MOTHERING FROM THE INSIDE

RESEARCH ON MOTHERHOOD AND IMPRISONMENT

EDITED BY
KELLY LOCKWOOD

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Series Editor Biographies

Laura Abbott is a Senior Lecturer in Midwifery at The University of Hertfordshire, UK. Laura's doctorate examined the experiences of pregnant women in prison: *The Incarcerated Pregnancy: An Ethnographic Study of Perinatal Women in English Prisons.* Laura continues to highlight and campaign about the issues facing pregnant women in prison.

Lucy Baldwin is a Senior Lecturer at De Montfort University, UK. Lucy has worked in criminal and social justice for over 30 years being a qualified social worker and probation officer. Lucy's research and publications focus predominantly on the impact of imprisonment on grandmothers, mothers and their children.

Sarah Beresford is a criminal justice consultant working within the Prison Reform Trust's Transforming Lives programme, UK. Sarah has a particular interest in the impact of parental imprisonment on children. She is a Trustee of both Partners of Prisoners (POPS) and Adelaide House, an Approved Premises for women in Liverpool.

Natalie Booth is a Senior Lecturer in Criminology at Bath Spa University, UK. Her research and publications explore the intersection between prison and family life and the impact of maternal imprisonment and remand for families.

Lorna Brookes is a Senior Lecturer at Liverpool John Moores University, UK. She has been running community-based support groups for children of prisoners for over a decade. As founder of Time-Matters UK (formally The MyTime Project), her primary strategy is to ask children what they want and need, co-creating solutions.

Helen Codd is a Professor of Law & Social Justice at the University of Central Lancashire, UK. She is passionate about social justice and human rights and has an extensive international record of research and publications in relation to prisons, prisoners and prisoners' families in the United Kingdom and global context.

Rachel Dolan is an Associate Lecturer at the Open University and a Winston Churchill Fellow. She completed her PhD at the University of Manchester, researching the mental health of pregnant women and new mothers in prison. Rachel has also carried out research in relation to indeterminate sentences and prison therapeutic communities.

Jenny Earle leads Prison Reform Trust's Transforming Lives programme, UK, to reduce women's imprisonment. Previously, she was senior legal policy analyst at the Equality and Human Rights Commission. In 2018, Jenny received an honorary doctorate from the Open University in recognition of her work on gender equality and women's rights.

Kelly Lockwood is a Lecturer in Criminology at the University of Salford, UK. Kelly has both practice and research experience working with women involved in the Criminal Justice System and is particularly interested in how motherhood is understood, constructed and experienced by women in prison.

Nancy Loucks OBE is Chief Executive of Families Outside, a Scottish charity supporting families affected by imprisonment. She is a Visiting Professor at the University of Strathclyde's Centre for Law, Crime & Justice and has conducted extensive research on the impact of imprisonment on families, prison policy and comparative criminology.

Shona Minson is a British Academy Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Centre for Criminology, University of Oxford, UK. She has worked as a barrister practising family and criminal law. Her research work has focussed on the observance of children's rights in maternal sentencing decisions and during and after their mothers' imprisonment.

Anne Pinkman is a Prison Reform Trust's Programme Manager for Scotland and Northern Ireland. Previously, she was the Chief Officer for Fife and Forth Valley Community Justice Authority. Her interests include women and mental health; in 2011, Anne established the Scottish Working Group on Women's Offending which she continues to convene.

Toni Wood is a Lecturer in Criminology at the University of Salford. Her main research interests are centred around the health and well-being of prisoners and prison staff. Toni is also one of the co-founders of the Autism and Criminal Justice System Hub at the University of Salford.

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Introduction: Mothering from the Inside

Kelly Lockwood

Keywords: Mothering; Mother; Prison; Imprisonment; Children of prisoners

The Beginning

As I write the introduction to this collection, I reflect on my decade of carrying out research and working with and alongside mothers in prison and their children. My own identities as a mother and as a criminologist are inextricably linked and have long informed my pursuit of this subject and a desire to better understand mothering and imprisonment and the impact of custody on mothers, their children and their wider families and support networks. As a mother of three *young* children at the time of my undergraduate criminology degree, I began exploring mothering identities of women in prison for my dissertation. Motivated by the lack of research in, and a growing passion for, the subject area, I continued this work in my doctoral research, exploring critically how women construct understandings of mothering and imprisonment (Lockwood, 2013). Within this last decade I have also had the privilege of working for a women's centre who supported women both in custody and on release and continued my academic endeavour as a feminist criminologist, researching with women in the criminal justice system and in particular mothers in custody. I have had the opportunity to work alongside many women who have and continue to experience imprisonment and consequent separation from their children and some inspiring professionals supporting them. Throughout this time, research in relation to mothering and imprisonment has become more visible and more diverse. Reflecting changes in my biography, as shown in Chapter 6, my own work has also diversified, exploring the stories of mothers in prison with older adult children. I have also organised and attended events bringing together scholars from an array of disciplines, including criminology, psychology, social work, health, law and geography, each bringing a unique perspective to develop understanding and new knowledge in order to promote better outcomes for mothers in prison and their children. The need for a collection bringing this research together to centre on mothering and imprisonment became apparent, in order to examine the barriers, struggles and challenges faced by mothers in prison and their children and those who work with and support them. Often these barriers are created and maintained

by a system that is ill equipped to deal with women's gender-specific needs; a system, that is in large, designed for and by men, without the needs of women prisoners in mind (Carlen, 1994; Carlen & Worrall, 2004). However, as a feminist narrative researcher, it was also important to bring awareness to stories of the capacity, resilience and resistance of women, their children and support networks, as they negotiate, cope with and make sense of imprisonment; factors which rarely inform dominant discourse or contribute to policy and practice reform.

Background and Context: Mothers in Prison

In England and Wales, just under 4,000 women are held in custody at any one time, equating to around 5% of the overall prison population (Prison Reform Trust, 2015). Although the population of women in prison has witnessed slight fluctuations, this figure has remained relatively static for the last decade. Women in prison tend to have complex needs and multiple disadvantages; indeed, the Ministry of Justice (2012) identifies this population as being more likely to have experienced trauma; physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse as children; local authority care as a child; and witnessed violence in the home. The majority of crime committed by women is non-violent or classed as 'minor', and as a result, women tend to receive relatively shorter sentences resulting in a higher turnover of women prisoners (Ministry of Justice, 2018). Arguing that prison is a disproportionate and ineffective response for women who come into contact with the criminal justice system, campaigners have highlighted the need to significantly reduce the numbers of women imprisoned in England and Wales (Lockwood, 2018; Prison Reform Trust, 2018a).

Political recognition of the specific needs of women prisoners and challenges within the women's estate were significantly heightened owing to the Corston Report (2007), a commissioned review of the needs and experiences of vulnerable women in the criminal justice system. The report made several recommendations, leading to political debate and gained cross-party support (Women in Prison, 2017). Follow-up reports acknowledged some 'progress' (see APPG, 2011; House of Commons Justice Committee, 2015; Social Exclusion Task Force, 2009), but as noted by Hine (2019), most of the evidence indicated a lack of significant change to either the scale of the population of women in prison or their experiences of custody.

Attending to many of the themes and recommendations of the Corston Report, the 2018 Female Offender Strategy for England and Wales (Ministry of Justice, 2018), sets out the government's agenda for working with women in contact with the criminal justice system across England and Wales. The 'aspirational nature' (Clinks, 2018) of the 'wide ranging and comprehensive' (Hine, 2019, p.12) strategy has been largely welcomed (Clinks, 2018; Hine, 2019; Women in Prison, 2018), including its commission of Lord Farmer to review his recommendations in relation to strengthening male prisoners' family ties to focus specifically on the needs of women prisoners. However, multiple limitations of the strategy have been highlighted, including a lack of concrete proposals to respond to women's different and complex needs and the lack of meaningful investment required to affect real lasting change (Clinks, 2018; Hine, 2019).

Despite the limitations and challenges that have been identified, both the .Corston Report (2007) and the Female Offender Strategy (Ministry of Justice, 2018) have brought increased visibility to the specific issues relating to mothers in prison. This has been useful in a number of ways, no less because reliable information and statistics relating to the mothering status of women in prison are not routinely collated (Prison Reform Trust, 2018b). A 1997 Home Office census indicated that over 60% of women in prison are mothers to dependent children (Caddle & Crisp, 1997). This remains the most up-to-date, reliable and therefore most commonly cited information available. However, official data often adopt narrow biological definitions of 'mother' and does not reflect the ways in which many women 'mother' or consider themselves 'mothers', including those who participate in 'mothering' and take on the primary roles and responsibilities of 'mothering' without meeting institutional definitions (Lockwood, 2013). Incorporating more diverse understandings of 'mother', this figure could therefore, in fact, be much higher.

For 85% of mothers in prison, imprisonment was their first significant separation from their children (Caddle & Crisp, 1997). With separation often cited as the most challenging aspect of their imprisonment (Carlen & Worrall, 2004; Baldwin, 2015; Lockwood, 2017, 2018), mothers in prison often have greater difficulties in adjusting to and coping with prison life in comparison to women who are not mothers (Loper & Tuerk, 2006). Separation is often exacerbated by difficulties in maintaining contact with their children through visitation. Owing to women's comparatively low representation among the prison population, fewer women's prisons exist. There are currently only 12 women's prisons in England and Wales; six have mother and baby units, with just two being open prisons. Women are, therefore, generally held further away from their homes than male prisoners, making visitation problematic (Women in Prison, 2012). Strained relationships with carers, who often act as gatekeepers to maintaining contact (Crewe, Hulley, & Wright, 2017), and unsatisfactory visiting conditions have also been cited by women in prison as barriers to maintaining contact with their children (Raikes & Lockwood, 2011). Visits are often valued as a means of protecting their relationships with their children and maintaining a meaningful role in their lives (Lockwood, 2017, 2018); however, the noisy environments and constant supervision with limited physical contact allowed (de Motte, Bailey, & Ward, 2012; Lockwood, 2018; Raikes & Lockwood, 2019) mean that visits can also be stressful and emotionally challenging for both mother and child (Lockwood, 2018; Raikes & Lockwood, 2011). Only half of women in prison have visits with their children throughout their sentence (Caddle & Crisp, 1997; Women in Prison, 2012).

The lack of contact that women have with their children is often compounded by diminished influence in their children's lives, coupled with worry about the quality of care their children are receiving and the impact of their imprisonment on their children's well-being (Mignon & Ransford, 2012). Estimates indicate that in England and Wales, over 17,000 children a year are affected by maternal imprisonment (Prison Reform Trust, 2012). A Home Office census indicated that only 9% of children with a mother in prison are

cared for by their father and only 5% are able to remain in their own homes (Caddle & Crisp, 1997). This figure is in comparison to 90% of children of imprisoned fathers being cared for by their mothers (Caddle & Crisp, 1997). Reports estimate that 4% of children experiencing maternal imprisonment will remain with their mothers in a mother and baby unit within the prison estate. At 24%, the majority of children will be cared for by maternal grandparents, with a further 29% being cared for by other family members or friends and 11–15% taken into local authority care (Caddle & Crisp, 1997; HM Inspectorate of Prisons, 1997; SCIE, 2008). The care of children with a mother in prison is described by Caddle and Crisp (1997) as 'unsettled', with a child experiencing an average of four different carers throughout their mother's sentence (Caddle & Crisp, 1997).

Research has long identified the significantly negative impact of parental imprisonment (Turliuc, Mairean, & Christmann, 2012). Experiencing the imprisonment of a parent is now recognised as one of the 10 Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) that are known to have a detrimental effect on children's mental and physical health, education and future job opportunities. Children can experience the separation as bereavement and may experience a range of difficulties including mental health and behavioural problems, anxiety, anger, confusion and depression (Jones & Wainaina-Woźna, 2013; Long et al., 2019; Murray & Farrington, 2005; Turliuc et al., 2012). However, less is known about the specific impact on children of having a mother in prison. The lives of these children may be particularly disrupted, as their mother is often their primary and only parental figure (Myers, Smarsh, Amlund-Hagen & Kennonl, 1999). With less stable care arrangements, being less likely to remain in their own homes and more likely to be taken into local authority care, maternal imprisonment is likely to be far more disruptive than paternal imprisonment (Caddle & Crisp, 1997). Greater understanding of the distinct yet interrelated issues explicitly associated with mothering and imprisonment is therefore required in order to inform policy and practice that promote better outcomes for mothers who come into contact with the criminal justice system and their children.

This Volume

This collection brings attention to the experiences and perspectives of women who are 'Mothering from the Inside', their children, families and wider support networks. Separated into two parts, Part I, 'From Sentence to Resettlement', and Part II, 'From the Margins to the Centre', these chapters explore a range of distinct yet interrelated issues explicitly associated with mothering and imprisonment in England and Wales. The book highlights the challenges of and barriers to mothering and imprisonment, whilst also illustrating the adaptive strategies adopted in order to resist and/or survive the impact of maternal imprisonment. In doing so, the collection highlights cross-disciplinary themes to encourage debate in relation to contemporary practice issues and challenges.

Part I of this collection addresses several interrelated issues, including sentencing, maintaining maternal contact, pregnancy and childbirth, and resettlement, whilst also attending to the lived experiences, perspectives and needs of children with a mother in prison. Based on her research with Crown Court judges, in the first chapter, Minson explores the way in which motherhood is constructed by the courts and the implications for sentencing. The chapter highlights how a woman's mothering role and responsibilities often compound her wrongdoing from the perspective of sentencers; it also illustrates inconsistent understandings of the sentencers' duty to consider the impact of any sentence delivered upon dependent children, coupled with a lack of understanding of the consequences of maternal imprisonment. Minson goes on to detail the training resources she has developed to aid consistency and understanding in relation to sentencing decisions. In Chapter 2, Booth draws attention to the changes in type, frequency and quality of contact between mothers in prison and their children once a custodial sentence has been passed. Drawing on qualitative research with mothers in prison and the carers of their children, Booth not only illustrates the challenges imprisonment poses in maintaining maternal contact, but the ways in which mothers, their children and those caring for them construct and adjust communicative practices to promote mother-child contact during imprisonment. The willingness of mothers and those caring for their children to make personal sacrifices in order to maintain and maximise maternal contact is also explored and the implications of such sacrifices considered. In Chapter 3, Abbott and Lockwood explore the perspectives of pregnant women and new mothers in prison. They highlight the specific challenges faced by pregnant women in negotiating the prison environment and the way in which prison policies and practice can exacerbate their sense of shame and stigmatisation. Consistent with many chapters within this collection, the theme of loss and separation is prevalent; fear of potential separation from their baby is highlighted as a constant stress both during pregnancy and after birth. The chapter also tells of the significance of supportive relationships with both prison staff and fellow prisoners and the adaptive strategies adopted in order to cope with pregnancy and new motherhood in the context of imprisonment. Adopting a mixed methods approach, with mothers who have or are experiencing imprisonment, their children, their children's carers and relevant professionals, Chapter 4 draws attention to the experiences and needs of children with a mother in prison. Through the work of the Prison Reform Trust, in this chapter, Beresford, Earl, Loucks and Pinkman highlight how children with mothers in prison often remain invisible; they highlight the level of disruption caused to their lives and the stigmatisation experienced. Throughout the chapter, the many barriers faced by these children are highlighted, including the barriers to receiving support and in maintaining contact with their mother during imprisonment. Despite such challenges, the chapter illustrates that with the right support, children can become more resilient and develop the skills needed to thrive. In Chapter 5, Baldwin builds on the work of the preceding chapters to bring attention to resettlement and the longer term impact of maternal imprisonment. Through focusing on maternal identity and

emotion, Baldwin illustrates how mothering identities can be 'spoiled' owing to imprisonment and consequent maternal separation with long-lasting implications for mothers' sense of self, relationships with their children and ability to engage in rehabilitative processes. Baldwin argues that supporting women in prison to understand maternal emotion is important in terms of emotional regulation and maintaining relationships with their children both in the shorter and longer term.

In the second section, 'From the margins to the centre', authors explore diverse perspectives and experiences in relation to mothering and imprisonment. These chapters highlight the importance of understanding how factors such as age and mental health intersect with mothers' lived experiences of and responses to imprisonment, and it highlights the experiences of professionals working with and mothering alongside women in prison. In Chapter 6, Lockwood explores the experiences of mothers in prison with older adult children. The chapter illustrates the strength of maternal identities as children transition to adulthood and how imprisonment serves to disrupt those identities. The chapter equally brings attention to mothers' capacity and the ways in which they continue to 'mother' their older adult children from prison. The chapter also explores the role adult children play in providing emotional, practical and financial support to their mothers during custody and considers the ongoing implications of this 'role reversal' for mothers' mental health and well-being. In Chapter 7, Dolan continues to illuminate issues of mental health, specifically attending to mental health in relation to pregnancy and new motherhood of women in custody. Adopting a mixed method approach, Dolan describes the prevalence of mental health issues experienced by mothers and the implications for their imprisonment, pregnancy and new motherhood. Dolan also explores how women are informed of mother and baby units and the factors associated with admission, including the impact of mental health. Exploring good practice in other countries, Dolan goes on to offer recommendations for policy and practice in relation to pregnant women and new mothers serving a custodial sentence. Through an ethnographic study, in Chapter 8, Wood focuses attention on the experiences of female prison officers working within the women's prison estate. Wood explores how gendered experiences, such as pregnancy, miscarriage, child birth and child-rearing (of both the officers and women prisoners), can create specific emotional burdens that can impact their working role, home life and relationships with the women they work with. With similarities with the work of Baldwin, in Chapter 5, Wood illustrates the ways in which such emotions are managed, or mis-managed, and the implications of this for presenting as professionals in the male dominated workplace of the prison. Offering an alternative practitioner perspective, in Chapter 9, Brookes brings attention to the way in which families impacted by maternal imprisonment experience support systems. Drawing on both her academic research and experience as a practitioner, Brookes considers what support can look like, highlighting her own successes and challenges in developing a model of support for children with a mother in prison. As with the work of Beresford and colleagues in Chapter 4, Brookes calls for more supportive

practices for mothers in prison and their families. Finally, in Chapter 10, Codd explores international perspectives on mothering and imprisonment and the political, social, cultural, economic and penological factors that mean that the issues associated with mothering and imprisonment can present differently in different settings. This chapter identifies key areas of commonality and difference and locates these discussions within emerging research to consider policy and practice development needs.

The chapters presented within this book bring together key issues relating to mothering and imprisonment, contributing at the same time to an understanding more broadly of women's imprisonment. Whilst the collection highlights the difficulties and stresses associated with maternal imprisonment, it offers a nuanced understanding to highlight accounts of resilience and resistances, reflecting the continued challenges and negotiations of mothers in prison, their children and those caring for and working with them in order to cope with and make sense of their changing situations, roles, relationships and identities.

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