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**MOTHERING DURING INCARCERATION: CONNECTING THE PAST AND
THE PRESENT EXPERIENCES**

by

Gordana Eljdupovic-Guzina

A thesis submitted to
The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Psychology

**Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario
December 18, 2001**

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"Mothering During Incarceration: Connecting the Past and the Present Experiences"

submitted by

Gordana Eljdupovic-Guzina

in Partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

The present thesis argued that in order to understand mothering during incarceration, women's pre-incarceration experiences of mothering and their current circumstances needed to be considered, as well as the dominant group's and the participants' perspectives on this issue. In order to account for different perspectives, a multimethod approach was employed, including archival data, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. A qualitative analysis of the interviews, as well as a quantitative analyses of data, such as logistic regression and series of multiple regressions were conducted.

Participants were federally incarcerated mothers from two federal facilities for women offenders in Canada. The sample size in the archival data study was 140 women. In addition, 40 women completed a questionnaire, of which 15 agreed to participate in a subsequent interview.

The concept of "affordances" of situations emerged from the qualitative analysis as useful in interpreting results. It refers to one's tendency to base interpretation of experiences on the given circumstances and what was possible in a particular situation. Thus, the majority of women's evaluation of their pre-incarceration mothering was based on what they could have done within highly marginalized circumstances of their lives. However, their narratives on mothering from the perspective of being incarcerated and distant from their "real lives," reflected to a much greater extent middle class norms. Women conveyed that it was primarily themselves as individuals that needed to be "fixed" which is precisely the perspective of the dominant group. Interestingly, the archival data study showed that although the greater mothers' marginalization in various domains of her life, only mental health had a unique contribution to predicting ratings of inadequate parenting. In other words, based on the outsiders' or correctional officers' point of view, inadequate parenting was associated with something dysfunctional within the individual.

The thesis also examined mother-child relationship and self-perceptions during incarceration in relation to women's sense of hope, as well as factors stemming from their past and present circumstances. It was expected that the mother-child relationship and self-perception, would be accounted for by mothers' pre-incarceration parenting skills in combination with her incarceration experiences and satisfaction with childcare arrangements. Results from the questionnaire study showed a significant interaction effect, such that, those mothers who in the past used less adequate parenting skills but who had a positive incarceration experience, reported a satisfying relationship with children during incarceration. On the other hand, mothers who in the past utilized adequate parenting skills were more satisfied with the relationship they established with children during incarceration, regardless of their prison experience. Childcare arrangements did not have a significant contribution on the quality of mother-child relationship. Results failed to support expectations regarding prediction of women's self-perception as mothers.

Results also showed that there was an interaction effect between both aspects of mothering and sense of hope. The more satisfying the relationship the mother had with the child during incarceration the greater her sense of hope, irrespective of how good of a mother she viewed herself to be. However, if the current relationship was not satisfactory, only if the woman had a positive self-perception of herself as a mother, she had a greater sense of hope.

The findings of the three studies pointed out the importance of the relationship between women's past and present experiences in relation to their experiences of mothering during incarceration. The results also highlighted the extent to which the contexts, such as when, where and by whom the phenomena are examined, can give specific and sometimes, seemingly contradictory meanings.

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Introduction

Many women offenders have children for whom they were the primary careproviders prior to incarceration (Eljdupovic-Guzina, 1999; Shaw et al., 1990). Compared to male offenders who also have children, the position of the women offenders is unique. Parenting issues seem to be of particular relevance in the case of incarcerated women. It has been suggested that maternal incarceration creates more damage to the family, since due to mothers' incarcerations, and unlike male offenders, children often lose not only their sole care provider but also the familial home and surroundings (Stanton, 1980; Watson, 1995; Wine, 1992; Woodrow, 1992). Many women develop guilt feelings that they have abandoned and betrayed their children, or, that they have left them on their own (Stanton, 1980; Wine, 1992; Woodrow, 1992). During incarceration women are also more likely to worry about the well-being of their children who now reside in a new environment (Moyer, 1993; Shaw et al., 1990; Stanton, 1980).

For some of these women, separation from their children is reported to be one of the most difficult aspects of being incarcerated and in some instances a source of depression and loss of hope (Hairston, 1991; Heney, 1996; Shaw et al., 1990; Wine, 1992). Maintaining their ties with children during incarceration is of great importance for women, and it has been suggested that doing so is of crucial importance for women's re-integration into the society after their release from prison (Correctional Service of Canada, 1995; Pollock, 1998). This is despite the accounts of some women who express that prior to incarceration, they had encountered tremendous difficulties with being primary or only care providers of their children, and often associated struggles and constraints with

motherhood (Chesney-Lind, 1997; Elizabeth Fry Society, 1994; Wine, 1992). However, upon examining the context of the lives most of the women had prior to incarceration, it becomes apparent that many of these difficulties are associated with their marginalized position in the society, that is, a very low socioeconomic status, social reaction and perceptions of single mothers, poor persons in general, and so on (Comack, 1996; Elizabeth Fry Society, 1994; Pollock, 1998; Sommers, 1995). Furthermore, studies documented that some incarcerated women, when they looked back on their lives before incarceration voiced that they were not “good” mothers to their children (Adelberg & Currie, 1993; Garcia Coll, Surrey, Buccio-Notaro & Molla, 1998). A similar perspective may come from outside observers. For example, researchers such as Pollock (1998) state explicitly that most women offenders are not good mothers. There seems to be a paradox imbedded in the perspective that contact with children during incarceration gives mothers a sense of hope and assists with their re-integration into the society on one hand, and on the other, that these women were inadequate parents and often voiced hardship in relation to the mother-role. If this is the case, then, facilitating their contacts during incarceration, most likely will not result in a positive relationship and strengthening their ties.

However, parenting is a complex issue and in order to understand it in the context of mothers’ incarceration, it is necessary to explore it in greater detail, including the mothers’ experiences of it before incarceration. It is unlikely that mothering behaviours can be simplistically categorized as bad or good. Furthermore, even if there were struggles and hardships associated with mothering before incarceration, the very fact that it is important for women to maintain contact with their children, indicates that it represents a value for them, and therefore, the mechanisms involved in this need to be

examined. Do women's parenting experiences prior to incarceration in any way affect and shape their needs to stay in touch with their children during incarceration? If, and when, women manage to maintain contact with their children, do their pre-incarceration parenting practices affect this contact in any way?

It has been only fairly recently that women offenders have been studied as a separate population with unique characteristics relative to men. Until this time, they were not particularly studied at all, or were considered to be similar or the same as the male offender population. This in itself is not unique for this population. Until the feminist movement, practically all disciplines had a gender "neutral" approach and specificities of participants that stemmed from their gender were not recognized nor included in scientific inquiry. A second reason for the lack of (adequate) research on women offenders was the very small number of these women compared to the population of male offenders. It is estimated that in Canada, there are about 350 incarcerated federally sentenced women offenders, which represents only 2% of the entire federal offender population. Federally sentenced offenders are those who have been sentenced for over two years. As to the offenders who received a sentence under two years (provincial sentence), women constitute only approximately 9% of the entire population (Shaw, 1994).

Although there is not one particular feminist perspective on female criminality (Boritch, 1997), what these perspectives do have in common is that they problematize and question individualistic and gender neutral approaches to studying criminal behavior which decontextualize phenomenon and individuals' actions. It has been maintained that in order to understand women's crimes, the specificities of women's experiences should be taken

into account (Laberge, 1991). Based on this perspective, many studies on women offenders point out the multiple disadvantaged position these women had prior to getting in conflict with the law (Chesney-Lind, 1997; Comack, 1996; Elizabeth Fry Society, 1994; Sommers, 1995; Wine, 1992). Their analyses of the social circumstances of women's lives and their offending point to "... strong links between the subordinate social and economic status of women and their involvement with the criminal justice system" (Boritch, 1997). Social practices and the very process of socialization impose pressures, constraints and limitations on women's lives, and yet, their responses to them are perceived as entirely their individual responsibility, rather than a reflection of their harsh social circumstances (Adelberg & Currie, 1993; Chesney-Lind, 1997; Comak, 1996; Elizabeth Fry Society, 1994). For that reason, feminists' studies approach women's experiences and actions as embedded in their economic, social and cultural situatedness, and they point out the extent to which this milieu shapes individuals' characteristics, actions and/or private life.

In 1989, as a part of the work on the National Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women in Canada, a survey of federally and provincially incarcerated women was undertaken. Its purpose was to gain relevant information on this population that would provide guidelines for designing programs, services and facilities for women offenders (Shaw. et al, 1990). One of the key elements of this process was to consult women themselves. Consistent with a feminist perspective, this approach reflected acknowledgment of the necessity to reveal women's own personal perspective and experience in order to understand specific needs that women offenders have. A document called "Creating Choices: The Report of the Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women" (1990) emerged as a result of this endeavor.

This document brought to attention that many incarcerated women were mothers and were primary careproviders of their children prior to incarceration (Correctional Service of Canada, 1990). Shaw et al. (1990) estimated that two thirds of federally incarcerated women have children. As previously mentioned, maintaining their ties with children during incarceration was of great importance to them and their well-being. Recognizing the relevance of motherhood in the lives of women and their children, and consistent with the women-centered approach, Correctional Service of Canada has taken certain steps based on the recommendations of the Task Force. New regional facilities were opened for federally sentenced women to allow women to be geographically closer to their families and in some instances to have children on the facilities with them. Since women are located closer to home, it is likely that it would be easier for them to arrange visits with the family/children than it was before when there was just one prison for federally sentenced women, in Kingston, Ontario. These new facilities were built in a community-like fashion in order to enable (to the extent that it is possible) women's daily living environment to reflect community standards (Correctional Service of Canada, 1992). Each facility consists of couple of houses shared by only eight women with each occupying a separate room. It is of relevance to mention this here, as women residing in facilities that are less like a "typical" prison and more like "home", might affect contact with their children. Given that the new regional facilities have a more home-like atmosphere, it could be expected that more women would find it acceptable to have the children come to the facility. In fact, at the time of this study, there were some women who had their babies and toddlers with them full-time on the facility. Thus, Correctional Services of Canada "assists" women to pursue their "natural" role. Nonetheless, many

aspects of their situation are not “natural” or consistent with the notion of mothering. In particular, the mothers are separated from their children and do not take part in their children’s day to day lives.

Another aspect of parenting that “Creating Choices” identified as relevant was women’s need for parenting programs. As a response to this need, “Guidelines for Parenting Skills Programs for Federally Sentenced Women” (1995) was developed. This document provides a general outline of the possible difficulties and needs with respect to parenting that women may have or need to learn. It offers guidelines for the management of women’s institutions in order to “...select, adapt or create, manage, and evaluate a parenting skills programs which will meet the needs of their specific population...” (p. 4). However, these guidelines were not established on the basis of systematic exploration and research of parenting practices nor the related needs that women offenders may have had. As the authors of this manual themselves state, “... there is virtually no information on the parenting styles or skills of Federally Sentenced Women...” (p.8). One of the goals of the present study was to provide such information. However, parenting practices emerge and develop within a specific context, and for that reason in order to create and maintain change, it is not sufficient to know solely about the parenting skills that women may have without understanding their relation to women’s notions of motherhood, how they perceive themselves as mothers and the way in which the manifested parenting practices are interwoven with women’s social circumstances. As Garcia Coll et al. (1998) point out, there is a general bias in the academic literature suggesting that men and women in prison need to improve parenting skills. If we were to develop this argument further, this perspective clearly locates the “problem” solely within the individual and reflects the

assumption that teaching “bad” parents new skills will solve the problem. It does not question or examine the context within which these possibly poor parenting practices emerge, nor the processes that emerge in response to incarceration.¹

The present study focused on women offenders, and in particular on their roles as mothers. When women enter the situation of incarceration, they have already parented, established certain relationships with their children and developed an understanding and expectations associated with the notion of mothering. These established relationships represent something that they bring to the situation of incarceration, and impact responses to separation from their children. The mother-child relationship prior to mother’s incarceration may range from adequate to quite impaired. This means that the mother and the child enter the new situation of separation, which itself is a very complex one, with different levels of strength (i.e. resources) which could be expected to affect the subsequent relationship.

Contrary to many other mothers, these women are separated from their children and therefore cannot fulfill their mother role in terms of its traditional definition, to provide everyday care and nurturance to their children. On the other hand, most of these women still maintain their mother identity and they could, to some extent, maintain contact with their children. Many stressed that this relationship kept them going during incarceration (Hairston, 1991; Heney, 1996; Shaw et al., 1990; Wine, 1992). Given that incarceration represents a drastic change in life to which women may react differently, this study also explored the effects of women’s experiences of incarceration on maintaining contact with their children, women’s perception of themselves as mothers, and the quality

¹ This does not mean that improving parenting skills should be entirely dismissed.

of the relationship established with their children . Finally, the effects of these aspects of mothering during incarceration on women's sense of hope were also explored.

The present study is primarily based on feminists' perspectives rather than mainstream psychological theories, such as for instance, the social learning theory. The main reason for this choice is that feminists theorizing and considerations seem to provide "tools" and lenses for understanding of individuals in their socio-economic and gender specific context, rather than as fairly isolated entities.

Marginalization and Motherhood

Many women offenders grew up in poverty, and were brought up by parents or substitutes who had addiction problems or were themselves involved with the justice system (Chesney Lind, 1997; Comack, 1996; Elizabeth Fry Society, 1994; Sommers, 1995; Stanton, 1980; Wine, 1992). Certain patterns from their childhood can also be found in their adulthood. Throughout their adult lives, the majority of women offenders had low socio-economic status, low educational level, experienced physical and sexual abuse (the abusers often being male family members), developed alcohol and/or drug addictions and have psychiatric disorders more often than the general population (Boritch, 1997; Chesney-Lind, 1997; Comack, 1996; Eljdupovic-Guzina, 1999; Johnson & Rodgers, 1993; Laishes, 1997; Shaw et al., 1990).

It has been pointed out that marginalization feeds on itself (Pollock, 1998; Schaffner, Goldberg & Kremen, 1990; Weingarten , 1998), and this is exactly what is seen in the lives of the many of these women. Marginalization refers to one's "... being on the edge of the social mainstream because of a perceived measure of 'difference' or

'deviance' " (Greenspan, 1998, p. 30). It places the person "... outside the boundaries of what is considered acceptable and desirable in a given social context" (Anderson & Mott, 1998). Some women offenders continued to live in a disadvantaged position similar to the one in which they grew up, and they had to face many of the challenges (alcoholism, poverty, abuse) their parents had. If one is growing up in poverty with parents who are facing multiple problems, and hence the child's needs are unmet, then the chances of developing adequate life skills, having access to resources and a "normal" life are quite small (Garcia Coll et al., 1998). For that reason Garcia Coll et al. (1998) identify the dysfunctional and abusive family background of many of these women as one of the sources of their marginalization.

It should be noted, however, that not all women who came into conflict with the law necessarily have these past experiences. Comack (1996) reports that some of the women she interviewed, spoke very warmly about their family and felt very close to their family members. Thus, while the majority of female offenders experienced a developmental background that left them vulnerable to a marginalized adulthood, there is some variability in this experience.

Some feminist literature suggests that the very role of being a mother may be a source of marginalization for many women (Garcia Coll, Surrey & Weingarten, 1998; Purdy, 1997). This perspective maintains that gendered social practices (i.e. gendered division of labor) which traditionally assign women to the private sphere and men to the public sphere, place the former in a disadvantaged position. An extremely powerful mechanism of maintaining this social arrangement involves socializing women (and men)

into gender specific roles. This mechanism leads women to want to mother, have a family and nurture, or in other words, to strive for the roles as assigned to them (Polatnick, 1984).

Given women's socially ascribed mother role and delegation to the private sphere, it is not surprising that most single parent families are in fact mother-headed. However, women's "choice" to remain primary careproviders for their children may considerably affect their socioeconomic position. By the very fact that women are the only care providers, they are limited in terms of available time and energy to invest in education, developing job skills, and so on, which renders them either "jobless" or occupying low-paying positions. This poses further limitations and represents a source of tremendous psychological stress (Atwood & Genovese, 1997; Brown & Moran, 1997; Williams, 1995; Koch et al., 1998; Millar & Glendinning, 1992).

Not only do such women face everyday struggles to make ends meet, but they also have to deal with society's perception of poor and single mothers. Drawing on their clinical practice with the poor, some therapists (e.g. Atwood & Genovese, 1997; Parnell & Vanderkloot, 1994) indicate that one of the dominant narratives that unfolds during the counseling process is that poor women coming from low income families are perceived and approached by others as less valuable and less respectable.² As Weingarten, Surrey, Garcia Coll and Watkins (1998) indicate, the notion of a "good" mother is closely tied to

² This reflects the society's individualist approach to the issues of poverty, considering it to be primarily a private issue and individuals' responsibility. As Parnell and Vanderkloot (1994), note:

The perception of the poor women is that there is a deficit in her psyche that has caused a predicament, which requires outside intervention. Whether her children are in foster care, she is an abused woman, or she needs medication for anxiety, depression, or psychosis, there is something within her that needs to be fixed in order for her to function independently. This

particular childcare arrangements that are associated with standards of the white middle-class. Thus, those mothers who do not have access to the economic, social and community resources that are available to the dominant class are positioned on the margins. Not being able to measure up to the dominant group standards may in some instances be reflected back on the mother's self-perception, and render them feeling inadequate and incapable of providing for their children in the way they "should" (Brown & Moran, 1997; Kazdin Schnitzer, 1998). These self-perceptions that women may develop are associated with the feeling/affective/subjective component of the notion of marginalization which Anderson and Mott (1998) identified as the "...negative feelings that 'actual/objective' marginalization can generate for the individual", and which stem from the individual comparing him/herself with others.

Atwood and Genovese (1997) refer to these experiences as "internalized societal myths". Often women themselves perceive their poverty, distress, lack of education, and other difficulties, as stemming from their own, private and inner faults, rather than as embedded in their social situatedness³. In other words, due to the process of socialization, they perceive and judge themselves through the eyes of the dominant discourse and its values. As a result, many single mothers tend to develop low self-esteem (Ali & Avison, 1997; Brody & Floor, 1997; Brown & Moran, 1997). A woman may experience feelings of not being a good enough mother since she cannot provide for her children as much as she would like to and as much as she is expected to by society, both materially and/or

perception is maintained, despite massive evidence that the social fabric itself is giving way - institutional failure, breakdown of family and community (p. 391).

³ This is the meaning of a feminist perspective that the public and the private are inter-related. One's "private problems," for instance lack of education, are not necessarily a sheer reflection of his/her inner characteristics, but also of his/her social situatedness which is beyond his/her control.

emotionally (Atwood & Genovese, 1997; Kazdin Schnitzer, 1998; Parnel & Vanderkloot, 1994). As Valeska (1984) points out, "how well we do anything directly depends on the economic and social environment in which we do it" (p. 71). Thus, for some women, choosing and wanting to mother (i.e. pursuing the social proscribed role) may drag them even further down the marginalization road both in terms of the decrease in their socioeconomic situation, as well as in terms of the feeling/affective/subjective component associated with marginalization which may lead to decreased feelings of self-worth and adequacy.

Identifying these aspects of mothering that may marginalize women lead many feminists to maintain that motherhood is oppressive for women (Allen, 1984; Moody-Adams, 1997; Purdy, 1997; Valeska, 1984). However, in spite of motherhood being associated with hardship and difficulties, many women pursue this role and continue to mother "against the odds" (Garcia Coll et al, 1998).

In contrast, an alternative feminist perspective on motherhood associates specific values with mothering and claims that there is something "beyond" the burdens related to it. For instance, Whitbeck (1984) believes that specific situations, such as pregnancy, labor and breast feeding allow women to identify with the child and form a unity with him/her that is very unique. These situations create specific bodily experiences associated with women's biological characteristics, which are inaccessible to men. As a result, caring and nurturing are alleged to become values in themselves. These specifically women's values (to nurture and care) are the same as those women are socialized to develop as a part of their gender role. As previously noted, these values were identified by some

feminists to be particularly oppressive for women, since they lead them to want to take a role associated with subordination (i.e. the mother role).

It was beyond the scope of this study to determine whether women nurture and care because they were socialized to value it, or because they derive specific values from it “independently” of their gender socialization. However, stressing the specific values associated with motherhood is of relevance here because it points out the many layers and the complexity of the motherhood issue. It also problematizes its reduction to just oppressive forces. Even if a woman experiences hardship and difficulties related to taking care of children and develops apparently inadequate parenting practices, it does not mean that she does not want to mother and does not derive certain values from the fact that she is a mother. While women from the margins may perceive themselves through the eyes of the dominant discourse, and thus perceive themselves as not measuring up to standards of good mothering, having children may be a value in itself, and as some feminists indicate, mothers from the margins may “resist” this imposed perception and assessment of their mothering (Weingarten et al., 1998). They may develop strategies to maintain their views of themselves as good mothers. “Welfare moms equate managing to put food on the table and a roof over their children’s head with being a good mother” (Weingarten et al., 1998, p. 276).

Clearly an assessment of the role of motherhood in women’s lives cannot be evaluated simply from the perspective of the dominant discourse. The notion that motherhood may be associated with specific end values, and that these may not be consistent with the standards of evaluation that are socially imposed points out the need to

allow women to define their specificities in their own words, and on their own terms. To understand women's experiences, they need to be situated within their own subjectivities and perceptions, that is, their own "... process of interpreting stimuli originating from the external environment" (Faccioli & Simoni, 1992, p. 68).

Women's Lives on the Outside

For most incarcerated women, separation from their children represents a major source of stress and pain and being able to stay in touch with them gives such women a sense of hope (Bloom, 1992; Heney, 1996; Shaw et al., 1990; Wine, 1992). However, at the same time, during incarceration and when they look back on their lives on the outside some women expressed guilt and pain associated with their perception that they were not good mothers to their children (Adelberg & Currie, 1993; Garcia Coll et al., 1998). One source of these feelings is most likely the internalized societal myth, as most of the women lived in difficult socio-economic situations and were not able to fulfill the mother role as prescribed. Not surprisingly, many women offenders are characterized by researchers, that is, outside observers, as unfit mothers (Pollock, 1998), or as Garcia Coll et al. (1998) state "... we have to recognize that the centrality of motherhood in these women's lives doesn't mean that just because they wish to be effective mothers, they automatically [were] are or will be" (p.271).

In many instances characterizing women's parenting prior to incarceration in a negative way, by outside observers as well as by women themselves, was based on the life style that many of these women had prior to incarceration. Thus, Pollock (1998) states that "addiction and criminality are extremely incongruent with good parenting" (p.11).

Other studies also indicate that addiction may be an important factor underlying women offenders' possibly inadequate relationships with children prior to incarceration (Elizabeth Fry Society, 1994; Comack, 1996; Maclean, 1997). Golberg et al. (1997) point out that one of the most serious effects of alcoholism among women, including women offenders, are inappropriate parenting practices which include abuse and neglect of children. Wine (1992) interviewed 211 women offenders who were mothers, and based on their self-reports, noted that 18.8% of women referred to substance abuse problems (either their own or partner's) as causing problems in their relationships with their children. Given that the majority of women offenders manifest some degree of substance abuse problems (Blanchette, 1997; Laishes, 1997; Maclean, 1997), it is surprising that only 18.8% of them identified (reported) addiction as causing problems in their relationship with their child. One reason may be that women were reluctant to give a socially undesirable answer. However, although there could be little disagreement whether prolonged intoxication and substance abuse problems increase the chances of establishing inadequate parenting, it is relevant to keep a couple of other things in mind.

First, most of the aforementioned studies that discussed and evaluated women's parenting practices did not systematically assess them. It is possible that in spite of substance abuse and other difficulties a mother may have had, some aspects of her parenting may not have been necessarily negative and inadequate. Even if parents develop addictions, it does not automatically mean that parenting and the relationship with the child will be affected to the same extent (Steinglass et al., 1987). As Mayes points out, "the presence of substance abuse in an adult may or may not be an indicator that he or she is a dysfunctional parent" (1995, p.101). Nevertheless, specific effects of substance abuse

on parenting represent a topic in itself, and they will not be dealt with in greater detail here. What is relevant for this study is that knowing that a woman had substance abuse problems prior to incarceration, does not in itself provide an understanding of the specific relationship that she may have had with her children, parenting practices she developed, or her perception of herself as a mother. To state it otherwise, without further insight into the context of her parenting, as well as substance abuse, represents just another way of pursuing the individualistic approach to studying one's experiences which locates the problem solely within the individual.

Consistent with this latter point, some studies shed a somewhat different light on parental addiction and subsequent parenting. It was noted that the stresses associated with living in poverty can tremendously affect parents' ability to be attentive to children and respond supportively which can, in some instances, lead to child abuse (Chesney-Lind, 1997; Coulton, Korbin, Su & Chow, 1995; McLeod & Shanahan, 1993; Pelton, 1994; Williams, 1995). Thus, Baumrind states that the "... primary causes and cures of child maltreatment are attributable to social-structural rather than to psychological factors" (1994, 360). Similarly, Williams (1995) points out, "drug or alcohol abuse, child abuse or neglect, and child abandonment are types of maladaptive behaviors that can be exhibited by desperate parents experiencing multiple stresses with which they are unable to cope" (p. 10). Accounts of some women offenders on their mothering on the outside would reflect precisely these struggles. Women who had addiction problems conveyed that they responded to stresses associated with parenting in impoverished and abusive environments by drinking and taking drugs. Their drinking was associated with sedating themselves and/or dealing with pressures and despair. However, they also reported that they felt

guilty about their habit since it often led them to neglect their children. This, in turn, increased the level of stress they felt, and eventually led them to resort to further sedation (addictions). Thus, wanting to pursue the mother role and an inability to handle the pressures and stresses associated with it, may be associated with developing addictions, which in turn creates even more problems in meeting demands of parenting. As Garcia Coll et al. (1998) state, for some women “... drugs might have been used initially as a support in their attempts to function as a mother, but then addiction keeps them from being the mothers they wish to be” (p.265). The longer this vicious circle lasts, the harder it is for the woman to get out of it. She may feel (and likely be) increasingly inadequate in her daily life which would increase her dissatisfaction with herself and guilt feelings. Some studies indicated that some women offenders gave up custody due to the inability to handle the demands of parenting, others lost custody of their children (Goldberg et al., 1997; Hairston, 1991; Shaw et al., 1990), and some made arrangements for the child to reside with someone else for certain periods of time since they were not able to look after him/her (Goldberg et al., 1997). Thus, paradoxically, being in prison may alleviate some of the stresses of day to day parenting demands and facilitate breaking the vicious circle.

Another aspect of their lives that women in Wine’s study identified as a source of difficulty in their relationships with their children prior to incarceration was directly associated with financial difficulties (Wine, 1992)⁴. Some women offenders reported that the pressures of being single mothers and the financial difficulties associated with it, led

⁴ This is consistent with research that suggests that financial difficulties may lead to tremendous psychological stress in parents (Coulton, et al., 1995; McLeod & Shanahan, 1993), which at the same time suggests that this is not a characteristic of women offenders per se.

them to offend, for example, by committing fraud; they felt that they did not have a choice (Caddle & Crisp, 1997; Stanton, 1980; Wine, 1992). Similarly, Johnson and Rodgers (1993) indicated that many women were "... low-income, semi-skilled, sole-support providers for their families" (p 98), and further suggested that there was a direct relationship between women's participation in property offenses and their roles as mothers. Boricht (1997) also pointed out that the majority of women were arrested for property crimes, although she did not specify the extent to which this was related to motherhood obligations.

Furthermore, Bonta et al. (1995) found that single-parent mothers had a significantly higher recidivism rate than did women offenders who were mothers and had a partner. Bonta et al. (1995) did not specify whether women's reoffending was associated with a particular type of offence. Higher recidivism among single mothers might be related with the stresses women face in relation to economic and social pressures that single parent (mother headed) families have to face, given that getting in conflict with law may represent their way of dealing with economic difficulties.

Paradoxically, it may be that doing something "bad" was a way for these women to maintain the model and the standard of a good mother, and alleviate the stresses surrounding their inability to provide for their children as they should. As one of Wine's (1992) respondents stated "most women are not hardened criminals but are just caught up in the circumstances of their lives" (p.34). As descriptions of the lives of some of these women indicate, they had close relationships with their children, with a prosocial and stable life style (Stanton, 1980; Wine, 1992). In the case of these women, Pollock's

(1998) statement that criminality is incongruent with good parenting becomes problematic and hardly applicable, and there is no reason to assume that their parenting would differ from that of non-offending women.

Abuse has been identified as another source of difficulty in the relationship with their children that women expressed (Wine, 1992). One third (31.2%) of women stated that abuse created problems in their relationships with children prior to incarceration. This was referring to situations in which the mother or the child was abused by her partner, or the child witnessed the mother being abused by her partner. In all instances the partner was the abuser.

Engaging in abusive relationships could be associated with financial strains, and the fact that single parent families are at a greater economic disadvantage than two parent families (Bianchi, 1995). This led Boritch (1997) to point out that women's economic dependency renders them vulnerable to violence. Women offenders' own accounts indicate that financial difficulties were the basis for enduring abusive relationships, in that, they needed to provide shelter and food for their children, and did not feel that they could make it on their own (Addleberg & Currie, 1993; Elizabeth Fry Society, 1994). Thus, it does not necessarily mean that a woman who exposes her children to a problematic environment, does not care for the children and that mothering is not important to her. To the contrary, it may reflect a coping response to the demands of mothering. Although the mother's abusive relationship with the partner may negatively affect her relationship with her children, her perception of herself as a mother may, nevertheless, stay fairly positive as

she may see herself as someone who is doing everything she possibly can for her child (e.g. the child has a father, their financial situation is better, etc.).

Once again, knowing that the child was abused by the father or mother's partner does not allow direct inferences regarding the relationship with the child that the mother may have established. Past research suggests that the mother-child relationships under these circumstances could be twofold. Herman (1992) indicates that the abused child could be resentful and distant from the non-abusive parent (mother) since this parent is perceived as not helping the child. This in turn may create difficulties in the mother-child relationship. Furthermore, abusive relationships may render a woman weak, vulnerable and decrease her self-esteem and sense of control over her life (Herman, 1992; Miller et al., 1993; Morrow & Smith, 1995), which could in itself decrease her ability to respond to her children's needs. On the other hand, Lovett (1994) showed that some girls who had been sexually abused by their fathers developed warm and accepting relationship with their mothers. Thus, knowing that the child was exposed to an abusive environment, and in spite of the mother identifying this as a source of difficulty in their relationship, the mother-child relationship under these circumstances and the ways in which she parented her children, may vary tremendously. Women who engaged in abusive relationships and whose children were exposed to it, may have parented their children differently and developed relationships that range from distant and inadequate to warm and close ones.

Without denying that parental substance abuse or abusive relationships may negatively affect the child, it is not a sufficient reason to automatically generalize and rely on this in order to indirectly evaluate the quality of the mother-child relationship. Such an

approach ignores that there may be variations in the mother-child relationship and parenting practices the mother may utilize. Indeed, some women themselves, as reported in Wine's study (1992), identified their parenting as bad due to their substance abuse. However, it is a rather generalized statement that does not shed light on more specific aspects of their relationship with their children. Thus, although their parenting was not close to the ideal one, there could have been a whole range of issues relevant to their relationships with their children. Second, assuming that women were inadequate mothers because of their substance abuse or engaging in abusive relationships, also ignores women's own specificities. It does not provide understanding of women's own perception on how they parented their child under these circumstances, why and what it meant to them.

Internal Models and Adequate Parenting

It is important to examine the parenting resources or the range of parenting skills women bring from the past into the situation of incarceration given that their previous parenting style may "mediate" or shape their relationship with children during imprisonment. The more inadequate and "impaired" they are, the more likely it is that the mother-child relationship during incarceration will be less satisfying. The parenting resources that women have and bring into the situation of incarceration, include not only those practices that they established with their own children prior to incarceration, but also the ones they were exposed to during their own growing up. An aspect of women's family inheritance that is of particular relevance for this study is the "internal working model" that women may have acquired during their formative years. These models refer

to the “mental representation of ... childhood experiences...” (Jenner & McCarthy, 1995) that may represent a guideline according to which one may parent his/her own children.

Many women offenders come from impoverished and inadequate family backgrounds. Their family “inheritance” may have positioned them, at the very onset of meeting the demands of adulthood and mothering, in a more disadvantaged position (Garcia Coll et al., 1998). In particular, when dealing with the stresses associated with being marginalized, these women may adopt coping strategies that they are familiar with and that they have learned during their own growing up.

It is this aspect of family inheritance that Garcia Coll et al. (1998) drew attention to when stating that many incarcerated mothers, in dealing with issues related to being separated from their children, may have to face the lack of these internal resources which could “... otherwise support their mothering role” (p. 263). If they were poorly parented, then their internal model (relating to children) is most likely affected by it and it cannot provide women with experiences and knowledge that they may fall back on during incarceration, and in trying to maintain ties with their children.

What seems to be problematic with this point of view is that it leads us to assume that, if women lived in a disadvantaged family environment, then these internal resources are inevitably weak or lacking. As previously argued, knowing that one grew up in a family which was in some way marginal does not represent a sufficient argument that the person was exclusively exposed to inadequate parenting. This further suggests that it may not have inevitably rendered her/him as lacking internal resources.

The way in which these circumstance affect women's parenting and relationship with her own children is not clear, nor is there reason to believe that it may be uniform. As previously argued, in spite of an abusive environment, women's relationships with children may have ranged from close and warm ones, to resentment and distance. The same could be said for women's own growing up experiences and relationships with their mothers/parental figures. This further suggests that in some instances, even if women experienced abuse, the internal model of parenting that they may have acquired may also encompass aspects of positive and warm relationships with another parental figure. This may represent a source of strength in women's own parenting endeavors, and not necessarily a source of marginalization (Garcia Coll et al., 1998).

Moreover, studies (Adelberg & Currie, 1993; Elizabeth Fry Society, 1994) show that some women offenders reported that precisely because they experienced an abusive relationship with parents, they tried hard not to repeat the same pattern with their own children and expose them to these experiences. If they were determined not to repeat the parenting they received, this implies that the received parenting, or the mother model women grew up with may represent a point of reference in their own perception and assessment of themselves as mothers. Thus, it is possible that when assessing their own relationships with children and their perception of themselves as mothers, they measured them in relation to the parenting styles and models they were familiar with, which were precisely the ones they received as children. In that case, if women were exposed to a situation of severe abuse and neglect in their families of origin (Chesney-Lind, 1997; Comack, 1996; Elizabeth Fry Society, 1994; Eljdupovic-Guzina, 1999; Heney, 1996; Shaw et al., 1990), their own possibly inadequate parenting (for instance periodic neglect

of children due to addiction problems) may, from their own perspective, still seem better than what they experienced as children. Thus, they may perceive themselves as better mothers than the maternal/parental figure they are familiar with from their own childhood. However, from the observer's perspective, they may be assessed as inadequate and as bad mothers.

A closer look at Weingarten's statement that "welfare moms equate managing to put food on the table and a roof over their children's heads with being a good mother" (1998, p.276) suggests another point of reference on which women may base their self-perceptions as mothers. It could be called the "affordance" of the situation women were in. Compared to what their situation allowed them to do, rather than in comparison to some general mainstream middle-class norm, women may feel that they did the best they could.. Further, as previously argued, for some women being with an abusive partner may result in their self-perception of themselves as good or better mothers than if they were single with considerable financial difficulties. However, women's reference points are not clear and need to be explored. Stressing women's possible points of reference is important since it clearly shows that a woman's self-perception as a mother and the parenting she may establish with her child (as assessed from the outside observer's perspective), may be two separate things and they may not necessarily correspond.

So far, the context and the various aspects of women's lives before incarceration that they bring into the situation of incarceration have been discussed in order to understand the background of their lives before incarceration and where they were coming from. Thus, it has been argued that substance abuse, abusive relationships and other aspects which characterized their lives and were associated with poor parenting (from the

outsider's perspective as well as in some cases, women's) requires a closer look. It was argued that even with the "same" circumstances (abuse, etc.), the mother-child relationship and her parenting of her children could vary and its implications should therefore not be generalized.

Incarceration and Mothering

It is reasonable to expect that the experiences that a woman brings into incarceration, together with the new circumstances that they are facing, affect their mothering during incarceration, relationships with her children, and how she feels about herself. One of the main concerns that evoked painful emotions in women who have been incarcerated was the need to be closer to their children and have an opportunity to stay in touch with them (Bloom, 1992; Hairston, 1991; Heney, 1996; Pollock, 1998; Shaw et al., 1990). Several studies identified separation from children as one of the central problems and source of depression for women during their incarceration (Hairston, 1991; Heney, 1996; Shaw et al. 1990, Caddle & Crisp, 1997; Wine, 1992; Woodrow, 1992). Not being able to see their children and maintain contact with them represented a source of tremendous pain. For some women, knowing that they have children on the outside, gave a sense of hope and something to hold on to.

Facilities being located in remote areas and distant from women's homes were identified as the main reason for less frequent visits with children (Bloom, 1992; Shaw et al., 1990). Until fairly recently, most of the federally sentenced women in Canada resided in the Prison for Women in Kingston, which meant that they were geographically far from their homes which often, due to limited financial means or other logistical difficulties,

precluded them from having more frequent visits (Heney, 1996; Shaw et al., 1990). As a response to these issues, Correctional Services of Canada established community-like regional facilities for federally incarcerated women to allow women to be closer to home and/or children. However, to date, there have not been any studies exploring whether this has affected, and in what way, the mother-child contact.

Although it has been argued that women's depression during incarceration is associated with being separated from their children (Hairston, 1991; Heney, 1996; Shaw et al., 1990; Wine, 1992), whether and in what way maintaining contact with their children, in fact decreases mothers' depression during incarceration and gives them hope has not been explored. Based on the previous considerations of women's lives on the outside and theoretical considerations of motherhood, it is important to recognize that mothering is complex and multi-dimensional and that its various aspects may have different outcomes. There is no reason to assume that all women want contact with their children, nor that those who do have contact feel positively about it and are automatically less depressed. Furthermore, if the mother and the child have contact, it does not necessarily follow that they will be able to establish a satisfactory and positive relationship. Even if a mother has regular and positive contact with the child during incarceration, she may nevertheless feel negatively about herself as a mother, which may lead to depression. As previously noted in the general consideration of motherhood issues, an inadequate relationship with a child, does not mean necessarily that the woman's self-perception of herself as a mother will be negative, and vice versa. Keeping this in mind, it is legitimate to ask whether it is the very contact with the child that decreases mother's depression and gives her a sense of hope during incarceration, or perhaps it is not so much the contact per se, but the extent to

which the mother and the child manage to have a good relationship and/or the extent to which she feels positively about herself as a mother.

Shaw et al. (1990) found that in spite of the majority of women wanting to stay in touch with their children, there were women who did not express a need to maintain contact with their children and family (Shaw et al., 1990). Since the main purpose of Shaw et al.'s survey was to identify issues that were of particular relevance for women offenders, it did not focus specifically on motherhood. For that reason, Shaw et al. (1990) do not elaborate on the underling reasons for women's choice regarding their children and which factors underlie the strong need in some women to be in close touch with their children, and not in others. It is possible that some women may not be invested in the mother role and mother identity, and that they may not have been invested in this role prior to incarceration as well. However, other women indicated that the reason for not maintaining contact with their children was that the visits created too much pain.

In some cases, if the mother already had difficulties with parenting, as well as if her internal model of parenting was "weak", during incarceration she is left with very limited resources (knowledge) to interact and communicate with a child in a positive way. Although her need to maintain contact with her children may be strong, her ability to find the "right" way to talk to her children, write a letter, etc. may be poor. This combined with multiple obstacles associated with incarceration may result in a failure to establish a satisfying relationship with her children and eventual cessation of the contact, which in turn may negatively affect woman's self-perception of herself as a mother. Thus, the pain associated with meeting with children during incarceration and the subsequent decision not to see children that Shaw et al. (1990) reported may be accounted for primarily by the

weak parenting resources that the woman brought into the situation of incarceration. If so, it is most likely that some of these women would benefit the most from “working on themselves” by taking various programs (for instance, on parenting, substance abuse, abusive relations, etc.)⁵ that are currently offered at all federal regional facilities for women offenders in Canada. Acquiring certain skills and knowledge may lead to talking to their children in a different way.

Another factor that may lead to the absence of contact with the child may not be related to the way the mother establishes contact with her child, but rather, may stem from a woman’s perception of her current situation. Many studies noted that prison was perceived by women as an unacceptable place to bring children, and given the stigma and shame associated with being a prisoner some mothers could not bear the thought that their children would see them in prison (Hairstone, 1991; Maclean, 1997; Moyer, 1993; Wine, 1992). In that case, it is a woman’s experience of prison and not the lack of her parenting skills that may affect the mother-child contact.

Women’s experiences of incarceration may range from perceiving it as a “shelter”, to feelings of a loss of control of their own lives (Arbour, 1996; Garcia Coll et. al., 1998; Heney, 1996; Wine, 1992). By being incarcerated, women are removed from abusive relationships, stresses of unemployment, poverty, inadequate peer relationships, severe substance abuse and other difficulties to which they might have been exposed on the outside. Thus, Pollock (1998) suggests that although many women may miss their children during incarceration, they are also relieved from the burden of having to care for them on the daily basis. As Garcia Coll et al. (1998) indicate, incarceration for some

⁵ As previously mentioned, many women voiced a need for such programs in the past (Shaw et al., 1990)

women means "... being free of alcohol and drugs, being 'clean' and having time on their hands has given them an opportunity to reflect on their own mistakes around mothering and their past limitations" (p. 269). Thus, paradoxically, while being inside, they may face fewer stressors which could set the stage for a better relationship with children.

In line with this, Maclean (1997) found that some incarcerated women, in spite of finding it important that they were mothers, opted not to contact their children during incarceration since they felt that first, they needed to work on other issues such as addiction, abuse experiences, and mental health problems. Knowing that they had children out there, and that they were currently working on making things better for both sides, gave such women a sense of hope. Thus, in some instances, the importance of being a mother and having children on the outside may not be necessarily reflected in having contact with children during this period. Many women stated that what gave them hope and kept them going during the period of incarceration was that they were mothers and had children to go back to (Adelberg & Currie, 1993; Garcia Col, Surrey et al., 1998; Wine, 1992).

If some women were not satisfied with their mother performance prior to incarceration, then it is possible that giving priority to dealing with specific personal issues first and taking control over their lives, may in turn positively contribute to their self-perceptions as mothers. Thus, working on various issues (e.g. being "clean," off drugs and alcohol) may in fact increase woman's self-perception of herself as a mother as she may feel that she is working on becoming a better mother regardless of whether she is in actual contact with children during incarceration. Perhaps these factors clarify the curious

finding in Wine's study (1992) that some women (9.4%) reported that their self-perception as mothers improved during incarceration.

There are other factors that may affect women's contact with their children during incarceration, and the effects of this contact. Past research has suggested that during mothers' incarceration, in the majority of cases, children were looked after grandparents or grandmothers (Bloom, 1992; Shaw et al., 1990), were placed in foster homes, or were looked after by the mother's friends (Shaw et al., 1990). Given that a woman depends on the careprovider to bring the child to the institution to visit and assist in maintaining contact, it is clear that the quality of mother's relationship with the careprovider is of great importance. Although there are not any systematic data on this, anecdotal evidence documented by Shaw et al. (1990) suggests that the relationship with the child's careprovider may strongly affect the number of contacts that the woman may have with her child, or whether she has contact with the child at all. Shaw et al. (1990) gave an example of foster parents who had a positive relationship with the mother and were willing to bring the child to the facility very frequently, whereas others felt that prison was not an appropriate place for the child to be. In another case that Shaw et al. (1990) reported, a woman was not able to establish a good communication with the foster parent, and this affected her ability to maintain contact with the child.

Although it could be expected that it may be easier for a woman to contact and communicate with a careprovider who was a family member, they too may have different perspectives on bringing the child to prison, which may consequently affect woman's maintaining contact with her children. Thus, Shaw et al. (1990) reported cases in which the father refused to allow contact between the mother and the child during the mother's

incarceration, since he perceived prison as an inadequate place for a child. Thus, to understand the factors that affect mother-child contact during her incarceration, issues regarding the childcare arrangements, and possible obstacles and limitations that a mother may encounter need to be considered.

However, even if a mother is able to communicate with child's careprovider and arrange visits, it may not necessarily mean that she is comfortable with the childcare arrangement. Bloom (1990) reports that a majority of the caregivers had to go through financial and emotional adjustments due to caring for the child during his/her mother's incarceration. She further indicates that this often resulted in the child experiencing inadequate care due to poverty. Furthermore, given that majority of the careproviders were children's grandparents, these people often have to deal with difficulties related to their own health and age, which may affect the quality of care provided for children. Thus, the circumstances under which their children are looked after may negatively affect women's self-perceptions of themselves as mothers, despite having contact with the child. The mother may have to live with a constant sense of profound dissatisfaction and concern about her child's everyday needs and well-being, which may in turn lead her to feel guilty and distressed about not being there for her child.

Along similar lines, Chesney-Lind (1997) noted that most of these women grew up in dysfunctional families and yet, very often, it is this same family and its members that represent the only support that women have. The woman's parents are often those who look after their children, even though some of them may have been the woman's abusers during her childhood. If so, knowing that their own child may be exposed to similar

experiences they have had as children may have a strong impact on women's distress and pain associated with being separated from their children. Similarly, for those women who grew up in foster homes and experienced abuse, knowing that their own children reside with foster parents may represent a source of tremendous fear, pain and despair, given that their children may be also abused and they are not able to protect them. Thus, although the mother may maintain regular contact with the child, her self-perception as a mother may be negative due to her concern for the child's well-being.

In conclusion, analysis of the research on motherhood issues in women offenders during incarceration suggests that mothering is of great importance for the vast majority of women. Many women reported feelings of depression associated with separation from their children. The importance for women to maintain contact with their children was recognized and Correctional Services of Canada took certain steps to facilitate this by building community-like institutions situated in all regions which made them closer to women's homes (children). However, while most of the studies conducted so far provided detailed descriptions of women's accounts, they did not always explore the actual relationships and associations between certain aspects of women's lives that they reported on. For instance, facilitating women's ability to maintain contact with their children likely reflects an assumption that this will be good for them and increase their sense of hope.

However, mothering and motherhood are complex issues, and therefore, it has been argued in the present study that contact per se may not necessarily be the most important factor that will automatically positively affect mothers' well-being, lead to her sense of

hope and decrease her depression. Rather, it is the quality of the relationship with the child, in the case of those mothers who maintain contact with their children, and woman's self-perception of herself as a mother, that were expected to have a strong association with women's well-being or sense of hope. Clearly, maintaining contact with the child during incarceration per se does not necessarily mean that the mother-child relationship is strong and positive, and that the mother feels positively about herself. Rather, it is the quality of the relationship she and her child establish and her self-perception of herself as a mother that likely lead her to be more or less depressed and to have a lesser or greater sense of hope. Further, a woman may have little or no contact with her child and nevertheless have a positive self-perception of herself as a mother, since her child is well-looked after and she is using her time in prison to deal with her addiction, improve parenting skills or increase her level of education, which will enable her and her child to have a more stable life on the outside. Although inseparable, these aspects of mothering, the relationship and mother's self-perception, may be accounted for by different factors. Some of them stem from the previous mother-child relationship and some from women's current circumstances, such as their experience of incarceration and the childcare arrangements they have for their children while they are incarcerated.

The Present Study

The goal of the present study was to explore the mother-child relationship during mother's incarceration. Studies (Bloom, 1992; Hairston, 1992; Heney, 1996; Shaw et al., 1990; Wine, 1992) indicate that it is of great importance for many incarcerated women to maintain contact with their children while separated and that it gives them a sense of hope for the future. Pollock (1998) showed that children often present the best motivation for change in incarcerated women. Furthermore, maintaining family ties during incarceration was considered to be of great relevance for women's successful reintegration upon release (Correctional Service of Canada, 1995; Pollock, 1998). Thus it is important to assess the nature of women's contact with their children such as the quality of their relationship with their children, and their self-perceptions as mothers.

However, it has been also noted that mother's incarceration may often "trigger" breaking the ties between the mother and the child(ren) (Pollock, 1998; Hairston, 1991). Intuition may suggest that this breakdown is more likely to come from women whose experiences of motherhood prior to incarceration were often associated with hardship (Chesney-Lind, 1997; Elizabeth Fry Society, 1994; Wine, 1992). From the outside observer's perspective some of these women's parenting practices were inadequate and some women themselves share this view on their parenting (Adelberg & Currie, 1993; Garcia Coll et al., 1998). However, women's difficulties prior to incarceration do not map directly onto their decisions to maintain contact with their children. Unless women are able to provide their own explanations in their own voices, assumptions stemming from dominant group values may be incorrectly applied.

Furthermore, it is not only a question of whether the mother maintains contact with the child, as this does not necessarily and automatically mean that the quality of their relationship and her self-perception of herself as a mother are satisfactory, nor that the mother is less depressed and more hopeful if she is in contact with her child. Even among women who maintain contact with their children, the effects of this contact may be moderated by many factors including their own past experiences with children, and the issues they face during incarceration.

Past experiences, in the present study, primarily refer to the parenting practices women employed with their children prior to incarceration. To understand a woman's parenting practice it was important to situate it within its context. For that reason this study explored the extent to which parenting practices were associated with and affected by the mothers' social situatedness. In particular, the more severe women's substance abuse was and the more affected other areas of their lives were (employment, living arrangements, engagement in abusive relationship, etc.), the more likely it was that this would negatively affect her parenting style and be perceived as negative from the outside. However, it does not necessarily mean that it will be perceived the same way by the woman herself.

The notion of parenting styles merits a brief mention here. In the literature, "good," "adequate" or "high-quality" parenting is considered to be the parenting practice that research identified as associated with child's psychosocial competencies or with "what constitutes child's optimal outcomes" in Baumrind's words (1996, p.405). They are defined as "... aggregates or constellations of behaviors that describe parent-child interaction over a wide range of situations ..." (Hart, Nelson, Robinson, Frost Olsen &

McNeilly-Choque. 1998, p.2). Styles of parenting that have been widely studied in the literature are authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive (Baumrind, 1996, 1994, 1993; Robinson, Mandlco et al., 1995). Authoritative parenting is characterized by democratic rules and parental warmth and involvement. Baumrind's longitudinal studies show that an authoritative practice was associated with optimal outcomes in children at different stages of their development, namely, preschool, school age and early adolescence (1996). It has been associated with children's psychosocial maturity, responsible independence, and cooperation with peers and adults (Robinson et al. 1995). Based on these findings, the present study referred to the authoritative parenting practice as the adequate or the more positive parenting practice. It is noteworthy that the participants in studies that showed that the authoritative parenting practice was the most adequate one were predominantly white, middle-class families, as Baumrind (1994) pointed out herself. This introduces caution in considering this type of parenting practice to universally be the best one. However, based on some of her research, Baumrind (1993) also indicated that children from different sociocultural niches with parents who were authoritative were similarly well-adjusted and competent. Thus, as much as it is important to keep in mind that the meaning of good parenting is relative and socio-culturally grounded it does not mean that it is an exclusive characteristic of middle-class parents and that it is not applicable or present in other family structures.

Parenting styles women may have developed prior to incarceration were expected to affect their relationship with children during this period, given that they represent ways in which women relate and communicate to their children. The more positive, close and adequate relationship she had with the child on the outside, the more likely it was that, due

to having these skills the mother would be able to establish similar ones during incarceration. More specifically, the more she used authoritative parenting practices, that is, warmth and involvement in her child's life, reasoning and democratic rules in communicating to her child, the more likely these skills might have facilitated establishing a satisfactory relationship with the child during incarceration as well.

The primary issues a woman may face during incarceration that may affect the nature of her relationship with the child and its effects on her own self-perceptions and sense of hope include her ability to take control of personal issues, and how they feel about the childcare arrangements they have during this period. Knowing that, in spite of many obstacles and separation, she has a positive relationship with her child may "keep her going" during this period and give her a sense of hope. Furthermore, taking control over her life during this period, may result in learning new skills which will allow the mother to relate to her children in a different way and establish a positive relationship with them. She may feel more positive about herself as a mother since she is "working on herself" and therefore has a sense that things will be better in the future.

Two components of childcare arrangement during mothers' incarceration have been identified: the communication and assistance women have with their children's careprovider, and their perception of children's well-being and safety at the careprovider's home. The frequency of mother-child contact may be significantly affected by the childcare arrangement mothers have during incarceration. More specifically, if a mother establishes an adequate communication with her child's careprovider and if this person is assisting the mother to maintain contact with her child, then the mother-child contacts will most likely be more frequent. Further, the more concerns she has about her child's well-

being and safety during his/her residing with the careprovider, the more likely it is that she would perceive herself as a mother in a negative way. Another factor that may affect the frequency of contact is the extent to which the mother perceives the facility as an adequate place for the child to come and visit, know where his/her mother resides, and so on.

In summary, this study examined the moderating effects of women's parenting prior to incarceration and their experiences of incarceration and childcare arrangements during this period on their contacts with children, satisfaction with the established relationship and self-perception as mothers. It also explored the effects of these various aspects of mothering during incarceration on women's sense of hope during this period. Based on theoretical considerations and past research, the following were expected:

- The more observed indicators of inadequate parenting the more likely it was that a woman came from socially marginal circumstances.
- If mother's incarceration experience, parenting style and satisfaction with childcare were positive, then the relationship between the child and mother, as well as her self-perceptions would also be more positive.
- An interactive effect between parenting skills and incarceration experience. If the incarceration experience was more positive, women whose parenting skills were weak prior to incarceration would indicate a higher quality of relationship with their children and more positive self-perceptions as mothers.
- The more positive a woman's self-perception of herself as a mother and the more satisfactory her relationship with her child during incarceration, the greater her sense of hope.

To assess these expectations, three studies were conducted. The first study used archival data and its main goal was to examine the relationship between perceived inadequate parenting and mothers' marginalization. The second study was based on questionnaires and it assessed relationships between various aspects of mothering, incarceration and hopelessness. The third study was exploratory in nature and its purpose was to highlight women's own construal of mothering and their circumstances. It was based on open-ended interviews in order to allow mothers to express their perceptions in their own words.

Study 1

Relationship Between Indicators of Marginalization and Perceived Parenting

The purpose of this first study was to explore whether women's social marginalization was associated with indicators of inadequate parenting skills. This relationship is often assumed from the dominant group's perspective, which not only stigmatizes and marginalizes individuals on the basis of such factors as socioeconomic status, but this perspective also evaluates the capacity of such individuals to appropriately raise children on the basis of their own, that is dominant group's, social context. It was hypothesized that based on such views women who were, from the outsider's perspective, evaluated as having better parenting skills would be more likely to maintain contact with their children during incarceration.

This study was based on data extracted from the automated database at Correctional Services of Canada. More specifically, a part of an instrument called Offender Intake Assessment (OIA) was used. This evaluation tool has been applied in all regional centers under Correctional Services Canada since 1994. It is applied to every offender to evaluate relevant domains of offenders' lives, such as: employment history, family relations, social interactions, community functioning and so on. Each domain is defined by specific areas or the so called "principal components," which are further operationalized by a number of indicators or yes/no items. Assessment is done by correctional officers immediately upon offenders' incarceration, and it is based on the interview with the offender as well as relevant individuals from the community. Based on the collected data, the officer fills out the OIA, by recording which indicators of each of the domains apply to the offender. For instance, depending of whether or not it applies to

the offender, the officer would chose “yes” or “no” to the following question or indicator of the employment domain: “Has no employment history?” The greater the number of indicators that apply to the offender, the greater difficulties he or she is considered to have in that domain. This assessment is then used to determine offender’s institutional placement and correctional plan (Motiuk, 1997).

In the present study these data were primarily used to explore the notion of marginalization in relation to parenting. The definition of marginalization as used in this study was that it represents one’s “...being on the edge of the social mainstream because of a perceived measure of ‘difference’ or ‘deviance’” (Greenspan, 1998, p.30). OIA indicators were used as a measure of marginalization as they seemed to reflect well the given definition. It is the outside observer (e.g. correctional officer) who decides whether or not certain characteristics (indicators) apply to the offender and her life circumstances. Second, the number of indicators for each domain shows the extent to which the offender “deviates” from the norm, or from an “average” normal person. Thus, those who get 0 or 1 point on a substance abuse domain, do not seem to be “sticking out” nor are they considered to function differently than an average person in this domain. Conversely, a greater number of indicators points out that the offender deviates from a norm, has difficulties in that domain and therefore needs to be changed. For that reason, that particular domain is included in their correctional plan.

The quality of the OIA information is narrow and restricted for the purposes of this study. The limited nature of the data is not surprising due to couple of reasons. First, the measures were designed and tailored to the male offender population and it is therefore likely that certain aspects that are relevant for women were not captured.

Second, these measures were not specifically designed to tap into variables of interest for the present study, but rather to assist in developing offenders' correctional plans. They focus only on the offenders' weaknesses (i.e. needs), or the "extreme" that needs to be treated. As such, the data focus on the "end of the scale" (of the, for instance, inadequate parenting or drinking habits), rather than on the entire continuum of the behaviour that was assessed. Nevertheless, they were used in this study in order to maximize the sample size, given that the entire population of federally incarcerated women is fairly small (around 350), and also given that this study is exploratory in nature.

Thus, the purpose of this study was to "capture" and examine outsiders' evaluation of women offenders' as mothers. More specifically, the relationship between women's functioning, or deviance from the norms in various domains and whether or not these women were perceived as inadequate mothers from the outside "objective" point of view was explored.

Method

Participants

The Offender Intake Assessment files of federally incarcerated women who were mothers were reviewed ($N=140$). Their characteristics are presented in Table 1 below. Their ages ranged from 20 to 49 ($M=32.16$, $SD=6.66$). The largest group of women were white, but over half were either Aboriginal or Black. They were serving their sentences in federal regional institutions across Canada. The number of children women had varied from one to eight; the majority having one, two or three.

Table 1
Characteristics of Participants (N=140)

Characteristic	N	%
Age		
19	0	0
20 – 25	25	18
26 – 30	35	25
31-35	36	26
36-40	26	19
41 and up	18	12
Number of children		
1	35	25
2	35	25
3 or 4	53	38
5 or 6	14	10
7 or more	3	2
Race		
White	61	43
Aboriginal	36	26
Black	32	23
Other	11	8

Measures

Marginalization. This was assessed using one part of the OIA called Case Needs Identification and Analysis. Case needs are defined as "... risk factors that can be addressed through appropriate programs or treatment" or those aspects of offenders' lives that are associated with criminal behaviour and that can be changed (Correctional Services of Canada, 1996, p.13). The Case Needs component consists of seven domains, each of which is characterized by principal components that consist of a number of indicators that tap into specific areas of each domain. Each indicator represents a yes-no item. "Yes" indicates that, based on the interview with the offender and other information, the correctional officers finds that the indicator applies to the offender. The greater the number of indicators from a particular domain that apply to the offender, the

greater her marginalization in this specific domain may be. Thus, each domain could be considered to represent an interval scale.

The following domains were used to assess marginalization: employment status, associates/social interaction, substance abuse, community functioning, personal/emotional orientation domains, as well as indicators that belong to two principal components of the marital/family domain, that is, the family background and marital relations (see Appendix A). Employment consists of principal components that tap into one's ability, work history (e.g. "Has an unstable job history?"), and so on. The range of values may be from 0 to 35. Associates/social interaction refer to one's interpersonal relationships and friends (e.g. "Has mostly criminal friends?"), and the range of values on this domain may be from 0 to 11. Substance abuse refers to alcohol and drug abuse (e.g. "Uses drugs on the regular basis?"), and the range of values for this scale may be from 0 to 29. Community functioning consists of couple of principal components that tap into one's living accommodation (e.g. "Has unstable accommodation?"), budgeting, leisure, etc., with the range of values from 0 to 21. Personal/emotional domain taps into one's cognition (e.g. "Unaware of consequences?"), behavior, mental health, etc. with the range of possible values from 0 to 53. The two principal components of the marital family domain are family background with the value range from 0 to 10 and marital relations with the value range from 0 to 8. The former refers to one's family of origin or the growing up environment (e.g. "Parents' relationship dysfunctional during childhood?"), and the latter to offender's marital or common law relationships (for instance, "Has been married/common law in the past?")

As previously discussed, this instrument was designed to assist in developing offenders' correctional plans. Thus, validity of this instrument was assessed in this light, that is, based on the needs of Correctional Services of Canada. For instance, Motiuk (1997) compared as a global measure, the need level rating (which can range from low to high) assigned to an offender by a correctional officer, with the number of OIA indicators that were assigned to him/her in each specific domain. Motiuk (1997) reports a positive correlation between the level of need for each domain, and the number of indicators identified as applicable to the offender. In other words, the more indicators in a specific domain, the higher the need for change (i.e. the more marginal the person is in that specific domain).

In the present study, reliability was assessed by calculating Cronbach's alphas for each domain. Internal consistency of the scales were as follows: Associates/social interaction .51; Substance abuse, alpha .96; Community functioning, .60; Personal/emotional domain, .90, Marital relations, .63 and Family background, .78. It is noteworthy, that fairly low alphas for Associates/social interaction and Community functioning domains did not increase if some items were deleted. For that reason, all items on these (and other) domains were maintained.

Parenting practices. Women's parenting prior to incarceration was assessed by a principal component of the marital/family domain of the OIA referring to women's parenting responsibility (see Appendix A). This principal component consists of 9 indicators, thus the range of possible values was from 0 to 9. The greater the number of indicators, the more inadequate parenting skills were defined to be. In this study, Cronbach's alpha for this component was .80.

Contact with the child during incarceration. Whether the mother and the child had contact during incarceration was determined based on reviews of the comment sections that accompanied each domain of the OIA. These comment sections are narratives that provide additional information regarding offenders. However, these comment sections are not highly structured and there is no specific procedure in place as to what exactly the interviewer should enter in these areas. For that reason, not all reviewed files contained the information of interest. Thus, only those files in which this information was clearly provided were included in the relevant analyses; this resulted in final sample of 49 files.⁶ The decrease in number of files that contained information on the contact during incarceration may also be due to the fact that OIA are done at the time of offenders entering the institution. Thus, it is possible that in the case of many women, not enough time had passed between onset of incarceration and the OIA interview to allow assessment of their contact with children.

Results

Predicting perceived adequate parenting. In order to test the relationship between marginalization and parenting a logistic regression was performed on the full sample. Although all variables were continuous, multiple regression was not used given that its assumptions were not met. Inspection of frequency distributions indicated that the outcome variable (perceived adequate parenting) and one of the predictors (substance abuse), were significantly positively skewed. For that reason these two variables were

⁶ There is no reason to believe that certain underlying factors or systematic biases determined whether this information was reported.

converted into categorical ones. The outcome variable consisted of 2 categories: perceived adequate parenting referred to those mothers who had no indicators of inadequate parenting whereas the second category, inadequate parenting, included those who had one or more indicators. Similarly, participants who did not have any indicators in the substance abuse domain were categorized as no substance abuse, and those who had one or more were in the category reflecting at least some abuse.

Logistic regression was conducted given that it is designed for predicting a discrete variable with continuous and/or discrete predictors. It is a flexible method with no specific assumptions regarding the distribution of predictors, such as linearity, normality and equal variance (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). However, given that a goodness-of-fit test was used in this study, expected cell frequencies for the discrete variables were evaluated. The assumptions that all expected frequencies are greater than 1 and no more than 20% are less than 5, were met.

Table 2
Logistic Regression Predicting Perceived Adequate Parenting

Variable	β	SE	Odds ration	Wald
Substance abuse	0.03	.52	1.03	0.00
Family background	0.05	.10	1.05	0.25
Employment	0.09	.07	1.09	1.79
Personal/emot. Orient.	0.22	.05	1.24	19.52**
Marital relations	-0.11	.14	0.90	0.62
Community funct.	-0.08	.11	0.92	0.60
Associates/social inter.	0.22	.12	1.24	3.37

** p< .001

A test of the full model with all predictors against a constant-only model was statistically reliable, $\chi^2 (7) = 59.68$, $p < .001$, indicating that the predictors as a set,

reliably distinguished between mothers who were perceived to have adequate parenting skills and those who were not. The success rate of prediction or the overall correct classification rate was 82.14 %. As shown in Table 2, Wald criterion showed that only personal/emotional orientation reliably predicted perceived adequacy of parenting. In other words, the odds ratio suggests that for one unit increase in personal/emotional domain, the mother is 1.24 times (or 76%) more likely to be assessed as an inadequate parent. Contrary to expectations, other predictors did not have significant unique contributions when entered last in the equation. The reason for this may be that most of the intercorrelations between predictor variables were significant. As indicated on Table 3 they ranged from .17 to .53. In particular, all predictors were significantly correlated with personal/emotional orientation. Therefore it is most likely due to their "overlap" that the unique contributions are not assigned to particular predictors and for that reason they may appear unimportant in predicting the outcome variable.

Table 3
Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations for Parenting and Measures of Marginalization⁷

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Parenting	.90	1.61	--							
2. Family background	3.11	2.62	.31**	--						
3. Employment	7.31	3.46	.22**	.11	--					
4. Personal/emot orient.	9.06	7.35	.64**	.33**	.17*	--				
5. Marital relations	3.49	1.81	.15	.37**	.10	.21*	--			
6. Community funct.	5.04	2.52	.39**	.19*	.33**	.41**	.07	--		
7. Associates/social inter.	3.46	2.27	.43**	.37	.26**	.40**	.25**	.27**	--	
8. Substance abuse	7.37	7.93	.30**	.42**	.20*	.39**	.31**	.21*	.53**	--

*p < .05. **p < .01

⁷ Two variables, parenting and substance abuse, were subsequently converted into categorical variables for the purposes of logistic regression.

Furthermore, as shown on table 4, χ^2 test in the case of substance abuse predictor and t-tests for all other predictors, show that, when examined individually, all predictors except marital relations, significantly differentiated between those mothers who were perceived as having adequate parenting skills and those with inadequate. Greater needs (or greater number of domain indicators) were associated with less adequate parenting skills.

Table 4
Mean Values or Frequencies for Predictor Variables as a Function of Perceived Parenting

Variable	Perceived Adequate Parenting <i>N</i> = 85	Perceived Inadequate Parenting <i>N</i> = 55	$\chi^2(1)$ or <i>t</i> (139)
Substance abuse indicators present	41	41	9.53**
Family background	2.61	3.87	-2.69**
Employment	6.72	8.22	-2.56*
Personal/emot orient.	5.74	14.18	-7.27**
Marital relations	3.35	3.69	-1.04
Community funct.	4.59	5.75	-2.54*
Associates/social inter.	2.77	4.53	-4.53**

Note. Chi-square test used for substance abuse variable; *t* test used for all other variables.
p* < .05. *p* < .01

Contact during incarceration. In order to assess whether women who had contact with their children during incarceration were rated as having better parenting skills than those who did not have contact, a Chi Square test was conducted. Twenty-eight out of 42 women who were in contact with their children and 2 out of 7 who were not in contact, were assessed as having adequate parenting skills. Given that two cells had expected count less than 5, Fisher's Exact Test was used. This statistic $\chi^2(1) = 3.67$ was not significant. Therefore the group of mothers who were in contact with their children

during incarceration did not differ on the perceived adequacy of parenting from mothers who did not maintain contact with their children during this period.

Discussion

While assumptions have been made about the relation between social marginalization and parenting, it was possible that these were more of a reflection of social stereotypes than reality. Therefore, it was important to situate and explore the parenting practices of incarcerated women, and second, to examine whether they were associated with the mother and the child maintaining contact during incarceration.

Numerous studies showed that the lives of women offenders are characterized with multiple difficulties (Chesney-Lind, 1997; Comack, 1996; Elizabeth Fry Society, 1994; Eljdupovic-Guzina, 1999; Heney, 1996; Pollock, 1998; Sommers, 1995; Wine, 1992). A number of sources of marginalization have been identified in the literature that could be applied to women offenders as well: impoverished growing up environment, substance abuse, low socio-economic level, being behind the bars and being a mother (Garcia Coll et al., 1998; Pollock, 1998; Schaffner, Goldberg & Kremen, 1990; Weingarten et al., 1998). Associated with these factors, women offenders have often been subsequently characterized as “bad” mothers, both on the part of the outside observer as well as women themselves (Garcia Coll et al., 1998; Pollock, 1998).

It was hypothesized in this study that the greater marginalization, the more likely it was that women’s parenting would be assessed or perceived from the outside perspective as “bad” or inadequate. Marginalization was assessed by the number of indicators of difficulties or deviations that were considered to characterize women in the following

areas of their lives: family background, employment, personal/emotional orientation, marital relations, community functioning, associates/social interaction and substance abuse. All of the measures used in this study were based on the outside observer's assessments, rather than on women's self-report. This seems to be consistent with the very notion of marginalization which consists of defining someone's behaviour based on the extent to which it deviates from certain standards (established by the outside dominant group), rather than the individuals' own context. On the other hand, as will be discussed later on, the very fact that one observer evaluated all domains may represent a limitation given that the assessments of each of them may not be independent. It should be also stressed here that important factors such as offenders' race and ethnic background were not included in the present study. The Offender Intake Assessment measures do not account for these factors that may affect one's assessment on various domains.

Results indicated that the domains as a set significantly contributed to evaluations of the mother as a good or as a bad parent. The greater indications of marginalization in these domains, the more likely the mother was evaluated as an inadequate parent. This is consistent with studies that pointed out that socio-economic circumstances may account for perceptions of inadequate parenting (Valeska, 1984; Weingarten, et al., 1998; Williams, 1995).

However, in terms of predictors' unique contributions, personal/emotional orientation was the only individual predictor that was significantly related to the perceived inadequate parenting. This domain includes various aspects of mental health, such as cognition (for instance, "Unable to recognize problem areas"), behaviour (e.g. "Aggressive" or "Worries unreasonably") and mental ability (e.g. "Mentally deficient" or

“Diagnosed as disordered in the past”). Contrary to expectations, other predictors did not significantly contribute over and above the other variables. This is likely due to the fact that all of these domains (family background, employment, marital relations, community functioning, associates/social interaction and substance abuse) were significantly associated with the personal/emotional one. A strong association between this domain and perceived inadequate parenting may support findings of other studies that poor mental health is often prevalent in single-mothers which is the case of a great number of women offenders. Further, the strong interrelations among predictors is consistent with the notion that childcare obligations are associated with certain socio-economic constraints such as difficulties in investing in education, finding and maintaining employment, and in general, having available time and energy; all of these aspects being considerably more difficult in the case of single parent families. These factors increase stress, which may trigger various mental health issues, resorting to substance abuse as a way of alleviating stress, which in turn, may further lead to antisocial interactions, poor community functioning and so on (Atwood & Genovese, 1997; Brown & Moran, 1997; Koch et al., 1998; Millar & Glendinning, 1992; Williams, 1995).

However, given that this is a correlational study, it is not possible to determine causation. An individual may have mental health problems due to difficulties associated with unemployment, demands of childcare and lack of support, but it could be the other way around, in that those with poor mental health are more likely to be unemployed, substance abusers, function with difficulties in the community and so on.

A possible reason for the obtained significant association between difficulties in the personal/emotional domain and parenting, and not other areas, may also stem from the

assessment process from which these measures emerged. It is important to keep in mind that all measures came from one source, that is, the correctional officer. The fact that out of all predictors only deviations in the personal/emotional or mental health domain were significantly uniquely associated with perceived poor parenting, may point towards the tendency of the evaluator to “individualize” problems or to search for and identify problems solely within the person. Women who are perceived as bad parents are also perceived as having mental health problems. This may reflect an assumption that, if a woman does not follow the mainstream prescription on how to mother, then something is most likely “wrong” with her. Problems in the personal/emotional domain are likely perceived as illnesses, and thus viewed, designing and implementing programs that can “fix” the illness (e.g. the individual) are required and justified. Parnell and Vanderkloot’s (1994) discussion regarding societal perception of poor women comes to mind here, as it seems to also apply to women who are perceived as inadequate parents.

The perception of the poor women is that there is a deficit in her psyche that has caused a predicament, which requires outside intervention. Whether her children are in foster care, she is an abused woman, or she needs medication for anxiety, depression, or psychosis, there is something within her that needs to be fixed in order for her to function independently (p. 391)

An implication of the results of the present study was that it points out the importance of examining the OIA assessment process itself in future research. The very process may reflect individualistic and pathologizing tendencies of the dominant discourse when those who are different are evaluated. This assessment process assigns the central role of the main evaluator of offenders’ functioning in various domains to the correctional

officer, that is, to the outside observer. This has profound implications for the inmate given that it determines their correctional plans and the programs they will be required to take during incarceration. However, this merits further research, given that an alternative explanation to the obtained results is also possible. Namely, a unique significant contribution of only personal/emotional orientation may be a result of the fact that the measure of this domain had a high Cronbach's alpha (.90) and a greatest range of values, whereas for instance, Associates/social interaction domain had a rather low alpha of only .51.

This study also examined whether those women who were perceived as adequate parents were more likely to maintain contact with their children during incarceration. Contrary to expectations, there was no significant difference on perceived parenting skills between those who maintained and those who did not maintain contact with their children. This was surprising given that the inadequate parenting measure captures the extreme side of such a lack of skills, and thus it would be reasonable to expect that this would likely lead to an absence of mother-child contact. However, the issue is clearly much more complex, and there are a couple of possible reasons for the obtained results. Although women may seem like "bad" from the outside point of view, it is possible that there may have been greater nuances in their parenting that the OIA measures were not designed to capture. If women's parenting before incarceration was evaluated as negative, it does not necessarily exclude the possibility that more adequate aspects of parenting also existed as a part of their parenting resources. These aspects of their mothering may account for their maintaining contact with children during imprisonment. Given that OIA parenting indicators do not assist in understanding whether the mother and the child will maintain

contact during incarceration on one hand, and on the other, the importance of mother-child contact during incarceration stressed both by the women as well as correctional services, it is clear that more sensitive measures need to be employed. These measures need to involve women's own perspective as well as the entire range of the behaviours they are meant to assess. This is of particular relevance given that the current OIA indicators may lead to designing correctional plans that may not include the most salient aspects of women's lives.

Study 2

Assessment of the Relationship Between Incarceration Experiences, Hopelessness and Aspects of Mothering

Results of the previous study indicated that perceived adequate or inadequate parenting did not differentiate between those mothers who had contact with their children, and those who did not. If this is the case, clearly other factors affect such contact and the mother-child relationship. The purpose of this study was to examine other, more specific factors that may be involved. As previously discussed, mothering itself is a complex issue and in order to achieve a greater understanding of mothering during incarceration, it was necessary to examine its various aspects in relation to women's "here and now" experiences. Thus, it was expected that the mother-child relationship and the woman's self-perception of herself as a mother would be more positive, if her incarceration experience, parenting style she utilized in the past and satisfaction with childcare were more positive. Furthermore, an interactive effect between parenting skills and incarceration experience was also expected. The two aspects of mothering (relationship with the child and self-perception) were expected to be associated with woman's sense of hope during her imprisonment. In order to examine these relationships, more specific, self-report measures were necessary. Utilizing more detailed measures allowed covering the entire range of behaviours that were of interest, and their self-report nature ensured that women's perspectives would be voiced.

Method

Participants. Participants were recruited from two regional institutions for federally incarcerated women. Both of these regional facilities have the same layout, programs and correctional approach. For instance, all regional facilities have visitation areas with toys for children, and a separate house which a mother can use during the weekend visits with children. Inmates and staff do not wear uniforms, nor are there cells with bars as is often the case in a more traditional prison. Thus, the uniformity of institutions in which participants of this study resided was ensured. This was relevant as the layout and the programs offered at the facilities may represent factors that could influence women's incarceration experience and contact with children.

The sample consisted of 40 women; 21 women were recruited from the Edmonton Institution for Women and 19 from The Grand Valley Institution in Kitchener, Ontario. Only women who had one or more children with whom they had at least some contact prior to incarceration were included in the study. Their average age was 31.9, ranging from 19 to 49 ($SD = 7.36$). The number of children women had varied from one to seven. Those women who had more than one child were asked to provide responses about the child they were the most in contact with. As shown in Table 1, the ages of these children ranged from 1 to 22 years old ($M = 7.22$, $SD = 5.31$). Most of the women ($n = 21$) were White, 10 were Aboriginal and 9 were Black. The most frequent offence (30 women) was drug trafficking, five women were incarcerated due to fraud and the other five for either murder or violent offences. It should be mentioned that women who were incarcerated because of drug trafficking were not all necessarily substance/drug abusers.

Furthermore, some women who were not incarcerated due to a drug related offence, but rather committed violent offences, were substance abusers.

Table 5
Characteristics of Participants (N=40)

Characteristic	N	%
Mothers' Age		
19	1	3
20 – 25	8	20
26 – 30	11	28
31-35	7	17
36-40	6	15
41	7	17
Number of children		
1	15	37
2	7	17
3 or 4	15	37
5 or 6	1	3
7 or more	2	6
Age of child responses provided		
1	4	10
2-5	15	37
6-9	10	25
10-15	8	20
16 and up	3	8
Race		
White	21	53
Aboriginal	10	25
Black	9	22
Offence		
Drug trafficking	30	76
Fraud	5	12
Other	5	12

Measures

Parenting practices. This was assessed with the Parenting Practice Questionnaire (PPQ) (Robinson, Mandleco, Olsen & Hart, 1995) which was designed to assess authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting styles (see Appendix B). It consists

of 62 items on which parents report their parenting behaviours on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always). This instrument is designed for the assessment of parenting practices of preschool and school-age children. However, in the present study, in order to include as many participants as possible, it was extended to the older age group. There were 24 participants who responded to PPQ. Children of other participants were too young and the scale was not applicable. Given that a number of participants had more than one child, they were asked to provide responses regarding the child they were the most in contact with. Two participants were in contact with all of their children to the same extent, and in those cases their ratings for one of their children were chosen randomly and entered into the analysis.

A measure of positive or more adequate parenting style was of particular interest. Given that studies suggest that authoritative style was associated with children's psychosocial maturity (Robinson et al., 1995) respondent's score on the Authoritative style was used and entered into subsequent analysis as a measure of adequate or more positive parenting. Authoritative style, as measured with PPQ consists of the following four practices: Warmth and Involvement (e.g. "I give praise when our child is good"), Reasoning/Induction (e.g., "I emphasize the reasons for rules"), Democratic Participation (e.g., "I take into account our child's preferences in making family plans") and Good Natured/Easy Going (e.g., "I shows patience with our child"). Respondents receive an aggregate score. As to the reliability, studies report Cronbach's alpha for Authoritative subscales to range from .82 to .91 (Hart et al, 1998; Robinson et al., 1995) obtained on samples of parents of pre-school and school-age children.

In the present study, alpha for Authoritative style was .93 and all items were retained. Participants' scores were calculated by averaging their responses across all relevant items and they ranged from 2.81 to 4.96. The greater the score, the more often the mother used this style of parenting.

PPQ is a fairly new instrument and therefore there are not many studies establishing its validity. However, it is based on theoretical constructs concerning these styles that themselves have received substantial empirical validity.

Incarceration experiences were assessed using adapted and shortened versions of Prison Control Scale and Prison Problems Scale (Zamble & Porporino, 1988). Each original scale has 40 items. On the Prison Control Scale, participants indicate how much control or influence they have over series of specific situations (e.g. "Getting help from staff when you need it"), on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (no control at all) to 5 (complete or total control). Similarly, on the Prison Problem Scale, participants indicate the extent to which certain situations bother them, such as "Being told what to do", on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (doesn't bother you at all/ never on your mind) to 5 (bothers you all the time/ always on your mind). Originally, these scales were constructed and used for male incarcerates. Only items that seemed to tap into women's experiences and that were of relevance for this study (e.g. "feeling hopeless", "losing self-confidence", "doing something useful with time in prison", etc.) were selected. As well, two new items were added that referred to whether women perceived time in prison 'as a chance to think about their lives in a different way', and whether they 'experienced incarceration as a shelter from the life they had on the outside' (Appendix C). These items were added given that it was

likely that these aspects of women's incarceration experiences may have affected their relationship with children.

In this study, there were 16 items from the Prison problem scale, and the inter-item analyses yielded Cronbach's alpha .69. There were 14 original items from the Prison control scale and together with the two added items (time to think and shelter), obtained Cronbach's alpha was .61. The correlation between the two scales was moderate, $r = -.44$, $p < .01$. Responses on Prison Problems Scale were recoded so that they reflected the same directional valence (more positive experience) as the responses on the Prison Control Scale. In order to reduce data, and given the significant correlation between the two dimensions, a single index was created by averaging participants' scores on these two scales (Cronbach's alpha = .76). Thus, the higher score, the greater sense of control she reported during incarceration and aspects of incarceration bothered her to a lesser extent. The obtained scores ranged from 39.50 to 70.40.

Two items that tapped into financial needs in relation to contacts (such as 'whether participants received financial assistance for phone calls and visits') and participants' perception of prison as a suitable place for children to visit were also added.

Childcare arrangement during mother's incarceration. Childcare arrangement was assessed with scales designed for the purposes of this study (see Appendix D). Items assessed respondents' satisfaction with the communication and contact they had with their child's careprovider, and their satisfaction with the assistance they received from the careproviders to maintain contact with their children (e.g. to talk on the phone, bring the child to the facility for a visit, etc.). Because the type of assistance and the extent to which careproviders needed to provide it varied considerably depending on the child's age

and other circumstances, it was decided to exclude these questions from the analyses. Only the item referring to women's satisfaction with the communication with the careprovider was maintained. Further items concerned the extent to which women felt comfortable (or concerned) about the well-being their children. Participants indicated the extent to which they were satisfied with five situations (childcare arrangement in general, food and housing the child has, emotional support and care, child's safety, and emotional well-being on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (not satisfied at all) to 5 (entirely satisfied). In order to reduce the number of variables and verify the internal reliability of these scales, Cronbach's alpha was calculated. Its value was .86 when the item regarding mothers' satisfaction with the food and housing children received was not included. Participants' scores on caregiver satisfaction were calculated by averaging their responses on the five remaining items, namely: communication with careprovider, childcare arrangement in general, child's safety, emotional support and well-being.

Self-perception as a mother. Parenting Sense of Competence Scale (PSOC; Johnston & Mash, 1989) was used to assess women's self-perception of themselves as mothers during incarceration (see Appendix E). It consists of two factors, Satisfaction and Efficacy, which tap into two domains of parenting that were relevant for this study. Namely women's own perception of their mothering skills and the value that mothering had for them. The first factor refers to Skills/Knowledge and "... reflects the degree to which a parent feels he or she has acquired the skill and understanding necessary to be a good parent" (Mash & Johnston, 1983). The second factor refers to Value/Comfort and "... assesses the amount of value a parent places on parenthood and how comfortable she or he feels in the parenting role" (Mash and Johnston, 1983). This scale consists of 17

items and participants' answers may range from 1 (strongly agree) to 6 (strongly disagree). Scoring for some items was reversed so that, for all items, higher scores indicate greater self-esteem (Johnston & Mash, 1989, p.169). Gibaud-Wallston and Wandersman (Johnston & Mash, 1989) reported alpha coefficient of .82 for Satisfaction and .70 for Efficacy scales. Test-retest correlations after a period of 6 weeks, ranged from .46 to .82 (Cutrona and Troutman, 1986, cited in Johnston & Marsh, 1989). In their study of psychometric properties of this scale of normal 4 to 9 year-old boys and girls, Johnston and Marsh (1989) report Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the total scale to be .79; for the Satisfaction factor .75 and the Efficacy factor .76. This scale has been used with parents of normal infants, older children and in clinical samples. Studies show that the scores on this scale were associated with perceived difficulty of the baby and social support (Johnson & Marsh, 1989; Mash & Johnston, 1983). The total score was also associated with a measure of general self-esteem (Cutrona & Troutman, 1986; Gibaud-Wallston & Wandersman, 1978, cited in Johnson and Marsh, 1989). Also, Mash, Johnston and Kovitz (1983) found that PSOC differentiated between abusive and non-abusive mothers. In the present study, participants' total scores were used, due to the small sample size and the related need to reduce data. Inter-item analysis for the total scale yielded Cronbach alpha=.59. In order to increase reliability, it was decided to drop one item ("It is not very hard to be a parent, and my problems are easily solved") which resulted in alpha= .64. Scores for the total scale were created by calculating the average of respondents' answers on all the remaining items.

Quality of the mother-child relationship during incarceration. This was assessed using the Child-Parent Relationship subscale from the Cleminshaw-Guidubaldi Parent

Satisfaction Scale (Guidubaldi & Cleminshaw, 1985) (see Appendix F). This scale consists of several factors, but most were not suitable for this study since they are based on the assumption that the child and the parent(s) lived together or interacted on the regular basis. The Child-Parent Relationship subscale consists of 10 items with a 5-point response scale, from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). In this study one item, namely, "My children annoy me too much in front of my friends" was changed into "My children annoy me too much in front of other residents in the institution during visits". It is of particular relevance to mention here that Cleminshaw-Guidubaldi showed that the scale was not biased when used with different types of samples. They showed that there was no significant relations between the scores and respondents' age, employment status, retirement, educational level, income and number of children. Furthermore, the scale was suitable for parents whose children ranged in age from 6 weeks to 38 years, which made this scale (subscale) particularly suitable for this study. Criterion validity of the scale was assessed by examining its relations to four other satisfaction measures, and the results indicated significant relations with all subscales (Cleminshaw-Guidubaldi, 1985, p.297). As to the reliability, Cronbach's alpha for the Parent-Child Relationship was .85 (Cleminshaw-Guidubaldi, 1985).

In the present study, 26 participants responded to this measure, of which six rated their relationship differently for each of their children. Four of them had more contact with one of their children and for that reason, ratings for these children were entered into the analysis. The other two were in contact with all of their children to the same extent, so the ratings that were entered into the analysis were chosen randomly. Cronbach's alpha was .75. Scores on this scale were created by calculating the average of participants'

responses, such that high scores indicated parents' greater satisfaction with the relationships they have with their child.

Hopelessness. Hopelessness refers to the negative expectations concerning oneself and his/her future life (Beck, Weissman, Lester, & Trexler, 1974). In this study it was assessed by using Beck Hopelessness Scale (see Appendix G). This scale consists of 20 true-false items (e.g.,). Scores are the sum of participants' responses on each item and they may range from 0 to 20.

Beck Hopelessness Scale has been widely used in studies on depression and suicidal motivation (Dyer & Kreitman, 1984; Johns & Holden, 1997; Kapci, 1998; Minkoff, Bergman, Beck & Beck, 1973). These studies found that hopelessness and depression were highly correlated which suggests that scores on this scale may also provide insight into more global depressive affective tone. Validity of the scale was assessed by correlations with clinical ratings of hopelessness; these were .74 with a "general practice" sample and .62 with an "attempted suicide" sample (Beck, 1974, p. 863). Reliability assessed as internal consistency of the scale was reported to range from .39 to .72 (Minkoff, Berhman, Beck, & Beck, 1973), whereas another study reported alpha coefficient to be as high as .93 (Beck et al., 1974). Test-retest reliability for the undergraduate students was .85 (Kapci, 1998). In the present study, Cronbach's alpha was .83.

Procedure

Collection of data was conducted in Edmonton Institution for Women in August, 1999, and in the Grand Valley Institution for Women in Kitchener, Ontario during the

month of September, 1999. Choice of facilities was limited to those where English is spoken.

Prior to going to the facilities, the researcher sent an announcement about the study and a sign up sheet inviting women to participate in a study on mothering during incarceration, and what it was like to mother before and during this period. Upon arriving at the facility, the researcher approached each volunteer, introduced herself, and made an appointment for the interview. Initially, at both institutions very few women signed up. However, after the first couple of interviews and after the researcher became a familiar face at the institution, the number of women who expressed interest in the study increased.

Administration of the questionnaire booklet was done individually in a private office at the facility. The informed consent form (see Appendix H) was read, explained and consent was given by each participant prior to administering questionnaires. Participants were told that the study consisted of two parts, a questionnaire and an interview, and that after the questionnaire they would be asked whether they would be willing to continue participating in the interview. Measures were completed one by one with the researcher providing instructions for each one. Most of the participants asked that the researcher to read each item to them and enter their answers, some of them voicing difficulties with reading, forgetting glasses or just finding the process more engaging and interesting if the items were read to them.

This considerably prolonged the time to complete the questionnaire booklet, but it allowed a more interactive relationship and greater rapport. However, this also often triggered participants' comments on the issues addressed by various items. The researcher would note their comments, express interest in them and remind participants that the

second part of the study (open ended interview) was designed precisely for the purposes of soliciting their comments and life events expressed in their own words.

After completion of the questionnaire booklet, written debriefing (Appendix I) was given to the participants which was often read aloud or verbally summarized by the researcher. Participants were then asked whether they would be interested in participating in the second part of the study which involved open-ended questions and possibly taping the interview. Appropriate consent forms were given for participants to sign. Appointments for the interview were made with those who expressed interest.

Individual interviews were done in a private office at the participant's convenience. Before starting the interview, informed consent was given (Appendix J). Notes were taken during all the interviews and permission to tape the interview were obtained from all participants. Interviewees were given written debriefing after the interview (Appendix K). The interview protocol and analyses will be described in Study 3.

Results

A series of multiple regression analysis was conducted to test the hypotheses regarding the relationship between the mother and her child, mother's self-perception, and her sense of hope. Based on hypotheses, the predictors entered in the equations to predict the quality of the mother-child relationship and mother's self-perception were ratings of her incarceration experience, authoritative parenting style, and satisfaction with childcare arrangements. Sense of hope was then examined in relation to mother-child relationship and mother's self-perception. To examine interactive effects, all of the variables were standardized, and cross-products between the standardized scores were calculated. It

should be mentioned that there were participants who did not complete all of the measures which resulted in different sample sizes for different analyses. For instance, women who had babies and toddlers could not respond to the parenting practices questionnaire since it is not applicable for these age groups and they were therefore excluded from these analyses. This posed caution when assumptions for multiple regression were tested given that due to a small sample size; it is hard to determine with greater certainty whether in fact assumptions have been met (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2001). Nevertheless, assumptions of normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, and independence, were tested by examining residual scatterplots. Examination of the scatterplot suggested that the assumption of normality may not have been met. Examination of frequency distributions of individual variables, showed that some were slightly skewed (child-parent relationships, childcare and hopelessness). This might have been a result of the sample being selected on the basis that the participants were those mothers who had lived with their children at least at one point in their lives, and were most likely those who felt more positively about mothering during incarceration and therefore volunteered to participate in the study. Table 6 displays means, standard deviations and intercorrelations between variables. Contrary to women's self-perception, the other aspect of mothering that was examined, namely the mother-child relationship was significantly positively correlated with incarceration experiences and authoritative parenting skills. Interestingly, childcare was not significantly correlated with either aspect of mothering, the relationship with the child and mother's self-perception. Hopelessness was significantly negatively correlated with incarceration experience as well as mother-child relationship.

Table 6
Means, standard deviations and intercorrelations between variables.

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Mother-child relation	4.46	.59	--					
2. Self-perception	3.88	.53	.45*	--				
3. Hopelessness	2.08	2.81	-.63**	-.21	--			
4. Incarceration experience	58.01	7.14	.45*	.24	-.54**	--		
5. Authoritative style	4.36	.57	.62**	.48	-.20	.14	--	
6. Childcare	3.88	.99	.33	.06	-.00	-.01	-.21	--

** $p < .01$ * $p < .05$

Predicting the quality of the mother-child relationship during incarceration. A hierarchical regression analysis was performed to test the hypothesis that (authoritative) parenting style, childcare satisfaction, and experience of incarceration predicted the quality of mother-child relationship during incarceration. Standardized scores on authoritative parenting style, childcare and incarceration experience were entered on the first step, and the interaction between authoritative style and incarceration experience was entered on the second step. As shown in Table 7, the main effects, explained 46.4% of the variance ($R^2_{adj} = .464$, $F(3, 16) = 5.62$, $p < .05$). Authoritative parenting explained unique variance ($B = .53$, $p < .01$) in that the more the mother used an authoritative style in her relationship with the child, the better the quality of their relationship during incarceration. Furthermore, the change statistic assessing the degree of additional variance explained by the interaction term which was entered on the second step was also significant, explaining additional 22.9 % of variance ($F(4, 16) = 10.01$, $p < .01$).

Table 7
Hierarchical multiple regression of mother-child relationships on incarceration experience, childcare and authoritative style of parenting

Step and predictor variable	r	R ² Change	sr ²	β
Step 1		.464*		
Incarceration Experience	.45*		.30	.31
Authoritative style	.62**		.57**	.59**
Childcare	.33		.18	.18
Step 2		.229**		
Incar.exp. X Auth.style			-.45**	-.50**
Simple slope				
At 1 SD above Auth. Style M		.645**		
Incarceration Experience			.06	.09
At 1 SD below Auth.Style M		.645**		
Incarceration Experience			.56**	.93**

N = 19; *p < .05; **p < .01

As expected, incarceration experience moderated the effect of parenting style on satisfaction with the child-parent relationship. Follow-up analyses were conducted by assessing the simple slopes for incarceration experience at one standard deviation below and above the mean of authoritative style (Aiken and West, 1991). As shown in Table 7, these regressions indicated that incarceration experience did not uniquely predict child-parent relationship at higher levels of authoritative style, but it was predictive at lower levels. More specifically, as expected, at the lower levels of authoritative parenting style, more positive prison experience was associated with a more satisfactory child-parent relationship ($B = .93, p < .001$).

Predicting self-perception as a mother. In order to test the hypothesis that

incarceration experience, care and authoritative parenting style predict women's self-perception of herself as a mother a hierarchical multiple regression analysis was performed. All three main effects were entered on the first step, and the incarceration between incarceration experience and parenting was entered on the second. Neither the first ($F(3,23) = 3.40$), nor second ($F(4,23) = 2.52$) step of the regression analysis were significant.

Predicting sense of hope. A hierarchical regression analysis was performed to test the hypothesis that the quality of mother-child relationship and self-perceptions as a mother would predict hopelessness during incarceration. Incarceration experience was entered on the first step in order to control its effect on hopelessness, and allow examination of the extent to which aspects of mothering account for the additional variance of hopelessness. Mother-child relationship and mother's self-perception were entered on the second, and the interaction term on the third. As shown in Table 8, incarceration experience explained 26.9% of the variance ($R^2_{adj} = .269$; $F(1, 25) = 8.83$, $p < .01$), in that the more positive incarceration experience, the lower hopelessness. The main effects of interest entered on the second step explained an additional 15.2 % of the variance ($R^2_{change} = .152$, $F(3, 25) = 6.36$, $p < .01$). Only the parent-child relationship contributed unique variance ($B = -.51$, $p < .05$) meaning that the more satisfying relationship with the child the mother has, the less she felt hopeless. The interaction term was also significant, explaining an additional 18.6% of variance ($R^2_{change} = .186$; $F(4,25) = 9.53$, $p < .01$).⁸

⁸ In order to test whether presence or absence of contact with children was associated with mothers' sense of hope, a t test was conducted. Results showed that women who were in contact with their children did not significant differ on hopelessness ($M=1.90$, $SD=2.82$) from those who were not in contact

Table 8

Hierarchical multiple regression of hopelessness on mother-child relationship and mothers' self-perception

Step and predictor variable	r	R ² Change	sr ²	β
Step 1		.269**		
Incarceration Experience	-.54**		.25**	-.52**
Step 2		.152**		
Mother-child relationship	-.63**		.16*	-.51*
Self-perception	-.21		.02	.05
Step 3		.186**		
Mother-child X Self-percep.			.16**	.44**
Simple slope				
At 1 SD above Self-perc M		.514**		
Mother-child			.02	.08
At 1 SD below Self-perc M		.514**		
Mother-child			.49**	-1.05**

N =25; *p< .05; **p< .01

Follow-up analyses were conducted by assessing the simple slopes for child-parent relationship at one standard deviation below and above the mean of mother's self-perception. These regressions indicated that child-parent relationship did not uniquely predict hopelessness at higher levels of self-perception, although it was predictive at lower levels. In particular, at the lower levels of self-perception, less satisfying child-parent relationship was associated with greater hopelessness ($B = -1.05$, $p < .001$).

Discussion

The purpose of this second study was to examine certain aspects of mothering during incarceration in relation to factors stemming from women's past and current circumstances. Studies showed that the majority of incarcerated women who were mothers voiced a need to be in contact with their children, that this contact was very

($M = 2.60$, $SD = 2.87$), $t_{(38)} = .67$, n.s.)

important to them and gave them a sense of hope for the future (Hairston, 1991; Heney, 1996; Shaw et al. 1990, Caddle & Crisp, 1997; Wine, 1992; Woodrow, 1992). Thus, Correctional Services of Canada took steps to accommodate these needs. However, this study argued that in order to understand mothering during incarceration, it was not enough to know whether or not the mother and the child are in contact. It leaves many questions unanswered such as, what is the quality of the mother-child relationship, how does the woman perceive herself as a mother and finally, do these two aspect of mothering affect women's sense of hope and if so, in what way. Having a positive relationship with the child during incarceration does not necessarily mean that the woman will feel positive about herself as a mother and vice versa. Therefore, the study argued that the mother-child relationship and mother's self-perception needed to be distinguished and examined separately.

However, mothering does not occur in a vacuum. Women bring different experiences into the situation of incarceration and they may also experience their current circumstances quite differently which may further affect their mothering during incarceration. Thus, it was expected that women's past experiences, such as the parenting styles they used before incarceration, as well as their current incarceration experiences and their satisfaction with the childcare arrangement would account for and shape their mothering during incarceration. It was also argued that the two aspects of mothering, the mother-child relationship and a woman's self-perception of herself as a mother may account for her sense of hope during incarceration in different ways.

Exploration of the quality of the mother-child relationship showed that, as expected, the more adequate parenting style (defined here as the authoritative style) the

mother used with her child before incarceration, the greater the quality of her relationship during this period. Indeed, if a mother reported a more adequate parenting style, the relationship with her child was not affected by her incarceration experience, that is, the extent to which she felt positive or negative about the prison. This does not come as a surprise given that the parenting styles represent a way of relating and communicating to the child, and therefore the more adequate and positive it was in the past, the more likely it is that, regardless of current difficulties, the mother and the child will be able to maintain a good relationship. In effect, they have more of the positive from the past to “build on” during the mother’s incarceration.

It is particularly interesting that the results supported the hypotheses that there was an interaction effect of incarceration experience and parenting on the mother-child relationship during incarceration. More specifically, if incarceration experiences were positive, those mothers who reported that in the past they utilized authoritative style less frequently had a better relationship with their children. This was most likely due to the fact that during incarceration, women may have felt more “stable” (e.g. sheltered) and acquired new skills which they may have utilized in their relationship with children during incarceration. This in turn resulted in establishing a good relationship with them during this period.

Limitations of this study that introduce caution in interpreting results merit mentioning here. The sample size in this study was very small which from the statistical point of view posed limitations on the stability and generalizability of its results. However, if the sample size is assessed based on the size of the population, then the sample in this study is acceptable. The entire population of federally incarcerated women

in Canada is 350. Not all of these women are mothers. Shaw et al.'s (1990) reported that out of 170 women who participated in their survey, 64% gave birth to at least one child. Based on the review of 426 Offender Intake Assessments, Eljdupovic-Guzina (1999) reported that 78% gave birth to at least one child. In addition, not all women who gave birth necessarily parented their children during at least some period in their lives, which was one of the criteria for the present study. Therefore the population size that was of interest here was even smaller than the total number of federally incarcerated women in Canada.

In addition, the sample size in the present study of 40 respondents in total decreased even further as the number of participants used in the analysis varied from 19 to 25. The reason for this was that not all participants were able to provide answers to all the measures and were therefore not included in the analysis. For instance, women who had very young children (babies and toddlers) could not fill out parenting practices questionnaire which was designed to assess these practices with older children. Therefore it is not certain whether the determined significant relations apply to those mothers whose children are of very young age.

Another limitation is that all measures regarding parenting that were used in this study, namely those that assessed parenting practices, mother-child relationship and mother's self-perception, were developed primarily based on studies with white, middle-class families which means that possible specificities and differences due to racial and ethnic backgrounds were not taken into consideration. Furthermore, all of these measures are based on the assumption that the child and the parent lived together and are therefore

in everyday contact. This was certainly not the case with mothers in this study.⁹ Measures of self-perception and mother-child relationship were likely less affected by this, given that women could respond to them based on their current experiences. However, the parenting practices questionnaire was used here to tap into the mother-child relationship that took place some time ago when the mother and the child were living together. This required participants to respond retrospectively rather than based on the immediate experience. Therefore, it is possible that to some extent responses reflected participants' tendency to present themselves in a good light and what they wished they had done, rather than what they actually did. However, the intention of the study was to examine the effects of parenting skills from the past, that is, the ones women bring into the situation of incarceration which inevitably carries the risk of respondents' distortion of facts (unless they were assessed prior to incarceration). Finally, it should be also kept in mind that, due to a small sample size, the study did not include factors of race and ethnic background.

It was expected that a woman's self-perception of herself as a mother would be greater if her incarceration experience and her satisfaction with the care her child received during her incarceration, were more positive. However, findings did not support this hypotheses. Satisfaction with childcare was not correlated with other variables in this study. One of the reasons could be a small sample size which precluded associations between variables to emerge as significant. Another reason could be that, as previously mentioned, participants' children were different age groups which likely made various

⁹ It draws attention to the limited and limiting definition of parenting which excludes those parents who may not be involved in childcare in the standard way. However, that is an issue in itself and cannot be dealt with here.

aspects of childcare salient for the mothers. These aspects may not have been captured since due to a small sample size the measure of mothers' satisfaction with childcare that was used was quite general. Similarly, incarceration experience measure may not have been sensitive enough to capture those aspects that are likely associated with mother's self-perception.

Self-selection of participants who volunteered to take part in the study should be also kept in mind. It is likely that those who felt more comfortable talking about their past relationship with children, who had a greater investment in the mother-role at the time of the interview, and for whom having children on the outside was more salient, had a greater interest to participate in the study. For these reasons, collected data, and consequently the results of the analyses, may have been somewhat skewed in highlighting issues related to mothering during incarceration. They may not have captured issues salient to those mothers who had greater difficulties in the past and for whom mothering was not as important. This self-selection of participants may have been reflected on their responses related to self-perception as mothers in that it was not related to the factors stemming from their current circumstances, such as incarceration experience and childcare, but rather, other factors that women brought into the situation of incarceration. For instance, the fact that these women, at least during a certain period of time in spite of difficulties, mothered their children before incarceration may have shaped their positive perception of themselves as mothers. Another factor may be "internal models" of parenting they acquired during childhood to which they compared themselves as mothers.

Overall, results suggest that it was not whether the mother and the child have contact per se that was associated with mother's sense of hope. Rather, it was the

mother's self-perception and the quality of her relationship with the child, that significantly contributed to her sense of hope. In fact, there was an interaction effect between the two predictors. If the mother and the child did not establish a positive relationship, but she nevertheless had a positive perception of herself as a mother, her sense of hope was higher and she felt more positive about the future. Thus, even if (at the time when the study was conducted), the mother and the child did not establish a good relationship, feeling positive about herself as a mother, gave the mother a sense of hope. On the other hand, if the mother-child relationship was satisfactory and positive, even if she did not feel positive about herself as a mother, her sense of hope was greater.

This study identified factors and the ways in which they were associated with mothering during incarceration. It pointed towards certain areas that may be salient for incarcerated mothers and should therefore be included in programs and interventions. For instance, knowing that a positive self-perception may be associated with incarcerated mothers' sense of hope, even if she does not have a satisfactory relationship with the child, delineates an area of intervention and assistance that may be offered to these women. At the same time, future research is necessary to determine factors which account for mothers' positive self-perception, given that the present study failed to do so.

Study 3

I WANTED TO BE, I TRIED TO BE, I WILL BE A GOOD MOTHER

The qualitative analysis conducted in this study is based on the interpretative perspective which focuses on the “how” rather than on the “why?” Denzin (1989). It attempts to understand how it is that the experiences in question, such as women’s perception of their mothering before as well as during incarceration occur, and the ways in which their experiences and interactions are constructed. This method represents “an attempt to make the world of ordinary people directly available to the reader” (Denzin, 1989, p.7) and for that reason seems particularly appropriate for this study. Its purpose is to understand the mothering issues before and during incarceration as experienced from “within,” by incarcerated women themselves. This population constitutes a highly marginalized group and as such, their behaviour tends to be categorized as different and deviant and they themselves labelled as needing to be “fixed” or changed. However, this “outsiders” point of view, does not allow understanding of the issues related to mothering and incarceration that women are going through; rather, it just categorizes and labels behaviours. The purpose of this study was to explore women’s perceptions and perspectives on their mothering before incarceration, their incarceration experience and how they perceive themselves as mothers during incarceration. As previously argued, in order to understand the complex issues associated with mothering during incarceration, it is necessary to account for insiders’ as well as outsiders’ point of view. For that reason, it was particularly important that women express their points of view in their own words express

The starting point of the analysis is the “lived concepts of everyday lives” (Denzin,

1989, p.25) that is, accounts and stories of individuals who share the experience of the phenomenon that is being studied, expressed in their own words. It consists of obtaining multiple stories, identifying their elements and essential structures, constructing and contextualizing them. The latter refers to “documenting how the structures of the experience will be altered and shaped as they are experienced, described, and given meaning by their participants” (Denzin, 1989, p. 62)

Method

The interview consisted of open-ended questions that functioned to guide and delineate the areas of discussion rather than to inquire about specific issues. The main areas that were addressed were: women’s pre-incarceration mothering experiences, their incarceration experiences and how they relate to their mothering during that period. This ensured that the same topics were addressed and covered with all participants while at the same time allowing for their unique stories to be expressed. The interview schedule used in presented in Appendix L. Interviewer often started the interview by referring to the responses and comments interviewees gave in their previous responses to the questionnaires dealing with similar issues and which were presented in the previous study.

Participants

Interviews with fifteen women were conducted As indicated on Table 9, the interviewees’ ages ranged from 19 to 41, and their children’s from 1 to 14. Most of the interviewees were white, incarcerated because of drug trafficking, and a majority of them were substance abusers.

Table 9
Characteristics of Participants (N=15)

Characteristics	N	%
Mothers' age at time of study *		
19	1	7
20 – 25	3	20
26 – 30	5	33
31 – 35	2	13
36 – 40	2	13
41	2	13
Age of child interview focused on**		
1	2	13
2 – 5	6	40
6 – 9	3	20
10 – 15	4	27
Number of children respondents' had		
1	6	40
2	4	27
3	5	33
Race		
White	9	60
Aboriginal	5	33
Black	1	7
Offence		
Drug trafficking	9	60
Fraud	3	20
Other	3	20
Substance Abuse		
Yes	11	73
No	4	27

* Percentages add up to 101 due to rounding.

** Responses of women who had more than one child were in most cases referring to one of the children in particular. This was the child they referred to in their responses on the questionnaires discussed in the previous study. They were asked to respond in reference to the child they have been in contact the most.

Data Analysis

Interviews lasted between 45 minutes to an hour and a half. They were tape-recorded and transcribed. Transcripts of women's interviews were reviewed by specific areas that were addressed. For instance, women's responses to the question what it was like to mother before incarceration, how they saw themselves as mothers "back then" were

reviewed. Certain themes that emerged in their accounts were identified and listed. A count of women who voiced specific themes was kept in order to ensure that all interviewees and their themes were accounted for. Once the themes were identified, the researcher "stepped back" and examined whether some themes formed clusters and in fact, reflected superordinate categories. For instance, women's accounts of pride associated with pregnancy, enjoyment of the body changes and so on, all seemed to cluster around and reflect a positive reaction and joy about being pregnant. Similarly, in their accounts on what it was like to parent before they were incarcerated, the interviewees themselves spontaneously introduced a clear distinction of what they were like as mothers before they started substance abuse and after developing this habit. This differentiation was subsequently used in the analysis of data and it anchored interpretation of women's accounts. Thus, interpretation of interview data was to a great extent guided by the themes and anchors participants themselves voiced in their narratives.

For this reason, the following results section is to a great extent organized and based on the themes and categories that emerged as salient in women's accounts on various aspects of their lives, rather than driven by specific research questions. In order to present how women's experiences of mothering evolved over time and the ways in which they were linked with the circumstances of their lives, the organization of the following section follows a chronological order; from women's reactions to pregnancy to their incarceration experience and plans for the future. The specific topics and subheadings are a reflections of those points that women's accounts identified as salient and in most instances their own wordings were used for naming the categories. Throughout the results sections, quotes from women's narratives are presented in order to, as much as

possible, faithfully depict and convey their points of view. In order to facilitate following the text and quotes, but also to ensure anonymity, interviewees were given pseudonyms.

Results

I Wanted to be a Good Mother; Pregnancy and “Romanticized” Mothering

Interviewees’ accounts on learning that they were pregnant and their reaction to it covered a full range, as it would with any other group of women: from the fact that pregnancy was planned to unplanned. In some instances, the mother reported that one child was planned whereas the other one was not. Descriptions of the feelings women had upon hearing that they were pregnant fell into two groups. Eleven women described feeling of joy and happiness upon hearing that they were pregnant, whereas four women reported being scared. One of the women who felt scared described that at the same time she also felt it was the “happiest time in her life and the best thing that happened” to her. Underlying sources or dimensions of joy and happiness women described are summarized on Table 10.

Table 10
Participants’ reactions to pregnancy (N=15)

Reactions	<i>N</i>	%
*Joy	11	73
Pride	4	
Making-up	3	
The kid will help	2	
Bodily experiences	5	
*Fear	4	27
Responsibility	4	
Too young	3	

* Some participants identified more than one source of joy or fear

Women described pride or a sense of self-worth associated with the fact that they were pregnant and were going to become mothers. As Helga stated:

“...I made something. She’s so cute I’ve got something to show off to everyone..”

A second theme or source of joy was a desire to make up for what they missed in their childhood and create a better world for their child. Kelly recollected that she really wanted to give her children the freedom to make their own choices and added that is was something she was never allowed to do. Similarly, Vera said, “I didn’t want it (her childhood experience) happening to my kid; I didn’t want it to be the way I was raised.”

Third, some women felt that the child, that is, having a child, would help them “shape up” and grow up. As Wilma said, “... it made me grow up fast... I was kind of out of control, I didn’t care, and had nothing to do. I was bored....”

The fourth source of feelings of joy associated with pregnancy, evolved around the bodily experiences of carrying a child. Mia described her feelings upon hearing that she was pregnant in the following way, “I was glowing, my eyes were sparkling, I love being pregnant, there’s a little life inside you.”

Often these sources of joy were intertwined, and having a child was a point of convergence for multiple needs or desires women had. Thus, in the following example, the notion of becoming a mother was associated with expectations that the child would help the mother “shape up” but also, the mother saw this as an opportunity to make up for her parents’ mistakes.

I wanted a kid, the kid would help me straighten up my life ... I wanted to be able to give my kid a life I never had. I would treat my kid better than I’d been treated.

Stop the chain! (Sue)

There were four women who described their feelings upon hearing that they were pregnant as scary. They associated this with being too young and with great responsibility. For instance, Kya recollected, "I was so scared of responsibility," whereas Ivy described the source of fear somewhat differently, "I was scared, I was so young, it was first his needs then mine."

In summary, most women evoked the socially desirable and expected reaction to pregnancy (that is happiness), whereas the reactions of a considerably smaller number of women brought to light another side of mothering, burden and responsibility.

Stressors and Strains: a Shift from "Romanticized" to "Realistic" Mothering

When focusing on parenting as a process, rather than looking at it as a "snapshot," certain temporal qualifiers in women's accounts on mothering were identified. Women's reflections on mothering as a process that evolves over time and with a continuous development of the relationship and role(s) showed that, as Denzin (1989) pointed out, the structures of the experience are altered and shaped as they are lived. Knowing that one is pregnant and thinking about being a mother on one hand, and having a child and the actual day to day care of the child on the other, shed a very different light on women's experiences of mothering.

The first "stage" depicted romanticized and idealized perspective on mothering. Women saw it as an opportunity to create a better world for their children than the one they grew up in. This was not voiced only by those women who were happy upon hearing that they were to have a child. Those women who were fearful of becoming a mother, nevertheless described how they wanted everything in the lives of their children to be

different. Descriptions of the initial period of becoming a mother conveyed that women had a sense of a new world of immense potential opening up for them and their children.

However, the realm of possibilities and potentials women encountered in the next stage of parenting, the day to day care for the child, was quite different from the first one. Chores and obligations associated with having a child and mothering stripped off the initial romanticized view on it. The enthusiasm and joy associated with becoming a mother were replaced with experiences of hardship. A marked shift was evident in the case of eight women. Their accounts are of particular interest here and will be discussed first as they shed light on the factors that underlie this change. Of these eight women, four clearly identified a particular point in the process of mothering at which they felt differently about it, as shown in some of their comments:

At first, I thought is this really true? [e.g. was happy, excited] and then afterwards I thought, this is a drag. I had nobody to talk to ... (Tessa).

At the beginning I was determined to look after my children...but after having them, I got scared....scared of the responsibility.... (Kya)

All I ever wanted to be is a mom... then things got hard... (Nika)

The other four women did not pinpoint a particular moment. Rather, their narratives on becoming a mother initially evolved around experiences of joy and happiness whereas later on, as the narratives evolved, the theme of hardship took over and governed these narratives.

In order to understand this shift, the contexts of their everyday lives as perceived from their own perspectives (or, in Denzin's terms, the experiences as they are lived) were explored. Thus viewed, the shift in their mothering experience seemed to mirror the shift

in their circumstances. In addition to the constraining and complex motherwork encountered by careproviders in general, interviewees' accounts showed that they faced further stressors and pressures. As in the past studies on women offenders, the lives of most of interviewees were marginalized in many ways: they were characterized by abusive and constraining relationships, social isolation, financial problems, lack of support and substance abuse (Chesney-Lind, 1997; Comack, 1996; Elizabeth Fry Society, 1994; Pollock, 1998; Sommers, 1995; Wine, 1992). In this study only 4 out of 15 women were not substance abusers, and all except one woman, had abusive, inadequate relationships with partners. Clearly, these circumstances of their lives were in and of themselves very difficult, and they further enhanced and made the constraining aspect of motherwork even harder. They evolved around three main themes: lack of support, poverty and abusive relationships. These pressures were often intertwined and they triggered each other.

The most dominant theme present in accounts of all eight women was a profound sense of loneliness, isolation and lack of support. As Tessa recalled, "I was a scared and lonely parent, I always kept her [daughter] close with me... I kept distance from meeting people because I was always afraid something would happen to me, or my child." Due to Tessa's very difficult growing up experiences and interacting with antisocial peers, she could only expect bad things from people. For that reason, in her attempt to be a good mother and as a way of protecting her child, she stayed away from people, from everyone. She was a single parent, very young, with minimum resources and no support. Staying away from others led to an even stronger sense of loneliness and stress, which eventually lead her to resort back to the old life style – old "friends", drugs, etc.

Given that most of the women grew up in unsupportive environments, lack of support per se was not anything new in their lives. As Kya said, "Everything I went through as I grew into womanhood I had to deal with on my own. So, I never had any guidance... my grandma died when I was young....my mom never cared...." However, in spite of being "used to" loneliness, experiences of isolation and lack of support seemed to be particularly accentuated precisely in the period when women were raising their children. This does not come as a surprise. The new role imposed a set of entirely new obligations, restrictions and challenges. Having to care for a child meant that it was not always possible to "mask" the loneliness with a busy social life, interactions with partners or peers, as interviewees often did before having children. Furthermore, the new role implied doing many things for the first time which in itself created a greater need for support and conversely, led to a greater sense of loneliness.

In describing circumstances that underlined the switch from happiness to hardship, in her experience of mothering, Sue's account highlighted a specific type of support, the need for community resources, institutional and socially organized support, "... money was always hard and so was food and stuff ... I tried hard to make ends meet.... Having to do it by myself was hard... No resources, no lady you can go and chat to. No programs." Stresses related to poverty and how they further exacerbated the need for support and assistance were also clearly depicted. Mia's recollection of bringing up her son in extreme poverty illustrating the extent to which it imposed additional daily stress was notable, "We lived on the reserve with my son in a trailer, and we did not have running water or plumbing, and I had extra jobs to keep the house extra clean so that nobody got sick." In addition, Mia's husband was drinking, he was verbally and physically

abusive and did not let her talk to anyone, not even sit on the stairs of the trailer and look at people who were passing by.

Abusive relationships were another dominant theme and stressor women described and it seemed to be associated with the previous one, with poverty. For instance, as she was describing the abusive relationship she had with her partner, Thea stated that at least the partner gave her and the child a "roof over their heads". Similarly, Mila described her relationship with the partner as abusive, "... he was hitting me, I was not allowed to go outside if he was out of town... but, he was a good provider."

These accounts show how a "solution" to one problem (poverty), created and evolved into a new one - abuse. This is consistent with other studies which also noted that women are more vulnerable to abusive relationships because of their difficult financial circumstances (Addleberg & Curie, 1993; Boritch, 1997; Elizabeth Fry Society, 1994). However, another layer that should be added here is that given that women had children to care for, and not only themselves, they had to weigh and balance their "options." Being able to have food and shelter in addition to suffering abuse, made them feel better as mothers, than not having the essentials (food and roof over their heads) for bringing up their children. From the outside point of view, this hardly makes a difference, but for the insider, it did. As both Mila and Thea stated, although their partners were abusive, they were at least good providers for them and their children.

It is important to keep in mind that stressors such as poverty were not isolated events, but rather, dominant characteristics of women's everyday lives; they were continuous and repetitive. Money and food were an issue for Sue every day; Mia cleaned the trailer and carried the water day after day. Therefore the effects of these additional,

unique stressors that these women experienced, were cumulative and gradually rendered women weak, with less emotional and physical energy. As their accounts indicated, at the beginning they were dealing with them, but over time, as Nika said, "... (then) things got harder."

Their impoverished circumstances not only made things harder, but they also made it particularly important for the women to (try to) do it differently (or to do it right). Expectations and the hope that everything would be different for their children was, as previously described, one of the main themes voiced in women's accounts. However, precisely these same circumstances undermined their mothering and added barriers to actually achieve that. As the void between what they expected and wanted to achieve and how things worked out became apparent, a disappointment emerged. Thus, the initial source of self-worth and joy associated with becoming a mother evolved into guilt and a sense of failure. As one mother said: "It was a let down...for me... for her (daughter)." Women who viewed themselves as "unsuccessful" mothers attributed this to their own personal faults and inabilities which represents yet another example of feminists' argument that the personal is political. However, what is of particular importance is that in spite of being aware that their "inability" was a reflection of their social circumstances (as Sue pointed out "... there isn't much out there"), women nevertheless internalized the "failure" and considered it to be their own, personal. This shows the extent to which socialization and "internalized societal myth" are ingrained and strong.

These accounts seem to be embedded in the ideology of mothering which glorifies the mother role, but also assigns the primarily job of raising children to the mother. As Rich (1986) pointed out, women's bodies, and we can certainly add mothering in general,

represent a space of contradictions: a space invested with power (in this study respondents were determined to do it differently; they had a sense of immense potential opening up for their children) and an acute vulnerability, referring to the constraining and tiring aspects of mothering, having to look after a child and attend to his or her needs.

Experiences women described covered the entire spectrum of values and feelings associated with mothering voiced and addressed in the feminists' literature – from a unique and very high value of giving birth, caring and nourishing life to the feelings of stress, loneliness, exhaustion associated with parenting responsibilities and duties – the unrecognized motherwork (Allen, 1984; Levine & Estable, 1990; Moody-Adams, 1997; Purdy, 1997; Rich, 1986; Valeska, 1984; Whitbeck, 1984). In particular, these women had many socio-economic issues to deal with and which made it impossible for them to fulfill the “shoulds” of parenting. Indeed, as Weingarten et al. (1998) pointed out, being a “good” mother is associated with specific childcare arrangements the family can afford.

However, before the next section it is important to mention here that accounts of seven women did not clearly indicate this shift from romanticized to realistic stage. The possible reasons for this are that two of the interviewees were with their children fairly briefly, as they were incarcerated shortly after they gave birth to their children. Given that they spent only a couple of months with them, most likely there was not enough time for the process that occurs over a longer period of time to develop clearly. In the case of two other women, although they voiced the shift in their experience of mothering (from joy and fun, to stress and struggle), they anchored it differently. As will be discussed in the next section in greater detail, they differentiated between periods when they were taking drugs and when they were “off” drugs; the former being associated with hardship and

stress and the latter with joy¹⁰. Accounts of the other three women did not reflect any shifts in their experiences of mothering. One of them had an extremely abusive partner, and most of her accounts during the interview evolved around how she managed to survive. On the other hand, descriptions of the remaining two women, reflected happiness and ease in bringing up their children. It is important to highlight that these two women were never substance abusers. Both were incarcerated due to fraud, had financially stable life styles and were clearly able to afford much more than the other women; they used that towards reducing their “mother work”. For instance, Ella had a live-in nanny to look after her child and she also had the child registered in daycare. Although, Ella also had an abusive partner, after having the child, she did not go through a drastic shift of worrying about basic needs such as the hygiene, food and shelter as did Mia who lived in a trailer. Rather, she was able to afford to enjoy “quality time” with her child. As some studies pointed out, good financial resources may positively reflect back on how individuals perceive themselves as parents (Brown & Moran, 1997; Kazdin Schnitzer, 1998; Weingarten et al., 1998). The discrepancy between what women needed as they were bringing up their children, and what in fact they were able to have was clearly much smaller in Ella’s case than in the case of Mia, Sue, and most of the other respondents. Thus, the drastic shift in experiencing mothering in the latter group mirrored the drastic shift in the circumstances of their lives. Conversely, the change in Ella’s circumstances was not as drastic upon having a child, and this was mirrored in her narrative which did not reflect a shift from joy to hardship.

¹⁰ Although it is hard to tell with greater certainty which was first, it is possible that these events were sequenced differently - because it was hard to deal with day to day parenting, they took drugs and vice versa.

As previously presented, some interviewees clearly articulated this shift and were able to pinpoint the circumstances of its occurrence. However, after the shift, when hardship started to dominate, women were still nevertheless mothers and carried on raising their children. The ways in which they navigated through the day to day mothering, coped and made sense out of their circumstances will be discussed in the next section.

I Tried to be a Good Mother, "Realistic" Mothering and Points of Reference

Women's accounts on mothering before incarceration during the second, realistic stage reflected certain points to which they referred and based their self-evaluations and descriptions. Here the three main points of reference are presented. First, the temporal one which women used in order to delineate different periods in their lives and in relation to which they qualified and described mothering. The second referred to the "affordances" of the situations they were in at the time, or, what was possible to do under the circumstances they were in. The third point of reference to which respondents compared and evaluated their own mothering was the mother role as they remembered it from their own childhood.

It is important to mention that the first two points of reference emerged in women's spontaneous accounts on what it was like to parent before incarceration. However, the third point of reference was likely prompted by the interview question which inquired as to who women compared themselves to when they described themselves as mothers.

Temporal Qualifiers. When asked what kind of parents they were, women's accounts clearly introduced certain temporal qualifiers. They spontaneously drew a distinction between how they perceived their parenting "then" versus how they perceived it "now,"

or they distinguished between periods when they were taking drugs and those when they were not. By introducing these temporal qualifiers, women's narratives showed that interpretations of events and developing structures of meaning were not static. They evolved and changed as did the context and circumstances of their lives. The following clearly shows how different temporal qualifiers (then vs. now) led Vera to view her own same actions (role) in different ways:

Up until now I thought I was a good parent. Now I see I've done a lot of wrong things ... Don't take me wrong, I didn't ever leave him alone, hit him ... I was there for him in body, not in my mind. I never had my boy around any crap. My kid has never seen me drink, stoned...

All but 4 interviewees were substance abusers. It was a serious issue for them and it dominated their narratives. Their accounts reflected cycles of being on and off drugs, trying to get off, difficulties they encountered when they tried to change, the ways in which stress built up, and how they made a full circle back and resorted to drugs again (as already well described in some studies, Garcia Coll et al., 1998; Goldberg et al., 1997; Hairston, 1991). Given that it was a central issue in their lives, when asked about mothering, a temporal qualifier as a reference point in their accounts on how they mothered their children was grounded in the circumstances of their substance abuse. As Kelly said, "Here I was this parent who was for them twenty-four hours a day, and all of a sudden alcohol has come into my life." Thea and Mia both used exactly the same wording when describing the change, "I was a good parent before drugs..."

While women readily and openly described the extent to which drugs affected and impaired their lives, when asked about their mothering, they drew a clear line introducing

a qualifier "when I was not on drugs" and then proceeded to describe themselves as good mothers. Their descriptions of how they mothered their children during the period of abstinence to a great extent reflect the "shoulds" of the dominant discourse. For instance, Thea's description corresponds to a "standard", socially prescribed mother role, "I stayed home, cooked ... Looked after the child like all mothers. Bathe them, feed them, watch TV with them, read them stories."

Thus, from the "now" perspective (of being clean and off drugs due to incarceration) when women described themselves as mothers they identified with what they did and how they mothered in period(s) when they were off drugs. Their mothering during substance abuse, which was in some cases a longer period than the one of abstinence, seemed to be cut off and was not a part of their self-perception of themselves as mothers. This was most likely a result of women's attempt to preserve positive self-perception of themselves as mother. However, by qualifying that before drugs they were good mothers, they also implicitly stated that they knew that how they parented during the period of substance abuse (e.g. "then") was not good.

Perceptions and evaluations are imbedded in one's particular circumstances. They may change over time given that these circumstances may change as well. As Denzin stressed, "the structures of experiences will be altered and shaped as they are lived. Thus, focusing on the lived experiences, illuminates the meaning of the phenomenon for the persons studied (Denzin, 1989, p.31). By introducing qualifiers (then vs. now; before vs. during drugs) interviewees' accounts reflect a shift in points of reference or sets of assumptions which represented bases of their self-evaluation. From the current perspective ("now") of being clean and off drugs women believed that they were not parenting

appropriately during the period they described. On the other hand, when they positioned themselves in their past circumstance (e.g. then), they thought that they were good mothers. As Vera said, "Up until now I thought I was a good parent".

The fact that "then" she thought that she was doing the right thing is of particular interest and requires further exploration. It suggests that "then" she based her evaluation of herself as a mother on different criteria than the criteria she used "now." This further required exploration of those points of reference or criteria which women used in the past and which, at the time, lead them to evaluate themselves as good mothers. Analysis of women's narratives on mothering "then"(during substance abuse) suggests, their self-evaluation as mothers was based on "coulds" or what was possible and what they could have done under given circumstances, rather than on the "shoulds". Points of reference that dominated their narratives on mothering during substance abuse highlighted how women made sense out of mothering during that period and why it was that "then" Vera thought she was doing everything right.

"Affordances" of Situations. Analysis of women's accounts on their mothering during the periods of substance abuse showed that their evaluations of themselves as mothers from the "then" perspective reflected as a point of comparison the "affordances" of the situations they were in, or what was possible in their circumstances at the time. Although the focus here is on their coping and making sense out of their mother role while at the same time dealing with substance abuse issues, it should be kept in mind that in the case of many (or all), the strains and stressors described in the previous section (poverty, isolation and abuse) were an integral part of their everyday lives. The focus on substance abuse and points of reference women used when referring to that period, is a reflection of what was

salient to them and what dominated their accounts. Their narratives clustered around the following themes: Parallel lives, I thought I was always there for him, It was not as bad as it can get, and I was always available.

Parallel lives. Accounts of some women evolved around their attempts to hide from their children that they were substance abusers and it was this effort that led them to perceive themselves as doing the right thing at the time. Maintaining parallel lives was very hard for them and they invested a great effort so that their children did not notice anything “unusual.” Respondents tended to stress this and were proud that their children were always well looked after in spite of their substance abuse. Thus, Kelly stressed, “They were well taken care of... Because I wanted to go out and drink, I’d take them to a motel room...I’d bring along a cousin to look after them... they’d get everything [they wanted]...” Similarly Mia said, “ I made sure he was in a safe place.... I never did drugs around him...” , and Vera pointed out that, “ I never had my boy around any crap. My kid has never seen me drink, stoned...”

I thought I was always there for him. While the previous theme primarily describes the “logistics” of balancing two lives - substance abuse and parenting, this theme illustrates women’s own “inner dialogue” during this period and their attempts to justify things. Wilma’s account shows how women were able to switch to the “then” mind set, and it highlights how and why some of their actions made sense at the time.

In my mind I was still doing the same, but ... I was in the bathroom all the time [e.g. taking drugs], I had a lot of baths but I never got wet; if I partied the whole night, I’d put on pajamas in the morning, so he thinks I just got up ...

It was not as bad as it can get. The following narratives show how in the overall context of being aware that they were not doing the right thing, women adjusted and readjusted points of reference in order to gain re-assurance that they were at least doing some things right. They tended to compare their circumstances with those that were even more difficult, which allowed them to believe that things were “fine.” Mila described it in the following way, “My son was never dirty or unfed. I knew that I wasn’t doing the right thing, but I was thinking, well he still has a roof over his head, meals.” Similarly, Sue pointed out that she always “had enough food for the kid” (but not necessarily for herself!).

The pattern of having different views on one’s own “same” set of behaviours, and the tendency to draw on the circumstances one is in when construing meaning in these behaviours is certainly not limited to the issue of substance abuse. In the present study this particular issue was the dominant one, given that majority of interviewees were substance abusers, and for that reason it emerged in their accounts of what it was like to parent before incarceration. The same pattern of shifting from one set of assumptions to another (or shifting points of reference) emerged in the narrative of one of the four interviewees who was not a substance abuser. In her accounts on how she mothered in the context of living with a severely abusive husband (children’s father) Deirdre described how she would discipline her children harshly because that was what her husband wanted her to do. She knew that it would be much worse for the children, if instead of her, he disciplined them. When her husband was angry and abusive towards children, she learned that it was better (for the kids) that she did not intervene and try to protect them, otherwise:

... it just got worse. He would just turn on me and then he would holler at them and hit them because they created the situation. So, I got so that I would just sometimes turn away and not look what was happening because then I wouldn't see it. But, I feel guilty for that now, there is no way the kids should have been treated the way they were.

Once removed from this situation and looking at it from the now perspective she did not agree with it, and felt guilty about it. However then, given the circumstances, it was the best she could do. If she did not discipline them harshly it would be even worse for the children. Instead of her, the father would discipline them and it would not only be a harsh punishment, but rather, a tremendous physical and verbal abuse.

For the outside observer, this mother as well as those mothers who were substance abusers would be characterized as equally bad mothers, and what they did and how they mothered would not be considered acceptable. However, their own accounts and evaluation of themselves as mothers show greater divergence. The stories depict nuances of the ways in which they cared and mothered their children and the relationship they had with them. Given the circumstances and what the mothers thought were their options, indeed, what they did was good for the children. At least the children had a roof over their heads, or, were exposed to a very strict mom rather than an extremely violent father.

These accounts point out the affordances of the situations women were facing, or what was possible in their circumstances and compared to that, how they evaluated themselves. Indeed, women's own accounts revealed, as Denzin pointed out, "... how a person emotionally and biographically fits an experience into their emerging, unfolding definitions of self" (1989, p. 62). Thus, in order to understand what it meant to them, it

was necessary to uncover and re-construct their own, rather than the dominant discourse's perspectives. In order to navigate through their circumstances women developed alternative sets of assumptions, such as those that underlie "parallel lives", or "at least the children had a roof over their head." These assumptions allowed mothers to develop a different meaning of a "good" mother which in turn, helped them to further cope and preserve an acceptable (positive) self-perception. As their circumstances changed (on or off drugs; with or apart from an abusive partner), so did their points of view and evaluation of self.

I was always available. Consistent with this was that in the case of three interviewees who were not substance abusers¹¹, their "now" verses "then" evaluations of themselves as mothers (self-perception), did not reflect any drastic change. Their perception of their mothering before incarceration, evaluated from the current perspective, did not differ from how they perceived it then. Ella described herself in the following way, "I was a good mom. First thing in the morning, I always kiss her and hug her, say I love you." Nada qualified herself, "I believe I was a kind of parent I always wanted, I respect them (kids) as unique human beings, I was always available." Similarly, Nika said, "I was a good parent, I accepted her (daughter) for who she is. She is a kid and she will make mistakes and messes... something I wasn't allowed to do."

Again, the context of their lives sheds light on why their experiences were different, compared to the rest of the interviewees. All three women were incarcerated for fraud, did not have substance abuse issues and their life style did not (negatively) affect

¹¹ The fourth interviewee who was not a substance abuser was Deirdre, discussed previously in relation to living with an abusive husband.

their day to day mothering. In other words, their life styles allowed them to get closer to the ideal and indeed from the outside point of view, their mothering was not in any way different or worse than that of non-criminal mothers. Thus they felt that they were good mothers and stated that they would never do anything differently other than fraud, which led to incarceration, and consequently, to their separation from their children. However, given that fraud made their lives more stable and comfortable, the question remains whether they would have been able to mother their children in the same way, had they not had that life style.

Mother Role as Remembered from Childhood. Another source of deriving positive self-perception of self as a mother, even when the life circumstances did not fulfill the criteria of a "normal" life, emerged in interviewees responses to the question concerning who they compared themselves to when they describe and evaluate themselves as mothers. All but 2 women compared themselves to their mothers or mother figures.

Most of them (n=9) stated that they did everything opposite from what their mothers did and for that reason they considered themselves to be good mothers. The extent to which women used almost exactly the same wording in describing this was quite remarkable. Thus, Deirdre said, "I'd like to think that everything is different from me and my mom I was a good mother..." , and Ella, "I was a good mom. I figured: if I do everything she (her mom) did not, I'll be fine."

The other four women who compared themselves to their mothers, voiced a different perspective. Three distinguished between some of their mothers' characteristics they liked and some that they did not like. They felt that in their own mothering, they themselves used and developed the former, but not the latter. For instance:

I would compare myself to my mom, well in lot of ways... Mom really did provide that security for me. But, when I was a kid, they (parents) whipped us, Mom was very strict ... I wanted to give my kids freedom ... (Kelly)

Because of things they did not do, there is a void in me which I learned to repair ... mother and father were extremely strict, I do not agree with that ... but, I learned faith from them, to joke and laugh with kids (Nada)

Only one interviewee, Mila, felt that she did the same as her mother, "I used the same kind of methods as she used... she's the one who taught me about time-outs, going to another room and counting..."

This sheds light on the parenting resources women had or better, the extent to which they did not have them.¹² The negative experiences from their childhood of what it was like to be mothered, led to the desire (and need) to do it differently with their own children, as previously discussed. However, in trying to do it differently, women found themselves between knowing how they do not want to parent on one hand, and the prescribed "myth" of a good mother which they could not achieve. In that respect, as Garcia Col et al (1998) pointed out, their inadequate growing up experiences rendered them without the knowledge of how to mother their children in an acceptable way, and indeed, as the authors suggest, it could be considered an aspect of their marginalization.

However, the statements of the nine women that they did everything opposite from their mothers and for that reason considered themselves to be good mothers pointed out that it was their inadequate growing up experience that was the point of comparison or a

¹² This could be also interpreted as another aspect of the ideology of mothering which is that daughters do not want to be like their mothers, and that they want to do it (mothering, etc) differently (Levine & Estable, 1990). This in fact reflects their own subscribing to the dominant discourse and its perspective

reference point from which they derived a positive self-perception of themselves as mothers. It also brings to light, as was the case in the analysis of the temporal qualifiers women introduced in their accounts, that a definition of a good mother covers an entire range of behaviours. It depends on the premises in which it is embedded. For the same reason, what one person might consider bad, another one may consider good or acceptable. For instance, Vera who was a substance abuser during one period of her life, and whose main source of income was selling drugs, took pride in the fact that she bought her son a computer, that he always had his own room, a desk and a bed. From the outside perspective and from the standards of the dominant discourse, this could hardly be considered adequate parenting. However, when compared to the internal model of mothering she was familiar with, her perception of herself as a mother becomes more clear. She recalls:

My mom gave us [her and the siblings when they were young] up... .. sold me to her boyfriends.... I slept in a box for a few years. With clothes piled on it and stuff because I knew ... or I thought, people wouldn't know where I was and my Mom wouldn't be able to get me hurt no more ... So, I'd hide in boxes ... cut a hole and had blanket in there... and folded cloths on top ... wherever we went I always had one. It was a safe place... they never found me when I was there. It would be only when I was going to the washroom or something.

This account sheds light on why it was important for her that her son had his own room and his bed and why it represented a source of pride for her as a mother.

So far we have explored women's accounts on what it was like to parent "then" -

that the mothers are the only ones that are responsible for their children and are therefore to be blamed.

before incarceration; how they saw it from the current perspective and how it seemed at the time - embedded in the context of their lives before incarceration. When they looked back at their mothering before incarceration, women tended to delineate the context by introducing the qualifier “before drugs” and then they proceeded to describe themselves as good mothers. Exploration of their mothering during substance abuse, resulted in identifying certain themes or sets of assumptions which stemmed from the affordances of their circumstances. These themes shed light on why some women, at the time of their substance abuse nevertheless felt they were good mothers. Another point of reference, the mother figure from their childhood, was also identified in their narratives. Most women felt positive about themselves as mothers when they compared their mothering to how they were mothered as children.

Incarceration Experiences and Projections of the Future

This section will focus on women’s mothering experiences from the “now” perspective, that is, during incarceration. It was mentioned earlier that from the now perspective most of the respondents voiced a different view on their mothering compared to how they saw it before (e.g. as Vera said, “ Now I see.....”). Exploration of their current (now) circumstances and the affordances of their situation is necessary in order to understand how women make sense out of their circumstances, as well as how they relate to their projections of the future.

Studies on incarcerated women have already identified that women tend to perceive incarceration as shelter or the very opposite, as an entire loss of control (Arbour, 1996; Garcia Coll et al., 1998; Heney, 1996; Wine, 1992). However, what follows from a closer examination of women’s accounts on incarceration as a process that evolves over

time is that in many cases it is not one or the other. As much as at one point in time, some of the aspects of incarceration were appreciated by some women, over time, some of the same aspects turned precisely into the opposite. For instance, Wilma drew a clear line and introduced a temporal qualifier when asked about experiencing incarceration as a shelter, “Now it is not like shelter, it was initially – it was a relief to be in because of the pressures on the outside.”

Likewise, some notions such as freedom and sense of control (for instance, Kya said, “incarceration helps me be in control”) were identified in women’s accounts as a source of both a positive and negative incarceration experience. If we keep in mind the fact that incarceration is a process and an evolving experience, then these seeming contradictions in fact, “fit.” In this study, the majority of respondents referred to their incarceration experience as a learning process in which they were getting to know themselves better, had an opportunity to work on their issues and so on. However, once a woman gained a sense of being able to control her life and realized what she wanted (as Wilma said, “I am getting clean, off the drugs ... I am just getting to realize what I want”), then constraints due to being incarcerated, which initially provided a sense of shelter and enabled the feeling of having control over one’s life, created just the opposite - a sense of not having the freedom. As Helga said, “I could be out there doing something useful, it is a waste of time.” Similarly, once the mother gained a sense of control over her own life, she also wanted to have a greater control over her child’s bringing up and care. As Tessa said, “... it is difficult being a parent and being locked up because you don’t get control of your children, of what happens to them.

Experiences of incarceration, as described by interviewees, fell into two groups.

The first one consisted of women who during the incarceration process never perceived it as beneficial. The second, consisted of those women who found incarceration beneficial and felt sheltered, either at one point during their incarceration or at the time of the interview. Their accounts on mothering during incarceration and their projection of this role (and their relationships with children in the future evolved around themes which map onto their current circumstances (e.g. incarceration experiences).

Non-shelter. The group that did not perceive prison as shelter, consisted of four women. It is interesting to mention that they did not have substance abuse issues. Three never did and one of them did in the past, but was not using drugs for a considerable period of time before incarceration. In contrast to others', their incarceration experiences indicated that they did not find anything helpful about being incarcerated, or perhaps just to a minimal extent. As Ella said, "... there is nothing positive from being here – well maybe ... I did a bit of soul searching... Since I am here I might as well....". Nada felt that she got rid of superfluous stuff, "... is the house clean, what do the kids wear... this is not important ... so maybe, being incarcerated and having to leave society teaches me that." It is noteworthy how, in order to maintain her daily involvement in childcare, she surpassed the clear barrier of not being able to mother her children on the day to day bases, in the following way, "When I was first brought here, I thought I couldn't parent any more... but I realize that parenting happens on many levels, and probably one of the most important ones is spiritual, I pray for them." In this way, she maintained her daily contact and connection with her children and felt engaged in and caring for them.

Accounts of these four women on the pre-incarceration experiences reflected a stable and consistent relationship with their children. They also had better lives on the

outside and had more stable relationships with their children. They did not see prison as a shelter in any way. It does not then come as a surprise that these women gave an identical statement “my kids are my life,” which pointed out that their lives were outside, there was nothing for them in prison.

Shelter. The second group where the majority of interviewees fell was the one that experienced incarceration as a shelter, at least at one point during this period. It seems that depending on their perception on how far they have progressed in working on their issues, different projections of their mother role in the future emerged.

I need my kids now. Three respondents reported that at the beginning of incarceration they needed the programs and felt sheltered. However, later on they did not feel that way any more. They acknowledged that initially they needed the time to work through their issues, to get clean from drugs and to have some quiet and peaceful time to think about their lives. However, they felt that they’d accomplished that, and wanted their children “now”. As Thea said, “I need my daughter in my life more than anything, now that I’m straight. I have so much love saved up for her.” Helga expressed it somewhat differently, “I took a parenting program, it probably costs money out on the street; but now, it is a waste of time to be inside I am just sitting here, wasting time.”

There was a sense of urgency reflected in their perception that they were ready for the life on the outside. The narrative of needing the child that these interviewees expressed, resembled the one voiced by some women when they described their feelings about mothering during the time when they were pregnant. Some needed the child to “help them grow faster” and help them “straighten up their lives”.

My kids give me strength. Contrary to the above, the following two groups consisted of women who voiced the need to work on and address many more issues before resuming (if at all) the mother role in the traditional sense. Although all interviewees voiced a sense of pride and hope associated with having children on the outside, some particularly focused on this. They felt that there were many issues they still needed to work on and they anticipated a difficult process ahead of them. However, they pointed out that having children helped them endure, as expressed in Kelly's account, "Being absent from my kids is the number 1 difficulty in my life. But then it also gives me the added strength too, to really fight my way through." In the following statement, Mia clearly shows the extent to having children gave her strength during incarceration, as well as that they represented the only source of pride and something positive in her life.

... out of all the rotten things and terrible things, the bad life I had, that is one thing nobody can cut me down for I have beautiful childrensomething to be proud of Gives me hope to straighten up ...

The central aspect of their accounts was the process of recovery and psychological issues they needed to work on during incarceration, rather than voicing a specific projection of the future for themselves and their children. Thus, the focus of Mia's account was that she felt lucky that she was "picked up" since only after that did she discover that she was pregnant and HIV positive. She felt that she had a chance to straighten up her life, precisely because she was incarcerated. Knowing that her child was out there, gave her strength.

I have to fix myself first. Some women felt that, upon release they would not be ready to take on the care of their children, and felt that nurturing themselves first was a

priority. Thus, Mila said, "Sure I could walk out these gates and walk right up and hug him, but I know that I need more help staying straight first. I'm no damned good to him if I go back to drugs." Kya, on the other hand indicated that she was not planning to resume the mother role full-time.

I don't think I really want custody right now. I realize now that I have to fix myself first. ... I don't want to take them away from what they know right now, but I do want my visitation rights. I can visit them at suitable times that we set up.

She felt that she was just learning to communicate with children and to be in control of her life, and that it would be better for her children to stay where they were. It was not because she did not care for her children that she did not want full custody of them, but rather, precisely because she did care for them, she planned to leave them in the foster home where they currently resided. Thus, in this case, based on her desire to be a good mother, but given her circumstances, she re-defined the mother role, rather than followed the traditional, prescribed one.

On Change

Accounts of women who felt they needed to work on themselves and who at least at one point experienced incarceration as shelter, seem to reflect a common assumption. There was an underlying (and in some case explicit) assumption that they needed to "fix" (better) themselves first and once that was done, their parenting would be smooth and without difficulties. Accounts of some women reflected an implicit assumption that when they got out of prison and finished working on themselves, everything would be fine.

However, without denying some women's need to work on certain issues, attention should be drawn to the following possibility. Women's expectations that

everything regarding parenting would be all right, as soon as they “straighten up,” may be a reflection of a deeply embedded dominant discourse assumption that a problem in parenting is always an indication that there is in fact a problem with the mother. If she was “fixed” and straightened up, the “natural” process of mothering would be smooth. The problem with this point of view is that it perceives “I” as separate and independent of its situatedness and context. Women are offered programs to help them become better mothers, to help them stop substance abuse, and so on. An assumption that there is something inside themselves and personal that is wrong and needs to be fixed underlies this approach. Moreover, it is internalized by the women themselves. Expectations that everything will be fine in terms of their mothering and looking after children as soon as they straighten up is problematic and may create difficulties. This expectation may set the stage for disappointment, guilt and decrease of self-worth, which in turn may increase the likelihood of women resorting to the old life styles. Thea who was re-incarcerated shortly after being released, described this experience:

Before, when I got out.... Things are not as easy as you think they're going to be. I set myself up for a fall.... I worked hard on myself (during incarceration), went out there and boom, I couldn't handle that lifestyle, I didn't now itOnce I got out there I was bored, lonely. Because this new life, I knew nothing about. I didn't know where to begin, how to act, whatever. I've had this life for so long. And I didn't have to act, I didn't have to be anybody, just myself. I could swallow alcohol and drugs.

During incarceration, women were not engaged in the complex and difficult day to day childcare and the “shoulds” of mothering.¹³ Rather, what they would like to do became central in their experiences of being a mother. It is quite similar to the enthusiasm that dominated their first stage of parenting when they were pregnant. In that respect some of the themes that were present in their accounts of pregnancy emerged again. It seems that, to some extent, the “romanticized” view on mothering occurs or more accurately, re-occurs during incarceration. They are on the inside, as their kids were during pregnancy, and at that stage, there are numerous potentials out there.

However, once women are released from prison, they are going back to the similar if not worse, disadvantaged circumstance they lived in before. If women experience confinement such as prison as shelter, then that in itself speaks of the extent to which their lives on the outside were difficult. As previously discussed, these circumstances impose multiple stressors and demands and women will have to deal with and respond to them. While women are in prison, quite a few of these stressors are taken care of. They have food and a roof over their heads, which as shown previously, was not necessarily the case in the past, and may not be upon their release. As Nika said “... jail is not bad at all, all your basic needs are met, I’d stay here forever if I had my daughter here...”

Discussion

In order to understand the complexities of mothering during incarceration, women’s accounts were situated within the context of their own narratives of their lives.

¹³ Indeed, as Pollock pointed out in her study, some women are relieved that they do not have day to day care of their children. However, it is a rather simplistic description of this complex issue since it highlights only one of many layers of this experience. Analysis of interviewees’ accounts indicates that in addition to the relief that some women certainly experienced, their experiences as incarcerated mothers, at the same time also reflected guilt feelings, a sense that they were working on their issues and therefore

They were also examined in temporal terms. Their narratives were analysed chronologically, starting with recollections of their reactions and feelings about pregnancy. The majority recalled joy and happiness associated with being pregnant and how they wanted and planned to do everything "right." However, as the mothering process evolved, the accounts of some women indicated that their experiences of mothering changed, from happiness and joy to hardship and difficulties. Exploration of the circumstances of their lives, showed that there was a strong association between this shift in their experiences on one hand and the limitations, burdens and multiple socio-economic difficulties women experienced in their day to day lives, on the other. The temporal approach explored in this study showed that women's attempts to follow the traditional and prescribed mother-role as they planned to do during pregnancy, dissolved in their daily encounters with poverty and isolation. During those periods when they faced multiple difficulties due to their disadvantaged and marginalized position, that is, when their everyday lives were very different from the mainstream one, women developed new criteria and points of reference in relation to which they evaluated themselves as mothers.

These points of reference reflected affordances of the situation women were in, that is, what was possible and what they could have done given their circumstances. For instance, one of the arrangements identified in this study as "parallel" lives showed that some mothers who were substance abusers, ensured that their children were well looked after, fed and safe, during the times when they went on binges. This further represented a point of reference and a source of positive self-perception for them.

There was a notable distinction between women who were substance abusers and

bettering themselves as mothers, and so on.

those who were not in respect to their accounts on mothering before incarceration. Those women who did not have substance abuse issues, reported more stable life styles as well as financial means (although acquired through fraud) which in a way, allowed them to get closer to dominant groups' standards. Consequently, throughout their mothering, their circumstances did not drastically change, nor did their experiences of mothering.

A point of reference on which those with stable and unstable circumstances did not differ were the mother roles or internal models of parenting as women remembered them from their childhoods. Women offenders' often impoverished childhood and poor parental/maternal model was already addressed in previous studies (Chesney-Lind, 1997; Comack, 1996; Elizabeth Fry Society, 1994; Eljdupovic-Guzina, 1999; Heney, 1996; Shaw et al., 1990) and some referred to it as a source of women's marginalization (Garcia Coll et al. (1998). However, the present study highlighted two relevant points on this issue. The inadequate maternal role that women carry from childhood may represent a point of comparison for evaluating their own mothering and as a result, a source of positive self-perception. Even those women who acknowledged that in the past they did not do many things right, nevertheless felt positively about themselves as mothers when they compared themselves to their own mothers. Second, results of this study suggest that these models from childhood represent guidelines for women with regard to what not to do or how they do not want to treat their kids.

Understanding incarceration from a temporal perspective also highlighted certain dimensions that were hidden from a "snap-shot" point of view. In the case of some women, and depending on the context of their pre-incarceration lives, incarceration was not experienced as shelter or as a loss of control, as some studies reported (Arbour, 1996;

Garcia Coll et al., 1998; Heney, 1996; Wine, 1992). Rather, these experiences were altered and evolved into each other. In turn, incarceration experiences were reflected in and shaped women's self-perception of themselves as mothers and how they saw their mother role in the future.

A distinction between women who were substance abusers and those who were not clearly emerged in their incarceration experiences and plans for the future. Women who did not have substance abuse issues never experienced prison as shelter. When they talked about their children, they all stated "my kids are my life." By doing so they clearly showed that their lives were on the outside, not on the inside, that is, in the prison. However, those women who had substance abuse issues experienced prison as shelter at least at one point in time. They also saw it as an opportunity to work on their issues. Depending on the extent to which women felt they made progress in working on various issues, they voiced different future plans regarding their children. Thus, some felt that they dealt with all their issues and wanted to be with and care for their children immediately. Others felt they still needed to work on various concerns and that the best for their children would be if they did not resume the full time mother role immediately upon release.

The present study argued and drew attention to the potential danger of women's expectations and beliefs that once they "straightened up", everything else regarding their mothering and relationship with their children would "spontaneously" fall into place. This expectation reflects the dominant discourse's individualistic point of view which locates the problem solely within the individual. The assumption underlying this point of view is that "I" has to change. However, as shown in this study, I itself changes depending on the

circumstances. Given that upon release women are going back to the same or worse circumstances, it is likely that, as they did before, they will again encounter numerous obstacles and difficulties. Due to the lack of a “social net” and support, it could be expected that they would go back to the old solutions (as they are familiar with them), as the respondent who was re-incarcerated indicated. However, one may wonder why is it that an individual would go back to the old ways given that she herself found it “bad” and inadequate when she looked back on it during incarceration. As the present study suggests, an answer to this question emerged once issues were analysed from “within.” An entire set of assumptions and mechanisms which women used at the time to make sense out of their substance abuse and mothering was revealed. Based on these assumptions or points of reference, many of the habits and behaviours that were not acceptable from the outside perspective, including women’s own point of view when they were distant from these circumstances (e.g. during incarceration), in fact, made sense.

Interestingly, there were certain similarities in women’s accounts on mothering during incarceration and during their pregnancies. Desire and plans for everything to be perfect, a sense of pride and hope associated with having children dominated their narratives. In other words, their narratives reflected norms of the dominant discourse. In addition, a common aspect of these two situations (pregnancy and incarceration) is that women did not face everyday hardships associated with marginalization and demands of parenting. Thus, in the “sheltered” place they perceived themselves from the perspective of the mainstream “shoulds” and it was this affordance of the situation that enabled women to switch to the mainstream assumptions and standards. It is likely that precisely this factor accounts for reports of some studies that not only researchers but some women

themselves voiced that, before incarceration, they were not good parents to their children (Adelberg & Currie, 1993; Garcia Collet al., 1998) . However, without knowing the context, this statement can be deceptive and lead to certain implications. Given that the women and “establishment” agree that their parenting before incarceration was not good, it justifies offering parenting programs to women during incarceration in order to help them learn or improve their skills. This not only focuses (points the finger) on the individual, as discussed, but neglects the fact that once their circumstances change and their daily pressures accumulate, women may not experience mothering based on same assumptions as the outsiders and as they did in prison (e.g. the shoulds), but rather on the coulds.

This points towards certain implications of this study. The temporal perspective which was employed pointed out the significance of the circumstances women were in when examining their mothering experiences. Given the possibility of resorting to different points of reference in self-evaluations as the circumstances change, it seems of utmost relevance to include this notion in the preparation of women for re-entering the society. There needs to be an awareness of the possibility that switching to different assumptions may render their current point of view and values irrelevant. Furthermore, analysis of their pre-incarceration living environment pointed toward the lack of socio-economic support which indicates that this needs to be available for women to reach out; expecting only “I” to change is not sufficient.

The smaller number of women offenders who did not have substance abuse problems and described a rather “mainstream” life style and norms, merit attention here. These women were sentenced for fraud, which in fact allowed them and their children to

have a stable life. Clearly in the case of these women a different re-integration strategy needs to be developed.

This highlights one of the limitations of the present study. Although the sample size was small, which is the case with the entire population as well, it was nevertheless clear that there are sub-groups of incarcerated women who faced different issues before as well as during incarceration. In order to understand them better, future research needs to focus on and compare woman's commonalities as well as unique needs and experiences, as opposed to making the assumption that they are all alike.

Another limitation of this study may be associated with the fact that the respondents were a selected group of incarcerated mothers who volunteered to participate; as was stated in the previous study, their perspectives may not necessarily well represent those of other incarcerated mothers.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

All three studies presented in this thesis were designed to examine incarcerated women's experiences of mothering. Each study examined certain aspect of this issue from a different point of view and using different sources of information. The first study used archival data collected by corrections staff to assess women's functioning in various domains, including their parenting, before incarceration. Indicators were based on the outside observer's assessments of inmates' weaknesses and difficulties in various areas. These measures were developed for and are used by correctional services to develop inmates' correctional plans. The second study used self-report measures (questionnaires) that tapped into women's current experiences, as well as their pre-incarceration parenting skills covering the entire range (both their strengths and weaknesses). While this study involved women's self-reports, it was clearly constrained by dominant group norms that guided the development of particular questions and narrowed the issues defined to be relevant. Finally, the third study was based on open-ended interviews in which women expressed their experiences on mothering in their own words and in their own way.

The reason for examining different points of view and using different sources was the expectation that the outsiders' and insiders' perspectives may be quite different. Given the socio-economic circumstances of most of women offenders, it was possible that their self-perceptions and perceptions of them from the outside perspective differed. Women offenders' lives are characterized by multiple marginalizations (Adelberg & Currie, 1993; Chesney-Lind, 1997; Comak, 1996; Elizabeth Fry Society, 1994). Studies argued that due to these circumstances, the dominant group tends to perceive these individuals as deviant, or that something is wrong with them. Marginalized individuals may internalize this point

of view as a norm and also perceive themselves as such on one hand, but on the other, those who are marginalized may precisely for that reason perceive things differently and use different criteria (Atwood & Genovese, 1997; Parnel & Vanderkloot, 1994; Weingarten, Surrey, Garcia Coll and Watkins (1998). Therefore, in the present thesis it was maintained that in order to understand the phenomena in greater depth, these potentially different points of view should be considered.

There is a direct practical or applied implication of understanding these different points of view. The dominant group is the one that sets the standards, which means that when women enter incarceration, it is the "officials" who assess what women need to change and how; they develop inmates' correctional plans and design programs for them. It is therefore important to see how and whether the perceptions of both sides match. Another reason for exploring different points of view is that in the more recent past Correctional Services of Canada conducted a survey of incarcerated women in order to collect information on what women themselves say they need. Results of the survey "Creating Choices" (1990) documented a number of needs women offenders voiced, such as the need for various programs (including the one on parenting), certain locations of the facilities, their layout and so on. Since then steps were taken in that direction and community like prisons were built. Quite a few of these changes were focused on enabling women to maintain contact with their children during incarceration. However, there has not yet been any research examining the mother-child contact and mothering during incarceration.

The three studies presented here not only covered different perspectives (women's own perspectives and the observers') and used different sources, but they also examined

various aspects of mothering. It was argued that in order to understand the issue of mothering during incarceration it was necessary to take into consideration a wider context, and not only whether or not women maintained contact with their children during this period. When incarcerated, women bring their experiences from the past, which may affect their mothering during incarceration. Furthermore, given that incarceration represents a unique and a drastic change in one's life, it was argued that these factors from women's immediate here and now experiences may also affect and shape their mothering.

While the first two studies, the one based on archival data and the other one based on questionnaires represented snapshots, the third study examined issues from a temporal point of view and analyzed women's accounts of mothering experiences from pregnancy to their plans for the future. This approach proved valuable as it provided a wider context within which findings of the other two studies could be situated. Furthermore, analyzing issues by contextualizing them and including the temporal dimension was deemed fruitful as it identified certain factors that become relevant under specific circumstances. It also enabled identifying some layers that are common to both the insiders' and the outsiders' perspectives.

Results showed that the chances of a woman being perceived as inadequate parent are greater, the greater her marginalization on various domains of her life, such as employment, personal/emotional orientation, marital relations, community functioning, associates/social interactions and substance abuse. However, in the present study, of all assessed domains, only mothers' mental health (personal/emotional orientation) had a unique contribution to predicting ratings of inadequate parenting. Given that this assessment was done from the outside point of view, that is, by the correctional officer, it

may be a reflection of the dominant discourse's tendency to attribute difficulties in one's life as solely located within that person. It is interesting that women's responses in the third study, which was based on their own words and ways of perceiving things, seemed to reflect the same point of view. In particular, some women offenders expressed expectations that if during incarceration they worked on themselves, that is, on their personal issues (such as addictions) their mothering would be good or better. While an association between improvement in mental health and higher quality of parenting cannot be denied, in view of women's accounts on their mothering as a process, this point of view seems simplistic and it reflects the dominant discourse's individualist perspective – women were localizing the ability to parent adequately solely within themselves.

A concept that may shed light on this seemingly unusual and unexpected convergence between these two points of view resulted from the analysis of women's accounts on their mothering before incarceration. Temporal analysis of women's experiences showed how their evaluation of themselves as mothers was shaped by the circumstances they were in. Their accounts showed how the affordances of the situations women were in, or what was possible under their circumstances, shaped their perception of themselves and self-evaluation as mothers. Thus, when women were experiencing multiple difficulties such as poverty, isolation, severe substance abuse, they nevertheless felt that as mothers they were doing a good job. The basis of this self-evaluation was the comparisons they made with what they could have done under those conditions. This study identified a couple of points of reference that emerged from women's spontaneous accounts on their lives "then", and during substance abuse. The notion of "parallel lives" showed that, at the time, being a good mother meant that women would

make sure their children were well looked after when they went on binges. Another notion, for instance "It was not as bad as it can get" indicated that in order to preserve a positive self-perception of self as a mother, women would compare the circumstances their children were in with ones that were even worse; although things were not perfect, at least the child had a roof over his/her head. These findings suggest that the points of reference or comparison women used in their self-evaluation were not the standards of the dominant group, the prescribed shoulds, but rather the coulds of their everyday lives. In spite of numerous difficulties it seems that having a child and being a mother was still nevertheless important to women, as evidenced by the described points of reference. Women developed these points of reference in their attempt to make sense out of their lives and mother-roles. They enabled women to derive a positive self-perception about something that mattered to them.

In view of this, if we go back to the finding that there is a similarity between women's expectations that if they work on themselves during incarceration it would better their parenting skills on one side, and correctional officers' assessment on the other, it is possible to identify what accounts for this similarity. Paradoxically, during incarceration many women can "afford" to think along the lines of the dominant discourse. At one point in time, many experienced prison as shelter, had a sense of stability and unlike their lives on the outside, their basic needs were met. Thus, it may have been the affordances of the prison that allowed some women to resort to the mainstream norms. This likely underlies the fact that working on themselves and taking various programs was precisely what women offenders voiced that they needed, as documented in *Creating Choices*. These women were incarcerated at the time and their statements most likely reflected

these circumstances. In other words, the affordance of the situation they were in when the Creating Choices survey was conducted, led them to focus on the “I” that needs to change and become better, just as it did in the present study.

In addition to their circumstances being such that they could afford the dominant group standards, it was also likely that the prison climate advocates endorsement of this point of view and provides incentives for it. Thus, during incarceration women aligned their thinking and evaluation with the one of the dominant discourse, which was the one on which the correctional officers most likely based their assessment. This merits further exploration in future research. It could be assessed by collecting data on women’s self-assessments at two points in time (for instance, at the onset of their incarceration, and later on) and comparing them to correctional officers’ assessments. In fact, women offenders themselves could be asked to provide self-assessments using the same OIA indicators which are routinely used by correctional officers. Alternatively, once women are released from prison, a follow-up study could be conducted which would explore women’s perception on what would have been beneficial during the period of incarceration, as they see it from the perspective of being released and re-entering the society.¹⁴

A more far reaching implication of the findings presented here is that in order to understand phenomena and experiences as they are lived, it is not sufficient to hear participants’ own voices and points of view. In addition to that, it is important to connect what respondents express in their own voices with when and where they expressed it.

¹⁴ However, it should be kept in mind that not all women in the present study, nor in the population of women offenders in general, lived in marginalized circumstances prior to incarceration. Some had stable incomes (although primarily due to fraud) and a incarceration experiences differently.

This is important because, as the present studies showed, experiences change as they are lived. Thus, women may experience prison as shelter or as a loss of control as already documented in some studies (Arbour, 1996; Garcia Coll et al., 1998; Heney, 1996; Wine, 1992). However, when perceived in temporal and contextual terms, it becomes apparent that a same person could have these two opposite experiences. Similarly, when women look back on their parenting before incarceration, studies showed that some maintained that they were not good mothers to their children (Adelberg & Currie, 1993; Garcia Coll, Surrey, Buccio-Notaro & Molla, 1998). However, this statement, per se, may be misleading because it does not take into account the effect of women's circumstances at the time on this point of view. When they were on the outside and not sheltered, their evaluation of their mothering was different and consistent with the circumstances they were in. Therefore, the unit of analysis in future research should include all of these components: how a particular behaviour was qualified, when and by whom. This will allow determining the changes that occur over time and under various circumstances.

This general context within which mothering during incarceration occurs provides an additional dimension for understanding certain aspects of mothering which were examined in the second study. This study argued that in order to understand mothering during this period, two of its aspects – mother-child relationship and mother's self-perception – needed to be examined, as well as their association with the mother's sense of hope for the future.

Results showed that those mothers who used adequate parenting skills in the past, as defined by normative research, had a more satisfying relationship with their children during incarceration. Given that the mother and the child had a positive relationship in the

past, this may have represented a positive resource that mothers brought into the situation of incarceration. However, those mothers who used less adequate parenting style in the past, but whose incarceration experience was more positive, were also able to establish a satisfying relationship with children. Thus, it is likely that they benefited from the programs and/or working on themselves during incarceration. In other words, during incarceration they may have learned new skills and coping mechanisms which they used in relation to their children. In that case, indeed the satisfactory mother-child relationship could be attributed to them learning adequate parenting skills. However, without denying that this may have certainly been the case with some women, analysis of women's accounts on their parenting before incarceration points towards a different possibility. It may not necessarily be that these women learned something specifically new, such as adequate parenting skills per se. Rather, it could be that the affordance of the environment they were in (e.g. prison) allowed them to utilize these skills (again). Even if women exhibited inadequate parenting before incarceration, they may nevertheless have had the adequate ones as a part of their parenting resources. This indicates that the entire spectrum of parenting skills needs to be assessed, rather than just the weaknesses. It further requires re-examining the process of developing correctional plans for inmates and rather than just identifying negative isolated tendencies, to endorse a more holistic approach.

However, a limitation of the presented results which should be examined in future research is that although they show that incarceration experience certainly had an effect on the mother-child relationship, it is not clear if this could be attributed to the specific programs offered in institutions or to the general sense of shelter and stability women may

have in prison. In the present study this was hard to differentiate as the sample size was small; some participants finished some programs, others were waiting to start them and some were going through various programs when the research was conducted.

The importance of mothering during incarceration and its effect on women's sense of hope for the future was also evident. It was argued that the mother-child relationship and the woman's self-perception of herself as a mother would affect mother's sense of hope. As expected, both aspects of mothering affected sense of hope, and in fact, there was an interaction effect. It should be mentioned that incarceration experience was also controlled for and that the interaction between the two aspects of mothering accounted for a sense of hope over and above incarceration experience. Incarceration experience was controlled for as it was reasonable to expect that one's sense of hope may be negatively affected by confinement, or alternatively, if incarceration was experienced as shelter, than it may be associated with one's greater sense of hope.

Thus the results showed that the more satisfying mother-child relationship during incarceration, the greater mother's sense of hope. If the mother-child relationship was not satisfactory, then it was the woman's positive self-perception of herself as a mother that gave her hope. The reason for this may be that women could develop positive self-perceptions as mothers if they felt they were working on various issues during incarceration. However, whether it was precisely these factors that underlie women's positive self-perception was not clear. Factors that were in the present study expected to account for this aspect of mothering were not significant; that is, incarceration experience, adequate parenting and the childcare arrangements. Thus, it remains to be examined in future research which factors account for mothers' self-perception during incarceration in

order to incorporate them in programs, given that it significantly affects women's sense of hope for the future. In addition, results showed that the contact with the child per se did not affect women's depression or sense of hope. This is contrary to inferences that were drawn from studies which documented that separation from children was a main source of depression in incarcerated women (Hairston, 1991; Heney, 1996; Shaw et al., 1990; Wine, 1992). It does not mean that the contact is not important; rather, in order to ensure women's sense of hope and minimize depression, other aspects of mothering need to be addressed as well.

In view of the previous discussion on the relevance of the context or the affordances of the situation, one may argue that the sense of hope that is associated with mothering during incarceration represents a reflection of women's current circumstances. In other words, the fact that during incarceration, mothering and mother-role gave them a sense of hope for the future does not mean that this will indeed occur in the future, upon release from prison. Indeed, analysis of women's accounts on mothering viewed temporally, as they evolved over time, provides some validation for this concern. This analysis indicated that most of the women recollected enthusiasm and the importance of becoming a mother during pregnancy. They were proud, happy and felt they had a reason to "shape up." However, over time, they encountered many stressors, of which some were directly related to the fact that they had a child to look after. This introduced a shift in their experiences of mothering; memories of hardship and stress were more present in their recollections. Similarly, the notions of pride, having a reason to shape up and work hard on themselves during incarceration, were also identified in accounts on what it was like to be incarcerated and to know that they have children on the outside. However, the

environment in which women lived before incarceration, is likely the same or similar to the one they will be going back upon release. Therefore, it could be expected that, as they did in the past, these circumstance may again negatively affect women's (experiences of) mothering. This does not imply that a change is not possible, but rather, it introduces caution in encouraging women's expectations that everything depends entirely on them, and only if they work hard on themselves during incarceration, their lives upon release will be "under control".

Finally, a limitation of the presented studies that should be kept in mind is the small sample size that was used. However, given that the size of the entire population is rather small, this may be an inherent difficulty in future research studies of this population. In order to surpass this limitation, it would be beneficial to expand data for each inmate that are routinely collected at the onset of incarceration. Over time this would allow a more reliable and greater sample size. Another limitation that merits specific attention is that, again primarily due to a small sample size, important factors such as race and ethnic background were not specifically explored.

In conclusion, the presented studies pointed out that in order to understand mothering during incarceration, it is important to examine factors stemming from women's past as well as present circumstances that are associated with this issue, as well as the ways in which the wider context of their lives gives meaning to them.

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Appendix A

Measures From The Offender Intake Assessment

DOMAIN	PRINCIPAL COMPONENT	INDICATORS
Employment	Ability	Has less than grade 8? Has less than grade 10? Has no high school diploma? Finds learning difficult? Has learning disabilities? Has physical problems which interfere with learning? Has memory problems? Has concentration problems? Has problems with reading? Has problems with writing? Has problems with numeracy? Has difficulty comprehending instructions? Lacks a skill area/trade/profession? Dissatisfied with skill area/trade/profession? Has physical problems that interfere with work?
	Work Record	Has no employment history? Unemployed at the time of arrest? Unemployed 90% or more? Unemployed 50% or more? Has an unstable job history? Often shows up late for work? Has poor attendance record? Has difficulty meeting workload requirements? Lacks initiative? Has quit a job without another? Has been laid off from work? Has been fired from a job?
	Rewards	Salary has been insufficient? Lacks employment benefits? Job lacks security?

	Co-worker relations	Has difficulty with co-workers?
	Supervisory relations	Has difficulties with superiors?
Marital Family	Interventions	Prior vocational assessment(s)?
		Has participated in employment programs?
		Has completed an occupational development program?
Marital Family	Family Background	Childhood lacked family ties?
		Mother absent during childhood?
		Maternal relations negative as a child?
		Father absent during childhood?
		Paternal relations negative as a child?
		Parents relationship dysfunctional during childhood?
		Spousal abuse during childhood?
		Sibling relations negative during childhood?
		Other relative(s) relations negative during childhood?
		Family members involved in crime?
	Marital Relations	Currently single?
		Has been married/common-law in the past?
		Dissatisfied with current relationship?
		Money problems affect relationship(s) past/present?
		Sexual problem affect relationship(s) past/present?
		Communication problems affect the Relationship(s)?
		Has been a victim of spousal abuse?
		Has been a perpetrator of spousal abuse?
	Parenting Responsibility	Has no parenting responsibilities?
		Unable to handle parenting responsibilities?
		Unable to control the child's behavior appropriately?
		Perceives self as unable to control the child's behavior?
		Supervises child improperly?

		<p>Does not participate in activities with the child?</p> <p>Lacks an understanding of child development?</p> <p>Family is unable to get along as a unit?</p> <p>Has been arrested for child abuse?</p> <p>Has been arrested for incest?</p>
	Interventions	<p>Prior marital/family assessment(s)?</p> <p>Has participated in marital/family therapy?</p> <p>Has completed a marital/family intervention program?</p>
Associates/Social Interaction	Attachments	<p>Socially isolated?</p> <p>Associates with substance abusers?</p> <p>Has many criminal acquaintances?</p> <p>Has mostly criminal friends?</p> <p>Has been affiliated with a gang?</p> <p>Resides in a criminogenic area?</p> <p>Unattached to any community groups</p>
	Interpersonal Relations	<p>Relations are described as predatory?</p> <p>Often victimized in social relations?</p> <p>Easily influenced by others?</p> <p>Has difficulty communicating with others?</p>
Substance Abuse	Alcohol Abuse	<p>Abuses alcohol?</p> <p>Began drinking at an early age?</p> <p>Drinks on a regular basis?</p> <p>Has a history of drinking binges?</p> <p>Has combined the use of alcohol and drugs?</p> <p>Drinks to excess during leisure time?</p> <p>Drinks to excess in social situations?</p> <p>Drinks to relieve stress?</p> <p>Drinking interfere with employment?</p> <p>Drinking interferes with marital/family relations?</p> <p>Drinking interferes with social relations?</p> <p>Drinking has resulted in law violations?</p> <p>Drinking interferes with health?</p>

Community Functioning	Drug Abuse	<p>Abuses drugs (solvents, prescription drugs, etc.)?</p> <p>Began using drugs at an early age?</p> <p>Uses drugs on a regular basis?</p> <p>Has gone on drug-taking sprees?</p> <p>Has combined the use of different drugs?</p> <p>Uses drugs during leisure time?</p> <p>Uses drugs in social situations?</p> <p>Uses drugs to relieve stress?</p> <p>Drug use interferes with employment?</p> <p>Drug use interferes with marital/family relations?</p> <p>Drug use interferes with social relations?</p> <p>Drug use has resulted in law violations?</p> <p>Drug use interferes with health?</p>
	Interventions	<p>Prior substance abuse assessment(s)?</p> <p>Has participated in substance abuse treatment?</p> <p>Has completed substance abuse treatment?</p>
	Accommodation	<p>Has unstable accommodation?</p> <p>Residence is poorly maintained?</p>
	Deportment	<p>Has poor self-presentation?</p> <p>Has poor hygiene?</p>
	Health	<p>Has physical problems?</p> <p>Has dental problems?</p> <p>Has dietary problems?</p>
	Finance	<p>Difficulty meeting bills?</p> <p>Has outstanding debts?</p> <p>Has no bank accounts?</p> <p>Has no credit?</p> <p>Has no collateral?</p>
	Communication	<p>Has problems writing?</p> <p>Unable to express verbally?</p>
	Leisure	<p>Has no hobbies?</p> <p>Does not participate in organized activities?</p>

Personal/Emotional Orientation	Support	Unaware of social services? Has used social assistance?
	Intervention	Prior assessment for community functioning? Has participated in a community skills program? Has completed a community skills program?
	Self-concept	Feels especially self-important? Physical prowess problematic? Family ties are problematic? Ethnicity is problematic? Religion is problematic? Gang member?
	Cognition	Unable to recognize problem areas? Has difficulties solving interpersonal problems? Unable to generate choices? Unaware of consequences? Goal setting is unrealistic? Has disregard for others? Socially unaware? Impulsive? Incapable of understanding the feelings of others? Narrow and rigid thinking?
	Behavioral	Aggressive? Assertion problem? Copes with stress poorly? Poor conflict resolution? Manages time poorly? Gambling is problematic? Has low frustration tolerance? Hostile? Worries unreasonably? Takes risks inappropriately? Thrill-seeking? Non-reflective? Is not conscientious? Manipulative?

Sexual Behavior

Has difficulty performing sexually?
Sexual identity problem?
Inappropriate sexual preferences?
Sexual attitudes are problematic?

Mental Ability

Mentally deficient?

Mental Health

Diagnosed as disordered in the past?
Diagnosed as disordered currently?

Interventions

Prior personal/emotional assessment(s)?
Prescribed medication in the past?
Prescribed medication currently?
Past hospitalization?
Current hospitalization?
Received outpatient services in the past?
Receiving outpatient services prior to admission?
Past programs participation?
Current program participation?

Appendix B

Parenting Practices Questionnaire

Being a parent is not always easy. In different situations we behave towards our children in different ways, sometimes liking it more than others. For each item please rate how often you behaved with your child in the described way. If your child is very young or an adult, you may not be able to answer all the questions.

- 1 = **Never**
2 = **Once In Awhile**
3 = **About Half of the Time**
4 = **Very Often**
5 = **Always**

Please answer the questions in relation to the child with whom you are in contact during incarceration the most. If it is more than one child, please answer separately for each one. If you are currently not in contact with any of your children, answer the following in relation to the child you spent the most time with before you came to this institution.

1. _____ I encouraged my child to talk about the his/her troubles.
2. _____ I guided my child by punishment more than by reason.
3. _____ I knew the names of my child's friends.
4. _____ I found it difficult to discipline my child.
5. _____ I gave praise when my child was good.
6. _____ I spanked when my child was disobedient.
7. _____ I joked and played with my child.
8. _____ I withheld scolding and/or criticism even when my child acted contrary to my wishes.
9. _____ I showed sympathy when my child was hurt or frustrated.
10. _____ I punished by taking privileges away from my child with little if any explanations.
11. _____ I spoiled my child.
12. _____ I gave comfort and understanding when my child was upset.
13. _____ I yelled or shouted when my child misbehaved.
14. _____ I was easy going and relaxed with my child.
15. _____ I allowed my child to annoy someone else.
16. _____ I told my child my expectations regarding behavior before the child engaged in an activity.

17. _____ I scolded and criticized to make my child improve.
18. _____ I showed patience with my child.
19. _____ I grabbed my child when being disobedient.
20. _____ I stated punishments to my child and did not actually do them.
21. _____ I was responsive to my child's feelings or needs.
22. _____ I allowed my child to give input into family rules.
23. _____ I argued with my child.
24. _____ I appeared confident about parenting abilities.
25. _____ I gave my child reasons why rules should be obeyed.
26. _____ I appeared to be more concerned with own feelings than with my child's feelings.
27. _____ I told my child that I appreciated what s/he tried or accomplished.
28. _____ I punished by putting my child off somewhere alone with little if any explanations .
29. _____ I helped my child to understand the impact of behavior by encouraging my child to talk about the consequences of own actions.
30. _____ I was afraid that disciplining my child for misbehavior would cause the child to not like me.
31. _____ I took my child's desires into account before asking him/her to do something.
32. _____ I exploded in anger towards my child.
33. _____ I was aware of problems or concerns about my child in school.
34. _____ I threatened my child with punishment more often than I actually gave it.
35. _____ I expressed affection by hugging, kissing, and holding my child.
36. _____ I ignored my child's misbehavior.
37. _____ I used physical punishment as a way of disciplining my child.
38. _____ I carried out discipline after my child misbehaved.
39. _____ I apologized to my child when making a mistake in parenting.
40. _____ I told my child what to do.
41. _____ I gave in when my child caused a commotion about something.
42. _____ I talked it over and reasoned with my child when s/he misbehaved.
43. _____ I slapped my child when s/he misbehaved.
44. _____ I disagreed with my child.
45. _____ I allowed my child to interrupt others.

46. _____ I had warm and intimate times together with my child.
47. _____ When two children were fighting, I disciplined the children first and asked questions later.
48. _____ I encouraged my child to freely express himself or herself even when disagreed with me.
49. _____ I bribed my child with rewards to bring about compliance.
50. _____ I scolded or criticized when my child's behavior didn't meet my expectations.
51. _____ I showed respect for my child's opinions by encouraging him/her to express them.
52. _____ I set strict well-established rules for my child.
53. _____ I explained to my child how I felt about his/her good and bad behavior.
54. _____ I used threats as punishment with little or no justification.
55. _____ I took into account my child's preferences in making plans for the family.
56. _____ When my child asked why s/he had to conform, I stated: because I said so, or I am your parent I want you to.
57. _____ I appeared unsure on how to solve my child's misbehavior.
58. _____ I explained the consequences of my child's behavior.
59. _____ I demanded that my child did things.
60. _____ I channeled my child's misbehavior into a more acceptable activity.
61. _____ I shoved my child when the s/he was disobedient.
62. _____ I emphasized the reasons for rules.

Appendix C

Incarceration Experiences

Prison Control Scale

This questionnaire asks you to judge *how much control or influence* you think you have over some of the things which may happen to you *while in prison*. An example of something where you would have no control would be, let's say, the kind of hand you got in a poker game since this is pretty much determined by chance. On the other hand, you could have a lot of control over whether you win the hand or not since you could, for example, use your skills in bluffing or calculating odds. For each of the things listed below, could you please decide *how much control* you think you have *while you're in prison*. Use a *number from 1 to 5* to give your answer where:

- 1 = is no control at all
- 2 = is very little control
- 3 = is some control
- 4 = is quite a bit of control
- 5 = is complete or total control

1. How often the people- you love visit and write to you _____
2. Keeping yourself from getting frustrated or angry _____
3. Staying in touch with the world and current events _____
4. Not becoming institutionalized _____
5. Keeping yourself from getting down and depressed _____
6. Getting things set up for your release _____
7. Getting help from staff when you need it _____
8. Solving family problems that may come up _____
9. Keeping yourself from getting lonely _____
10. Staying on top of things in the institution _____
11. Not losing your self-confidence _____
12. Whether you end up doing something useful with your time in prison _____
13. Changing a bad habit you may want to change _____
14. Changing your way of thinking about certain things while in prison _____
15. Using time here as a "chance" to think about your life in a different way _____

Paying for child's visits	1	2	3	4	5
	very hard to manage				very easy to manage

Do you receive any financial assistance for phone calls and visits from someone?

1 2 3 4 5

a little a great deal

How do you find this institution in regards to children coming to visit?

1 2 3 4 5

not suitable suitable

How do you find the rooms in the institution designated for visits with children?

1 2 3 4 5

not suitable suitable

Appendix D

Childcare arrangement during mother's incarceration

1. Who is your child staying with while you are here?

2. How do you find your communication with your child's careprovider?

0 1 2 3 4
Not satisfied at all Entirely satisfied

3. If you are in touch with your child in one (or more) of the following ways, how would you assess your child's careprovider's assistance in making these arrangements for you:

To talk on the phone with your child.

0 1 2 3 4
Not helpful at all Very helpful

To read your letters to the child.

0 1 2 3 4
Not helpful at all Very helpful

To assist your child to write to you.

0 1 2 3 4
Not helpful at all Very helpful

To accompany the child to the facility for a visit.

0 1 2 3 4
Not helpful at all Very helpful

4. Some women are satisfied with the childcare arrangements they have for their children, and some are not. How do you feel about the childcare arrangement you have for your child/ren?

0 1 2 3 4
Not satisfied at all Entirely satisfied

5. How do you assess the care your child is receiving in terms of the following. (If you don't have information on this, please answer the questions based on your 'gut feeling'):

Food and housing your child has at his/her careprovider.

0 1 2 3 4
Not satisfied at all Entirely satisfied

Emotional support and care your child is receiving from his/her careprovider.

0 1 2 3 4
Not satisfied at all Entirely satisfied

6. How do you feel about your child's safety at the place where s/he is residing now?

0 1 2 3 4
Not satisfied at all Entirely satisfied

7. How do you feel about your child's emotional well-being at the place where s/he is residing now?

0 1 2 3 4
Not satisfied at all Entirely satisfied

Appendix E

Parenting Sense of Competence Scale

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the statements, by circling the appropriate number for each statement.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
	strongly agree				strongly disagree	
1. _____	The problems of taking care of a child are easy to solve once you know how your actions affect your child, an understanding I have acquired.					
2. _____	Even though being a parent could be rewarding, I am frustrated now while my child is his/her present age.					
3. _____	I go to bed the same way I wake up in the morning, feeling I have not accomplished a whole lot.					
4. _____	I do not know why it is, but sometimes when I'm supposed to be in control, I feel more as the one being manipulated.					
5. _____	My mother was better prepared to be a good mother than I am.					
6. _____	I would make a fine model for a new mother to follow in order to learn what s/he would need to know in order to be a good parent.					
7. _____	Being a parent is manageable, and any problems are easily solved.					
8. _____	A difficult problem in being a parent is not knowing whether you're doing a good job a bad one.					
9. _____	Sometimes I feel like I'm not getting anything done.					
10. _____	I meet my own personal expectations for expertise in caring for my child.					
11. _____	If anyone can find the answer to what is troubling my child, I am the one.					
12. _____	My talents and interests are in other areas, not in being a parent.					
13. _____	Considering how long I've been a mother/father, I feel thoroughly familiar with this role.					
14. _____	If being a mother/father of a child were only more interesting, I would be motivated do a better job as a parent.					
15. _____	I honestly believe I have all the skills necessary to be a good mother to my child.					
16. _____	Being a good mother/father is a reward in itself.					
17. _____	Being a parent makes me tense and anxious.					

Appendix F

Child-Parent Relationship

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the statements, by circling the appropriate number for each statement.

1	2	3	4
strongly agree			strongly disagree

1. _____ I am satisfied with the way my children treat me.
2. _____ I think that my children do not like me very much which upsets me.
3. _____ My children are usually a joy and fun to be with.
4. _____ I am pleased with the amount of love and affection I receive from my children.
5. _____ I think my children would consider me to be a good parent.
6. _____ I am delighted with the relationship that I have with my children.
7. _____ My children's cooperative behavior pleases me greatly.
8. _____ I am dissatisfied with the way I express love to my children.
9. _____ My children add variety to my life which is stimulating.
10. _____ My children annoy me too much in front of other residents in the institution during visits.

Appendix G

Beck's Hopelessness Scale

Instructions: Please indicate whether each of the following statements is true (T) or false (F).

1. I look forward to the future with hope and enthusiasm.	T	F
2. I might as well give up because I can't make things better for myself.	T	F
3. When things are going badly, I am helped by knowing they can't stay that way forever.	T	F
4. I can't imagine what my life would be like in 10 years.	T	F
5. I have enough time to accomplish that things the things I most want to do.	T	F
6. In the future, I expect to succeed in what concerns me most.	T	F
7. My future seems dark to me.	T	F
8. I expect to get more of the good things in life than the average person.	T	F
9. I just don't get the breaks, and there's no reason to believe I will in the future.	T	F
10. My past experiences have prepared me well for my future.	T	F
11. All I can see ahead of me is unpleasantness rather than pleasantness.	T	F
12. I don't expect to get what I really want.	T	F
13. When I look ahead to the future, I expect I will be happier than I am now.	T	F
14. Things just won't work out the way I want them to.	T	F
15. I have great faith in the future.	T	F
16. I never get what I want so it's foolish to want anything.	T	F
17. It is very unlikely that I will get any real satisfaction in the future.	T	F
18. The future seems vague and uncertain to me.	T	F
19. I can look forward to more good times than bad times.	T	F
20. There's no use in really trying to get something I want because I probably won't get it.	T	F

Appendix H

Informed Consent Form (Questionnaires)

The purpose of an informed consent is to ensure that you understand the purpose of the study and the nature of your involvement. The informed consent must provide sufficient information such that you have the opportunity to determine whether you wish to participate in the study. Your decision to participate or not in no way will affect your treatment at the institution.

Purpose of the Study and Task Requirements

The purpose of this study is to understand how women feel about themselves as mothers and the nature of their contact with their children during incarceration. It attempts to understand the ways in which these experiences are related to women's parenting before incarceration as well as to women's feelings about the institution they are in. You will be asked to fill out questionnaires related to these areas of your life. Some of the questions are asking about quite sensitive areas of your life and negative experiences that you might had. It will take you approximately 45-60 minutes to complete the questionnaires. If it is more convenient, the researcher can read the questions to you. Upon completion of the questionnaires, you will be also given an option to have an interview with the researcher and if you decide to do so, another appointment will be made.

Research Personnel

The following people are involved in this research project and may be contracted at any time. For questions or concerns regarding the study, please contact: Gordana Eljdupovic-Guzina (Principal Investigator, (613) 520-2600, Ext. 1413); Dr. Kim Matheson (Faculty Sponsor, (613) 520-2600, Ext. 2648). If you have any ethical questions or concerns regarding this study, please contact either Dr. Mary Gick (Chair of Ethics Committee, (613) 520-2600, Ext. 2664; Dr. Kim Matheson (Chair of the Psychology Department, (613) 520-2600, Ext. 1648)

Potential Risk/discomfort

Some women may find certain issues in this study upsetting and causing discomfort. If you need to talk about it, please contact Psychology Department, Health Care, Peer Support Team and primary workers in the institution. You can get in touch with psychologists, health care workers and peer support team members by letting your primary worker know that you need to see them and you will have an appointment scheduled as soon as possible. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you are under no obligation to continue with the study or to answer all the questions.

Anonymity/Confidentiality

Data collected in this study will be used only by the researcher and will be kept confidential. All information will be coded and analyzed in such a way that your name and your personal identity will not be used. Your name will appear solely on this consent form, whereas all the questionnaires that you will fill out will have only a code (number) that will be assigned to your name as indicated below. In order to ensure anonymity, this

consent form with your name and signature will be kept in a separate envelope and only the researcher will have access to it.

Right to Withdraw

You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and you do not have to answer any questions that you prefer not to.

Signatures

I have read the above information and understand the conditions of my participation. My signature indicates that I agree to participate in the first part of the study which consists of filling out questionnaires.

Name: _____ Researcher: _____

Signature: _____ Signature: _____

Code: _____

Date: _____

You have now completed this questionnaire, and there are two more questions I would like to ask you.

1. Some of the questions you answered may not have talked about those things that you find particularly important in relation to how you see incarceration and parenting. Furthermore, some questions asked what you did, or someone you knew did, rather than, what that meant to you and how you saw that. Because it is very important to hear from **you and in your own words** what you think about parenting and incarceration I would like to invite you to have an interview with me. It will last approximately 30-45 min. Please indicate below whether you would be willing to do an interview.

☐ Yes, I am willing to do the interview.

☐ No, I am not willing to do the interview.

2. I would like to ask you for permission to review your Offender Intake Assessment (OIA). It is a part of your file which was filled out at the time when you began serving your sentence and it contains information about your life before incarceration (for instance, the level of education you have, where you lived before, whether you were employed and so on). I would like to better understand other areas of your life before you came here and for that reason information from your OIA will be very helpful. Given that there were already many questions you answered, it would save a lot of time if I could just look over your OIA. The information that I would like to see refers to your family background, substance abuse issues if you had any, level of education, employment, etc. You already talked to the correctional officer about all of that when you came to the institution. All information will be kept confidential, and it will be coded and analyzed in a way that your personal identity will not be revealed in any way. If you agree that I review your OIA, please sign below.

I have read the above information and understand the conditions under which my OIA will be reviewed by the researcher. My signature indicates that I agree that the researcher reviews my OIA.

Appendix I

Debriefing (Questionnaires)

Thank you very much for participating in this study. Your participation will help understand how women who are incarcerated and who have children feel about maintaining contact with their children during this period and how it affects their well-being.

Past studies showed that for some incarcerated women maintaining contact with children was very important. Other women felt that they had changed so much during incarceration or that they needed to work on so many personal issues, that they chose not to contact their children very often, or not at all. Like many women in the community who did not necessarily get in conflict with the law, some incarcerated women were just not interested in being mothers and in looking after their children and for that reason they did not contact their children during incarceration. There were also women who lost custody and the right to have contact with their children.

This study will attempt to understand the extent to which aspects from women's past parenting experiences as well as those from their current situation, affect their contact with children. It explores women's relationship with children before incarceration as well as women's own childhood. It was assumed that the better communication a mother had with her child before incarceration and the better relationship she had with her own parents when she was a child, the more likely it is that these experiences will make it easier to have better communication with the child during incarceration. For that reason some of the questionnaires asked about these parts of your life.

However, previous studies showed that some incarcerated women felt that the characteristics of the institution they were in affected their relationship with children. For instance, women felt that there were not rooms in the institutions that would make it comfortable for the mother and the child to have a visit. For these reasons, some of the questionnaires you filled out asked for your opinion about the institution you are in.

Some of the questions may be upsetting for you and if you would like to talk to someone about it, please contact the Psychology Department, the Health Care, Peer Support Team or the primary workers in this institution. You can get in touch with psychologists, health care workers and peer support team members by letting your primary worker know that you need to see them and you will have an appointment scheduled as soon as possible. Since I will conduct research with other women as well, I may still be in the institution in the next couple of days and if you would like to talk to me, please feel free to contact me any time. Just let your primary worker or psychologist know that you would like to get in touch with me and I shall come to see you as soon as possible. If you would like to get in touch with me later on when I will no longer be on the facility, bellow is the phone number and address where you can reach me.

If you have any further questions or concerns about this research project, you may contact me (Gordana Eljdupovic-Guzina) at (613) 520-2600, Ext. 1413; Dr. Kim Matheson (Faculty Sponsor, (613) 520- 2648). If you have any ethical questions or concerns regarding this study, please contact either Dr. Mary Gick (Chair of Ethics Committee, (613) 520-2600, Ext. 2664; Dr. Kim Matheson (Chair of the Psychology Department, (613) 520-2648). If it is more convenient for you, you can also write to any person mentioned above at: Department of Psychology, B550 Loeb Building, Carleton University, 1125 Colonel By Drive, Ottawa, On, K1S 5B6, Canada (and we will get back to you).

Again, thank you very much for taking your time to participate in this study and for sharing your feelings and thoughts with me.

Gordana

Appendix J

Informed Consent Form (Interview)

The purpose of an informed consent is to ensure that you understand the purpose of the study and the nature of your involvement. The informed consent must provide sufficient information such that you have the opportunity to determine whether you wish to participate in the study. Your decision to participate or not in no way will affect your treatment at the institution.

Purpose of the Study and Task Requirements

As you know, the purpose of this study is to understand how women feel about themselves as mothers and the nature of their contact with their children during incarceration. It attempts to understand the ways in which these experiences are related to women's parenting experiences before incarceration as well as to women's feelings about the institution they are in. In this part of the study, you will be asked to describe what you thought about the questions you answered in the previous part of the study and whether they address things that you felt were important in your life in relation to parenting. In this interview, we will also talk about how you felt about looking after your child before you were incarcerated, what your experiences were like when you were a child, as well as how you feel about the institution you are currently in. The interview will take you approximately 30-45 minutes.

Research Personnel

The following people are involved in this research project and may be contacted at any time. For questions or concerns regarding the study, please contact: Gordana Eljdupovic-Guzina (Principal Investigator, (613) 520-2600, Ext. 1413); Dr. Kim Matheson (Faculty Sponsor, (613) 520-2600, Ext. 2648). If you have any ethical questions or concerns regarding this study, please contact either Dr. Mary Gick (Chair of Ethics Committee, (613) 520-2600, Ext. 2664; Dr. Kim Matheson (Chair of the Psychology Department, (613) 520-2600, Ext. 1648).

Potential Risk/discomfort

Some women may find certain issues in this study upsetting and causing discomfort. If you need to talk about it, please contact Psychology Department, Health Care, Peer Support Team and primary workers in the institution. You can get in touch with psychologists, health care workers and peer support team members by letting your primary worker know that you need to see them and you will have an appointment scheduled as soon as possible. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you are under no obligation to continue with the study or to answer all the questions.

Anonymity/Confidentiality

Data collected in this study will be used only by the researcher and will be kept confidential. All information will be coded and analyzed in such a way that your name and your personal identity will not be used. Your name will appear only on this consent form, whereas the tape of the interview and/or researchers note will have only a code (number) that will be assigned to your name. In order to ensure anonymity, this consent form with your name and signature will be kept in a separate envelope and only the researcher will have access to it. You should be aware that any disclosure of your child being abused will have to be reported to the Children's Aid Society.

Right to Withdraw

You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and you do not have to answer any questions that you prefer not to.

Signatures

I have read the above information and understand the conditions of my participation. My signature indicates that I agree to participate in the interview and that **the interview may be recorded.**

Name: _____ Researcher: _____

Signature: _____ Signature: _____

Code: _____

Date: _____

I have read the above information and understand the conditions of my participation. My signature indicates that I agree to participate in the interview but that **the interview may not be recorded, only notes taken by the researcher.**

Name: _____ Researcher: _____

Signature: _____ Signature: _____

Code: _____

Date: _____

Appendix K
Debriefing (Interview)

Thank you very much for the interview. Sharing your thoughts and opinion will help understand what you personally see as important in regards to mothers being incarcerated and their maintaining contact with children.

As you know, this study attempts to understand aspects of women's past as well as current lives that may affect how they feel about maintaining contact with their children during incarceration. The questionnaires you filled out earlier asked about your parenting skills, how your parents brought you up, what you thought about this institution as well as the care and the home your child has now. However, we are all very different and for that reason maybe something that each of us thinks is important was not mentioned in the questionnaires. For that reason the interview asked about your own understanding of the areas of life we discussed.

The interview also asked about your understanding of yourself as a parent and of your childhood. The main reason for this is that sometimes we may see ourselves differently from how other people see us. For instance, sometimes others may feel that a mother is not looking after her kids properly, but she personally may feel that she is doing the best she can. Or, it may be assumed that a mother whose parents did not treat her well when she was a child, will not know how to treat her own kids, whereas in fact, precisely because she had a negative experience with her parents, she made sure not to behave in a same way with her kids. For all these reasons, it was important for me to make sure that I understand how you personally see yourself and your life.

Some of the questions may be upsetting for you and if you would like to talk to someone about it, please contact the Psychology Department, the Health Care, Peer Support Team or the primary workers in this institution. You can get in touch with psychologists, health care workers and peer support team members by letting your primary worker know that you need to see them and you will have an appointment scheduled as soon as possible. Since I will have interviews with other women as well, I may still be in the institution in the next couple of days and if you would like to talk to me, please feel free to contact me any time. Just let your primary worker or psychologist know that you would like to get in touch with me and I shall come to see you as soon as possible. If you would like to get in touch with me later on when I will no longer be on the facility, below is the phone number and address where you can reach me.

If you have any further questions or concerns about this research project, you may contact me (Gordana Eljdupovic-Guzina) at (613) 520-2600, Ext. 1413; Dr. Kim Matheson (Faculty Sponsor, (613) 520-2648). If you have any ethical questions or concerns regarding this study, please contact either Dr. Mary Gick (Chair of Ethics Committee, (613) 520-2600, Ext. 2664; Dr. Kim Matheson (Chair of the Psychology Department, (613) 520-2648). If it is more convenient for you, you can also write to any person mentioned above at: Department of Psychology, B550 Loeb Building, Carleton University, 1125 Colonel By Drive, Ottawa, On, K1S 5B6, Canada (and we will get back to you).

Again, thank you very much for taking your time to have the interview and for sharing your feelings and thoughts with me.

Gordana

Appendix L
Interview Protocol

Pre-incarceration parenting

Earlier on you filled out questionnaires that asked about you as a parent. These questionnaires often seem to address those characteristics of parenting that are important. However, we are all also very different and it is possible that there is something very important for us as parents that these questions did not address. Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

When you think about your relationship with your child(ren) before incarceration, what kind of a parent do you believe you were?

How do you see your parenting skills back then?

When you think of yourself as a mother, are there any persons or situations that you compare yourself to?

Incarceration experience

In the questionnaires that you filled out earlier, there were also some questions that asked about your incarceration and how you feel about this institution. Is there anything else that these questions did not ask and that you found important?

What aspects of incarceration you find the most difficult in your role as a parent?

Are there any aspects of it that you find helpful?