

Babies Behind Bars: A Study of Prison Nursery Units

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions of women offenders currently participating in nursery programs in prisons in Nebraska, Indiana, and Illinois to explore the effects of prison nursery units on women offenders and its possible connection to recidivism. A qualitative methodological approach is used to collect data by performing interviews with the nursery-participant women offenders to explore the effect on the offender and her role as a mother with the child currently in her care, as well as any children she may have on the outside. Three major themes emerged from the data regarding the perceptions of the women: the impact of the lived experiences of the women in the nursery unit in relation to the programs' physical space and program implementation; the mother-child bonding and attachment as an influential factor in their personal growth and development; and the gender-responsive programming and structure's impact on their perception of rehabilitation and recovery as they sought to move forward with their lives. This study extends the literature on the lived experiences of women participating in prison nursery units as well as ideas for future research.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As the War on Drugs is waged in the United States, the incarceration rate continues to climb as more persons are incarcerated in the U.S. than in any other developed nation in the world (DeFina & Hannon, 2010). Alarming, statistics show a more than 800 percent increase in women's incarceration between 1977 and 2007 (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2008). Many point to this increase largely as a result of changes in law and sentencing procedures associated with the War on Drugs (DeFina and Hannon, 2010) as well as the "feminization of poverty" (Sharp & Marcus-Mendoza, 2001, p.23) which links the economic position of women offenders to being responsible for the increase in larceny, fraud and drug offenses. Over seventy-five percent of imprisoned women are mothers (Beatty, 1997), a representation likely to rise with the increasing rates of women's incarceration. As incarceration rates increase, programs shown to decrease recidivism are being given more serious consideration for implementation within the criminal justice system (Eckholm, 2008), particularly programs that are gender-responsive (Goshin and Byrne, 2009). Prison nursery programs are perhaps one of the most controversial gender-responsive programs associated with imprisoned women (Belknap, 2007), but one that is initially proving to decrease the rate of recidivism among the women offenders participating in the few operating prison nurseries in American prisons today (Carlson, 2009).

The purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions of women offenders currently participating in nursery programs in prisons in Nebraska, Indiana and Illinois to further explore the effects of prison nursery units on women offenders and the possibility of

decreased rates of recidivism. While it is impossible to measure recidivism with a population of inmates still incarcerated, this study seeks to examine how these women's experiences in prison nursery units have impacted their perceptions of how they believe they will be better able to avoid behaviors and choices that result in recidivating post-release. Interviews with the nursery-participant women offenders explore the effect on the offender and her role as a mother with the child currently in her care as well as any children she may have on the 'outside'. Specifically I examine how the nursery program impacts the maternal roles for these women, and how this impact can be evaluated and used to provide social policy recommendations based on the scholarly analysis of the lived experience of these women in this particular context. I also examine how these women perceive this program as a more effective rehabilitative approach to criminal justice as opposed to the typical punitive approach most commonly employed by jails and prisons throughout the United States. I will discuss how such social policy recommendations can promote programs that benefit both offender and society by the nurtured mother/child bond, possibly resulting in lower recidivism and less overall cost to society.

In an effort to further contribute to the existing literature, I chose to interview prisoners from three separate state institutions to facilitate comparisons and contrasts between the programs in an effort to more closely examine how the lived experiences of these women may vary according to program implementation. While to a certain degree the lived experiences are very similar in that all participants are incarcerated, program requirements and opportunities varied between the institutions which could contribute to the women's perceptions of nursery program benefits.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL APPLICATION

History of Prison Nursery Units in the United States

Allowing incarcerated women to raise their babies with them inside the confines of prison is not a new concept in the U.S. criminal justice system. In the late 1800s, women's penal institutions, called reformatories, were built and designed to house women offenders with the specific goal of reforming the prisoners by training them in important appropriate gender roles of domesticity (Craig, 2009). The prisoners were trained in middle-class homemaking values including cooking, sewing, and cleaning, and many of these reformatories also included nurseries to accommodate the women prisoners who had infants (Belknap, 1996).

As time passed, support in the U.S. for having babies in prison began to deteriorate. Public opinion began to shift and the notion of babies being raised in prison became too controversial. According to Brodie (1982), support deteriorated due to security-related concerns, the liability for the institutions, and concern for the potential adverse affects to the child's physical and mental development. Kauffman (2001) noted the additional concerns of cost and the attitude that mothers in prison were considered unfit. By the early 1970s, all prison nursery units in U.S. prisons had closed with the exception of the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility in New York (Staley, 2002). The Bedford Hills nursery program began operating in 1901 and has remained operational when all others in the U.S. closed (Mauskopf, 1998). As the rate of women's incarceration quadrupled between 1986 and 2006

(Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2008), the criminal justice system began a renewed interest in operating prison nurseries as a gender-responsive approach to rehabilitation (Craig, 2009).

Present Day Prison Nursery Units

Twelve states currently have at least one nursery unit within their women's correctional institutions or operate a community-based nursery for women prisoners outside the confines of the prison (TDCJ, 2010; IDOC, 2008; Villanueva, From, & Lerner, 2009). Rules and procedures governing the units and the inmate's eligibility criteria for participation vary depending on the institution but some basic premises exist overall. One main requirement for participation in any of the nursery unit programs currently operating is participation in parenting classes. Improved parenting skills and mother/child bonding are two of the major goals of the prison nursery unit initiative as institutions recognize the future benefits of these goals for the mother and the child (Carlson, 2001; Black, Payne, Lansdown, & Gregoire, 2004). Drug treatment is also often required, and facilities implement a zero-tolerance policy for drug use for mothers participating in the program (Carlson, 2001). Additionally, most institutions have a requirement that mothers convicted of a violent offense or an offense against a child cannot participate in the nursery program (Carlson, 2001). The Washington Corrections Center for Women in Gig Harbor, however, does not have a nonviolent offender requirement. Wendy Jans, Gig Harbor's program overseer, states "If they are going to be parents on the outside, they should be in our program" (Kauffman, 2001, p. 63). To be eligible to participate in the program at Gig Harbor, the mother must be scheduled for release within three years of the baby's birth and must retain custody post-release and be the child's primary caregiver (Kauffman, 2001).

Release dates are a common requirement with other nursery programs as well, but the length of stay based on release dates varies among the programs. The South Dakota Women's Prison Mother Infant program only allows newborns to stay with the mother for thirty days (SDDOC, 2011). The Baby and Mother Bonding Initiative (BAMBI) program in Texas allows for a six-month stay providing that both mother and baby are medically fit (TDCJ, 2010). Illinois allows babies to stay up to the age of two, which means participating mothers must have a projected release date within two years of the birth of the baby (IDOC, 2011). In common overall, a prisoner's release date cannot extend past the time they are able to participate in the nursery program, a requirement alleviating the issue of the child and mother being separated while the mother serves the remainder of her sentence (Carlson, 2001; Kauffman, 2001).

Another variation between institutions is the work requirement. Some prisons require the mother to work within the prison after the newborn is six weeks of age while the newborn is cared for by other trained inmates. Requiring the mother to work while in prison is an effort to provide the mother with the skills necessary to maintain herself and her child upon release from prison. Other programs allow the mother to be a full-time mother with her child, focusing on bonding and relationship-building (Pösö, Enroos, & Vierula, 2010; Black, Payne, Lansdown, & Gregoire, 2004; Carlson, 2001).

Comparing U.S. current prison nursery policies to other countries reveals that other countries are far more attuned to the mother/child bond, even when mothers have committed a crime, than the United States is. Byrne, Goshin, and Joestl (2010) reported that only four nations of seventy queried have a routine policy to separate mothers from their infants – Suriname, Liberia, the Bahamas, and the United States. In other countries such as Germany

(Kauffman, 2001), the UK (Black et al., 2004), South Africa (Eloff & Moen, 2003), Finland, and Spain (Pösö, Enroos, & Vierula, 2010), women have historically been allowed to have their children with them while incarcerated in recognition of the child's best interests and the rights of children to be united with their mother. German mothers who are imprisoned but who are not security risks are allowed to come and go from the prison to care for their children in their homes during the day and return at night to serve their sentence. Mothers who are more of a high security risk are allowed to have their children up to age 3 with them inside the prison at all times (Kauffman, 2001).

As previously mentioned, New York's Bedford Hills Correctional Center's nursery unit remained open when all others in the United States closed in the 1970s and has served as a model for other states in re-implementing the units (Mauskopf, 1998). Nebraska implemented their in-prison nursery unit in 1994 (Carlson, 2001), Washington opened theirs in 1999 (Kauffman, 2001), followed in the past decade by in-prison and/or community-based units in Ohio, Alabama, California, Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, North Carolina, Massachusetts, West Virginia, Texas and Vermont (TDCJ, 2010; Villanueva, From, & Lerner, 2009; IDOC, 2008).

Arguments For and Against Prison Nursery Units

"I'm a good mother who just made bad decisions. This program keeps me reminded of what I'm jeopardizing if I keep making bad decisions" (Courtney, TDCJ, 2010). This is a quote from a participant in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice BAMBI program and conveys one of the primary benefits of the prison nursery unit programs – mother and child bonding. The mothers participating in this program are allowed the opportunity to lavish

attention on their newborns, building the bond between the two strong enough to – hopefully – act as a deterrent to bad choices upon release back into society. For some mothers who had a drug addiction prior to incarceration, this is an opportunity for them to build this attachment while sober and clean, an opportunity they may have missed with other children while ‘on the outside’ due to bad decisions and addictions (Kauffman, 2001). The babies benefit from this bond as well. Attachment theory posits that a strong, uninterrupted bond with a responsible adult caregiver, preferably the mother, has a lifelong impact on the child’s emotional and cognitive development (Tuerk & Loper, 2008). Rutter (1981) discussed the possibility of development retardation and impaired developmental progress caused by maternal deprivation. But how does this impact society? How can proponents of prison nursery units communicate the benefits of prisoner mothers bonding with their children in a quantifiable way to a society that emphasizes crime control via a punishment-based system of justice as opposed to a rehabilitative system of justice? Why should society care about these babies born to ‘unfit’ mothers, other than from a humanitarian point of view? What is it going to cost and why should we be willing to pay for it?

Recidivism is one long-term cost to society that prison nursery units have been shown to impact. As Wanda Redding, Rehabilitation Programs Division program specialist for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, notes: “Our goal is to reduce recidivism. We want that mother to fall in love with that baby so much that there’s no way she could ever leave it to come back and see us” (Texas DOCJ, 2010). Carlson (2009) reviewed recidivism rates for programs in New York, Nebraska, Washington, Ohio and California and found lower recidivism for prisoners participating in all of these nursery programs as compared to those not participating and/or the general prisoner population. For example, the recidivism rate

over a 10-year period for mothers participating in Nebraska's prison nursery program was 33.2% lower than pregnant inmates who did not participate in the nursery program (Carlson, 2009). Illinois boasts zero recidivism for the mothers participating in their program over the last four years (IDOC, 2011). While research is still sparse regarding overall recidivism rates for all prison nurseries due to their relative newness (Carlson, 2009), these early statistics are very promising for the criminal justice system burdened with higher and higher rates of inmates, many who are recidivists. This drop in recidivism obviously translates to lower costs for the system as well. But mothers not returning to prison, resulting in decreased cost to taxpayers for imprisoning recidivists, is not the only benefit that can be quantified here. Carlson (2001) reports in his survey of incarcerated women that 59% of the women surveyed had mothers who had been incarcerated. The generational cycle of offenders can be broken when the mothers participating in the nursery programs learn how to be better, more responsible parents in the parenting classes and bond with their child to form a lifetime attachment, increasing the likelihood that these children will then break the cycle of offending (Carlson, 2001).

Actual costs associated with prison nursery units are another concern that society may have with these programs. How much does it cost to house these infants and provide for all of their physical and medical needs? How can the criminal justice system afford new programs that benefit a few when prisons are overcrowded and programs are cut due to lack of funding? Prison nursery units can be self-sustaining with grants, donations, and volunteer assistance from the community. Indiana's nursery unit "runs wholly on grant money and donations" (IDOC, 2008). When Indiana prison officials put the word out asking for donations for their new nursery program in 2008, an overwhelming number of offenders

throughout Indiana's prison system donated over five thousand dollars to support the Wee One's nursery at the Indiana Women's Prison in Indianapolis. Some Indiana state legislators recognized the importance of the nursery unit and threw a baby shower at the site to donate gifts of clothing and supplies (IDOC, 2008). Illinois' nursery unit at the Decatur Correctional Center has operated at no cost to the taxpayers for the four years it has been in existence due to donations and volunteers from the community (IDOC, 2011). Nebraska's prison nursery program obtained a grant from a national institution to help start their program, and community volunteers including the Visiting Nurse Association of Nebraska have helped keep costs down for ongoing operation (Carlson, 2001). West Virginia's nursery program is a matter of state law which requires a unit to be provided, but does not provide funding for the unit. Their funding derived from a partnership with Early Head Start, a federal program (C. Roberts, personal communication, June 15, 2011). These are just a few examples of how funding can be provided for these units. Carlson (2001) also did a cost analysis to analyze costs associated with babies in the prison as compared to outside the prison (being cared for by foster care, thus costing the state) and found that medical costs would be similar, and that caring for a child in the prison would be much less costly to taxpayers than to pay for foster care for the child on the outside. Additional factors such as babies being breastfed by their mothers, thus cutting down on costs for formula (not to mention the health benefits known to be associated with breast milk), and community organizations donating clothing, diapers and other needs all contribute to the overall efficiency of prison nurseries.

Some may ask "Are babies in prison safe?" It does not seem like an environment suitable for infants, what with all of the criminals and such. Prison nursery units are located

separately from the other areas of the prison so the infants are not exposed to the prisoner population at large. Their main contact is with prison guards assigned to the nursery unit, medical personnel, 'nanny' prisoners (in prisons that are set up for this), and other prisoner mothers and their infants. I did not find any information that any child in the nursery programs throughout the United States has been physically harmed in any way. When considering the homes these children could be placed in as an alternative to staying with their mother in prison, the possibility of physical harm seems a non-issue. Another factor to consider on this issue is that in order for a mother to remain in the prison nursery program they are required to stay out of trouble. As most of these women are motivated to retain this accommodation, prisons can expect a decrease in misconduct for the women in the program (Carlson, 2001). Additionally, the women are also required to be drug-free, and Carlson (2001) reports that in the first five years of the nursery program in Nebraska no woman participating in the program had reported positive for drugs. This too is a substantially important factor when transitioning to life outside the prison – if the drug addiction can be successfully treated there is less of a chance of drug use later and thus a lessened risk of recidivating.

Some people may question whether or not prison nursery units are fair. They may believe that these women are supposed to be getting punished, not experiencing the privilege of having their baby with them in prison. What about the other prisoners? Aren't the nursery moms getting better treatment? If one was to focus only on the prisoner mother and the benefits she redeems personally from having her baby with her in prison, one could argue that it was unfair. After all, there is not a similar push for men to keep their babies in prison. And women prisoners who are not pregnant do not get this 'special' treatment. But to

recognize this whole issue as a social problem, not a problem specific to individual incarcerated women, causes us to recognize that the situation is much larger and widespread than the women who are benefitting from this program. The participants are still serving their time and paying their debt to society in accordance with law and criminal justice policy – they are still behind bars and deprived of most freedoms. In this situation, however, the child’s right to the most basic need – the love of its mother – is being met. Research is showing that mothers are responding positively to the program, becoming drug free and recidivating less, both factors that will contribute to the overall wellness of the children of these mothers and to the betterment of society as a whole. Perhaps as the prison nursery unit initiative grows and research continues to bear out the cost and overall benefits of these programs, in time similar programs for men can be implemented, allowing them to have more visitation with their children while they are in prison. While I am sure that some prisoners feel the mothers are receiving special treatment, I think the response of the prisoners in Indiana coming together to donate thousands of dollars to support the Wee One’s unit speaks volumes about how supportive other prisoners are of this initiative.

Mauskopf (1998) approached the issue of prison nursery units by integrating a discussion of the four major goals that drive correctional system policies: rehabilitation, deterrence, incapacitation, and retribution. She argued that deterrence is not being achieved by incarcerating the mother because the incarceration is destroying the family structure, potentially pushing the mother back into criminal behavior because her family support network is destroyed. She proposed that incapacitation, or taking the criminal out of society so no further harm is done, is counterproductive for a mother unless she committed a crime against her family. Otherwise, incarceration is doing more harm than good by taking the

mother away from her children, thus punishing the children. This separation is particularly damaging to children in their formative first year. Retribution is a means to punish the criminal, but, again, the children are the ones most punished by their mother's incarceration. Finally, the goal of rehabilitation is to demonstrate to the prisoner what she did wrong and then how to fix her life and make choices other than crime. Mauskopf (1998) emphasized that prison nursery units can actually be beneficial in the rehabilitation process by preparing the mother for her rehabilitated role upon release by learning to care properly for her child. The opportunity to bond with and raise a child from birth while clean and sober may be an opportunity these women have missed with other children due to bad decisions and addictions (Kaufmann, 2001). The opportunity offered by the prison nurseries is an opportunity of rehabilitation for the mother that can potentially have long-term effects post-release.

In addition to the benefits already discussed, prison officials report a change in the atmosphere within the prison because of the presence of the babies. Larry Wayne, Nebraska Correctional Center for Women's former warden, said "The whole population is a little better behaved – more mellow, more restrained – when the kids are around" and "Children bring humanity into a situation that's otherwise pretty tense, hostile, and volatile" (Carlson, 2001, p. 90). Abby Kupper, unit supervisor for the Residential Parenting Program at Gig Harbor in Washington commented "...All the women [in the prison] are so protective of the program and of the babies. It's had a calming effect on the whole compound..." (Kauffman, 2001, p. 64). Craig Roberts, West Virginia's Associate Warden of programs in charge of implementing their nursery unit, was not supportive of the initiative when first assigned to the task, but upon witnessing first-hand the difference it makes in the women's lives he is

now an adamant supporter (C. Roberts, personal communication, June 15, 2011). These comments help to demonstrate the benefits of the program while also illustrating the difficulty in quantifying the positive aspects of this program. An improved, less hostile environment is difficult to specifically quantify, but could certainly be considered as priceless to the staff and inmates working and living in the situation.

Eloff and Moen (2003) discuss problematic issues with prison nursery units that should be considered as the nursery programs expand in the future. While one of the main goals of the program is to foster the attachment between the mother and her newborn, Eloff and Moen (2003) found in their research a possibility that the babies could have difficulties attaching to the mother even when physically together due to the multiple maternal figures present in the nursery unit. They found that some of the babies in the prison they studied seemed to attach to several of the women, all who were constants in their lives because of the close living proximity. They referenced a study in which attachment can be ineffective as a result of inconsistent mothering, which in this instance is inherent in the case of multiple women performing different mothering roles. Another problematic factor was discipline. While these mothers have the advantage of having their babies with them in prison, they still do not have the freedom in parenting choices they would have on the 'outside'. Some of the mothers in their study reported frustration in having no voice in prison officials disciplining their children, and the researchers noted the possibility for the children becoming confused at the inconsistency of which adult figures were and were not allowed to discipline them (Eloff & Moen, 2003) .

Luther and Gregson (2011) examined the lived experiences and adaptation responses of women parenting infants while incarcerated and in particular how these inmates were

adapting to prison life and parenting their children under the restricted circumstances of being incarcerated. They also explored the role of female role socialization and how it influenced these women's desire to create a home-like atmosphere within the prison for their children, and identified a growing tension in trying to do so due to the restrictions of prison officials. "In restricting their opportunities to create a sense of family and home as they desired, the institution not only compromised the inmate-mother's opportunities to live up to their expectations as mother, it also compromised their ability to enact their gender roles" (Luther & Gregson, 2011, p. 98). Additionally, these women also reported tension and frustration due to the lack of autonomy in trying to perform their role as mothers, mostly due to the restrictive prison policies that made the inmates feel like they were "...being mother-like, but not really being a mother" (Luther & Gregson, 2011, p. 92).

The women in Luther and Gregson's (2011) study reported conflicting messages from the institution itself surrounding the expectations of the women's mothering and the lessons they were learning in parenting classes and from prison medical staff. Luther and Gregson (2011) discussed the importance of mothers' self-conceptions, and how these self-conceptions would influence these women's success when transitioning to post-release issues of parenting particularly in the realm of autonomy. Transitioning from an atmosphere of restricted and supervised parenting to life on the outside of total autonomy could be problematic for the mother and the child. Additionally, Luther and Gregson (2011) reported on the tension experienced by some of the mothers trying to conform to the norms of mothering that were expected by the institution, norms and mandates which "can be in direct conflict with cultural norms, previous socialization experiences, and other requirements of the same institution" (Luther and Gregson, 2011, p. 101).

Feminist Theory Application

Feminist theory can be applied to the issue of prison nursery programs from several different angles. Indeed, a feminist theoretical standpoint can assist in understanding how criminological theory in general and the criminal justice system specifically have treated women differently than men historically, and that penal policies in the U.S. are particularly punitive toward women (Sharp & Marcus-Mendoza, 2001). Sussman (2009) states “A prison infrastructure established to handle the prototypical violent male offender ignores women’s distinct needs” (p. 478). The pathways perspective within the feminist theoretical framework can also lend to the understanding of how women’s experiences within the criminal justice system differ from men’s experiences within the criminal justice system (Ryder, 2007; Brown, 2006). Having a more complete and gender-responsive understanding of women’s positions within the criminal justice system can speak to the justification of prison nursery programs that some would argue are an inequitable privilege allotted to women prisoners.

“Feminism and feminists recognize that gender inequalities exist in society, and they value change that enhances gender equality” (Belknap, 1996, p. 10). Recognizing that criminological theory typically places men at the center and women peripherally with little emphasis on why women commit crime or on conditions in prison for women and girls is critical to understanding the gendered differences that exist in the criminal justice system (Belknap, 1996). Leonard (1982) stated that “...men have indeed molded our legal system, which echoes the contradictions felt toward women: at times regarding them as evil and deceptive, at times treating them as childlike and defenseless” (p. 44). And Chesney-Lind (1997) asserted “...anyone seriously interested in examining women’s crime or the

subjugation of women, then, must carefully consider the role of the contemporary criminal justice system in the maintenance of patriarchy” (p. 4). Perhaps women are largely overlooked because they make up a small percentage of offenders within the system, but the rate of women’s incarceration is growing faster than the rate of men’s incarceration, making gender-responsive policies that much more critical (Belknap, 1996).

Prison policies examined through the lens of a feminist framework can demonstrate how racist and sexist stereotypes of women have been a major factor in developing the criminal justice system structure and the “...state’s attempt to regulate and control women’s minds and bodies” (Craig, 2009, p. 35S). One area to critically analyze is the politicalization and regulation of women’s reproductive and parental lives within the criminal justice system (Vainik, 2008). Craig (2009) asserted that the state has

... consistently attempted to regulate and control women’s minds and bodies toward ends that were not women’s own. Nowhere is this more visible than in the state’s relationship to offenders who are mothers, as women’s reproductive capacity highlights, as nothing else, the issue of women’s sexuality and society’s need to regulate it (p. 49S).

Women have medical needs that are distinctly different from men’s medical needs, yet often those needs are unmet by prisons. Tapia and Vaughn’s (2010) study reported cases in which jails and prisons withheld basic needs for women during menstruation, causing them to bleed on themselves, their clothing, and in their cells. Roth’s (2004) study on prisoner abortion rights revealed that the legal right to an abortion is withheld from some women prisoners even if they have the funds to pay for the procedure themselves, forcing them into a parental role they did not want. Additionally, many prison policies fail to address the abortion topic altogether, and many others have a policy in place but fail to follow through on allowing the procedure within the legal timeline for doing so (Roth, 2004).

Sexual abuse is a further experience that women prisoners are subject to disproportionately, as women prisoners are far more likely to be sexually abused by guards who are men than men prisoners by guards who are women (Human Rights Watch, 1996; Goetting, 1985).

Policies regarding pregnant inmates are even more disturbing. Social stereotypes of women prisoners who are mothers are particularly damning: a woman who has committed a crime cannot possibly be a fit mother (Kauffman, 2001). Any consideration for who she was and the maternal roles she performed before she made a bad choice are discredited. Prenatal services are available to inmates in fewer than half of all prisons (Tapia & Vaughn, 2010), which is especially problematic when considering that many women prisoners come from disadvantaged backgrounds making them more likely to have a difficult pregnancy with complications (Vainik, 2008). “When incarcerated pregnant women are denied prenatal health care, this is a sign that the system finds them unfit and doesn’t care if they stay that way” (Solinger, 2005, p. 245). The lack of or delay in prenatal care results in an increased prevalence of mortality and morbidity of pregnant inmates (Byrne, Goshin & Joestl, 2010). In addition to a lack of any obstetric care from a medical professional, other prenatal measures that should be taken but oftentimes are not are proper diets to meet the dietary needs of a pregnant mom and developing baby, an appropriate setting for adequate rest, clothes that fit properly, and an accessible bathroom (Vainik, 2008; Tapia & Vaughn, 2010).

The policy of shackling pregnant inmates who are in labor and throughout the birthing process is another opportunity for the system to exhibit the ‘right’ of masculine domination over women (Vainik, 2008; Tapia & Vaughn, 2010). Not only is the practice potentially physically dangerous for the mother and the baby, it can also produce psychological trauma, sending the message to the woman that “...her body – and her baby –

are undeserving of the joy that normally accompanies pregnancy” (Vainik, 2008, p. 678). Solinger (2005) stated that shackling “...functions as a punishment appropriate for reproductively insubordinate women – that is, women who should not be having babies, who do not deserve to be mothers, and yet they are” (p. 245). This particular policy seems overly punitive for women who have never posed a flight risk, have been convicted of a non-violent offense, and/or are medically incapacitated by an epidural or other pain medication given for the birthing process (Sussman, 2009). Rather than a valid security concern, it seems an “unjustified animus toward pregnant women” (Vainik, 2008, p. 678), and a way to further humiliate and degrade them. Four states have taken measures to end the cruelty of shackling pregnant inmates. Vermont’s ban on shackling states that no shackles will be used after the prisoner’s first trimester through the recovery period at the hospital (Sussman, 2009). In 1999, Illinois banned the shackling of pregnant inmates during transport to the hospital, while in labor, and following birth, and California followed with a similar ban in 2006 (Tapia & Vaughn, 2010). Upon opening their prison nursery unit in 2009, West Virginia implemented a no-shackle policy as well (C. Roberts, personal communication, June 15, 2011). Sussman (2009) reported pending progress in other states to eliminate shackling during labor and delivery, but in most states the policy to shackle, whether formal or informal, remains.

Prison policies following the birth of a newborn are also disconcerting. Common policy is to immediately separate the prisoner mother from her newborn, and in some states mothers are not even allowed to hold their newborn babies (Tapia & Vaughn, 2010). These policies eliminate any time for bonding between the mother and baby (Carlson, 2001), which illustrates another way in which male-centered policies punish women and deprive them of

their maternal rights and privileges. The child, born into a difficult situation, has no rights and must also suffer the punishment of an overly punitive consequence of incarceration dealt to the mother.

Feminist theory can also lend to the consideration that motherhood is not static but varies from one situation to the next, and that mothers residing in prison are functioning in a very stressful situation (Pösö, Enroos, & Vierula, 2010; Allen, Flaherty, & Ely, 2010). Parental rights are basically nonexistent for many women prisoners, especially for those whose children have become wards of the states. Allen, Flaherty, and Ely (2010) argue that women prisoners suffer not only from extreme criminal justice policies but from child welfare policies that are rigid and uncompromising, oftentimes eliminating an imprisoned woman's maternal rights before she is released and can re-claim custody of her child(ren). These policies can also inadvertently affect the community at large while directly impacting the children of incarcerated mothers.

Reay (Adkins & Skeggs, 2004) used a Bourdieuean feminist approach in discussing cultural capital as it can apply to emotional labor, and I believe we can use her approach in recognizing the importance of a mother's influence in the emotional development of her children, as well as the invested cultural capital she contributes to her children. Rose and Clear (1998) also addressed the issue of capital in the form of social capital and how communities and, more specifically, families are impacted by the removal of human and social capital when community members and loved ones are incarcerated, resulting in weakened foundational structures which can contribute to the development of more crime. We need to ask ourselves just who is benefitting from policies that will allow a mother serving a short sentence for drug possession or writing bad checks to lose her children

permanently, thus destroying any chance at her impact and contribution of human capital into their lives?

Pathways approach to criminality

Many feminist scholars are utilizing an approach to understanding women's criminality termed the 'pathways' approach (Brown, 2006; Ryder, 2007). According to Brown (2006), the pathways perspective "...argues that women's offending is an outgrowth of histories of violence, trauma, and addiction – conditioned by race, culture, gender inequality, and class" (p. 137). Feminist theories emphasize the role that personal trauma plays in women's lives and choices due to female role socialization that emphasizes the importance of social bonding and relationship building, thus placing them at risk for lowered self-esteem as a result of abusive relationships (Bloom, Owen, Covington, & Raeder, 2003). The pathways approach analyzes the gender-structured differences between men's and women's lived experiences that exacerbate women's societal marginality leading to involvement in criminal behavior.

Radosh (2002) argued that for many women inmates, "crime is a symptom of other painful life experiences" (p. 300). Brown (2006) contributed that "men's lives are far less likely to be defined by sexual abuse, exploitation, and violent victimization by a loved one" (p. 138). Chesney-Lind (1997) discussed the 'multiple marginality' (p. 4) factor of gender, race, and class that has placed women offenders on the fringe of society, and argues that while criminology has historically been sensitive to the role of social class in crime, a new challenge has been posed in order to understand gender and race as well.

The pathways approach can lend to this understanding by taking into account the multiple factors that women experience unique to their gender, which can lend to understanding the differing relationships of offending behavior and the causes for the behaviors (Brown, 2006). For example, the family structure can be a different factor for women than for men, serving as a source of victimization and abuse for women rather than a source of protection. Girls are more often affected by childhood sexual abuse – estimates indicate over 70% of sexual abuse victims are girls – and the abuser is likely a family member. Women prisoners are more likely to have been victims of physical and sexual abuse than men prisoners. Although both men and women who reported prior abuse were both likely to report that the abuse began in childhood, women were far more likely to report the abuse lasting into adulthood (Chesney-Lind, 1997).

Acknowledging the differences highlighted by the pathways perspective can impact policy recommendations directed at gender-specific rehabilitative efforts (Brown, 2006). If a growing number of women are engaged in criminal behavior as a response to abuse and victimization in their everyday lives or as a result of their economic marginality, further abuse and victimization within the criminal justice system will have negligible rehabilitative effect, particularly if the existing rehabilitative approaches were “...developed for and by males [and] made available in a blanket approach to all females” (Moe & Ferraro, 2006, p. 139).

Attachment Theory

Attachment theory is an approach that takes into consideration the children impacted by maternal incarceration. Sometimes referred to as the ‘invisible’ population (Brink, 2003),

estimates indicate more than 1.7 million children in the U.S. have at least one parent who is incarcerated (Glaze & Maruschak, 2008). Of these children, 90% whose fathers are incarcerated live with their mothers, whereas only 28% of the children whose mothers are incarcerated live with their fathers (Mumola, 2000). Children whose mothers are incarcerated usually end up living with grandparents, in foster care, or with other relatives, and usually get shuffled from one caregiver to the next throughout the mother's incarceration (Tuerk & Loper, 2008). In addition to the above-estimated 1.7 million children, approximately 10% of the women entering correctional centers are already pregnant and more get pregnant after entering prison, resulting in an estimated 2000 babies born each year to women prisoners in the U.S. (Vainik, 2008). As previously mentioned, common policy in U.S. prisons is to separate women prisoners from their newborns immediately after birth, impeding any opportunity for attachment to develop between mother and baby (Tapia & Vaughn, 2010).

Attachment theory asserts that children who have successful attachment or bonding relationships with a primary adult figure (usually a mother) will be better able to cope with situations and circumstances in life (Tuerk & Loper, 2008). For a baby whose mother is incarcerated, this attachment would have to occur with whomever takes care of the baby in place of the mother – possibly the father, but as statistics show, it is more often grandparents, other relatives, or a foster family (Mumola, 2000). Research suggests that this attachment can be effective with another adult providing the situation is stable, but unfortunately for children with incarcerated mothers the situations are often unstable and they experience multiple changes in caregivers (Poehlmann, 2005). The child who fails to 'attach' to a responsive caregiver can experience difficulties with their emotional and behavioral

development and reactions (Poehlmann, 2005), as well as develop more serious disorders such as affectionless psychopathy in which the child exhibits an antisocial personality, is unable to follow rules, feels no guilt, cannot form long-lasting relationships, and is more likely to engage in law-breaking behavior in the future (Tapia & Vaughn, 2010).

Additionally, mothers who are not given the opportunity to attach with their newborn may not feel the need to reunite with the child after leaving prison and leave them with the alternate caregiver, which could result in the child feeling abandoned by a mother who does not want them (Carlson, 2001). Overall, the relationship a child has with his or her mother is one of the most powerful protective aspects in a child's developmental life (Marsicano, 1999).

In addition to issues of attachment and emotional development, children placed with their mothers' family member(s) can be detrimental physically as well. Chesney-Lind (1997) reported that oftentimes women inmates experienced sexual or physical abuse in their homes as children, and many lived with parents who were addicted to alcohol and/or drugs. Placing the children with these same family members also puts these children at risk for the same types of abuse their mothers endured, perpetuating the cycle of abuse (Sharp & Marcus-Mendoza, 2001). Even in situations that are not abusive, children whose parent(s) are incarcerated are more likely to live in poverty (DeFina & Hannon, 2010), as caregivers can face many obstacles to obtaining support needed to raise children that are not theirs (Phillips & Bloom, 1998). Family members raising children that are not theirs do not qualify for payments from the state in the same way that foster families are qualified, and TANF and AFDC assistance have rules attached that cap the assistance after a certain amount of time and have a lifetime limit on benefits. Therefore, if the family member has exhausted their

limit prior to taking on the care of additional children, they are exempt from this assistance even with the addition of new children to the household (Phillips & Bloom, 1998). Many times this financial burden necessitates siblings being separated and cared for by multiple family members, and it also results in changes in caregivers as funds and other resources become exhausted.

Foster care is an alternative for child placement that many incarcerated mothers have to rely on because they have no other option. A major downfall with foster care is that mothers can lose their child(ren) to adoption if they are incarcerated for more than a year and the foster family moves forward to adopt (Mauskopf, 1998). Some states even have legislation to expedite the timeline for adoption or permanency hearings (Luke, 2002). Sharp and Marcus-Mendoza (2001) theorized that many of the women in their study may have chosen to allow their children to live with abusive family members in an effort to keep them out of the foster care system to avoid the possibility of losing their child(ren) permanently through adoption. They emphasized that children are not likely to be returned to the custody of their parent after becoming a ward of the state. This is yet another example of the disparity and gender differences between men and women in this situation. Children whose fathers are incarcerated are most likely being cared for by their mother, but children whose mothers are incarcerated are most likely being cared for by someone other than their father (Mumola, 2000).

The stress experienced by the incarcerated mother worrying about her children on the outside is psychologically damaging and causes excessive guilt and depression, especially when considering that prior to incarceration the mother was more likely to have been the sole caregiver and source of support for the child(ren) (Tuerk & Loper, 2008). In the case of

inmates with a newborn, the stress, guilt, and depression caused by missing out on the opportunity for early attachment and worrying about never seeing the child again can be extremely overwhelming.

Visitation between the incarcerated mother and her child(ren) can help alleviate some of the guilt and depression and build the maternal bond, and Johnston and Gabel (1995) asserted that the best predictor of a family being reunited after incarceration is contact between the family members during incarceration. Visitation, however, is another obstacle the incarcerated mother has no control over. In many cases the physical distance between the incarcerated mother and her children is large and the cost for transportation to visit is too much for the caregiver to afford (Tuerk & Loper, 2008). In some instances a woman is incarcerated in a facility near her family allowing for a visitation schedule to be established and then is moved to another facility far away from the family which results in a breakdown in the visitation schedule and an intensified feeling of loss for the mother and the child(ren) (Sharp & Marcus-Mendoza, 2001). And, in other situations, mothers do not get to see their children for visitation because the caregivers refuse to bring the children to the institution. In each of these scenarios, some of the loss felt by the mother and the child(ren) can be alleviated by phone calls and letter writing . However, these tactics are only effective for children old enough to respond to phone calls and letter writing (Tuerk & Loper, 2008). Newborns would certainly not benefit or develop a maternal attachment through phone calls or letters.

Lived Experience of the Inmates

This study seeks to examine the perceptions of the women in the prison nursery units and how their lived experiences may differ from other women inmates, as well as the possible impact on recidivism. Therefore, some comparison to other women inmates' experiences is crucial. Sykes' (1958) research on the influence of the prison structure on inmates and the process by which they adapt to the structural forces within the prison revealed certain facets of prison life he referred to as "The Pains of Imprisonment" (p. 285), which included the deprivation of liberty, autonomy, security, and goods and services. For example, Sykes (1958) stated that because of the structure of the prison society, "the prison inmate can never feel safe" (p. 78). He is thrust into a situation of helplessness and dependence due to the rules governing his every action within the institution. He is forced to live a Spartan existence:

When we examine the physical structure of the prison, the most striking feature is, perhaps, its drabness. It has that 'institutional' look shared by police stations, hospitals, orphan asylums, and similar buildings – a Kafka-like atmosphere compounded of naked electric lights, echoing corridors, walls encrusted with the paint of decades, and the stale air of rooms shut up too long (p. 7).

Jones (1993) used Sykes' (1958) perspective along with others to examine the adaptation responses of women inmates in a Midwestern U.S. prison. Previous studies cited by Jones (1993), including Ward and Kassebaum (1965) and Giallombardo (1966), found that "although women experience the same deprivations of incarceration as do men, the social structure that develops in women's prisons differs substantially from that found in men's prisons" (Jones, 1993, p. 72). One reason for this difference, according to Jones (1993), is the female role socialization patterns that reinforce familial and peer relationships.

One of the key deprivations experienced by women in Jones' (1993) study was the deprivation of family and the guilt and uncertainty of what to do with her children while she was incarcerated. The women were visited infrequently by their families and were especially concerned about their children, particularly infant children, bonding with their temporary caregivers. The lack of contact with one's family led to feelings of insecurity and loneliness. One woman commented "I wonder sometimes if I have been dumped by my family" (Jones, 1993, p. 81). Contact from the outside served to support and encourage the inmates, whether it be via visits, letters, or phone calls, but a physical visit was considered the most important as it demonstrated to the prisoner the most effort on the part of the outsider.

Another deprivation Jones (1993) reported was the loss of independence due to the imposition of petty and numerous rules, and the inconsistency at how these rules are enforced by staff. One inmate noted: "They've got control of every little personal thing that you do, which is really hard to accept" (Jones, 1993, p. 79). Additionally, the women in Jones' (1993) study, like the men in Sykes' (1958) study, were concerned for their own safety, physical and mental, being "locked up with a group of people you cannot trust" (Jones, 1993, p. 79). A final concern related to safety reported by Jones (1993) pertinent to this research study is the frustration women inmates experienced over the tendency for gossiping and troublemaking amongst the inmates. One inmate commented that, while men will fight with one another easily, women will go behind your back and incite others to get involved in the dispute and gossip about you, trying to hurt you. "Women are just different" (Jones, 1993, p. 79).

How do the perspectives of the women in the prison nursery units align with or differ from the perspectives reported by previous researchers? And if their perspectives are

different, how might the differences impact the long-term issue of recidivism? While recidivism obviously cannot be measured until these women have been released and resume life in society, what experiences while incarcerated are impacting their beliefs that they will make better choices post-release to avoid recidivating? Are the gender-responsive programs administered particularly within prison nursery units successful at altering the perspectives reported by researchers such as Sykes (1958) and Jones (1993)? These are the questions I seek to address in this study. However, as Sykes (1958) pointed out

It might be argued, of course, that there are certain dangers in speaking of the inmates' perspective of captivity, since it is apt to carry the implication that all prisoners perceive their captivity in precisely the same way. It might be argued that in reality there are as many prisons as there are prisoners – that each man brings to the custodial institution his own needs and his own background and each man takes away from the prison his own interpretation of life within the walls. (p. 63)

As such, I seek to give voice to the inmates I could reach and allow them to tell me about their lived experience within a renewed penal program geared at rehabilitation responsive to their gendered needs. My goal is to capture the positive and the negative in order to further the discussion surrounding prison nursery units and to identify areas of inquiry requiring further research.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Sample

Incarcerated women living in a prison nursery unit in one of three state prisons – Nebraska, Illinois, and Indiana – were recruited for participation in this study using a purposive sampling strategy. Random sampling could not be conducted for this study due to the limited number of women residing in prison nurseries in the Midwest area accessible to this researcher. All inmates who resided in these three locations were invited to participate but not all of them could be or agreed to be interviewed.

A total of sixteen women were interviewed. Thirteen of the women interviewed had already given birth while in prison and their baby was living with them in the prison nursery unit. Two women were pregnant and already living in the prison nursery unit where they would remain after the birth of their child. One woman interviewed did not have a baby of her own living with her in prison but was living in the prison nursery unit as a prisoner nanny. Two study participants were incarcerated in the Nebraska Correctional Center for Women, York, Nebraska. Four study participants, including the prisoner nanny, were incarcerated in the Indiana Women's Prison, Indianapolis, Indiana. Ten study participants were incarcerated in the Decatur Correctional Center, Decatur, Illinois. Prior to my arrival at each institution, the women were informed by the prison staff that a college student was coming to conduct a study of the nursery unit. Upon my arrival, I fully explained to all prospective participants the purpose of the study, that no benefits or rewards would result from participation, that no negative consequences would result from non-participation, and

that all information would be kept confidential. I also obtained a Certificate of Confidentiality from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to further protect the participants and their confidentiality, a factor which was also fully explained. Written informed consent was obtained prior to each interview.

The participants in this study who were prisoner mothers ranged in age from 20 to 37 (mean age: 26.5, SD = 4.9). [Note: the prisoner nanny is not included in the age data. She was 55 years of age.] Race was self identified. Of the 16 participants, 10 were Caucasian, 5 were African American, and 1 was Native American. Regarding marital status, 9 participants were single/never married, 6 were divorced, and 1 was married. Convictions resulting in incarceration included 7 drug-related convictions, 7 burglary/theft convictions, 1 DUI and 1 forgery conviction. However, according to the study participants, most of the burglary/theft convictions were directly related to supporting a drug habit. For 5 of the participants, their current incarceration was not their first. Eleven participants reported this being their first incarceration; however, of these 11, several reported prior involvement with the criminal justice system for drug-related violations. Thirteen participants reported prior drug use. Three responded they had not used drugs prior to incarceration, but 1 of these 3 admitted an addiction to alcohol. Six of the participants were first-time mothers.

Procedure

Qualitative interviews were conducted between November 2011 and January 2012 within each prison's nursery unit. The face-to-face interviews lasted from 15 minutes to an hour and 20 minutes. The semi-structured interview guide was designed to elicit information specific to each woman's individualized lived experience in the present as well as historical

information relevant and contributing to her current situation in an effort to contextualize and examine each participant's unique experiences. I personally conducted and digitally audio-recorded all interviews which I then transcribed at a later date.

I used a semi-inductive approach in researching prison nursery units while employing a multitheoretical framework utilizing feminist and attachment theories to guide my observations and interpretation. As this was a qualitative study designed to examine women prisoners' perception of prison nursery units, guiding questions led my research in a grounded theoretical approach in order to fully depict the depth and distinctiveness of each woman's lived experience.

Prior to commencing actual interviews, several approvals were mandatory. First, I requested and received permission to interview inmates participating in the prison nursery unit programs in three separate state institutions: the Nebraska Correctional Center for Women at York, Nebraska; the Decatur Correctional Center Moms and Babies Program in Decatur, Illinois; and the Indiana Women's Prison Wee One's Nursery in Indianapolis, Indiana, and each written approval is attached in the Appendix. As my study population was a vulnerable population, my research procedures had to be approved by my institution's review board. The IRB also required me to obtain a federal Certificate of Confidentiality from the Department of Health and Human Services to further protect the confidentiality of my study participants, which was acquired in December 2011 and is in effect for the duration of this study or May 2013, whichever occurs first.

Design Strengths and Weaknesses

A qualitative approach utilizing a semi-structured interview process with guiding questions derived in part from previous research was chosen for this study for several reasons. I chose to interview the inmates living in the nurseries to better understand their lived experience because, as Jones (1995) noted, "...our understanding of the prison world must be based on the experiences of actual participants in that world" (p. 107-108). While a survey would allow for the collection of a large amount of data from a larger number of inmates, a survey cannot provide details of how these women are personally affected by their environment due to the prestructured nature of the questionnaire and the inability for the expansion of information collected based on previous interview responses given (Jones, 1995). A qualitative approach also allowed me to seek illumination and understanding of the context of my sample's lived experiences in a manner that other methods would not have (Hoepfl, 1997), but also allowed me to "maintain an outsider's objectivity" (Jones, 1995, p. 111). Additionally, Sprague (2005) implores feminist researchers to "uncover the narrowness and gender-blindness of standard approaches by unpacking assumptions embedded in them" (p. 107), a process best achieved utilizing qualitative interviews to understand the context within which their experiences contribute to their perceptions and behaviors.

Inherent weaknesses also exist in the design of this research study. Prison inmates are a vulnerable population and, as such, their responses to the questions asked during the interviews could be influenced to some degree by social desirability – the inmates may fear more restrictive policies or sanctions against them depending on how they answer the questions and as a result may answer the questions in a manner that they may consider more

favorable than truthful for these reasons. The attitudes and responses of the study participants may have been influenced by the “separateness” (Jones, 1995, p. 107) of their world and my world and our potentially differing cultural norms and values. Several factors could contribute to this separateness, including race and socioeconomic status, but also the knowledge that I as the researcher, unlike they as the prisoner, was free to leave the prison at any time (Jones, 1995). Time constraints at the Indiana facility and a small inmate population at the Nebraska facility resulted in fewer interviews obtained, resulting in a smaller sample of interviews than could have been collected offering a better understanding of the overall perspective of women in those facilities as compared to each other and to the Illinois facility.

Data Analysis

I personally transcribed each audio-recorded interview. I then analyzed the transcribed interviews by performing a process of open, axial and selective coding utilizing the constant comparative method of qualitative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The goal of the constant comparison method is to “discern conceptual similarities, to refine the discriminative power of categories, and to discover patterns” (Tesch, 1990, p. 96). Constant comparison allowed me to look for commonalities and differences in the inmate’s perspectives on individual and institutional levels.

I began with an open coding process conducted with each individual interview (Boeije, 2002). Each passage of the interview was studied to allow themes to emerge in order to develop and label appropriate codes. During this process I was able to compare different parts of the interview to check the consistency of the data reported. For example, if

in one part of the interview the interviewee indicated she had custody of her other children prior to becoming incarcerated but in another part of the interview she indicated her children were living with family members even prior to her incarceration, a contradiction is noted and coded accordingly. Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, and Spiers (2002) argue that a rigorous system of “responsiveness to data” (p. 19) and comparison throughout the analysis process, rather than a post hoc reflection when analysis has ended, lends to the reliability and validity of the data. Additionally, Morse et al. (2002) emphasize the need to move back and forth between previous research and current research throughout the current study process to verify analysis in keeping with the grounded theory method of generating emergent themes while allowing previous theory to guide your analysis.

After completing open coding with each individual interview, I moved on to a process of axial coding by comparing interviews within the same group of interviewees to look for and identify patterns, or combinations of codes (Boeije, 2002). In order to compare at this level, I compared interviews between interviewees residing in the same prison to analyze and compare perspectives within the same shared space, while still referring back to previous data to compare these experiences with prior research to increase the reliability and validity of the data analyzed (Morse et al., 2002). I was able to complete the process of axial coding when all of the relevant themes pertaining to my main research questions contained within each group of interviews had been coded.

Upon completion of axial coding, I compared interviews between groups of interviewees through a process of selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) to analyze similarities and differences experienced between shared spaces. I was able to extrapolate differences between institutional settings that affected the perspectives of the women as a

group between each institution. At this point, I also compared this data to data from prior research to analyze differences in the perspectives of women in these institutions to those reported from prior studies in different prison settings and situations to further analyze how the lived experiences of the women in this study were the same as or different than women in other prison settings. Morse et al. (2002) argued that it is “essential that the investigator remain open, use sensitivity, creativity and insight, and be willing to relinquish any ideas that are poorly supported regardless of the excitement and the potential that they first appear to provide” (p. 18), which I strove to implement throughout this process in a further attempt to support the validity and reliability of this study. Close attention to detail and to comparison between and among study participants as well as with prior research was an important step throughout the data analysis process to maintain focus and clarity.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Lived Environment

I will begin my findings by describing the physical settings at each individual prison nursery unit I visited as well as the basic program implementation as recounted to me by the inmate interviewees in an effort to give a more detailed picture of how the units are similar and different, as well as to offer an account of what these units ‘look’ like for those who have not experienced them firsthand. The facilities were similar in basic aspects but key differences in their physical environment lent to differing perspectives of the women’s shared experiences within their confines. The comments I will quote are reflective of responses from most of the moms interviewed unless otherwise noted.

Physical space

Two of the prison nurseries visited were similarly decorated within the unit itself. The walls were brightly painted with murals of cartoon characters and alphabet letters and had the appearance of a daycare or preschool setting. The nursery unit in Illinois included pictures on the walls of all of the babies that have been through the program since its opening in 2007. In all three, the toys, books, and various baby furniture, including baby swings and strollers, were readily visible and also lent to the daycare-like atmosphere. While some may associate a prison setting with bars and drabness, such as Sykes’ (1958) representation of prison as a Spartan existence – drab and institutional - these units were bright, cheerful, and absent of any bars on doors or windows. Luther and Gregson (2011) reported frustration on behalf of the prison nursery moms they observed due to their inability to create a homelike

atmosphere for their children within the confines of their prison nursery unit. The moms interviewed in these prison nurseries did not express this frustration, and were very positive about and seemingly proud of their environment and the positive atmosphere for their children. Malinda, who has been in a nursery unit longer than any other inmate interviewed for this study, said “I try to make it as much as home as I can.” [Note: Pseudonyms have been assigned using an online resource throughout the remainder of this thesis to protect the identities of the study participants.] Many of the moms agreed that it’s less like a prison and more like living in a daycare.

The prison nursery unit in the Nebraska Correctional Center for Women was the newest structurally of the three and had been constructed specifically for the nursery program, unlike the units at Illinois and Indiana which were existing spaces converted for use by the nursery program. Only moms participating in the nursery program and prisoner ‘nannies’ were incarcerated in the Nebraska prison nursery unit, whereas the Illinois unit included inmates participating in their Reunification program and the Indiana unit included open population inmates. (The Reunification program in Illinois consists of inmate mothers who are allowed more liberal visitation schedules with their children, but the children are not allowed to live in the prison with their mother.) As a result of the shared ‘living space’ arrangements, the Illinois prison nursery unit housed up to ten mothers and their babies, as well as another two dozen or so Reunification moms, resulting in around 40 women sharing their living space. In Indiana, the numbers of moms and open population prisoners sharing the same space was similar to Illinois, but the additional prisoners in the Indiana nursery unit were not involved in any way in programs similar to the Reunification program in Illinois – they were strictly open population prisoners residing in the shared space.

The Nebraska facility inmates lived in a private room with their baby. Their rooms consisted of a baby bed and the inmate's bed, a bulletin board for hanging pictures and such, and a small television. The walls were plain but clean and brightly painted. The inmates on this unit shared a common bathroom area where they also showered. A separate area was set up for bathing and changing the babies, and the inmates here also had their own private laundry room so that they could wash their baby's (and their own) laundry separate from the general prison population's laundry. The common day area was a nice open space and filled with a multitude of toys, a few couches and some rocking chairs. The inmates had a small area outside that was separate from the general population where they could take their children to get fresh air and sunshine when the weather permitted. Kenya, a Nebraska nursery unit inmate, commented that the program "has provided everything I've needed for this baby as far as diapers or formula or lotion or doctor's appointments. I'm very privileged to be in this program!" At the time I visited, the nursery unit was very quiet as only two nursery program inmates and one inmate nanny were residing there.

Inmates in the Illinois facility live in a private room with their baby but share a toilet and sink bathroom area between each two rooms. Security cameras are set up in each room and as a part of the acceptance process to live in the unit, the baby's father and/or grandparents, depending on the familial situation, have to sign a waiver allowing the baby to live there and be watched by security cameras. The individual rooms have one wall painted with a decorative mural, a changing table, a baby bed, the inmate's bed, and various personal belongings. Many of the inmates here have a television in their room but they can only listen to it with headphones so as not to disturb other inmates. The common day area has a large television and several couches, some round tables and benches, and two large play areas for

the children complete with a host of toys. The television is only allowed to be tuned to child-friendly programming, such as cartoons or Animal Planet, during the day hours. A small kitchen area adjoins one of the play areas where the moms can prepare bottles and meals for their babies. A separate area has baby tubs and changing tables as well as a good supply of baby clothes that have been donated to the program. The moms get to 'shop' for new outfits for their baby as they grow. Kathrine, an inmate on the unit who has not yet delivered her baby, said "It is so clean here. Everything is fresh, clean, disinfected, like they even take the toys in the visiting room once a week and disinfect, clean everything."

The unit in Indiana was similar to Illinois in that each inmate and baby had a private room, but the Indiana facility had no electricity in the dorm area of individual rooms. This meant no private televisions and no security cameras. Their rooms also consisted of a baby bed and inmate bed and various personal belongings, but were not decorated with murals or paintings. There was a small room (padded cell) utilized as the nursery area outfitted with a few rocking chairs where the moms could feed and rock their babies in a quiet area. There were several rooms used for the storage of donated clothing and nursery items. An area outside was fenced in and supplied with outdoor toys and a baby pool (for warmer months) and allowed for outdoor time for the babies separate from the general prison population. The common day area was considerably smaller than the area at the Illinois and Nebraska facilities and was shared by the nursery unit moms and the open population prisoners. It was furnished with several tables and chairs, and one corner of the room served as the play area for the babies complete with some toys and shelves of books and games. A padded mat on the floor in this area provided space for the babies to play on the floor, but it was mostly

covered by the various baby swings and larger toys. This shared area seemed to be a point of frustration for the moms I interviewed.

Three of the Indiana facility moms voiced frustration that the shared space, or day area, where the moms and babies congregate is chaotic due to the open population prisoners sharing the same space. Allie, an experienced mom with three kids on the outside, is concerned for her new baby because she feels the environment causes her to be “over-stimulated” with all the activity around her, adding that her baby won’t take a bottle in the day area because of all the noise and distraction.

There’s a lot going on here and the only thing I really, I don’t really care for, I like the program, but it’s like, there’s an open pop side that has nothing to do with the program. That always, that puts like extra chaos in the program, you know what I mean? Especially when open pop – open population – has nothing to do with the program, they’re on the other side. [They mingle here] all day long! The only time we can have privacy away from them is in our room or in the nursery, not out in here ever.

Allie also worries that there is a lack of ample space for floor time for the babies to develop their motor skills, noting that the floors are hard tile and “dirty”, and “no one wants to put their kid on it”. Inappropriate language due to the shared space was also a frustration for one of the moms. Melisa acknowledged that inappropriate language was against the rules in the unit and around the babies, but due to the chaos and lack of structure caused by the additional inmates the language rule was not often enforced. Mallory, another Indiana inmate, reported her only frustration with the shared space was that she wished it was “bigger”. They also do not apparently have a ‘kid-friendly programming’ rule for the shared television in the day area as an adult thriller movie was playing on the morning that I was conducting interviews.

Another frustration that was shared by Allie that was not shared by others in Illinois or Nebraska was the issue of safety. According to prior research by Jones (1993) and Sykes

(1958), prisoners are concerned for their own safety while in prison, both physical and mental, being “locked up with a group of people you cannot trust” (Jones, 1993, p. 79). Each woman interviewed was asked the question “Do you think your baby is safe?”, and I pressed further with all interviewees to expand on their perceptions of safety within the prison asking, for example, “Even amongst being raised in prison with other prisoners, you think he/she’s safe?” All interviewees except one answered “Yes”, and offered additional explanations similar to what Zelma, an Illinois inmate, had to say: “It’s a whole process to get over here. It’s an interview process, they do more of a background check, and you’re not supposed to have any DCFS or violent crimes or anything like that.” Most of the women explained that they were very comfortable with their co-habitants in the nursery because of the acceptance process necessary to live there, and many also indicated procedures in place to deal with anyone they felt was not ‘safe’. The one exception to this was Allie, who answered “I’m afraid for my [child]” because of the 25 or so extra women combined with the lack of structure within the unit. Allie further responded by saying she is very thankful for the program, that it’s a “blessing” to have her baby with her. Her responses indicated a definite internal conflict between being grateful for being allowed to bond with her child and the difficulties of trying to adapt to the institutional structure within the prison setting.

Program implementation

The implementation of the nursery program at each facility varied slightly. The differences between work requirements, classes offered, and the general administration at each facility were evident in the data, as well as the impact they had on the participants’ perspectives.

The roles of the prison guards and staff were often discussed by the inmates and it became clear in analyzing the data that their impact on the women's lived experiences is substantial. The only specific question relating to prison staff that I asked during the interviews was "Do you think your baby has bonded with the prison staff here?" The answers to this question were varied, as some felt their children had and others felt they had not. However, many of the women in the Illinois and Indiana facilities commented at other times throughout the interview in particular about the guards within the units in relation to the structure of the unit and the program delivery. Sofia, an Illinois inmate, commented "They make sure that they have the best guards that come over here, like they don't put the on-edge guards, you know, maybe the more serious and whatnot. They tend to put the more laid-back guards that you know kids are going to be able to like to get along with. They don't just throw any CO over here." Malinda, the inmate who tried to make her space as much like home as possible, said "When you think of prison, you think of mean guards, you know, stuff like that, and the men and the women are just so good with my [child]." Conversely, Allie, the Indiana mom who was afraid for her child, commented on her frustration with the chaos and lack of respect within the unit and highlighted the ability the guards have to affect the structure within the unit. "People know what they can do with certain guards, you know. We used to have the same guards so you know what you can do with each guard....it's very aggravating. Basically if the guards would enforce [the rules], the moms will do it."

According to the inmates, all three programs provided adequate healthcare services for mom and baby, but the implementation of healthcare services differed between the programs. In Indiana, a doctor visits the prison for the baby check-ups, whereas the babies in

Nebraska were taken outside the facility by a nursery staff member to a local doctor. The moms would write out a list of questions they had concerning their child and the staff member would write down the answers from the doctor. At the Illinois facility, moms were allowed to accompany their child to the doctor's office outside the prison along with a prison staff member and a guard in an effort to simulate and prepare the women for their maternal role post-release. They were also allowed to take their child to WIC (Women, Infants and Children) program appointments outside the facility. According to Susan Creek, Moms and Babies Program Infant Development Administrator at the Illinois facility, "These moms need to know how to care for their babies. And who best to tell them how than the doctor himself?" (S. Creek, personal communication, March 23, 2012).

The daily structure for the inmates varied between institutions. Illinois and Nebraska both had work and/or class requirements for the inmates, whereas Indiana did not. A typical day for the moms in Illinois and Nebraska included assigned chores or work assignments and/or class attendance. The schedules varied depending on the individual inmate's choices. Some attended college courses. Others attended varying self-building classes (to be discussed further in a later section of this research). Moms that were still pregnant or had recently given birth (referred to in Illinois as 'on a lay-in') did not have work assignments. Many of the moms felt that the programs and schedule helped in preparing them to be successful upon release. Malinda commented "I think it's just the structure we have here and the programming that we're allowed to do" that will contribute to her success upon release. Amie, a first-time mom, felt that the strict schedule of her day and the requirements she had to fulfill were training her to be more structured. She recognized the benefit to her personally and to her child to have a structured day and a set schedule for things including feeding and

bedtime, commenting “I think it gives you a good structure on not coming back, gives you a good positive attitude.”

Indiana does not have a work requirement for the inmates, although they do attend classes when they are offered and if they have spaces available. Mallory, an Indiana inmate, commented that a frustration of hers was that the women had too much idle time to gossip a lot. She thought a job requirement would be a good idea to help further with transitioning back into society and to keep the women occupied more so they would have less time to gossip. “I think that maybe a job would be...that would definitely transition you even more. Because I know I’ve got to work. Probably most of us in here do need to.”

While most of the data reflected positive outcomes as a result of the women’s lived experiences in the prison nursery, there were concerns communicated about the drama within the shared space of the nurseries in all three institutions. Sofia said “We have our fair share of drama just like everywhere else. If I could change that I would but you can’t change that whenever you throw 40 females in one living area together.” Allie responded that she felt like she was constantly being watched and evaluated, and did not like the pressure that involved for her:

There’s a lot of eyes on us, like...all eyes are on us, you know like, the moms, there’s so many people on the unit that everyone’s watching to make sure you do everything perfect, you know? It’s kinda lot of pressure because you’ve got everybody like watching you, you know? Everyone’s just pick, pick, picks you apart.

Malinda’s reflection of the drama caused her to reflect on the positive aspect of her lived environment: “I live in an environment with 40 other women so we all have, you know...I have frustrations, but I also have a lot of people that are here to help me when I have frustrations.”

Previous prison research indicates a general frustration or tension among the inmates due to prison rules and regulations (Jones, 1993; Sykes, 1958; Eloff & Moen, 2003; Luther & Gregson, 2011). Luther and Gregson (2011) reported that restrictive policies within the prison nursery unit they observed particularly impeded on the inmate mothers' feelings of autonomy and independence. The women reported that restrictions including "parking their baby strollers, selecting their children's food, deciding on the amount of time their baby could lie in one position, decorating the walls of their cells, deciding who could touch their children, contacting the doctor, and choosing the bed their child slept in" (Luther & Gregson, 2011, p. 91) were all sources of tension and frustration interfering with their ability to perform their maternal roles. These women were particularly frustrated with the restrictive policies regarding co-sleeping with their infant, which for some was considered a cultural norm that was practiced to enhance the mother-child bond. Many inmates reported breaking the rule and sleeping with their child anyway, one reporting that "it makes things kind of frustrating to be a mom and you can't actually *be* a mom" (Luther & Gregson, 2011, p. 92).

The participants in this study were asked "Do you feel you are being allowed to raise your baby the way you want to, or are there too many rules and regulations interfering with that?" to explore if the moms in these units were similarly frustrated and impeded in their maternal roles. Their overall responses were in sharp contrast to the previous research. Most moms reported having no issue overall with the rules and regulations, and many even commented on their appreciation of the structure involved in having the rules that they had. Melisa, an Indiana inmate, commented "The rules don't bother me. We've gotta follow some everywhere we go, we have rules." Jami, an Illinois inmate, said "I think the rules are just fine." Sharron, an inmate that has been to prison multiple times prior to this

incarceration, said “I think that most of the rules make sense.” Sofia shared that “All the rules are for the baby’s safety, so I don’t have a problem with them.” And Amie, an Illinois inmate and first-time mom, said “I don’t have any problems with any of the rules they set here, none of them.” Amie also commented that she was asked whether or not she would be okay with someone else telling her how to raise her child during the interview process to be accepted in the nursery unit. She responded by saying “Well, in my eyes I’m going to be perfectly fine about it because I have no idea how to raise a child. None whatsoever. I just don’t.” This was a sentiment echoed by many first-time moms and will be discussed again later within this research.

Co-sleeping was a rule in place at each of the institutions visited that several of the moms reported a frustration with, but all expressing frustrations with the rule followed up by saying they understood why the rule existed. [Note: Co-sleeping entails having the infant in bed with the mother in a lying-down position, whether they are sleeping at night or resting during the day. According to the moms interviewed, the infants were not allowed to lie in the bed with the mom at any time on the premise that if the mom fell asleep the baby could be suffocated or roll off the bed onto the hard floor.] Malinda said “Sometimes I feel like that’s a stupid rule, but they have these rules for a reason and it is for structure.” Kathrine felt that “It’s a huge liability issue here, and I understand.” Jerri, an Illinois inmate and first-time mother, said “Well the one rule I don’t like is the laying in the bed with the babies. But I know that’s a safety issue and I agree with that.” Jerri went on to say that she is happy because her baby is getting used to sleeping by herself and only wakes up twice each night now, and even though she does not like the co-sleeping rule she would not change it because “what if somebody got hurt?” Maricela, another Illinois first-time mom, commented that she

disliked the co-sleeping rule but added that her baby slept alone in her crib very well. And Kenya, also in disagreement with the co-sleeping rules, agreed “it’s probably a better thing to teach him to sleep by himself.” None of the moms referred to co-sleeping as a cultural norm but more as a practice of convenience (in putting the child to sleep if it woke up in the middle of the night) and/or a method for physical bonding time.

The only other rule reported on as a frustration by a few of the moms, which was also reported by Luther and Gregson (2011) in their study, was their limited input on food choices for their child. Most of the babies in each of the units were too young to have the introduction of food as an issue at the time of these interviews. Kenya, an experienced mom in the Nebraska facility, felt she should be able to introduce cereal to supplement the formula for her son because he was taking a bottle every two hours and she felt he could stay fuller and more satisfied with cereal. She felt her previous mothering experience should qualify her to make this decision but instead had to rely on the doctor to approve the change in the baby’s feeding schedule. Allie, also an experienced mom, reported her frustration in having to get permission from the baby’s doctor to introduce foods when she wanted to. “I’m like no, I’m the mom, I don’t have to ask the doctor.” As Luther and Gregson (2011) noted, this restriction impedes the autonomous decision-making a mother should be able to make. However, Malinda, a first-time mom with a toddler, discussed the rules about feeding for her son and considered these rules a benefit because, had she been at home, she would’ve let him eat whatever he wanted whenever he wanted. Instead, because of the structure of the rules, he is a very good eater of fruits and vegetables, not junk food.

He’d rather have a wheat thin than an animal cracker, you know, stuff like that. Now that I look back on that [the rules in place when he was a baby], he is such a good eater because of that. Some of the rules at the moment seem like they’re stupid rules, you know, but in the long run they are here for a

reason and I'm glad that I was in this environment to kind of learn how to actually do things like that because I wouldn't have done those things at home. I wouldn't have.

As with the reflection on rules overall, Malinda believed the structure and education she was receiving in the program was more a benefit to her maternal role and accepted a relinquishing of some rights in acknowledging that it was all working together to make her a better parent.

Mother-Child Bonding

As previously noted, developing the mother-child bond is one of the main goals of the prison nursery units (Carlson, 2001), building the bond strong enough to hopefully decrease future behavior and choices that would result in repeated incarceration. The mothers in this study were asked "Do you feel like you are developing a strong bond with your child? Do you feel like you have the privacy needed to adequately bond with your child?" Every participant responded positively, affirming that they were indeed bonding with their child, that they were very grateful for the opportunity to bond with their child, and that they were thankful for the various programs within the institution that contributed to the effectiveness of bonding with their child. Sharron, a self-admitted drug addict who's been in prison multiple times, says "I think this program is really remarkable and it's just the bonding that helps us to want to help ourselves more if you ask me." Jerri, who shared aspirations of becoming a veterinarian by starting college classes while in prison, said "I love this program. If it wasn't for this program I wouldn't be able to keep my baby, you know...I wouldn't be able to get to bond with her." And Sofia, an Illinois inmate with her first child, said "I can honestly say that if I wouldn't have got to keep my baby with me then I wouldn't have had

that drive to get out and change or do anything different, because I would've lost that chance to bond with him.”

The physical space allotted to these units would appear to facilitate the bonding process as well, as the moms have their own personal room to retreat to when they want alone time and the common areas allow group participation in learning new ways to develop the mother-child bond. The privacy of personal rooms is especially relevant for Allie, the Indiana mom disturbed by all the activity on her unit, as she feels she can only bond in her private room due to the noise and chaos in the group area. Maricela, an Illinois inmate “scared of a lot of things” about being a first-time mom, discussed how she was learning different parenting approaches during group times, and her observation also demonstrates how differing cultures and races could contribute to learning parenting styles that are new and different.

I'm the type where my mom...Barney raised, Barney taught me everything. And like sitting here now they say it's not good to put your child in front of the t.v. Nursery rhymes I've never heard I've learned because that's what other races like to do, so I'm like 'Oh, that's kinda cool!'

In a similar vein, Zelma, an Illinois inmate with two other children, comments on how other inmates, particularly those of another race, tell her how to raise her baby and instruct her on what she is doing wrong. Zelma finds this frustrating at first, but then adds that she's becoming more open to other cultures. “If I open my mind, because I'm hard headed, I can be really hard headed, but if I'm open to it, it can be good. Sometimes I am open to it.” She continues to say that these new perspectives have increased her ability to bond with her child.

According to Johnston and Gabel (1995), contact between family members during incarceration is the best predictor of a family being reunited after incarceration, but inmates are at the mercy of their children's caregivers when it comes to actually getting visitation.

Mumola (2000) reported that children whose mothers are incarcerated most likely live with grandparents. The babies in this study were no exception to this. The majority of the women in the study reported that their baby would be living with its maternal grandmother if he/she did not live in prison. Ten of the babies would have lived with their mom's mom, one with its aunt, one with its great-grandmother, one would have been placed in foster care, and only two of the children would have lived with their father.

Although it is impossible to predict how often the babies would have been brought to the prison to visit their mom, examining how often the mom and baby get visited in prison now by these prospective caregivers, who currently care for the inmate's other children, could give an indication of how often that may have been. Nine of the moms interviewed have children on the 'outside'. Of these nine, five never get visited by their other children, three get visited one time per month, and one gets visited two times per month. Many of the moms who do not get visited indicated that travel was a hardship for the caregiver, and Melisa added "I asked them not to even trouble themselves with coming here" because of the hardship it would cause for her mom and grandma to bring the kids. Bonding with a newborn under these time constraints would be (and are for other inmates not in a prison nursery unit) nearly impossible.

While the bonding process is important for any child and mother, the first-time moms interviewed were especially impressed and grateful to have the opportunity to bond with their child and to be in an environment where they felt like they learned a great deal about being a mother. Maricela commented

When I first heard [of this program], I'm like, keeping my baby in jail? I don't even wanna be here, why would she wanna be here? But once you get here it's, it's not only like a learning experience but it's like a bond like of the first couple months with your child, like the bond you're supposed to have.

And I know, like me, I'm a very busy-body at home so my baby probably would've been with my mom more than she would've been with me.

Malinda reflected on the importance of experiencing her child's "firsts" – first step, first tooth – “All them things are just...especially me being a first time mom...I'm getting to do everything.” Jerri added “This is my first child. I wanna be there. I just...it would've hurt me a lot, you know.”

Kauffman (2001) expressed that prison nursery units allow moms who had a prior drug addiction the opportunity to bond and attach with their child while clean and sober, a possible missed opportunity with prior children because of their addiction. Thirteen of the fifteen moms interviewed admitted to having a drug addiction prior to being incarcerated and nearly all agreed that being drug free in prison was allowing them to be a better parent. Allie felt more prepared because she is learning to be more protective of this child because she is drug-free and more focused, “more clear”. Mallory, a mother of four, comments that she feels like she is being a better parent with this baby because “just being able to be in my right mind 100% all the time...I just remember every little thing that he does. I don't want to miss nothing no more and I regret that with the other kids.” Amie commented “I think psychologically it would've messed me up in my head to where I probably woulda used again if I had to give up my first and only kid because I was incarcerated because of the stuff, you know.” When asked if her drug use would have kept her from being a good parent, Malinda replied

Yes. I quit using when I found out I was pregnant, but I think, um, after having him it would've been...it would've probably took a bad toll and I probably would've ended up in prison anyway, so I am thankful that I came to prison. I mean I don't like being here, but I'm thankful that I did because that would've definitely kept me from being a good mom to him.

The process of mother/child bonding was greatly enhanced by a program offered within the Illinois prison nursery unit called Baby TALK. I feel this part of the data is particularly relevant to discussing bonding and attachment and could serve as a model to other facilities with prison nurseries. I knew nothing about this program when I started doing interviews at the Illinois facility, and one by one the women being interviewed told me about the program and what it meant to them. Their excitement about this program was palpable and each one told me something different they had learned by participating in the sessions.

According to their website, Baby TALK is a “national model for supporting families of very young children” and its mission is “To positively impact child development and nurture healthy parent-child relationships during the critical early years.”

(www.babytalk.org). Baby TALK has been operating in Decatur, Illinois, for over 25 years, serving the community by working to enhance parenting skills through literacy and other measures. They operate locally for the community, but additionally a representative of Baby TALK has been visiting the Decatur prison nursery weekly for several years, teaching the inmates various parenting techniques and bonding strategies. The representative also visits the moms in the hospital when they give birth, a visit that some moms acknowledged made them feel special, like someone cared.

Maricela, the mom who admitted she was scared because this is her first baby, says “Baby TALK is teaching our babies how to improve their skills, tummy turns, things like that”. Kathrine, who has several children on the ‘outside’, talks excitedly about the nursery songs they sing and learn, and adds “It’s all positive energy”. Malinda discussed how she is not only bonding with her child because of Baby TALK but is also developing bonds with fellow inmates in the process, and says “I think to myself, I would’ve never went to a group

like this at home. I would've been too busy, you know, with everyday life. I would've never taken him to Baby TALK or anything like that. I think that really helps us bond together, back here." Jami adds "We get on the floor and we sing songs and stuff like that. We row row row your boat kind of thing and it helps them with their legs." Jami was also excited because the Baby TALK representative brings them pamphlets about the development stages of children and teaches them how to interact with their babies. Several moms discussed how the Baby TALK representative taught them about babies' body parts and brain development while teaching them how to do stimuli tests on the babies to gauge responsiveness. All of the activities they participated in with the Baby TALK program taught the women how to bond with their child through language (singing, reading, baby talk) and touch (limb exercise and massages), but clearly another benefit to the moms was an increased feeling of competency and knowledge. An additional benefit of Baby TALK was that they are available to be contacted if the moms need assistance post-release as they are in the community, and the bonds of trust between the moms and the Baby TALK staff have been built and nurtured within the prison walls.

Feminist Perspective

The interview data in this study indicates that the various programs, classes, and parenting skills incorporated at each of these facilities had an overall positive impact on the study participants. The overall message conveyed by the women was one of increased competence and empowerment as they learned more about themselves, what caused them to be in prison, and how to help themselves stay out of prison upon release.

Considering the treatment of the participants in the nursery units from a feminist perspective, I asked questions based on previous research about their experience within the programs. I inquired as to whether they received prenatal care throughout their pregnancy, which included regular doctor's visits, prenatal vitamins, a special diet (if necessary), clothing that fit, and adequate rest. Every participant responded that they had received good prenatal care while incarcerated. The one exception was a mom who had gestational diabetes whose care was modeled around a typical diabetic person, not a woman with gestational diabetes, but aside from that this mom felt she was treated well in all other areas. Amie commented "...here they give us the special things like fruit and dairy and vegetables and that all comes from this program". Nearly every inmate interviewed at some point during the interview used the word "blessed" or "blessing" for how they felt about being in the program.

The programming within these nursery units also had a positive impact on the participants. Given the primary purpose of jail programming is to reduce the risk of offenders recidivating, program models that are shown to negatively affect recidivism rates should be studied more closely for consideration of wider implementation (Tripodi, Bledsoe, Kim, & Bender, 2011). From a feminist perspective, a gender-responsive program should be organized and created with the gender-specific needs of women and their lived experiences, including the staff and program development (Bloom & Covington, 2000), particularly when considering the role personal trauma may have played in their illegal choices and behavior (Brown, 2006). As an example in this study, Sharron and I discussed at length her history, which included a long-term drug addiction, childhood abuse, and multiple rapes.

I'm sure in the midst of it I got addicted to a lot of different things, the drugs, the lifestyle, fast money, but I really believe that I started the drugs because I don't want to face the reality of a lot of trauma things that have happened in my life. And maybe from no love in childhood.

Sharron's reflection on why she started using drugs resonates with research describing the difference between why men use drugs – to relax and have fun with friends – and why women use drugs – for “self-medication and escape” (Davidson & Chesney-Lind, 2009, p. 234).

The women in this study reported life-changing results from their involvement in the programs and classes they attended. I could feel the sincerity emanate from Kenya as she shared how she felt about being in the prison nursery program, having previously discussed several hurtful relationships. “I'm very privileged to be in this program. It's a place where I can have my baby and be safe and be me. [This program is] just a real good opportunity to...really work on yourself. I mean, you could sit in prison all day long and not do nothing and go out and do the same thing but there is opportunities in here that if you want to change they're available.” Melisa said “It changes women's lives in here. I've seen it happen before my eyes.” Kathrine commented “It's all positive. It all makes you feel better about yourself and be a better person.” And Jami, reflecting on what she has accomplished since she has arrived, said “I think [this program] is the best thing that happened for me based on my situation...I don't think I would, you know, I think I've changed a lot as a person being here with her. I think it made me a different person, it really has.”

Lorrie, the prisoner nanny who resided in the nursery but had no children with her in prison, discussed her prison experience with me. “I can't say I'm sorry for coming here because I've done a lot.” Lorrie had gotten her G.E.D., associates and bachelor's degrees all while incarcerated. She also had a unique perspective on the programs offered at the Indiana facility as she was older, had raised her children, and had more ‘life experience’ to contribute to her perspective. Lorrie was burdened with the plight of the prisoner moms when they got

released and whether or not they were adequately prepared to resume life responsibilities on the outside. She discussed all of the material items the women receive from two volunteer agencies when leaving, including clothing, toys, formula, diapers, and other needed baby items, but was troubled that the women would not be prepared for the financial responsibilities. “When you go home, you’re not going to have anybody handing you this stuff. You know, you’re going to have to worry about how you’re going to buy milk, how you’re going to buy clothes and, you know, how you’re going to get all this.” She felt strongly that these women should be offered a budgeting class to learn these things prior to release.

Wiewel and Mosley (2006) discussed the financial instability of incarcerated women and how their low-income status can make them “vulnerable to the cycle of recidivism because the obstacles they face in taking care of themselves are so great” (p. 76). Add to this the obstacles of caring for a child, especially if they have never had that responsibility before, and the result could be defeating. Illinois incorporates budgeting in to their prison nursery program by having the women budget their children’s needs each week, creating a list of items needed for the program assistant to buy at a local store, further increasing their competence as women and as a parent. Zelma, who was in prison for retail theft and, by her own admission, “wasn’t paying for nothing”, discussed her appreciation of the budgeting responsibility since she had never done that before.

Parenting programs specifically can be beneficial in increasing a woman’s confidence and self-esteem, creating a motivation to refrain from criminal behavior (Gonzalez, Romero, & Cerbana, 2007; Thompson & Harm, 2000). The moms in this study reported improved parenting skills – Maricela said “I know now everything isn’t a freak-out kind of thing” – and

an overall education on being a mom as some did not know what motherhood entailed prior to coming in to the nursery program. Jami commented that “I’ve learned a lot of things that I didn’t know before even though like I had prior experience with my niece and nephews, but I learned a lot of things that I didn’t know [about the baby and how to be a mom]”. Malinda said “I thought I knew what being a mom was until I came here. It’s not the same as babysitting a kid. It’s a lot of work being a mom. This program has done so much for me that I would have never got on the outside.” Amie responded “Prior to this incarceration, I had held an infant one time in my entire life. Changed one diaper in my entire life. Never been around babies, nothing. So I definitely needed this program and all its help and education on babies.”

The parenting programs were also beneficial for inmates who had children prior to coming to prison, increasing their sense of competency for the children they will resume parenting when they are released. Melisa, a single mom with four kids, discussed her views on being in the program, particularly regarding getting prepared for an infant and returning to motherhood post-release to a child that has a learning disorder. “It’s been six and a half years since I had an infant and it really helped me get prepared being around the other mother’s children, younger, and the other infants before her...A lot of facts that we wouldn’t pay attention to if we were at home and not in this program. And the different temperaments that I didn’t understand about my children, why, you know, because they have their own personalities and they all different.” She was pleased about the insight and education she is receiving on how to deal with her child with a learning disorder, adding that she feels a heightened sense of adequacy. Jerri, learning how to be a new mother, said “So far, it’s

teaching me how to be a great parent, coping with my child. And this program is teaching me how to just love kids...I've learned how to comfort them.”

The gender-responsive programming available to the women in the prison nursery units helps to strengthen these women's reflection of themselves. As the traditional female role socialization patterns in a hegemonic society place an emphasis on male dependence and caring for others, women in treatment, particularly substance-abuse treatment, need to focus on becoming “whole and balanced persons” (Wiewel & Mosley, 2006, p. 69). The data in this study show that these women are experiencing growth toward becoming more whole and balanced women while bonding and attaching with the children in their immediate care as well as the ones they will resume motherhood with post-release.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This study sought to examine the perceptions of women offenders raising their babies in prison nursery units in three separate state institutions to explore the effects of their lived experience within the confines of the prison nurseries and the impact their experiences could have on reduced rates of recidivism. It is important to note that this study was not designed to measure recidivism. Measuring recidivism with a population of prisoners still incarcerated is impossible. Rather, this study was designed to learn more about why this particular group of women felt they may or may not have a better chance of making better choices post-release to avoid recidivism as a result of participating in a rehabilitative program allowing them to keep their newborn with them in prison. The semi-structured interview utilized was designed to explore the effect on the offender and her role as a mother with the child currently in her care as well as her motherhood role, if applicable, with children she will resume parenting post-release. How do the nursery programs impact their maternal roles, how can this impact affect reduced rates of recidivism, and how can this be evaluated and used to provide social policy recommendations? Do these women perceive the nursery program as a more effective rehabilitative approach to criminal justice?

As a result of the data analysis, three main themes emerged in this study: the lived experiences of the women in the nursery unit in relation to the programs' physical space and program implementation impacted their perspective of effectiveness of the prison nursery unit programs; the mother-child bonding and attachment was an influential factor in their personal growth and development; and the gender-responsive programming and structure

impacted their perception of rehabilitation and recovery as they sought to move forward with their lives.

Analyzing the data through the perspective of attachment theory revealed that the mothers and babies in this study did seem to be developing a strong bond. Eloff and Moen's (2003) research indicated a disconnect in the ability for the moms and babies to attach in the prison nursery they studied due to multiple maternal figures and interference from prison officials. None of the women in this study expressed difficulty in bonding with their child due to others or due to physical space limitations. All responded that they were developing bonds with their children, that they had the privacy and space to bond with their child, and that the other women and/or programs within the institution aided their process of bonding. Additionally, all of the moms felt the bond they were developing with this child was going to help them make better choices post-release to avoid recidivating, and for many moms this bond was enhanced by being drug-free. Amie, a first-time mom who had a meth addiction prior to incarceration, thinks the bond with her child will help her stay drug-free because "...you've got something to live for now." She is looking forward to a new life in another state when she and her child are released, away from the triggers and people in her life before she went to prison. Other moms echoed Amie's response in that they were becoming so attached to their baby they were going to try hard not to come back, to leave this child, and any other children they may have, to return to prison.

While attachment theory focuses on children having successful bonding relationships with a primary adult figure (Tuerk & Loper, 2008), in this study and others like it (Eloff & Moen, 2003; Luther & Gregson, 2011; Carlson, 2001), it is more difficult to assess the bonding experienced by the child as the majority of the children are still infants. It is more

evident in these situations to comprehend the benefit of attachment from the mother's perspective and the influence this bond has on her ability to better cope with situations and circumstances in her life.

A major goal of the prison nursery units is mother-child bonding, a phenomenon more clearly understood through the lens of attachment theory. While this goal is to not only reduce the risk of recidivism but also to hopefully reduce the pattern of generational offending (Carlson, 2001), it is difficult to argue this point of effectiveness due to the lack of research post-release on the prison nursery moms and children. The scant statistics on recidivism does indicate that something within these programs is having a longer-term effect on the mothers, thus resulting in fewer recidivists, but the relationship between lower recidivism and attachment is not well established. No known studies are being done to follow these women post-release to determine if they are retaining custody of the child they are bonding with in prison, and if this bonding experience is impacting their relationship with their other children. It is difficult to argue the benefits of bonding and attachment if the child's bond with its mother is severed at some point post-release.

A main premise of attachment theory is that children who fail to attach to a responsive caregiver can experience difficulties with their emotional and behavioral development and reactions (Poehlmann, 2005), but the children born in prison nurseries are not being evaluated long-term to determine whether or not they are indeed attaching to their mothers and maintaining this attachment as they grow and develop. If these programs are going to continue to exist and grow in numbers, research examining the long-term effects for the mother and the children are necessary. According to the nursery program directors in Illinois and Nebraska, this research cannot be assumed by the state as they are not allowed to

follow the inmates once they have served their sentences and are released. Therefore, independent scholarly research should be conducted to evaluate this relationship, and I have been fortunate to become a part of a longitudinal study that is going to do just that. Dr. Beichner, a criminal justice professor at Illinois State University, is at the beginning stages of a longitudinal study that will follow the inmates post-release for several years to study the lives of the nursery unit mothers and their families in an effort to contribute to the scholarly knowledge of the long-term realities of prison nursery units.

Using the perspective of feminist theory to analyze the data in this study helped to determine that the policies within these three institutions did place a higher priority on the needs of these women, policies which impacted how the women perceived of themselves as mothers and as individuals. While some of the women interviewed experienced frustrations with some of the rules of the program or the space limitations, all of the women were grateful and thankful to have the opportunity to be in the nursery unit with their child. The women were thankful for the education they were receiving in the various classes they were allowed to participate in, empowering them to address personal issues. As Malinda commented, “[Lifestyle redirection class] has opened my eyes to so many things in the past four weeks”, challenging her to work on her relationship skills and become more open-minded.

The pathways approach to criminality, utilized by many feminist scholars to better understand women’s criminality, was another useful perspective in analyzing the data in this study. Feminist theories emphasize the role that personal trauma plays in women’s lives and choices due to female role socialization that emphasizes the importance of social bonding and relationship building (Bloom et al., 2003). Employing the pathways approach, we can better understand how the family structure can be a source of victimization and abuse for

women more so than men. As all of these women struggle to overcome past traumas and choices that have resulted in incarceration, the hope of another chance is what they need to focus on rehabilitation and lifestyle changes for the better. Kenya, a mom in Nebraska, commented, “For other people [other prisoners not in the nursery program] it’s just killing time to sober up, to getting back out. [Being in this program] it’s a little more of an eye opener. You have something to look at every single day to remind you, let’s not do this again. I’ve learned a lot from being in here. Some days it’s hard.”

In analyzing the family and relationship structures of the women in this study, trauma and familiarity with the criminal justice system was evident. Twelve of the sixteen women interviewed reported having a spouse or intimate partner in prison, parents in prison, abusive relationships with family and/or intimate partners, and/or previous incarcerations themselves. This familiarity was not more prevalent for any particular race – white and black women in the study equally responded to this familiarity with the criminal justice system. Zelma, a mother of three serving time for retail theft, reported both of her parents and her current partner have been in or are currently in prison. Sharron, a mother of four, is serving her fifth prison sentence and told me all of her children’s fathers (each child has a different father) are also currently incarcerated. Maricela did not report having any family members or a partner incarcerated but did tell me her baby’s father physically abused her. Mallory, a mother of four, reported that she has been in prison before, and that currently her estranged husband is incarcerated as is her baby’s father.

The women’s histories highlight the importance of gender-responsive programming to allow them to deal with the hurts and traumas specific to their situations in order to heal and make better choices in the future. Many of the women were also impacted by the close-

knit atmosphere they experienced in the nursery program, referring to their situation as family-like and encouraging. Amie commented “There’s nobody that’s left out. We’re all like a big family here...” Considering their histories, perhaps another influential aspect of this experience is the ability to feel like a valued member of a family unit, a refuge to feel safe in, a position many of these women may not have experienced prior to this time in their lives. Kenya reflected “It’s a place where I can have my baby and be safe and be me.”

Gender-responsive programming was clearly influential for the women in this study and, as highlighted previously, served to contribute to their feelings of self-worth, competency, and autonomy in their roles as mothers and women. Jerri, a single parent mom wanting to pursue an education post-release, feels like she is meeting a lot of great people in prison and getting the opportunity to better her life.

You think of prison as a rock bottom, but it’s not really rock bottom because you do have a lot of opportunities to just get your stuff together...This is a privilege to me, you know. I’m incarcerated. I should be learning a lesson. I mean, I am learning a lesson right now, but I should still be able to be a parent. You know. And I feel like they gave me that chance.

The impact of the programs, however, could be influenced by the amount of time each individual is incarcerated and therefore how much of the programming they can participate in. Severson, Bruns, Veeh, and Lee (2011) refer to this length of time in programming as “dosage – the amount of exposure one individual has to an intervention that is necessary to result in a reduction in recidivism” (p. 328). Further research should examine whether the ‘dosage’ experienced by moms with relatively short sentences – i.e. those in the nursery programs – is adequate to reduce recidivism, and if so, how that can apply to a larger inmate population. If shorter sentences result in a smaller likelihood of reduction in recidivism, those findings should be considered in determining what programming is most effective for

inmates so they can complete them prior to release. Further research into the effectiveness of gender-responsive programming could also positively impact policy recommendations directed at rehabilitative efforts within women's prisons overall (Brown, 2006).

Further analyzing the data from a pathways approach feminist perspective, I was able to identify a difference between one inmate and the others participating in this study. As previously discussed, a large majority of the women in this study reported prior involvement with the criminal justice system either personally or via a family member or intimate partner. Kathrine was one study participant who did not report any prior involvement with the criminal justice system, and she was the only inmate who verbalized the stigma she was experiencing due to her incarceration. Kathrine, a mother of six, discussed with me that she was from a hard working family. Her parents, siblings, and she and her partner were all hard working - her life revolved around a close-knit, hard working family. "I'm a tax payer, [my partner] is a tax payer, we're tax payers, you know." From all indications, she was firmly planted in a middle-class family (although she did refuse to disclose the income in her family). Regarding her conviction that landed her in prison, Kathrine said several times that she was a good mom that made a bad choice. I found it interesting that she was the only woman interviewed who made any indication to the stigmatization she was experiencing because of her incarceration. Discussing her crime that led to her conviction, she said "...the article went in the paper" and everyone knew what she had done. Later in the interview, Kathrine added that she hates the word inmate, hates the word incarcerated, "I hate it all".

Kathrine's reaction to her incarceration is less surprising than the lack of any indication of stigma from the other study participants. She referred to her time in prison as "a huge lesson learned". The other women in the study gave little indication of being

embarrassed or ashamed of their current situation, and thus gave the impression that their situation was more aligned with what they would consider as normalcy in their lives. Nursery programs such as these visited in this study can be influential as policies and programming are further developed to fight the revolving door of recidivism and the generational cycle of offenders, increasing the self-esteem and self-efficacy of the women through counseling, education, and maternal responsibilities, and rebuilding a sense of 'normalcy' for these women.

As previously mentioned, although statistics are sparse on prison nursery unit programs, what exists shows a significantly decreased rate of recidivism for moms participating in these programs (Carlson, 2009). In March 2012 the prison nursery unit in Decatur celebrated its five-year anniversary, boasting zero recidivism for the forty-four moms who have been through the unit since its opening (S. Hansbro, personal communication, March 28, 2012). And as statistics are showing these promising numbers, questions arise as to why. How does this program impact the women in ways that other programming does not so that they have such a better chance of staying out of trouble post-release?

Radosh (2002) discussed the possibility that the selection of inmates has an impact on lower recidivism rates for nursery moms. There is a process of selection for choosing who can participate and who cannot. Only mothers with shorter sentences are allowed in the program as prison officials believe separating the mother and child when the child is two years old would be more detrimental than having the child bonding with alternate caregivers from the beginning. Typically, mothers who have committed a violent offense are not allowed to participate, presumably for the safety of the children involved. (As previously

discussed, the Washington Corrections Center for Women in Gig Harbor is the exception to this rule. (Kauffman, 2001)) Mothers who have a history with the Child and Family Services Agency may not be allowed to participate. When considering the lower rate of recidivism for these women, though, one cannot overlook the fact that they have still engaged in some form of criminal behavior to be in prison, so to say that selection necessarily results in the lowered rates of recidivism is not a valid argument without further research to bolster the claim. Of the 16 women that participated in this study, half of them were repeat offenders or had at least been in some contact with the criminal justice system previously if not actually incarcerated. Sharron was serving her fifth jail sentence as an adult, not counting multiple times in jail as a juvenile. Additionally, of the 9 participants who were not first-time moms, five had either voluntarily or involuntarily lost custody of some or all of their children prior to becoming incarcerated. Using this sample as an example, it is evident that not all participants have histories that make them inherently less of a risk for recidivating.

Discussions with the participants revealed differences in the program structure that may contribute to the overall effectiveness of the nursery programs and a resulting decrease in recidivism, differences that could possibly be implemented on a more wide-spread basis to other prisoners. Malinda discussed the support system she would have in place when she was released, including her WELLS counselor (WELLS is an acronym for Women Embracing Life Long Sobriety, a program offered in the Illinois prison) who has given Malinda her contact information to call if she needs someone to talk to when she gets released. Amie commented that “being on this wing, you have the advantage to be first chosen out of the whole institution to go to other classes that are available like parenting and lifestyles and self-image and stuff that will better help your self-esteem and self-...just

yourself, you know, for the outside.” Her observation highlights the need for class availability for all prisoners, not just the ones participating in special programs. Amie went on to discuss the Baby TALK program at the Illinois facility, commenting on the post-release advantage of Baby TALK:

There’s not a lot of programs that are in this facility where if you were in trouble on the outside or if you needed some kind of help, self-talk or something like that, you couldn’t call here unless you were at this program because we are all on then back and forth, you know, we have that advantage over other people.

Baby TALK is a great resource for these moms that is a community-based organization, so further collaboration with other community-based resources specifically relevant to the situations the ex-inmate is experiencing, in addition to existing ones, would be another implementation helpful to more inmates upon their re-entry to society.

Another difference noted in the data was the difference in the way pregnant women were treated at one Illinois institution in comparison to the prison nursery unit institution. The inmates in Illinois are typically sent to a facility in one part of the state, and then women who are deemed eligible to participate in the nursery program are relocated to the institution housing that unit in another part of the state. While the inmates did not report being mistreated at the first institution and did receive all required prenatal care, they were mandated to do work assignments and chores that they were not mandated to perform once they arrived at the nursery program. Loraine discussed conditions at the first facility she was incarcerated at, commenting “We sleepin’ on one mat, scrubbing floors, if we got to, get on, if we got to get on our knees and stuff, spraying bleach and stuff, they don’t really care over there.” This discrepancy reveals that pregnant inmates who are not a part of the nursery program are treated much the same as an inmate who is not pregnant, which could, as Vainik

(2008) expressed, be problematic due to the fact that many of the prisoners come from disadvantaged backgrounds making them more likely to have a difficult pregnancy with complications. Common treatment throughout the system, regardless of whether or not a woman 'qualifies' for the nursery unit, should be a given, but as past research has indicated (Vainik, 2008; Tapia & Vaughn, 2010; Solinger, 2005) this is usually not the standard upheld by the criminal justice system. Recognizing the difference that respecting the pregnant status of a woman can make should influence policy decisions in the future.

Several issues that came up during this study's interviews that should be studied further included worry on behalf of moms as to how their child would adjust post-release. Jerri worried about her daughter's well-being post-release. "It's going to be really hard when I get out of here. She's not gonna want to be around no one but me because she been raised that way just to be around me." Allie worried about her daughter being spoiled because she's held all the time, and when they get out she won't be sitting and holding her all the time. She'll have three other kids to care for and a job to go to. Other moms worried about their child's socialization skills and attaching to other family members post-release. While some of the children received visits from family members while in the nursery unit with their mom, others did not. How will they attach to these family members once they are released?

Future research should also examine the lived experience of these children, both in and out of prison. One of the institutions in this study was very accommodating for the children, throwing monthly birthday parties and Holiday parties, such as Halloween and Christmas. A child who celebrated his first birthday on the unit received a tricycle from the wardens and family members were allowed to come and help celebrate. Are all programs this child-friendly? Prison nursery unit babies are not allowed to leave the prison with other

family members during their mother's incarceration. How are they impacted by society when they are "free" on the outside, especially the children who live in prison until they are old enough to be aware of their surroundings? Lorrie, the nursery unit nanny in Indiana that participated in this study, worried about the children's post-release interaction with men as inside the Indiana prison they were never around men. Do they experience heightened anxieties or behavioral issues because of their unconventional start in life? All of these issues and more deserve further attention to fully understand the long-term effects for these children. While statistics indicate a possible advantage for the mothers in these situations, it is highly irresponsible to completely neglect the children's position in these living arrangements.

It is important to note that while this study sought to bring to light the lived experiences of the women in these nursery units - to give voice to their stories - because of the design and timeframe of this study this goal could only partially be met. "To avoid artificiality, our understanding of the prison world must be based on the experiences of actual participants in that world" (Jones, 1995, pp. 107-108). However, conducting one interview in a 30 to 60 minute timeframe is not near sufficient enough to delve deep into the entire lived experience of these women. I designed my interview questions based on previous research, but there were many thoughts, ideas and concepts left out due to the constricted timeframe of this project and many more that came up during the course of the interviews that were left untouched. Luther and Gregson (2011) were able to observe and be integral parts of the prison nursery unit they studied over the course of a year, but even their research is lacking the depth of the genuine experience of these women, mainly due to the fact that they themselves were not prisoners too. They, like me, were able to leave at the end of the

day and go home. As Jones (1995) noted, my access to information was affected by my role as a sociology researcher.

Finally, while several limitations were discussed in the Methods section of this thesis, several more exist. All of the programs and requirements commented on within this thesis, unless otherwise noted, were reported to me by the inmates and as such could be incorrect. Regarding the comparisons between institutions, as I was only able to interview two inmates at the Nebraska facility and four at the Indiana facility, the representations of their programs is weak in comparison to the Illinois facility where I was able to interview ten inmates as well as visit the facility on three separate occasions. Future research could benefit from additional comparison of nursery units to further determine what works better in some than others and how collaboration between facilities could better the programs overall. Further, the issue of race and culture and how these differences could impact program participants and their perceptions of effectiveness appeared in the data but was not pursued at length in this study due to time constraints. This is another issue for more in-depth research as prisons in the U.S. are racially diverse, and learning more about how cultures can diverge and work together, especially in the context of shared mothering roles in the close proximity of a prison nursery unit, are crucial for future growth.

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APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions:

I'm going to begin by asking questions about you:

What is your current age?

What is your race?

When you were growing up, did you ever experience any kind of abuse – such as physical or sexual abuse? If yes, were you abused by family members, friends, strangers, ?

Are you married? (Inquire as to married prior to incarceration? Divorced? Living with partner?) Were you ever abused by your spouse/partner?

Approximately what was your income prior to incarceration? (monthly or annually...)

Were you employed prior to being incarcerated? If so, what did you do?

What were you convicted of to be here in prison?

Is this your first time being in prison? If not, ask about prior incarceration and recidivism – new charge or parole/probation violation?

Did you receive prenatal care during your pregnancy? (Ask specifics, such as doctor's visits, special diet, adequate rest, clothing that fit, vitamins)

Did you experience any complications with your pregnancy? (If yes, expand)

How old is your baby?

If your baby did not live with you here, where do you think s/he would live?

How many children do you have (total, including the baby(ies) in the nursery program with you)?

IF APPLICABLE: Prior to incarceration, who did your child(ren) live with?

IF APPLICABLE: Who do they live with currently?

IF APPLICABLE: Do you expect them to live with you when you are released? (If not, why not or what arrangements are taking place?)

Do you expect to keep your new baby with you when you are released? (If not, probe further.)

Do you have a plan in place for how you will support yourself and this baby (and any other children) when you are released?

IF APPLICABLE: Do you get regular visitation with your other children?

IF APPLICABLE: Who usually brings them for visitations?

IF APPLICABLE: Is the baby allowed to interact with her/his siblings during visitation?

IF APPLICABLE: Does the baby's father come for visitation with you and/or the baby?

IF APPLICABLE: Discuss visitation time – routine, physical contact allowed, time/duration, sibling jealousy?,

IF APPLICABLE: How do you think your other kids feel about your new baby being in here with you and them not being allowed to live here with you? Do they ever ask you about that? How do you answer their questions?

Did you use drugs prior to being incarcerated?

IF APPLICABLE: Do you feel like your drug use was keeping you from being a good parent?

IF APPLICABLE: Do you feel like being drug-free in prison has made you a better parent for this baby? (Have them explain if possible)

IF APPLICABLE: Do you think you will be able to remain drug-free when you are released? (Inquire as to any specific coping skills she has been taught in the program.)

Now we'll talk a little bit about the nursery program here at _____ (name of correctional center visiting).

Tell me in your words how you feel about the prison nursery program.

Are there requirements for participating in this program? (ex: parenting class, drug-free, etc...)

Do you feel like you are developing a strong bond with your child? Do you feel like you have the privacy needed to adequately bond with your child?

Are you developing bonds with the other nursery moms that you may not otherwise be developing if you weren't here in this unit?

Do you all (the other prison nursery moms) help each other with taking care of the babies?

Do you think your baby has bonded with the other moms here?

Do you think your baby has bonded with the prison staff here?

(Depending on age of child): Does the prison staff discipline your child? Do other moms discipline your child?

Do you feel you are being allowed to raise your baby the way you want to, or are there too many rules and regulations interfering with that?

Do you think the environment here is kid-friendly? (Discuss further – warm and inviting or cold and sterile, allows for imaginative play, appropriate toys)

Do you feel like you and your baby receive adequate healthcare?

Do you think your baby is happy?

Do you think your baby is safe? Would you be worried for your baby's safety if s/he did not live here with you?

Would you be worried about losing custody of your baby if s/he didn't live here with you? (If so, who are you afraid you would lose custody to?)

How is your day structured? Are you required to work, or do you spend your day being a full-time parent?

Do you feel like this program is preparing you to be successful when you are released? How so?

Is there anything about the nursery unit that is frustrating? Is there anything you would change if you could?

What would you like to tell others about the nursery program?

APPENDIX B

LETTER OF APPROVAL FROM ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Illinois
Department of
Corrections

Pat Quinn
Governor

S. A. Godinez
Director

Decatur Correctional Center / 2310 E. Mound Road / P.O. Box 3066 / Decatur, IL 62524-3066 / Telephone: (217) 877-0353 / TDD: (800) 526-0844

July 21, 2011

IRB
Southern Illinois University
@ Edwardsville
Rebecca J. Garrett
402 Jefferson Street
Pawnee, IL 62558

Dear Rebecca:

Please be advised permission has been granted for you to conduct your thesis research project at the Decatur Correctional Center.

You will be given access to enter the facility and conduct interviews with Offenders who are participating in the Moms & Babies Program. Your point of contact while at the facility will be Susan Creek, Infant Development Administrator. Ms. Creek may be reached at 217.877.0353 Ext. 334.

Welcome and we look forward to working with you on this project.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Hansbro', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Shelith Hansbro
Warden

x: Assistant Warden of Operations Assistant
Warden of Programs Susan Creek, Infant
Development Administrator File

APPENDIX C

LETTER OF APPROVAL FROM NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

STATE OF NEBRASKA

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

Robert P. Houston

Director



Dave Heineman
Governor

August 2, 2011

Rebecca J. Garrett
Graduate Student
Southern Illinois University
Edwardsville, Illinois
P.O. Box 75
Pawnee, Illinois 62558

Dear Rebecca J. Garrett:

This letter is to notify you and to serve as an IRB document demonstrating that you have received approval from the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services (NDCS) for your research project titled "*Babies Behind Bars: A Study of Prison Nursery Units*". Your project has been through the NDCS research review process and has been approved by Director Robert P. Houston on July 25, 2011.

The Nebraska Department of Correctional Services is looking forward to working with you on your project and will provide you the necessary access to our institutions, inmates, programs, and data within the scope of your study.

Sincerely

Steve King
Planning & Research Administrator
cc: Robert P. Houston, Director

APPENDIX D

LETTER OF APPROVAL FROM INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



STATE OF INDIANA
Department of Correction

Indiana Government Center – South

Mitchell E. Daniels, Jr.
Governor

302 W. Washington Street • Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2738
Phone: (317) 232-5711 • Fax: (317) 232-6798 • Website: www.in.gov/idoc/

Bruce C. Lemmon
Commissioner

August 09, 2011

Rebecca Garrett
P.O. Box 75
Pawnee, IL 62558

RE: Research Application

Dear Ms. Garrett:

Your request to conduct a research project titled "Babies Behind Bars: A Study of Prison Nursery Units" has been reviewed by an internal IDOC review panel.

I am pleased to inform you that the application has been approved and you may begin your research once you receive approval from your academic IRB. Please contact Superintendent Steve McCauley, Indiana Women's Prison, at (317) 244-3387 in order to initiate your research.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Aaron Garner". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light background.

Aaron Garner
Executive Director, Research & Technology

cc: Steve McCauley
Jim Basinger

APPENDIX E
DHHS CERTIFICATE OF CONFIDENTIALITY

CERTIFICATE OF CONFIDENTIALITY
CC-HD-11-108
issued to
Southern Illinois University Edwardsville
conducting research known as
Babies Behind Bars: A Study of Prison Nursery Units

In accordance with the provisions of section 301(d) of the Public Health Service Act 42 U.S.C. 241(d), this Certificate is issued in response to the request of the Principal Investigator, Dr. Dave Kauzlarich, to protect the privacy of research subjects by withholding their identities from all persons not connected with this research. Dr. Kauzlarich is primarily responsible for the conduct of this research.

Under the authority vested in the Secretary of Health and Human Services by section 301(d), all persons who:

1. are enrolled in, employed by, or associated with the Southern Illinois University Edwardsville and their contractors or cooperating agencies and
2. have in the course of their employment or association access to information that would identify individuals who are the subjects of the research pertaining to the project known as Babies Behind Bars: A Study of Prison Nursery Units

are hereby authorized to protect the privacy of the individuals who are the subjects of that research by withholding their names and other identifying characteristics from all persons not connected with the conduct of that research.

This study will interview incarcerated mothers and their infant children participating in prison nursery unit programs in three state prison institutions to better understand their perceptions of the program and the impact to their maternal roles. Approximately thirty women will be recruited as subjects and interviewed once, face-to-face in the prison.

A Certificate of Confidentiality is needed because sensitive information will be collected during the course of the study. The certificate will help researchers avoid involuntary disclosure that could expose subjects or their families to adverse economic, legal, psychological and social consequences.

All subjects will be assigned a code number and identifying information and records will be kept in locked files at the Institution.

This research is currently underway and is expected to end on 05/31/2013.

As provided in section 301 (d) of the Public Health Service Act 42 U.S.C. 241(d):

'Persons so authorized to protect the privacy of such individuals may not be compelled in any Federal, State, or local civil, criminal, administrative, legislative, or other proceedings to identify such individuals.'

This Certificate does not protect you from being compelled to make disclosures that: (1) have been consented to in writing by the research subject or the subject's legally authorized representative; (2) are required by the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 301 et seq.) or regulations issued under that Act; or (3) have been requested from a research project funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) or the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) by authorized representatives of those agencies for the purpose of audit or program review.

This Certificate does not represent an endorsement of the research project by the DHHS. This Certificate is now in effect and will expire on 05/31/2013. The protection afforded by this Confidentiality Certificate is permanent with respect to subjects who participate in the research during the time the Certificate is in effect.

Date: 12/12/2011



Steven Hirschfeld, MD PhD

Associate Director for Clinical Research

Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development