable. Tina explains, “I never neglected my kids, they never wanted for nothing, they always stayed in a fine place, they always had the finer things in life. I made sure my kids had everything. If it comes down to it I sell my body to get them stuff.” Tina feels that she has consistently provided for her kids by making sure they have everything they need and many things that they want. It is so important to her to provide for her children that if she reaches a point in which she can no longer do that by acceptable means, she is willing to engage in criminal behavior.

The women also articulated a social expectation that mothers are ever-present in their children’s lives as one characteristic of a socially constructed “good mother,” mimicking Hays’s (1996) notion of intensive mothering. Yet, mothering from a distance or relinquishing their status of mother are other ways the women repair their damaged identities. Anne has elected to spend a significant amount of time away from her son, as did four of the other mothers. After completing three months in jail, Anne was given the opportunity by her family to enter the residential reentry program and focus on her recovery from addiction, which would entail

leaving her child with her sister and brother-in-law. However, this was a difficult decision to make, as she felt and still feels guilty for being absent from her children's lives. She explains,

I was hesitant to come here [the reentry program] because I had already been 3 months away from the baby, I've never been away from the youngest and he's 3, so I was like I don't want to be away from him any longer. But I figured here at least I'd get to see him sometimes and to extend my treatment, that's only going to better me for him.

Anne is not consistently present in her son's life. She gets to see him on occasion, but he does not stay with her in the house. She recognizes that being away from him may be frowned upon by individuals who do not understand her situation; however, she still feels that she is being a good mother. She is sacrificing time with him now so that she may be a better mother in the future.

Similarly, Jeannie sees herself as a good mom because she gave her two daughters up for adoption: "So, I've always had my kids' best interest at heart and if I didn't I wouldn't have given up my two daughters in the first place. I did that because I wanted, I loved them so much, I did it because I loved them, not because I didn't love them." For Jeannie, giving her children up for adoption is a way in which she was a good mother. Jeannie explains that she was attempting to do the best she could with what she had, and in recognizing that she could not give her girls the best life, she gave them up.

The process of negotiation between the identities of mother and probationer/parolee impacts how the women see and present themselves as mothers. Each participant expresses an awareness of the dominant ideal mother role and seeks to fulfill it by always keeping her children as a priority. However, the stories of these women in particular redefine the ways some of the mothers go about being a "good mother." They keep their children's best interests in mind, they teach their children, they provide for them, they strive to be a constant in their lives, or they find

them better homes either temporarily, or permanently, thus achieving these goals through unconventional means. These woman are not just using motherhood as a way to repair the damage inflicted by a criminal record; they are using their own redefinition of ways to be a good mother because prevailing strategies of good motherhood that they articulate themselves would not allow them to repair their damaged identities. Motherhood is a tool that can be used to repair and redeem their damaged identity as probationer/parolee and to move beyond the stigma associated with a criminal record to create positive sense of selves.

CHAPTER SIX:

DISCUSSION

At the core of the experiences of the women I interviewed is the idea that the process of negotiating multiple identities is incredibly complex. It is too intricate a process to think that one identity can trump another in all situations and that the process of becoming is linear and finite—hence the growth of research dedicated to intersectionality. Nevertheless, within the research on women and the criminal justice system, much of the literature continues to neglect the experiences of mothers who are under state supervision as an issue of intersectionality research. Particularly, the challenge of managing the responsibilities associated with the parolee/probationer identity that conflicts with a mother identity is under-researched. The women here embrace “mother” as an identity; it is an all-encompassing part of who they feel they are. Parolee/probationer is an identity with its own set of obligations, yet it is not a part of themselves that they embrace, nor do they talk about it as a defining characteristic, but rather something they must manage. Nevertheless, parolee/probationer identity, specifically the pressures, responsibilities, and stigma that come with it, has the power to influence their mother identity.

As illustrated by the examples provided throughout *Conflicting Responsibilities and Identities*, probation or parole is almost always prioritized when it comes in conflict with the associated responsibilities of motherhood. These conflicts arise directly due to their combined identity of “mother under state supervision,” and in order to be “good parolees/probationers,” the

women feel they must suspend or compromise their mother identity. However, as exemplified by the specific stories of Lucinda, Delilah, Tina, and Jeannie, it is impossible for the mothers to completely forget their mother identity in order to be “good probationers/parolees.” What often results from this complicated negotiation of responsibilities is guilt and fear—guilt when they have to tend to their state supervision responsibilities over their children, and fear of incarceration when they decide that their children must come first. When faced with the conflicts that result from being moms on parole or probation, these women do have some tools by which to help them manage. These tools, while varying in availability and reliability to each woman, emerge throughout the interviews as imperative to their success as both mothers and probationers/parolees.

Family and community support was talked about extensively in the interviews, but the forms and reliability of each was highly varied. For example, having family members or friends who can watch the children while the mother goes to Narcotics Anonymous meetings or generally tending to probation/parole responsibilities, can directly influence the management of “mother” and “probationer/parolee,” having the potential to make it much simpler. As Jeannie indicates, social support can also work indirectly. While it may seem that her employers were only supporting one part of her identity, the probationer/recovering addict, in actuality she was given support for both. While they directly supported her probationer/recovering addict identity, they also indirectly had an impact on her identity as a mother.

While family and community support is arguably an important component of managing being a mother on parole or probation, this only makes a difference to a certain extent. The presence of even intense support cannot completely make up for the feelings of emotional abandonment and guilt when the mother has to miss things that are important to her children, like

sports games or graduations. Guilt is a powerful emotion that emerges through each and every interview in one way or another. As Tina and Marilyn discuss, despite having incredibly strong support systems, they still feel guilty or like “bad moms,” even when their children were cared for while they focused on probation/parole. The conflict between probation/parole and motherhood, even when lessened by various forms of support, continues to complicate the process of identity negotiation. Social support is undeniably crucial; however, it does not act as an invincibility shield. Having support makes management easier, but it does not protect these women from the expectations of motherhood, nor does it protect them from the emotional consequences when they do not feel that they are meeting those expectations.

Without a support system, the already arduous task of managing identities that oftentimes conflict is made even more challenging. In order to be a successful probationer and to do right by her child, Kiara felt that adoption was the best option. It may seem that Kiara abandoned her identity as mother in favor of probation, but in actuality she was acting as both mother and probationer. There is an implicit connection between Kiara’s absence of social support and the idea that adoption can be a way to enact the role of the socially constructed “good mother.”

The mothers must also work to gain or maintain different forms of social support in order to manage their combined identity. However, with their parolee/probationer identity comes the potential for stigmatization, and with stigma comes the risk of losing support (or never obtaining it to begin with). To manage the risk of stigma for both themselves and their children, the women employ the second tool that I discuss: *Stigma Management through Management of Openness*. Some of the women embrace the experiences associated with the parolee/probationer identity when they see the potential for good, specifically when there is an opportunity to teach, as exemplified by Marilyn. Marilyn is open in situations where the risk of stigmatization for her

is relatively low and the benefit for others to learn is high. However, when there is an increased potential for stigmatization, especially the stigmatization of their children, Marilyn, Lucinda, and Tina attempt to hide their parolee/probationer identity. As Tina's discussion exemplifies, protecting her children is a core part of her identity as a mother and one way in which she enacts this mother identity is through stigma management. Anne also hides pieces of her probationer identity, but she does it in order to maintain being respected as a mother by her children. In this way, "mother" and "probationer" have once again merged; she manages motherhood through attempting to hide events associated with probation.

Using stigma as a construct to better understand or interpret the experiences of these women works to a certain extent. They discuss feeling as if their criminal record results in negative perceptions and then manifests in differential treatment (see Jeannie and Susan), however these women themselves also use this stigmatized identity to teach those around them; rather than seeing themselves as wholly spoiled, they see the potential for their past mistakes to forge a better future. In this way, stigma works, but what uniquely emerges is the potential of stigma to be used for the purposes of positive identity formation.

The mothers must constantly manage the identities of mother and parolee/probationer, hiding one or promoting one when they feel it is necessary. Whether they are open about their probationer/parolee identity and use it as a teaching tool or hide it to protect themselves and their children, it is clear that there is a complex process of negotiation going on. Deciding whether to be open or not incorporates their identities as mothers and depends on who may or may not be affected, either positively or negatively. By negotiating their openness, these women are using another tool to manage their combined identity. Particularly, they are attempting to manage the

potential stigma that could result from their identity and in turn affect the systems of social support they may or may not have at their disposal.

As a result of their stigmatized identity, the women are at risk for potential damage to their identity. To mitigate the damage, these women employ the final tool that is discussed in this piece: *Repairing Damage to Identity through a Redefinition of “Good Mother.”* The mothers rework the ways in which they go about being “good mothers,” while still asserting that they are, in general, adhering to the hegemonic standard of motherhood. Marilyn teaches her children by sharing her experiences and feels good about herself because she believes she is protecting with knowledge. Tina provides for her children by selling her body, but feels justified because her kids “never wanted for nothing.” Anne mothers from a distance while in the residential reentry program. By placing recovery over the instant gratification of motherhood, she is essentially enacting motherhood through prioritizing recovery. This may be deemed initially selfish rather than selfless, but Anne redefines it in a way that is seen as something that is good for her child and an important aspect of being a better mother. By becoming a better mother through recovery, Anne is able to repair some of the damage that has been inflicted by her probationer identity. Jeannie puts the interests of her children before hers by placing them for adoption. In the act of relinquishing her rights as a mother, she embraced her identity as a mother by doing a very motherly and loving thing. This impacts her sense of self—rather than feeling that she was a bad mother for doing this, she feels good about her decision and thus repairs her sense of self. By seeing themselves as good mothers, the women are able to foster a positive sense of self despite the damage that was inflicted by their criminal behavior. Through this reworking of good motherhood, the women are better able to manage the conflict that results from being mothers under state supervision.

There are many instances of direct conflict that result from the combined identity of “mother under state supervision.” In order to deal with this conflict and manage their combined identity, the women use a multitude of tools. This analysis focuses on three of those tools: social support, managing openness, and redefining ways to be good moms. The women have access to and use each of these tools in varying degrees—some not having access at all and some having constant and reliable access. These are tools that can make managing being a mother under state supervision easier if available, reliable, and used correctly in situations, but can also exacerbate the difficulties if unavailable, unreliable, and used incorrectly. What has emerged from this analysis is the complex nature of navigating the combined identity of “mother under state supervision” and the tools that this particular group of women have used to do so.

CHAPTER SEVEN:

CONCLUSION

There are findings that emerged in my analysis that are in line with and supported by the previous literature. The pervasiveness of the ideology of motherhood, the socially constructed definition of the “good mother” and intensive mothering, is apparent throughout the discussions surrounding motherhood. These women are aware of and strive to reach this socially coveted identity of “good mother.” As Kiara illustrates, a good mother, to her and also to the other participants, means being completely selfless, as is reflected in the previous literature (Choi et al 2005). The demanding nature of state supervision is also heavily discussed throughout the interviews and is also in line with the previous literature surrounding probation and parole (Petersilia 2003; Richie 2001). It is interesting to note that in trying to manage their competing identities, adaptation was bidirectional, with the women re-negotiating their definitions of good mothering (through identification of alternative “good mothering” behaviors) and their perceived stigma of state supervision (through claiming the value of such experiences for others).

The women talk frequently about all of the requirements of parole or probation, specifically about how they must prioritize state supervision over everything else, or risk going to prison. The institution of state supervision does not often take into consideration other identities/statuses/roles, and makes it difficult to tend to these other responsibilities, as Opsal (2001) also discusses throughout her work. The significant role that systems of social support play in successful reentry is also supported by previous research (Dodge and Pogrebin 2001;

Richie 2001; Richie 2005; Pearl 1998; O'Brien 2001; Servan and Mittlemark 2012; Harm and Phillips 2000). These different forms of social support, including family, parole/probation officers, employment, and residential reentry programs, have the potential to make the prioritization of parole/probation a little bit easier when a conflict of responsibilities occurs.

While stigma did not emerge as a primary focus for these women, instances of stigmatization or fear of stigmatization did occur, especially in relation to their children, which is also seen throughout the stigma and stigma management literature (Uggen et al 2006; LeBel 2012; Carpenter et al 2010). Additionally, the idea that motherhood is a redeeming identity, one that can potentially repair damage inflicted by the parolee/probationer identity, is reflected both in the literature and throughout the interviews. By reconstructing their experiences and reframing them as acceptable mothering practices, these women are better able to reclaim a culturally coveted social identity (Opsal 2001).

My research also expands on and differs from the existing literature. As a whole, my study adds to the literature by focusing specifically on a population of mothers on parole or probation. There is scant research that makes, as its priority, the experiences of moms under state supervision. Within the motherhood literature, researchers suggest that Black single mothers are seen as deviant, whereas White single mothers are considered to be deviant yet redeemable (Solinger 1994). The findings that emerged pertaining to social support seem to suggest something different, particularly that White mothers (not necessarily single) who have deviated so far from social norms by engaging in crime, are seen as worse by their families. The withdrawal of support by Kiara and Marilyn's families suggests that their deviations from White social norms are unforgivable and thus they are unredeemable. Family support for the Black participants is discussed as stronger and more reliable, perhaps because of the higher prevalence

of crime in minority communities (Lewis 1966). The strong support particularly from Tina and Delilah's families suggests that their identity as moms on parole/probation has more potential for forgiveness.

An addition to the literature also emerges from the discussions of the role social support plays in reintegration. The women talk about how important social support is, but they also discuss the ways in which social support is not all-protecting. Having even an abundance of social support cannot shield them from the guilt associated with prioritizing something over their children, as Tina and Marilyn illustrate. Social support is also limited by the risks associated with sharing their parolee/probationer identity, particularly with school personnel and employers, re-invoking the potential for stigmatization, including deferred stigmatization. As previously mentioned, the women do not spend an extensive amount of time discussing the ways they feel they are stigmatized. They spend more time talking about how they decide whether to hide or reveal their parolee/probationer identity. Specifically they engage in a complicated negotiation of deciding who will benefit or who will be harmed by being open about their identity. Their mother identity also plays a role in this negotiation. They hide their identity from others if they feel their kids could be harmed, but they are open with others if they feel that they can help. They hide pieces of their experiences from their kids if they think their mother identity could be compromised, but they are open if they think their kids could benefit from hearing about past mistakes. This incorporation of the mother identity into the stigma management techniques they employ also adds a new component to the stigma/stigma management literature.

As previously discussed, the women sometimes embrace the experiences that result from their stigmatized identity and use those experiences to teach others and consequently feel good about themselves. When they do this, they are able to use their parolee/probationer identity to

promote a positive sense of self. Stigma in general has been a relevant concern in both the fields of Criminology and Sociology. Sociologists have expressed that people can manage and embrace stigma, however this nuanced approach to stigma has been largely unexplored in Criminology. It also has not necessarily been applied to mothers. The ways that these women embrace their histories of criminality and state supervision offers a more comprehensive understanding of the potential for positive identity formation despite holding a stigmatized identity.

Motherhood as a redeeming identity is supported by past research, however it is the way in which these women redefine the ways to go about being good mothers that is different. They do not redefine what being a good mother means, but they forge new paths to good motherhood that challenge the existing motherhood ideology. Through embracing past mistakes and making them teaching moments, providing through criminality, prioritizing state supervision/recovery, and mothering from a distance, these women provide new narratives for “good motherhood.”

That said, there are limitations to the current study. While in-depth interviews provide a closer look at the complexities of social life as certain individuals experience them, the results of my study are not generalizable in part due to the sample size, and in part due to the recruitment procedure. Not all mothers under state supervision will experience such tremendous conflict between motherhood and parole/probation, nor will they handle it the way these women did. With that said, I strongly believe that there is a value to qualitative research with such populations, as taking a more in-depth look at how policies and institutions affect individuals could provide for better, more informed public policy. Additionally, while my sample reflected some diversity in terms of race, class, and age, my participants were recruited using snowball sampling; therefore, many of the women were associated with the same residential reentry

program, church groups, and drug and alcohol counseling services. These similar associations could lead to some homogeneity in the responses.

Collectively, the negotiations these women engage in shed light on the intricate and complicated experiences of mothers on parole and probation. The findings that emerge are both supported by the existing research, but also differ from and expand on previous works. Exploring their experiences provides a new, and more comprehensive look at how the identities of mother and parolee/probationer both conflict and merge to create a combined identity of “mother under state supervision.”

Policy Implications

Research regarding the formerly incarcerated’s attempts at reintegrating into society allows for a better understanding of the challenges they face—an understanding which can in turn work to better inform the creation of policies that affect these specific individuals. The prison and state supervision systems have historically been built on a male-model (Opsal 2011), and despite many strides, these systems still rarely take into consideration the needs of women, particularly mothers. The resources available to individuals under state supervision are an extension of that male-model, also rarely focusing on the specific needs of women and mothers. The mothers I interviewed undeniably face a unique set of obstacles that make their reintegration and periods of state supervision incredibly difficult. While trying to be “good parolees/probationers,” they risk their identity as “good mothers” and vice versa. When their responsibilities conflict, they must make a difficult decision in which probation/parole usually wins out. However, in such situations when their children are in danger, they may choose to risk violating probation/parole. This would result in a technical violation and could lead to their incarceration.

If the institution of state supervision would consider the conflicting responsibilities that come with being a mother (and perhaps even with other identities, statuses, or roles), there could be a chance of decreasing the prison population through reconsidering technical violations. Ideally, the parole and probation system should make recommendations on a more individualized case-by-case basis. The requirements of state supervision should be tailored to each individual and take into account both the formal obligations of their identities/statuses/roles, as well as the social obligations. For example, if a mother is on parole or probation and her child needs her, she should be able to tend to her child without fear of violating and being sent to prison. As our country is in its fourth decade of mass incarceration, this could have wide-reaching effects. With fewer people in prison, the working-age population could spend their time working and contributing to the economy rather than sitting behind bars, and our government could devote much needed resources to productive systems like education and healthcare.

Suggestions for Future Research

While my research looked at how women manage motherhood and state supervision, it could be helpful in terms of policy to also explore how other individuals with potentially conflicting identities manage state supervision. For example, an exploration into fathers who are primary caretakers could provide an interesting perspective. As guided by the previous literature, I originally aimed to unearth some of the potential racialized experiences with the criminal justice system—however this was not an emergent theme. Focusing on the potential impact that race/ethnicity has on involvement with parole and probation would potentially be quite illuminating.

REFERENCES

- Barreras, Ricardo E., Ernest M. Drucker, and David Rosenthal. 2005. "The Concentration of Substance Use, Criminal Justice Involvement, and HIV/AIDS in the Families of Drug Offenders." *Journal of Urban Health Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*, 82(1): 167-170.
- Belknap, Joanne. 2001. *The Invisible Woman: Gender, Crime and Justice* (2nd ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Berry, Phyllis E. and Helen M. Eigenberg. 2003. "Role Strain and Incarcerated Mothers." *Women and Criminal Justice*, 15(1): 101-119.
- Best, Amy L. 2003. "Doing Race in the Context of Feminist Interviewing: Constructing Whiteness Through Talk." *Qualitative Inquiry* 9(6): 895-914.
- Bill, Louise. 1998. "The Victimization and Revictimization of Female Offenders: Prison Administrators Should be Aware of Ways in which Security Procedures Perpetrate Feelings of Powerlessness Among Incarcerated Women." *Corrections Today*, 60(7): 106-108.
- Braithwaite, John. 1989. *Crime, Shame and Reintegration*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report. 1994. "Recidivism of Prisoners." Available at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/rpr94.pdf>.
- Campbell, Anne, Steven Muncer, and Daniel Bibel. 1998. "Female-Female Criminal Assault: An Evolutionary Perspective." *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 35: 413-428.
- Carby, Hazel. 1987. *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Carpenter, Gloria Jean, Yvette Harries, and James Graham. 2009. *Children of Incarcerated Parents: Theoretical Developmental and Clinical Issues*. New York, NY: Springer Publishing Company
- Choi, P., C. Henshaw, S. Baker, and J. Tree. 2005. "Supermum, Superwife, Supereverything: Performing Femininity in the Transition to Motherhood." *Journal of Reproductive and Infant Psychology* 23(2): 167-180.
- Collins, Patricia Hill. 1987. "The Meaning of Motherhood in Black Culture and Mother-Daughter Relationships." Pp. 274 in *Maternal Theory Essential Readings*, O'Reilly, Andrea (Ed). Toronto, Canada: Demeter Press.
- Collins, Patricia Hill. 1994. "Shifting the Center: Race, Class, and Feminist Theorizing about Motherhood." Pp. 45-65 in *Mothering: Ideology, Experience and Agency*, ed. Evelyn Nakano Glenn, Grace Chang, and Linda Forcey. New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Collins, Patricia Hill. 2000. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (2nd ed.). NY: Routledge.

- Coontz, Stephanie. 1992. *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap*. New York: Basic Books.
- Crenshaw, Kimberle. 1991. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review*, 43(1241): 1241-1299.
- Dill, Bonnie Thornton. 1986. "Our Mother's Grief: Racial Ethnic Women and the Maintenance of Families." Research Paper 4, Center for Research on Women. Memphis, TN: Memphis State University.
- Datesman, Susan K., and Glorinda L. Cales. 1983. "'I'm still the same mommy': Maintaining the Mother/Child Relationship in Prison." *Prison Journal* 63: 142-154.
- Dodge, Mary and Mark R. Pogrebin. 2001. "Collateral Costs of Imprisonment for Women: Complications of Reintegration." *The Prison Journal*, 81(1): 42-54.
- Douglas, S. J. and M.W. Michaels. 2004. *The Mommy Myth: The Idealization of Motherhood and How it Has Undermined Women*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Faith, Karlene. 1993. *Unruly Women: The Politics of Confinement and Resistance*. Vancouver, BC: Press Gang Publishers.
- Feeley, Malcolm and Jonathan Simon. 1992. "The New Penology: Notes on the Emerging Strategy of Correction and Its Implications." *Criminology*, 30: 449-471.
- Flavin, Jeanne. 2004. "Employment Counseling, Housing Assistance...and Aunt Yolanda?: How Strengthening Families' Social Capital Can Reduce Recidivism." *Criminology and Public Policy* 3(2): 209-216.
- Fox, James G. 1982. "Women in Prison: A Case Study in the Reality of Stress." Pp. 205-220 in *The Pains of Imprisonment*, R. Johnson and H. Toch (Eds.), Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Freudenberg, Nicholas, Jessie Daniels, Martha Crum, Tiffany Perkins and Beth E. Richie. 2005. "Coming Home from Jail: The Social and Health Consequences of Community Reentry for Women, Male Adolescents, and their Families and Communities." *American Journal of Public Health*, 95(10): 1725-1736.
- Girshick, Lori B. 1999. *No Safe Haven: Stories of Women in Prison*. Boston: Northeastern University Press.
- Glaze, Lauren E., and Laura M. Maruschak. 2008. "Parents in Prison and Their Minor Children." Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- Goffman, Erving. 1963. *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Harding, David J. 2003. "Jean Valjean's Dilemma: The Management of Ex-Convict Identity in the Search for Employment." *Deviant Behavior*, 24: 571-595.
- Harding, Sandra. 1987. "The Method Question." *Hypatia*, 2:19-35.
- Harm, Nancy J. and Susan D. Phillips. 2000. "You Can't Go Home Again." *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 32 (3): 3-21.
- Hays, Sharon. 1996. *The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Heisler, Jennifer M. and Jennifer Butler Ellis. 2008. "Motherhood and the Construction of 'Mommy Identity': Messages about Motherhood and Face Negotiation." *Communication Quarterly*, 56(4): 445-467.
- Holtfreter, Kristy, Michael D. Reisig and Merry Morash. 2004. "Poverty, State Capital, and Recidivism Among Women Offenders." *Criminology and Public Policy*, 3, 185-208.

- Howarth, Caroline. 2006. "Race as Stigma: Positioning the Stigmatized as Agents, Not Objects." *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology* 16 (6): 442-451.
- Jones, Edward, Robert A. Scott, and Hazel Markus. 1984. *Social Stigma: the Psychology of Marked Relationships*. New York: W. H Freeman.
- Kauffman, Kelsey. 2001. "Mothers in Prison." *Corrections Today*, 63(1): 62-65.
- Kline, Sue. 1993. "A Profile of Female Offenders in State and Federal Prisons." Pp. 106 in *Female Offenders: Meeting the Needs of a Neglected Population*, Laurel, MD: American Correctional Association.
- Ladd-Taylor, Molly and Lauri Umansky. 1998. *Bad Mothers: The Politics of Blame in Twentieth Century America*. New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Law, Victoria. 2009. *Resistance Behind Bars: The Struggles of Incarcerated Women*. Oakland, CA: PM Press.
- LeBel, Thomas P. 2012. "If One Doesn't Get You Another One Will: Formerly Incarcerated Persons' Perceptions of Discrimination." *The Prison Journal* 92(1): 63-87.
- Lewis, Oscar. 1966. "The Culture of Poverty." *Scientific American*, 215(4): 19-25.
- Mason, Jennifer. 2002. *Qualitative Researching*. London: Sage Publications.
- Mignon, Sylvia I. and Paige Ransford. 2012. "Mothers In Prison: Maintaining Connections with Children." *Social Work in Public Health*, 27(2): 69-88.
- Moe, Angela M. 2007. "Criminalized Mothers." *Women & Therapy* 29 (3): 135-164.
- Moe, Angela M. and Kathleen J. Ferraro. 2008. "Criminalized Mothers." *Women and Therapy* 29 (3): 135-164.
- Morton, J and D. Williams. 1998. "Mother/child Bonding: Incarcerated Women Struggle to Maintain Meaningful Relationships with their Children." *Corrections Today* 60 (98): 100-105.
- Mullings, Leith. 1986. "Anthropological Perspectives on the Euro-American Family." *American Journal of Social Psychiatry*, 6: 11-16.
- Mumola, Christopher J. Allen J. Beck. Laura M. Maruschak, Todd D. Minton, Tom Hester, Ellen Goldberg, and Jayne Robinson. 2000. "Incarcerated Parents and their Children." Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. 2013. "Criminal Justice Fact Sheet." Retrieved from <http://www.naacp.org/pages/criminal-justice-fact-sheet>.
- O'Brien, Patricia. 2001. *Making it in the "Free World."* Albany, New York: State University of New York Press.
- O'Brien, Patricia. 2001. "'Just Like Baking a Cake': Women describe the Necessary Ingredients for Successful Reentry After Incarceration." *Families in Society*, 82 (3): 287-285.
- O'Brien, Patricia. 2002. Reducing Barriers to Employment for Women Ex-Offenders: Mapping the Road to Reintegration." *Safer Foundation: Council of Advisors to Reduce Recidivism through Employment (C.A.R.R.E)*. Policy Paper #2. 1-24.
- Opsal, Tara D. 2001. Freedom, Surveillance, and Power: Women Living Under the Institution of Parole. PhD Dissertation: University of Colorado at Boulder.
- Opsal, Tara D. 2009. "Women on Parole: Understanding the Impact of Surveillance." *Women and Criminal Justice*, 19 (4): 306-328.

- Opsal, Tara D. 2011. "Women Disrupting a Marginalized Identity: Subverting the Parolee Identity through Narrative." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 40 (2): 135-167.
- Owen, William Foster. 1984. "Interpretive Themes in Relational Communication." *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 70: 274-287.
- Pager, Devah. 2007. *Marked: Race, Crime, and Finding Work in an Era of Mass Incarceration*. Chicago, IL: State University of New York Press.
- Pearl, Natalie. 1998. "Use of Community Based Social Services to Reduce Recidivism in Female Parolees." *Women and Criminal Justice*, 10 (1): 27-52.
- Petersilia, Joan. 2003. *When Prisoners Come Home: Parole and Prisoner Reentry*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Richie, Beth E. 2001. "Challenges Incarcerated Women Face as They Return to Their Communities: Findings from Life History Interviews." *Crime and Delinquency*, 47 (3): 368-389.
- Schmitt, Michael T., Nyla R Branscombe, Diane Kobrynowicz and Susan Owen. 2002. "Perceiving Discrimination Against One's Gender Group has Different Implications for Well-Being in Women and Men." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 28 (2): 197-210.
- Schram Pamela J. 1999). "An Exploratory Study of Stereotypes about Mothers in Prison." *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 27: 411-426.
- Servan, Annette K. and Maurice B. Mittelmark. 2012. "Resources for Coping Among Women Ex-Offenders." *International Journal of Mental Health Promotion*, 14(5): 254-263.
- Simon, Robin. W. 1992. "Parental Role Strains, Salience of Parental Identity and Gender Differences in Psychological Distress." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 33(3): 25-35.
- Solinger, Rickie. 1994. "Race and 'Value': Black and White Illegitimate Babies, 1945-1965." Pp. 287-310 in *Mothering: Ideology, Experience, and Agency*, E. N. Glenn, G. Chang, and L. N. Forcey (Eds.), New York: Routledge.
- Sousa, Amy C. 2011. "From Refrigerator Mothers to Warrior-Heroes: The Cultural Identity Transformation of Mothers Raising Children with Intellectual Disabilities." *Symbolic Interaction* 34 (2): 220-243.
- Teather, Susan, Les Evans, and Margaret Sims. 1997. "Maintenance of the Mother-Child Relationship by Incarcerated Women." *Early Child Development and Care*, 131: 65-75.
- The Sentencing Project. 2012. "Incarcerated Women Fact Sheet." *The Sentencing Project: Research and Advocacy for Reform*.
- The Vera Institute of Justice: Family Justice Program. 2011. "Why Ask About Family?: A Guide for Corrections." Retrieved from <http://www.vera.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/Why-ask-about-family-Final.pdf>.
- Travis, Jeremy. 2005. *But they all come back: Facing the challenges of prisoner reentry*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.
- Christopher Uggen, Jeff Manza, and Melissa Thompson, 2006. "Citizenship, Democracy, and the Civic Reintegration of Criminal Offenders." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 605: 281-310.
- Ussher, Jane M. 1989. *The Psychology of the Female Body*. London: Routledge.
- Women's Prison Association. 2003. "A Portrait of Women in Prison." Retrieved from www.prisonpolicy.org/scans/WPA_Portrait_Focus_NewLogo.pdf

- Yang, Lawrence Hsin, Arthur Kleinman, Bruce G. Link, Jo C. Phelan, Sing Lee, and Byron Good. 2007. "Culture and Stigma: Adding Moral Experience to Stigma Theory." *Social Science and Medicine*, 64: 1524-1535.
- Zalba, Serapio. 1964. *Women Prisoners and Their Families*. Sacramento, CA: Delmar Press.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter



RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND COMPLIANCE
Institutional Review Boards, FWA No. 00001669
12901 Bruce B. Downs Blvd., MDC035 • Tampa, FL 33612-4799
(813) 974-5638 • FAX (813) 974-7091

10/25/2013

Ms. Kaitlyn Robison
University of South Florida
Department of Sociology
4220 E. Fowler Avenue
Tampa, Florida 33620

RE: Full Board Approval for Initial Review

IRB#: Pro00013263

Title: Motherhood Bound in the Chains of Parole: An Exploratory Study of the Experiences of Mothers on Parole

Study Approval Period: 10/18/2013 to 10/18/2014

Dear Ms. Robison:

On 10/18/2013, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and **APPROVED** the above application and all documents outlined below.

Approved Item(s):

Protocol Document(s):

[Study Protocol, ver 1, 09-24-13](#)

Consent/Assent Document(s)*:

[consent form ver 2, clean.pdf](#)

*Please use only the official IRB stamped informed consent/assent document(s) found under the "Attachments" tab. Please note, these consent/assent document(s) are only valid during the approval period indicated at the top of the form(s).

As the principal investigator of this study, it is your responsibility to conduct this study in accordance with IRB policies and procedures and as approved by the IRB. Any changes to the approved research must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval by an amendment.

Appendix B: Interview Guide

1. General:
 - a. Please tell me a little bit about your life
 - b. How did you become involved with the justice system?
2. Parole:
 - a. What was your first meeting with your parole or probation officer like?
 - b. How open are you with people about being on parole or probation?
3. Motherhood:
 - a. Tell me about your experience of being a mother
 - b. What is the most rewarding part of being a mother, the most challenging?
 - c. When you hear the phrase “good mother”, what do you think of?
4. Motherhood and Parole/Probation:
 - a. How has it been being on parole or probation and being a mother?
 - b. How do you balance being a mother and being on parole or probation?
 - c. What are the challenges you’ve experienced as a mother on parole or probation?
 - d. What has the process of reuniting with your child/children been like?
 - e. Do the people at your children’s school know that you’re on parole or probation?
5. [If not previously discussed...]Do you think that race/ethnicity, sexuality, ability, class has had an effect on your experience as a mother on parole or probation?