

CHARACTERISTICS ASSOCIATED WITH ROLE CONFLICT IN MOTHERS
WHO ARE INCARCERATED

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ABSTRACT

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This study examines the relationships between a mother's perception of whether or not her minor children would live with her after incarceration, which is related to role conflict experienced by incarcerated mothers, and the following variables: (1) ethnicity, (2) mother's closeness to her parents while growing up, and (3) whether or not minor children lived with the mother prior to incarceration. A hierarchical log-linear model was used to analyze all variables and their associations simultaneously. A statistically significant relationship was found between whether or not mothers lived with their minor children prior to incarceration and whether or not they perceive that they will live with them after incarceration. Women who lived with any of their minor children prior to incarceration were more likely to expect to live with them after incarceration. A significantly statistic relationship was also found between whether or not mothers lived with their minor children prior to incarceration and ethnicity. African American women tended to expect to live with their children after incarceration more so than women of other ethnicities.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Mothers who are incarcerated experience motherhood under circumstances that very greatly than what society deems normal and appropriate. Their experiences, then, as incarcerated mothers, are of interest to the sociological field. This study examines the relationships between a mother's perception of whether or not her minor children would live with her after incarceration, which is related to role conflict experienced by incarcerated mothers, and ethnicity, familial relationships, and whether or not minor children lived with the mother prior to incarceration. A hierarchical log-linear model was used to analyze all these variables and their associations. The following is both an introduction to the varying forms of mothering that exist and a review of the current literature regarding incarcerated mothers.

Traditional Motherhood

Motherhood has traditionally been the major role of women. Sociologically, motherhood is not an individualized experience but an institution of society (Rich 1976). Lorber's (1994) summary of the attributes that socially define a good mother can be paraphrased as follows: bound both physically and emotionally to her children, willing to sacrifice herself and anything else for her

children, and loving and nurturing for the good of her children, yet doing so as a non-sexual being (p. 146). These characteristics are the basis for the social construction of motherhood that is internalized by women (Rich 1976).

While the institution of motherhood as described above determines the social norm for mothers, the characteristics that define it cannot always be found in the life experiences of women. For example, one of Lorber's (1994) characteristics of a good mother is that she is bound physically and emotionally to her children. A woman's biological connection to her offspring through the reproductive process is just one of the reasons she is thought to be emotionally bound to them. A commonly held belief is that women's hormones give them a maternal instinct, a belief that is not supported in the scientific literature (Lindsey 1990), nor is it found in all women. This belief may appear natural because of its prevalence and acceptance as fact (Ambert 1994). That females are socialized to be primary caregivers and to be more nurturing than males may be a better explanation for emotional bonds between women and their children. Socialization regarding motherhood also explains the finding that the emotional bonds women have with their children vary widely with some having strong attachments and others having weaker ones (Rich 1976).

Lorber (1994) also characterizes motherhood as selfless. The idea that a woman should sacrifice everything for her children is the altruistic archetype of motherhood. But when sociologists critically analyze this aspect of motherhood we find the concepts of sacrifice and self-denial to be more dynamic than they first appear. The traditional gendered division of labor can be seen as a mother's

sacrifice of any possible self-fulfillment outside of the home in order to tend to the everyday task of raising and socializing her children. Yet we know that more and more mothers are going in to the workforce everyday (Schroedel and Piper 2003), creating a conflict for many women between their life experiences and the social construction of selfless motherhood. This exemplifies another discrepancy between the ideal of motherhood and the actual experience of mothering. These discrepancies can lead to role strain for some mothers.

Role Conflict

Role is an important concept in sociological theory. A role is a set of expectations attached to a particular status (Thio 1997). We all have more than one status. A mother also has the status of daughter relative to her own parents. A student probably is also an employee, whose employer may also be a mother, a volunteer, a grandmother, and so on. As we've just seen, the expectations of mother are nurturer, caretaker, and selfless. That same woman, though, may be an employee. The expectation of an employee is to be emotionally removed and professional. Both roles must be maintained to meet the social expectations that accompany each status.

Managing one or more roles can be difficult. Role strain occurs when a single role involves conflicting expectations (Marshall 1998). Role strain can occur in any situation when a mother cannot care for her child on a daily basis. Noncustodial mothers, including incarcerated mothers, may feel incapable of engaging in aspects of their children's lives that are related to the role of mother. Role conflict, on the other hand, is experienced when two roles have conflicting

expectations associated with them (Marshall 1998). Incarcerated mothers cannot meet the expectations of the role of mother. Being a prisoner means that a mother, at least temporarily, relinquishes custody as well as the day-to-day upbringing of her children. Role conflict sometimes occurs, not because of the roles themselves, but because of the pressure people feel to fit into the social and cultural definitions of such roles (Thio 1997).

There are various strategies to deal with role strain and role conflict. One way is to compartmentalize everyday life so that a role is embraced and carried out well in one setting then relinquished and another is focused on in a different setting. An example of this would be a mother not bringing work from her professional life home with her. Another strategy is to play out a role in a conscious, yet negative manner, simply to manage the outcomes of the situation (Marshall 1998). A woman who does not want to be a custodial mother may act as though the courts or the father are to blame for her lack of parental rights. Different strategies can be used interchangeably as situations shift and evolve (Turner 1978).

Erving Goffman (1961) developed the concept of role distancing, which is also used to manage role strain. Role distancing is the process of mentally separating oneself from a role when it is disagreeable. Not only do individuals internally separate themselves from the role, but inherent in the definition of role distance is the external, pointed expression of separation from a role. We want people to know we do not align ourselves with a particular role. An incarcerated

mother may align herself with the role of mother to distance herself from the roles of prisoner and noncustodial mother.

Non-Traditional Motherhood

Direct observational studies of parenting patterns have found that, overall, parents share the same general goals for their children: first is to ensure survival, next is to equip them with the tools to care for themselves as adults, and finally to develop cultural-specific virtues (LeVine 1989). Mothers tend to direct the formation of these goals more so than fathers because of their greater day-to-day interactions with the children. Moreover, the way in which these goals are realized varies greatly between cultures. For example, the accumulation of millions of day-to-day interactions between mothers and children in rural Africa produces the ability for children to do responsible work by the age six or seven. In addition, Japanese children are developing math skills about this age, and American children are developing verbal skills (LeVine, Miller, and West 1988). Furthermore, day-to-day interactions, child-rearing, and ultimate goals are all affected by social factors within a culture.

Just as world cultures produce different life patterns and perspectives, so do sub-cultures produce patterns within a larger culture. Ethnicity is revealed through the varying customs, rituals, values, attitudes, and personality types of the individuals who make up the larger group (McAdoo 1999). The operational definition of ethnicity used here refers to groups that are not only a numeric minority, but who also constitute a socially, politically, and economically subordinated population (Wilkinson 1999). While there are definite differences

within ethnicities regarding family and mothering, the subordination common to all minorities creates a greater distinction between white and non-white groups. For example, compared to all families in the United States, African American and Hispanic families tend to be larger. For African Americans in particular, single-parent, female head of household families occur more often than in families from other groups (Wilkinson 1999).

Both African American and Hispanic families tend to reflect the traditional family model (Baker and Carson 1999). However, there is also a trend for stronger, extended kinship relationships. These stronger familial ties are related to the historical subordination of minorities. When social, political, and economic stability are continuously undermined, extended networks of family are relied on in order to ensure more stability. As our society becomes more stratified and minorities become better represented in higher socio-economic levels, the need for extended support may diminish although the strong familial bonds have already been imbedded. Another factor that helps to explain family differences is that minority families tend to locate in closer geographic areas, sometimes with multi-generations residing in the same household. Non-white families are characterized by more intimate relations with implied family obligations (Wilkinson 1999).

These cultural deviations from the norm in kinship ties, coupled with less economic stability, create a much different mothering experience for non-white women. Particularly in the African American community, “other mothers,” usually maternal female family members, take on a substantial role in childrearing. This

mothering experience is in direct opposition to the assumption that a biological mother must be the single most important individual in the care taking of children (Baker and Carson 1999; Hill Collins 1994). In the Hispanic community, some maternal relatives may act as problem-solvers for a woman's day-to-day child-care issues (Wilkinson 1999). The traditional act of mothering is then placed in someone other than the mother's control, thus deviating from the motherhood standard set by middle-class, white families.

The connection between ethnicity and socio-economic status also affects perception of a woman's mothering. Overall, non-white women and families have a lower economic position than white women and families (Wilkinson 1999). Mothers with lower socio-economic status do not fit the ideal role of mother, regardless of ethnicity. The ability to meet the fundamental needs of one's children is assumed by this ideology. While more and more mothers are becoming part of the workforce and outsourcing childcare, the complexity of the poor mother's situation in meeting the needs of her children and caring for them is compounded. All mothers in the workforce, regardless of socio-economic status, must find childcare for their children. Poor mothers, however, without the resources to pay for childcare, depend on family and relatives to take care of their children. Women who can afford to pay others for childcare gain the power to set certain standards for the care of their children (Owen 1998). Women without these resources do not experience this ability. As discussed earlier, the paradox of being poor and being a mother may create role strain.

A major component of the dominant definition of family is that the unit is economically self-sufficient and not dependent on extended family, peers, or the state (Bould 1993; Cheal 1991). The simple act of feeding one's children becomes a symbolic representation of the role strain experienced by mothers who lack minimal resources. Devault (1991) studied this particular act and its implications on mothering and family. She found that a disconnect occurs between what should be done to feed the family, or the ideology, and what actually can be done to feed the family.

There are reasons other than cultural norms and social custom for why mothers may not live with their children. Another pattern that sets some families apart involves noncustodial mothering. Noncustodial mothers may be separated from their children for a variety of reasons: they may be willing to live apart from their children; they may be ordered to do so by the court system; or they may be a victim of child stealing (Fischer 1983). Societal attitudes toward noncustodial mothers are much more negative than those for noncustodial fathers. It is a social assumption that any separation of two parents (married or non-married) will result in the mother being the primary caregiver of the children as this is part of the cultural good mother image. This nonnormative status, then, stigmatizes and marginalizes noncustodial mothers (Arditti and Madden-Derdich 1993). This may be a factor in why, both in this study and in others, some incarcerated mothers hope to live with their children after they are released even if they did not live with them prior to being incarcerated.

Attitudes toward various child-free lifestyles were studied by having 34 faculty and graduate students from a human development and family studies program compare various child-free situations. The lifestyles were judged on two dimensions: whether the situation was common or uncommon in society; and whether society indicated approval or disapproval of the situation. The two dimensions formed four quadrants: common and approval; common and disapproval; uncommon and approval; and uncommon and disapproval. The harshest judgment is placed on those lifestyles that were found to be uncommon and have social disapproval. The childless lifestyle situations that were judged are as follows: married-lost child, involuntary childlessness, voluntary childlessness, single, preparental, empty nest, noncustody fathers, noncustody mothers, nonmarital heterosexual cohabitation, and homosexual cohabitation. The only two lifestyles that fell in the most negative quadrant, uncommon with social disapproval, were homosexual cohabitation and noncustody mothers. Noncustody fathers were considered to be fairly common with at least some social approval (Dolan and Hoffman 1998).

The unyielding cultural definition of motherhood and the subsequent stigmatization of noncustodial mothers is internalized by these mothers. Chesler (1986) has documented that noncustodial mothers experience and express more guilt than do noncustodial fathers over not living with their children. This internalized guilt is compounded when the noncustodial status is actually chosen by the mother. Mothers without custody do not always have this situation forced upon them. Or, mothers feel mentally or physically incapable of caring for their

children on a day-to-day basis. Some mothers may not feel they are able to meet the needs of their children financially. Sometimes mothers relinquish custody because the children prefer to live with their fathers (Arditti and Madden-Derdich 1993). Regardless of the reason, the mothers who do not choose to live with their children full time experience guilt and social pressure (Rothman 2000). Society tends to hold noncustodial mothers in disdain because they are not conforming to the social definition of motherhood. Ironically, many times these women are relinquishing custody with their children's best interests in mind, above their own, which is in fact an aspect of the social definition of motherhood. Regardless, the fact that they are not meeting the social expectations of the motherhood role will usually lead to role strain.

Incarcerated Motherhood

In 1998, approximately 666,000 mothers of minor children were in the correctional system (Bureau of Justice Statistics 1999). Research has shown that most incarcerated women are non-traditional mothers prior to incarceration. The majority of women in state and federal prisons are non-white and occupy a low socio-economic status (Bureau of Justice Statistics 1999). Women are more likely than men to be the sole caretaker of their children prior to incarceration (Enos 2001; Greenfeld and Snell 2000; Pollock 2002; Schafer & Dellinger 1999). And more often than not, single mothers lack sufficient legal income to support their families (Girshick 1999). Most of the respondents in this study had a household income of less than \$20,000. The gap between marginalized mothers and the mainstream is widened by incarceration and both role conflict and role

strain can occur. This study explores the role conflict experienced by mothers who have been incarcerated and factors that might affect this conflict.

The research on incarcerated women indicates various patterns concerning the role of mother. Hairston (1991) found that approximately 40 percent of her participants did not live with their children prior to arrest. Hairston also found that the majority of her respondents expected and desired to live as primary caregivers for their children after release. This is even true for those who did not live with them prior to incarceration. In the current study, some women did expect to live with their minor children after release even though they did not live with them prior to incarceration. Respondents in other studies of incarcerated mothers have voiced similar desires (Baunach 1985; McGowan and Blumenthal 1978). These authors indicate, however, that the reality of reunification after incarceration is much less likely than these mothers hope. Fessler (1991) also studied mothers' reunification plans. She found that while most mothers expected to live with their children after incarceration, seldom did they have a detailed plan to obtain custody. Research has also found the perception of not living with children after incarceration to be a major factor in role conflict. The role of being in prison, and therefore separated from their children, conflicts with the expectations assumed in the role as mother. The fear of long-term separation from their children, as well as the possibility of losing their children upon release, leaves these mothers with feelings of inadequacy, guilt, and depression (Baunach 1985; Kiser 1991).

In the last two decades, a discourse has begun that investigates the relationships among race, family, and the criminal justice system (Enos 2001; Daly and Chesney-Lind 1988; Heidensohn 1987; Leonard 1982). The disproportionate representation of minority women in prison makes ethnicity a key factor in analyzing mothers in prison. While almost two-thirds of women on probation are white, over two-thirds of women incarcerated in federal and state prisons are non-white. African American women represent 48 percent of all incarcerated women and Hispanic women represent about one in seven women in state prisons and one in three women in federal prisons (Greenfeld and Snell 2000). These figures closely match the ethnic makeup of the sample used for this study.

Ethnic differences in child placement and reunification patterns have also been found. Results of a 1991 survey found that, while mothers were incarcerated, white children were more likely to live with their fathers than both African American and Hispanic children. Minority children were more likely to live with grandparents than white children. Moreover, white children were twice as likely to be placed in foster care than any other children (Snell 1994) given that Hispanic and African American women look less favorably on using the foster care system than do white women. Overall, Hispanic and African American women have larger networks of relatives and friends willing to care for children while they are incarcerated (Enos 2001). After incarceration, 73 percent of all mothers were reunified with their children. Of these, 52 percent were white, 30 percent African American, and 18 percent Hispanic (Fessler 1991). Factors

existing prior to incarceration (for example, whether or not children lived with the mother) may have influenced these differences in reunification between ethnicities.

Contact with family and friends for incarcerated women provides emotional support and helps in managing their roles (Girshick 1999). In addition, familial placement during incarceration allows for better child-mother relationships than foster care (Johnson 1995). Most often the temporary, familial caregiver is a grandparent—mainly the maternal grandmother (Belknap 2000; Schafer and Dellinger 1999; Owen 1998). The second most likely caretaker of children of incarcerated mothers is another relative of the mother, such as an aunt (Owen 1998). Nevertheless, even when children are placed within the family, mothers express concern about their position as mother while incarcerated (Enos 2001). Data for this study show that mothers stated the placement most negatively affecting the child-mother relationship not to be foster care but other placement, excluding father and maternal grandmother. Possibly, mothers were able to exert more power with the state and their own mothers than with other familial arrangements (Johnson 1995).

A consistent trend in research on female prisoners is that they tend to come from dysfunctional families (Mullings, Pollock, and Crouch 2002). In a study done on male and female inmates, Panton (1974) found that women were more likely than men to have difficulties in their interpersonal relationship with family and peers. Over 30 percent of the mothers in this study did not feel close to their mothers while almost half did not feel close to their fathers. Owen (1998)

also found that incarcerated women's childhoods tend to exhibit maternal passivity, cruelty, absence, and neglect. Many studies consistently show female inmates to have a childhood history of abuse, both physical and sexual (Mullings, Pollock, and Crouch 2002; Owen and Bloom 1995; Chesney-Lind and Rodriguez 1983; Crawford 1988).

Incarcerated mothers are marginalized women in many ways, even prior to taking on the role of prisoner, and thus have more likely than not already experienced role strain when trying to meet the expectations of motherhood. The role of prisoner and the role of mother are in direct opposition to one another; the binary nature of these roles is likely to lead to role conflict.

CHAPTER II

DATA AND METHODS

Introduction

Research has demonstrated relationships between ways of mothering, ethnicity and familial relationships. The same characteristics are associated when focusing on incarcerated mothers. Which of these characteristics are associated with whether or not women perceive that their children will live with them after incarceration, which is associated with role conflict? I explore these associations through analysis of data collected from incarcerated mothers. The specific research questions to be analyzed are the following: Is there a relationship between ethnicity and whether or not mothers perceive that they will live with their children after incarceration? Is there a relationship between familial relationships and whether or not mothers perceive that they will live with their children after incarceration? When controlling for whether or not mothers lived with their children prior to incarceration, are there any relationships between the above characteristics and whether or not mothers perceive that they will live with their children after incarceration?

Methodology

Learning how incarcerated women's experiences and characteristics affect their role conflict can best be done by examining their own perceptions. Enos (2001) was able to uncover distinct perceptions of mothering in prison by talking with incarcerated mothers. Hill Collins (1994) points out that we must differentiate between what social discourse has said *about* marginalized groups and what these groups say *about themselves*. This study uses self-reported quantitative data to explore the relationships between various characteristics and incarcerated mothers' perceptions of whether or not they will live with their children after incarceration. While qualitative data would be beneficial for an in-depth analysis of the intricacies of women's perceptions of their children, quantitative data are useful when looking at relationships between the perceptions and other variables.

Several different variables will be tested for association with a mother's perceptions of whether or not she will live with her children after incarceration: ethnicity, prior-incarceration living arrangements, her closeness to her mother, and her closeness to her father. All of the variables used here are categorical. Ethnicity groups are only defined by membership; there is no order to the differences between groups. The remaining variables are all dichotomous. This means that all members belong to one group or the other. Categorical data could be analyzed by statistically testing each of these variables separately for association with the mothers' perceptions, with a series of univariate analyses. That is, testing the relationship of one variable with another. A simple univariate

analysis for these types of data would include several independent chi-square tests. However, using a multivariate technique will allow for one complete analysis instead of a series of univariate or bivariate analyses. With multivariate statistics I was able to simultaneously analyze multiple variables (Tabachnick and Fidell 2001).

This study uses a hierarchical log-linear model strategy to analyze the relationships among all the variables for this study. A log-linear model is like a multiple linear regression model in which the variables of interest (and the interactions between them) are the independent variables, and the dependent variable is the natural logarithm of the frequency of cases in a cell of a frequency table (George and Mallery 2003). Relationships are determined by the expected and observed frequencies in the cells, just as in a chi-square analysis. But with the log-linear model I was able to analyze all variables and their interactions at one time. With this technique it is also possible to keep the overall Type I error rate set, regardless of how many variables are tested (Tabachnick and Fidell 2001). The loglinear model also detects three factor or higher order interactions. It works backwards, first testing the highest order interactions (say, as in this study, the interaction between all five variables), then the next highest, down to single variable effects on the frequency distribution, eliminating non-significant interactions and variables, until only those significant variables and interactions are left (Stevens 1996). The final product is called a best fit model. The characteristics of this technique make for a clean, strong analysis.

Data

For this study I used secondary data compiled for the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse by the Texas A&M University Public Policy Research Institute. Participants in this study were state prisoners and jail inmates who were processed at two intake facilities in Texas, the Woodman Unit in Gatesville and Plane State Jail in Dayton. The original researchers approached 1,377 women at the facilities regarding the study and 1,198 of those completed the interview process. Fourteen trained female researchers conducted the face-to-face interviews with the participants from May 1998 until April 1999. The researchers used a Computer Assisted Interviewing (CAI) system to aid in the interviewing process. The complete questionnaire consists of six major categories: drug use history, criminal history, health status, high-risk sexual behaviors, prior physical and sexual abuse, and demographics (Mullings, Pollock, and Crouch 2002). All data used for this study were considered demographic data in the original questionnaire. Items from the original survey that apply to this study can be found in the Appendix.

Not all the original data were applicable to this study. Women who were interviewed who did not have children were excluded from the sub-data set used here. I also decided that the analysis used in this study would be more valid by excluding women whose children were 18 years of age or older. These women might not have lived with their children prior to incarceration or would not perceive they would live with them after incarceration simply because their children were adults and including them may have skewed the results. Out of the

1,198 women who completed the interview, 826 make up the sample for this study.

Measurement

The objective of this study was to examine the relationships between a mother's perception of whether or not her minor children would live with her after incarceration and the following variables: (1) ethnicity, (2) mother's closeness to her parents while growing up, and (3) whether or not minor children lived with the mother prior to incarceration. Variables relating to living arrangement with children prior to incarceration, perceptions of living arrangements after incarceration, ethnicity, and familial relationships were then recoded and used in the analysis for this study.

In the original interview mothers were asked a series of questions regarding each of their children. Original data were coded into separate variables for each child who was reported. For example, respondents were asked the question: Did your oldest child live with you prior to incarceration? The responses were recorded as a single record of that variable. Next, information on each additional child was recorded into separate variables. From the original data, the variable in this study indicating whether or not mothers lived with their minor children prior to incarceration was constructed as a dichotomous variable. If at least one of those children lived with her, the record created was coded "Yes"; if no children lived with her, the record was coded as "No." The same variable creation process was repeated with regard to whether or not mothers perceived a minor child would live with them after incarceration. If a respondent

answered “yes” to at least one minor child, she was coded as “Yes”; if a respondent answered “no” to all minor children, she was coded “No.” Two separate questions were asked regarding mother’s closeness to her own mother and father. Original categories for both questions were as follows: “usually very close,” “sometimes close,” “usually distant,” “usually hostile,” “unpredictable extremes of behavior—sometimes close, sometimes hostile,” and “non-responsive.” For purposes of this analysis I was only interested in whether or not respondents felt close to their mother and father. Answers were recoded either “close” or “not close.” Doing this also minimized the number of cells in the statistical analysis, thus increasing the frequency in each cell. For the same reason, ethnicity for this study is defined as Anglo (White), African American, Hispanic (including Chicano, Mexican-American, Cuban, Puerto Rican, Spanish), and Other.

Sample

The mean age of the sample used here was 32 years old, ranging from 18 to 51. The majority of the respondents were African American (44.1%), followed by Anglo Americans (37.9%), Hispanic (14%), and Other (4.0%), which includes Asian, American Indian, and “something else.” While 27 percent of the sample were married at the time of the interview, 34 percent had never been married. The rest (39%) were divorced, separated, or widowed. Of those who were married, half had been married for five years or less. The number of children for each respondent ranged from one through eleven, with 50 percent having only one or two children. The median level of education attained by the respondents

was between ninth and eleventh grade. Sixty-nine percent of the sample had less than a high school education at the time of the interview. When asked what they had been doing “professionally” for the year prior to incarceration, the majority (58%) of the mothers responded they had been working at least part-time, while 21 percent had been unemployed. The remaining 21 percent were either keeping house, in school, or disabled. Seventy-four percent reported to have a household legal income of less than \$20,000. Fifty-five percent of the mothers indicated they received some sort of basic support (food, housing, etc.) during the six months prior to incarceration from family or friends (Table 1).

Summary

This study uses data collected from incarcerated mothers to capture their own perceptions of whether they believe they will live with their children after incarceration. A hierarchical loglinear model was used to find any associations among these perceptions and ethnicity, familial relationships, and whether or not mothers lived with their minor children prior to incarceration. Original data were recoded and partitioned in order to do this analysis. A final sub-sample was selected and subsequent analysis performed to explore the relationships previously mentioned.

CHAPTER III

FINDINGS

Introduction

A five-way frequency analysis was performed to develop a hierarchical log-liner model of incarcerated mothers with at least one child under the age of eighteen (a minor). One model was selected in lieu of two models that would have been independent of one another. This decision was based on the fact that both the living arrangement variables (whether or not at least one minor child lived with the mothers before incarceration and whether or not the mothers perceived that at least one minor child would live with them after incarceration) had highly unequal cell frequencies between the dichotomous categories. Partitioning the study into multiple models would have left some cell frequencies quite small, possibly reducing the power of the analysis (Milligan 1980). Categorical variables analyzed were (1) ethnicity, (2) whether the mothers lived with at least one of their minor children prior to their current incarceration, (3) whether the mothers felt close to their own mothers during childhood, (4) whether the mothers felt close to their fathers during childhood, and (5) whether the mothers perceived they would live with at least one of their minor children after incarceration.

Out of 826 respondents, 820 incarcerated mothers provided valid data that were usable in this analysis. All but one two-way contingency table provided expected cell frequencies greater than five, so power reduction should not have occurred. After the best fit model was selected, none of the 64 cells was an outlier, an indication that the model being used is not an adequate match for the data.

Stepwise selection by simple deletion of effects using SPSS

HILOGLINEAR produced a model that included all first-order effects, one three-way association, and three two-way associations. This means that all the individual variables, three interactions between two variables, and one interaction between three variables (discussed in the following section) added to the significance of the model. The model indicated a good fit between observed frequencies and expected frequencies.

Overall Findings

Most of the mothers (82.7%) perceived that they would live with at least one of their minor children after incarceration (Table 1). Of these women, 73.4 percent lived with at least one minor child prior to incarceration (Table 2). This is a much higher percentage of mothers than other research has indicated (Hairston 1991). In addition, more women expect to live with their children than did live with them prior to the incarceration. This is also consistent with the previous research discussed earlier (Baunach 1985; Hairston 1991; McGowan and Blumenthal 1978).

Of the women who perceived that they would live with minor children after incarceration, only 69.2 percent felt close to their own mothers while growing up (Table 3), and slightly fewer (55.1%) felt close to their fathers (Table 4). These numbers mirror other research indicating that incarcerated women tend to have had negative parental experiences, come from dysfunctional families, and have difficulties in their family relationships (Mullings, Pollock, and Crouch 2002; Pantan 1974; Owen 1998; Owen and Bloom 1995). Interestingly, the proportion of these women who felt close to their mothers while growing up as well as those who felt close to their fathers was slightly higher than the proportion of the overall mothers in this study (Table 1).

When looking at the ethnicity of the women who thought they would live with minor children after incarceration, 44.8 percent were African American, 36.9 percent were white, and 15.2 percent were Hispanic (Table 5). White women are slightly more represented in this group than in the overall sample (37.9%) while Hispanics were slightly less represented (14.0%) (Table 1). This is the reverse pattern than what one study concluded on actual reunification. Fessler (1991) found over half of her respondents that actually lived with their children after incarceration to be white.

Fewer mothers (17.3%) thought they would not live with at least one of their minor children after incarceration (Table 1). Of these women, 84.6 percent also did not live with any of their minor children prior to incarceration. Prior incarceration has a strong relationship to perceptions of post-incarceration living arrangements for these mothers (Table 2). If they lived with any of their minor

children prior to incarceration they are much more likely to perceive that they will live with them after this incarceration. Previous research has found a less realistic perception of reunification plans for incarcerated mothers (Fessler 1991). These data show that perceptions relate to past living arrangements more closely.

Sixty-two percent of those who felt they would not be reunited with their minor children felt close to their own mothers (Table 3) while 52.8 percent felt close to their fathers while growing up (Table 4). Slightly fewer women who do not perceive that they will be reunited with their minor children felt close to either parent while growing up than those who do perceive they would live with minor children. Both groups of women have low rates of closeness to parents while growing up.

More white women do not think they will live with any minor children than do minority women. The ethnic makeup of the mothers who do not perceive they will live with any minor children after incarceration was 42.7 percent white, 40.6 percent African American, and 8.4 percent Hispanic (Table 5). This would not be expected looking at the research, which shows us that minority mothers tend to have others, particularly female family members, as primary caregiver for their children more often than do white mothers (Baker and Carson 1999; Hill Collins 1994; Wilkinson 1999).

As discussed earlier, fewer mothers lived with at least one minor child prior to incarceration (63.3%) than those that expected to live with at least one of their minor children after they are released (Table 1). Approximately 70 percent

of these mothers felt close to their own mothers growing up (Table 3). Slightly over half (55.1%) felt close to their fathers (Table 4). Fewer white women lived with any of their minor children (35.0%) than did African American women (42.9%). The number of white women who lived with their minor children prior to incarceration was smaller than the proportion of white women in the sample. The reverse trend is again found for both minority groups (Table 5).

Research Questions

Is there a relationship between ethnicity and whether or not mothers perceive that they will live with their children after incarceration? A two-way association was examined between the variables ethnicity and whether or not mothers perceive that they will live with at least one of their minor children after incarceration. Differences between expected and observed frequencies within cells were not large enough for this effect to be statistically significant. However, the frequency distribution lends support to some practical differences between ethnicity and whether or not women perceive that they will live with any minor children. White mothers perceived they would live with minor children after this incarceration slightly less so than was expected. On the contrary, both African American and Hispanic mothers perceived that they would live with their children slightly more so than expected. As stated earlier, this finding goes against previous research, which indicates minority children tend to be more likely not to live with their biological mothers than white children (Baker and Carson 1999; Hill Collins 1994; Wilkinson 1999).

Is there a relationship between familial relationships and whether or not mothers perceive that they will live with their children after incarceration? Individually, neither two-way associations involving closeness to mother and father during childhood were found to be in the best fit model (Tables 3 and 4). Looking again at practical differences, though, I find interesting differences between observed and expected frequencies. More mothers were close to their own mothers and felt they would live with minor children after incarceration than was expected. Conversely, more mothers who did not feel close to their own mothers did not expect to live with any minor children after this incarceration. The same patterns are found for perceptions of post-living arrangements and closeness to father as well as prior-living arrangements and closeness to both parents. A trend, while not statistically significant here, does seem to exist. If the mothers felt close to their parents, they were more likely than not to have lived with their children before incarceration and expect to live with them after this incarceration.

The three-way association between closeness to mother, closeness to father, and whether or not the respondents felt they would live with any of their minor children, also does not reach statistical significance, although it does come close to reaching significance at the .05 alpha level (Table 6). This significance at first appeared close enough that cross-validation may be appropriate. However, after close examination, I determined that most of the statistical association relates only to the respondents' closeness to mother and closeness to father. For example, more women tend to be close or not close to both

parents, while fewer women tend to be close to one parent and not the other. Observed cell frequencies in which women felt close to one parent and not close to the other were much lower than expected. This is true for both prior- and post-living arrangement variables. This implies that the women more often than not felt close to both parents, as opposed to one parent or the other.

When controlling for whether or not mothers live with their children prior to incarceration, are there any relationships between the above characteristics and whether or not mothers perceive that they will live with children after incarceration? Ethnicity and familial relationships do not associate with post-living arrangement perceptions at a statistically significant level for these data. Non-association holds true independent of the prior living situation of the minor children. There is a strong association, as discussed earlier, between post-living arrangement perceptions and prior living arrangements (Table 2). Mothers who lived with minor children prior to this incarceration were much more likely to perceive that they would live with them after this incarceration than those that did not. This association is the strongest second order effect in the model.

The final two-way association that contributed to the model is between prior living arrangements and ethnicity (Table 5). The groups that contribute to this significance are African American women and "Other" women. African American women tend to expect to live with their minor children after incarceration more so than the other women. While not significant, white women and Hispanic women tend to perceive that they will live with their minor children less than expected. "Other" women add significantly to the differences in that

they tend to perceive they will live with their minor child at a much lesser rate than expected. This finding may be attributed to the small sample size of this group.

Summary

None of the relationships this study proposed to investigate were found to be statistically significant. While not significant, trends were indicated in the analysis. African American and Hispanic mothers expected to live with their minor children slightly more so than was expected. Practical differences were also found in familial relationships. Mothers who were close to their parents while growing up expected to live with their minor children slightly more than expected. While not a research question, a statistically significant relationship was found between whether or not mothers lived with their minor children prior to incarceration and whether or not they perceived they would live with these children after their incarceration. A statistically significant relationship was also found between whether or not mothers lived with their minor children prior to incarceration and ethnicity. In the following chapter conclusions and implications regarding both practical and statistically significant findings will be discussed.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

Discussion of Findings

The primary focus of this research was to test whether or not there are relationships between ethnicity, familial relationships, prior living arrangements with children, and whether or not incarcerated mothers perceived that they would live with their children after incarceration. It is supported in the literature that the perception of reunification with children is one of the factors that affects whether they will experience role conflict and role strain while incarcerated (Baunach 1985; Kiser 1991). It is also supported that ethnicity, familial relationships, and the living arrangements of children are dimensions of women's lives that help create a wide spectrum of mothering styles and experiences (Wilkinson 1999; Baker and Carson 1999; Hill Collins 1994; Arditti and Madden-Derdich 1993; Dolan and Hoffman 1998; Chesler 1986; Rothman 2000; Glenn 1994). I was interested in seeing if any of these characteristics might have an effect on incarcerated mothers' perceptions as to whether or not they will live with their children after incarceration, which is related to role conflict and role strain while incarcerated.

Loglinear analyses revealed no statistically significant relationship between ethnicity and whether or not mothers thought they would live with their minor children after incarceration. Practical interpretation did show, though, a slight trend toward more non-white women who expect to live with their children than white women. Overall, most women said they expected to be reunited with at least one of their minor children. These results may be an over-compensation that women use in order to avoid, both internally and externally, the stigmatization of being noncustodial mothers when they are released. Research has indicated that the reality of reunification is much less likely than what mothers hope (Baunach 1985; McGowan and Blumenthal 1978). Also, the women may feel a need to distance themselves from the role of noncustodial mother. Role distancing may be used to alleviate the conflicting expectations of mothering while in prison.

The same trend was found to be true for prior-incarceration living arrangements. Slightly more non-white women had custody of at least one minor child prior to incarceration than the white women did. One explanation for this trend is that prior to incarceration, white mothers are more likely not to have custody of any of their minor children than non-white mothers. African American and Hispanic extended families could be sharing custody responsibilities for multiple children, as would fit the extended family child rearing model that is more common among non-white families when social, political, and economic stability are threatened.

Multivariate analyses also revealed no statistically significant association between familial relationships and whether or not mothers thought they would live with their minor children after incarceration. Again though, for both closeness to mother and to father, practical significance can be found. More so than expected, respondents felt close to their own mothers and fathers while growing up and perceived they would live with children after incarceration; more so than expected, respondents did not feel close to both their own mothers and fathers while growing up and did not expect to live with their children after incarceration. While not statistically significant, there is some relationship between familial relationships and perceptions of living arrangements. The research indicates a relationship between negative childhood experiences and female incarceration (Mullings, Pollock, and Crouch 2002; Panton 1974; Owen 1998; Owen and Bloom 1995; Chesney-Lind and Rodriguez 1983; Crawford 1988). It seems that the trend might go a step further towards reunification plans and, thus, role conflict. Women who did not live with their children prior to incarceration also tended not to be close to their parents while growing up (and those who did live with them tended to be closer). While not statistically significant, this is an interesting trend. Disconnect to parents while growing up and negative childhood experiences may be associated with both female incarceration and whether or not these women live with their children before and after incarceration.

Prior living arrangements did not significantly affect whether or not either ethnicity or familial relationships were associated with women's perceptions of

whether or not they would live with their children. It was, however, the strongest variable associated with these perceptions. Women who lived with their children prior to incarceration were much more likely to expect to live with at least one of those children after incarceration. Conversely, those who did not live with any children prior to incarceration were less likely to expect to live with them afterwards. This makes sense. What is interesting is that more women expect to live with at least one of their minor children than did live with them prior to the incarceration. Again, other research has found an optimism for reunification plans that surpasses reality. This could also be a factor of self-reporting stigmatizing information. Mothers may want to believe they will be reunited with their children, regardless of the practicality of this, because of the negative connotation of not living with their children has already been placed upon them and will be again. This finding may also be related to role distancing. By believing that they will live with their children after incarceration, they distance themselves from the negative roles of prisoner, incarcerated mother, and noncustodial mother.

Limitations of the Study

Although this study provides interesting findings regarding the relationships between various characteristics and mothers' perceptions of reunification with her children, an indicator of role conflict, it also has several limitations. In using secondary data, I compromised on how these relationships would be defined and analyzed. An original survey instrument could be constructed to include scales that could measure more accurately and broadly

mothers' role conflict experienced while incarcerated. The same could be done for variables defining familial relationships. A data collection instrument that was specifically designed to analyze pre-existing characteristics that may be related to role conflict and role strain would likely produce very different results.

A second limitation of the study also relates to the instrument used, especially the way in which the original data were captured. For this analysis I had to determine which mothers had at least one minor child living with them prior to incarceration and which mothers perceived at least one minor child would live with them after this incarceration. Questions regarding living arrangements, as well as several other questions, were asked regarding each child. The data then needed to be recoded into the above dichotomous categories. This process of recoding may have diminished the validity of the analysis somewhat. For example, if a respondent has five minor children and expects only one of them to live with her after incarceration, she is then coded as perceiving at least one of her minor children will live with her after incarceration. But what of the other four?

Another limitation is the way in which the women were recruited for the study. At intake, mothers may have many other things on their minds than what is going on with their children and where they will live after it is all over. They have also not yet, at least with this particular incarceration, had a chance to experience any role conflict or role strain that may occur from perceptions of reunification with children. The timing of the collection of the data may have skewed these women's responses.

A final limitation to this study is the lack of consideration to length and number of incarcerations. Women who are serving a first sentence may have very different perceptions of reunification than women who are serving their second or third. Also, women who will be serving only several months compared to a year or more may also have different ideas about whether or not they will live with their children after incarceration. These factors should be controlled for in an analysis dealing with self-reported perceptions of anything that will occur after a prisoner's term is served.

Recommendations of Further Research

A survey instrument designed specifically for analyzing relationships between pre-existing characteristics and components of role conflict and strain should be designed. Questions specifically relating to why mothers did not live with or do not think they will live with their children could be developed to alleviate issues regarding differing responses between children. Common reasons from the literature could be used to develop a measurement for this variable. Having a set list of reasons may also associate more with ethnicity. That is, the "why" behind living arrangements may be found to be significantly associated with ethnicity. Scales could be constructed to measure familial relationships, both current as well as in childhood. Also, recruiting respondents after they have already been incarcerated for a set amount of time would control better for this variable. If women were recruited from parenting programs, they would all have been thinking about this topic prior to participating and richer data may be the result. In addition, the inclusion of simple questions regarding

number and length of incarceration/s would allow a researcher to control for this variable.

A specifically designed survey instrument could also include other areas involving children and role conflict. As the literature on mothering, family patterns, and incarceration indicates, placement of children can also be a factor of role conflict. Another factor in role conflict, not discussed in this study, is the mothering that occurs while the women are still incarcerated. For instance, how much control do the mothers have in making decisions regarding their children? Also, who are the children placed with? How much visitation do mothers have with their children? Including all these factors in a study would produce a more well rounded analysis of role conflict in incarcerated mothers.

Finally, research on role conflict could be enhanced further after various types of relationships are found. Qualitative research involving the in-depth analysis of issues that have been found to be related to role conflict would lead to a greater understanding of the differences in experiences among mothers who are incarcerated. This then could help in the prevention of recidivism as well as programming while incarcerated.

Summary

The role conflict and role strain experienced by incarcerated mothers may have a lasting impact on their lives as well as their relationships with their children beyond incarceration. Sociologically, understanding factors that influence the conflict and strain could progress our knowledge of roles and the management of conflicting roles. Practically, understanding such factors might

lead to improved parenting programming for incarcerated mothers and therefore better life chances for these women and their children.

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APPENDIX

Hello my name is _____. I am working on a statewide survey for Texas A&M University. We are going to ask you questions about your usage of tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs. *Your answers will help the State to provide better treatments to those who use those substances. Your identity and your responses will remain confidential. Even though some information may be difficult to recall, your honesty is our standard of excellence.* Please answer the questions based on your regular usage.

1. Which of the following best describes your racial or ethnic group – African American, Hispanic, American Indian, Anglo, Asian, or something else?

Anglo (White)

African American

Hispanic (INCLUDING CHICANO, MEXICAN-AMERICAN, CUBAN, PUERTO RICAN, SPANISH)

Asian Specify _____

American Indian

Something Else Specify _____

Refused

During most of the time you were growing up, how would you describe your relationship:

2. with your mother?

Usually very close

Sometimes close

Usually distant

Usually hostile

Unpredictable extremes of behavior – sometimes close, sometimes hostile

Don't Know

Refused or No Mother

3. with your father?

Usually very close

Sometimes close

Usually distant

Usually hostile

Unpredictable extremes of behavior – sometimes close, sometimes hostile

Don't Know

Refused or No Father

4. Do you have children?

Yes

No

Don't Know

Refused

5. How many?

ENTER ____ 98=DK. 9=RF

Now please tell me about this child/your oldest child.

6. Is it a boy or a girl?

Boy

Girl

Don't Know

Refused

7. How old is s/he?

Years

Months

Don't Know

Refused

8. How old is s/he?

ENTER ____ (# years) (CONTINUE TO FM9C)

98=Don't Know

99=Refused

9. How old is s/he?

ENTER ____ (# months) (CONTINUE TO FM9C)

98=Don't Know

99=Refused

10. Was she/he living with you before you were arrested this last time?

Yes

No

Don't Know

Refused

11. Do you expect him/her to live with you when you get out of prison?

Yes

No

Don't Know

Refused

ASK FOR THE REST OF CHILDREN (RECORD IN VARIABLES 12
THROUGH AS MANY CHILDREN AS RESPONDENTS HAVE)

GENDER

AGE

WHERE LIVING?

LIVE WITH AFTER?

TABLES

Table 1

Frequency Distributions for mothers with at least one child under Age 18

	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
<u>Total</u>	826	
<u>Ethnicity:</u>	826	
Anglo (White)	313	37.9
African American	364	44.1
Hispanic	116	14.0
Other	33	4.0
<u>Mean Age</u>	32	
<u>Marital Status:</u>	825	
Married	224	27.2
Widowed	28	3.4
Divorced	158	19.2
Separated	135	16.4
Never Married (including annulments)	280	33.9
<u>Median # of Years Married</u>	5	
<u># of Children:</u>	826	
One	175	21.2
Two	250	30.3
Three	201	24.3
Four	102	12.3
Five or More Children	98	11.9
<u>Median # of Children</u>	2	
<u>Last Grade of School Completed:</u>	825	
Grade 0-8	147	17.8
Grade 9-11 (Some High School)	423	51.3
Grade 12 (High School Graduate)	162	19.6
Grade 13-15 (Some College)	80	9.7
Grade 16 (Graduated College)	12	1.5
Graduate Work	1	0.1

Table 1

Frequency Distributions for mothers with at least one child under Age 18

	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
<u>Working, School, Unemployed, etc.:</u>	820	
Working full-time	346	42.2
Working part-time	133	16.2
Going to School	16	2.0
Keeping House	142	17.3
Disabled	12	1.5
Unemployed	171	20.9
 <u>Household Legal Income in Prior Year:</u>	657	
Under \$10,000	354	53.9
\$10,000 to \$20,000	135	20.5
\$20,000 to \$30,000	94	14.3
\$30,000 to \$40,000	35	5.3
\$40,000 to \$50,000	14	2.1
\$50,000 and above	25	3.8
 <u>Basic Support from family or friends:</u>	824	
All/Most	98	11.9
Some	208	25.2
Very Little	147	17.8
None	371	45.0
 <u>Did respondent live with at least one child under age 18 prior to incarceration?:</u> <u>prior to incarceration?:</u>	826	
Yes	523	63.3
No	303	36.7
 <u>Did respondent perceive she will live with at least one child under age 18</u> <u>after this incarceration?:</u>	826	
Yes	683	82.7
No	143	17.3
 <u>Close to Mother?:</u>	822	
Yes	559	67.7
No	263	31.8
 <u>Close to Father?:</u>	822	
Yes	450	54.5
No	372	45.0

Table 2

Cross-Tabulation

Observed Frequencies & Percentages for Pre- x Post-Living Arrangements

Did respondent live with at least one child under the age of 18 prior to this incarceration?			
	<u>n</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Does respondent perceive she will live with at least one child under the age of 18 after this incarceration?			
		(<u>n</u> = 826)	$\chi^2 (6)$
		501	162.08***
<u>Yes</u>	(<u>n</u> = 683)	(73.4%)***	182 (26.6)%***
<u>No</u>	(<u>n</u> = 143)	22 (15.4%)***	121 (84.6)%***

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table 3

Cross-Tabulation				
<u>Observed Frequencies & Percentages for Living Arrangements x Closeness to Mother</u>				
Did respondent feel close to mother while growing up?				
	<u>n</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	$\chi^2 (6)$
Did respondent live with at least one child under the age of 18 prior to this incarceration?				
<u>Yes</u>	(<u>n</u> = 522)	(<u>n</u> = 822) 365 (69.9%)	157 (30.1)%	0.12
<u>No</u>	(<u>n</u> = 300)	194 (64.7%)	106 (35.3)%	
Does respondent perceive she will live with at least one child under the age of 18 after this incarceration?				
<u>Yes</u>	(<u>n</u> = 681)	(<u>n</u> = 822) 471 (69.2%)	210 (30.8)%	1.07
<u>No</u>	(<u>n</u> = 141)	88 (62.4%)	53 (37.6)%	
* <u>p</u> < .05; ** <u>p</u> < .01; *** <u>p</u> < .001				

Table 4

Cross-Tabulation				
Observed Frequencies & Percentages for Living Arrangements x Closeness to Father				
Did respondent feel close to father while growing up?				
	<u>n</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	$\chi^2(6)$
Did respondent live with at least one child under the age of 18 prior to this incarceration?				
<u>Yes</u>	(<u>n</u> = 522)	(<u>n</u> = 822) 295 (69.9%)	225 (30.1)%	1.17
<u>No</u>	(<u>n</u> = 300)	155 (64.7%)	147 (35.3)%	
Does respondent perceive she will live with at least one child under the age of 18 after this incarceration?				
<u>Yes</u>	(<u>n</u> = 680)	(<u>n</u> = 822) 375 (55.1%)	305 (44.9)%	0.25
<u>No</u>	(<u>n</u> = 142)	75 (52.8%)	67 (47.2)%	
* <u>p</u> < .05, ** <u>p</u> < .01; *** <u>p</u> < .001				

Table 5

Cross-Tabulation						
<u>Observed Frequencies & % for Pre & Post-Living Arrangements x Ethnicity</u>						
	<u>n</u>	<u>Anglo (White)</u>	<u>African American</u>	<u>Hispanic</u>	<u>Other</u>	$\chi^2 (6)$
Did respondent live with at least one child under the age of 18 prior to this incarceration?						
<u>Yes</u>	(<u>n</u> = 523)	183 (35.0%)	(<u>n</u> = 826) 249 (47.6%)*	79 (15.1%)	12 (2.3%)**	9.68*
<u>No</u>	(<u>n</u> = 303)	130 (42.9%)	115 (38.0%)*	37 (12.2%)	21 (6.9%)**	
Does respondent perceive she will live with at least one child under the age of 18 after this incarceration?						
<u>Yes</u>	(<u>n</u> = 683)	252 (36.9%)	(<u>n</u> = 826) 306 (44.8)%	104 (15.2%)	21 (3.1%)	4.91
<u>No</u>	(<u>n</u> = 143)	61 (42.7%)	58 (40.6)%	12 (8.4%)	12 (8.4%)	
*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.						

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Table 6

Cross-Tabulation

Observed Frequencies & % for Living Arrangements x Closeness to Mother x Closeness to Father

	Close to			$\chi^2(6)$
	Father (n = 820)	Closeness to Mother (n = 820)		
Does respondent perceive she will live with at least one child under the age of 18 after this incarceration?		Yes	No	3.45
<u>Yes</u>	Yes	300 (44.1%)	75 (11.0%)	
	No	171 (25.1%)	134 (19.7%)	
<u>No</u>	Yes	48 (34.3%)	26 (18.6%)	
	No	39 (27.9%)	27 (19.3%)	

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

VITA

Laura Lindley was born in Harvey, Illinois, on October 11, 1973, the daughter of Dawn and John Lindley. After graduating from Rich Central High School, Olympia Fields, Illinois, in 1991, she began her undergraduate work at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois. After she received the degree of Bachelor of Arts in December, 1995, she moved to Austin, Texas, where she did Marketing Research for a year and a half. After working in Document Control for a wafer fabrication company in Austin, she entered the Graduate School of Southwest Texas State University, San Marcos, Texas. During graduate work she has been a grant specialist and writer and currently does data analysis in the workforce industry.

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