Mothering Behind Bars: Lived Experiences of Female Offenders at Johannesburg Correctional Facility, Gauteng Province

by

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to myself, my mother (Malehu Dorcus Masekoameng) and my sister (Maria Masekoameng), and my participants.
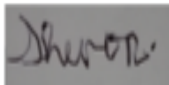
Declaration

Name: Masekoameng Sheron Mathlatse

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Degree: Master of Arts in psychology (with specialisation in research consultation)

I declare that **Mothering behind bars: Lived experiences of female offenders at Johannesburg Correctional Facility, Gauteng Province**

is my own work and that all the sources that I have used, or quoted, have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signature   **Date 19 September 2022**

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My appreciation goes to the Almighty God, who has created me and gave me faith to complete this work; without Him this piece of work would not have been possible.

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Abstract

The percentage of female offenders who are single mothers of minor children is a growing concern among the total female incarceration population in South Africa and globally. This study aimed to explore how expectations about mothering bear out for incarcerated mothers who are physically separated from their children. The experience of motherhood was captured using face-to-face interviews with a guide of semi-structured questions with eight (8) incarcerated mothers at Johannesburg correctional facility, Gauteng province, South Africa. The data were analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) couched with Social Identity Theory (SIT) and revealed that circumstances that led to maternal pathways differed from the literature. The findings of this study provided a foundation of how the social context, together with maternal obligation, influences behaviours that women internalise, and which lead to offending behaviours. This warrants further research in an effort to curb and prevent maternal incarceration.

Keywords: single mother, separation, motherhood, maternal obligation, minor children incarceration, social identity theory, South Africa

Abstract – Sepedi

Diphesente tša bagolegwa ba basadi ba go hloka balekani ba e lego bommagobana ba bannyane ke tlhobaboroko go palomoka ya basadi bao ba golegilwego ka Afrika Borwa le lefaseng ka bophara. Maikemišetšo a nyakišišo ye e be e le go nyakišiša maitemogelo a bagolegwa ba basadi bao ba godišago bana ba le kgolegong, le go kwešiša maitemogelo a bona a gore ba bopa bjang ditšhupo tša godiša bana le kwešišo ye ba e amantšhago le go godiša bana. Nyakišišo ye e laeditše maitemogelo a bagolegwa ba basadi bao ba arogantšwego le bana ba bona. Boitemogelo bja go ba mma bo dirilwe ka go šomiša mokgwa wa dipoledišano ka tlhahlo ya bommagobana bao ba golegilwego ba seswai (8) ka dipotšišo tše di beakantšwego pele go kgoboketša datha ka maitemogelo a bona a go ba batswadi bao ba lego ka kgolegong ka Johannesburg, Profense ya Gauteng, Afrika Borwa. Datha e sekasekilwe ka go šomiša mokgwa wa go sekaseka maitemogelo ka Teori ya Boitšhupo bja Setšhaba gomme e laeditše gore mabaka a go dira gore ba godiše bana a fapana le ao a lego ka gare ga dingwalwa. E laeditše gore mabaka a go swana le Tlaišo ka Balekane, mathata a ditšhelete le go nyaka go hlokomela bana ke mabaka a magolo ao a ilego a gapeletša batswadi ba bagolegwa go dira bosenyi. Dikutollo tša nyakišišo ye di laeditše ka moo maemo setšhabeng, le maikarabelo a botswadi, a amago maitshwaro a basadi gomme ba fetše ba dira bosenyi. Se ke lebaka la gore go dirwe dinyakišišo tše di tseneletšego gore go fedišwe le go thibela go golegwa ga batswadi.

Mantšu a bohlokwa: mma wa go hloka molekane/motswadinoši, maikarabelo a botswadi, go golegwa, teori ya boitšhupo bja setšhaba, Afrika Borwa

Abstract – isiZulu

Isifinyezo esiqukethe umongo wocwaningo

Amaphesente enani labenza amacala abangomama ababodwa abanezingane ezincane aya ngokukhula ngendlela ekhathazayo eNingizimu Afrika. Inhloso yalolu cwaningo bekuwukuphenyisisa ngezipiliyoni zabesimame abenza amacala abongomama ababoshiwe ukuqondisisa ngezipiliyoni zempilo yabo nokuthi bakubona kanjani ukuba ngomama kanye nencazelo yabo abayibeka kwindima yokuba ngomama. Lolu cwaningo belunenhloso yokuhlaziya ngokuthi kulindeleke kanjani ukuba ngomama kubantu abangomama ababoshiwe abahlukaniswa nezingane zabo. Izipiliyoni zokuba ngomama zabhekwa ngokwenza ama-interview ubuso nobuso ngokuholwa yimibuzo ebhaliwe yama-semi-structured eyabuzwa komama abasyisishagalombili (8) ababoshwe kwifasilithi yokuqondisa izimilo eJohannesburg, kwiprovinsi yaseGauteng, eNingizimu Afrika. Ulwazi lwahlaziwa ngokusebenzisa uhlaziyo lwe-Interpretative phenomenological analysis olalusekelwa yi-Social Identity Theory olwaveza ukuthi izimo ezenza ukuphambuka kwabesimame zehlukile kunemibhalo. Lwakhombisa izinto ezifana nodlame olwenzeka kubalingani olwaziwa njenge-Intimate Partner Violence, kanye nezihibe ngokwezimali, kanye nezidingo zokufezekisa indima yokuba ngomama, kwaba yizinto ezinkulu ezinomthelela kwababoshiwe abangomama kwindlela yokuziphatha yobugebengu. Okutholwe wucwaningo kuhlinzeke ngesisekelo sokuthi isimo sezenhlalisano, kanye nezibopho zokuba ngomama, kunomthelela kanjani kwindlela yokuziphatha komama, nokuziphatha okuholela ekwenzeni amacala. Lokhu kudinga ukuthi kwenziwe futhi olunye ucwaningo, ngemizamo yokuvimbela ukuboshwa kwabesimame.

Amagama abalulekile: umama oyedwa, indima yokuba ngumama,, izibopho zokuba ngumama, ukuboshwa, i-social identity theory, iNingizimu Afrika

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Background of the Study

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a background of the research study that explains the demographics of women offenders and their justification for being involved in the criminal justice system. The construction of motherhood was also explored. This study offers a description of why there was a need to conduct this research. In addition, I propose the research questions which guided the need for the research/research problem and the objectives of the study. Furthermore, the chapter also explains the methodology employed, the demarcation and ethical considerations of the study, and finally the summary of the chapter.

1.2 Background of the Study

"Historically, women and girls, as both victims and offenders of crime, were usually left out of studies or, if included, were typically done so in sexist and stereotypic ways" (Belknap, 2007, p. 2). This was because in most cases, women in society are perceived as victims of criminality because of their nature of being caregivers rather than perpetrators, which is in line with their gendered role (Qhogwana, 2019). Easterling (2012) articulates that the lack of a dominant framework causes information about female offenders' experiences to be unnoticed. Corresponding to the United States research findings (Easterling, 2012), corrections and sentencing experts Van Zyl Smit and Dunkel (2001, p. 589) observe that "there has been no systematic study of the imprisonment of women in South Africa or of the regime to which they are subject". On the other hand, investigation into female offending, predominantly in South Africa, focuses on the western and European knowledge while it leaves no room for the localised knowledge to be explored (Artz et al., 2012; Dastile & Agozino, 2019).

The rationale for the exclusion of female offender literature as documented by the fourth edition of the *World Female Imprisonment List* compiled by Walmsley (2017) may be that women who offend constitute a segment of 2% to 9% of the total incarcerated population. Nonetheless, the female offender population over more than a decade from 2000 to 2016 has increased by 20% globally (Walmsley, 2017). Glaze and Maruschak's (2010) report on the Bureau of Justice Statistics supports

Walmsley's (2017) findings as it articulates that the female offender population is regarded as having the fastest growing population rate in Africa, Asia, Europe, the United States of America (USA) and Oceania. For example, Sawyer (2018) indicates that the growth of women imprisonment (see Figure 1.1) has increased nine times over the 20 years prior to the publication as compared to their male counterparts.

Figure 1.1:

The Growth of Women Imprisonment over the past 20 Years and more in the United States of America
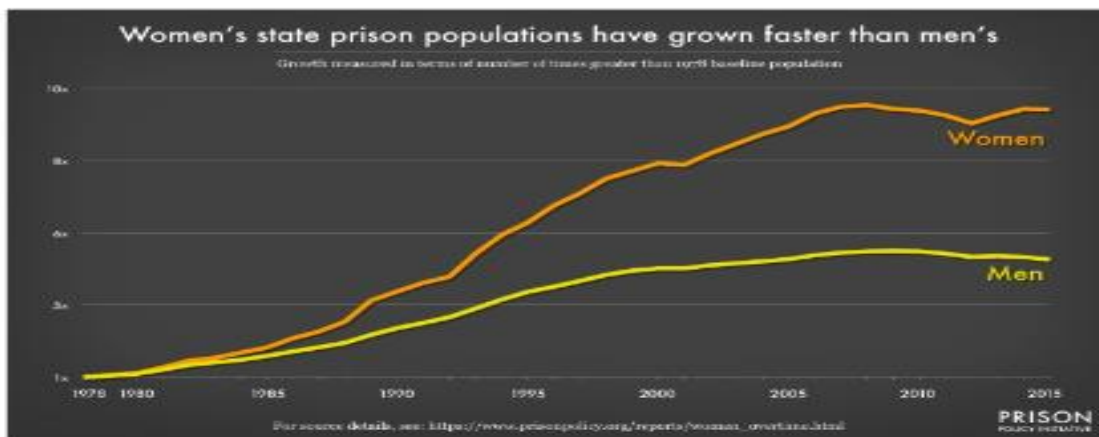
Source: Sawyer (2018, n.p.)

Literature (Aiello, 2016; Cooper-Sadlo et al., 2019; Easterling et al., 2019; Glaze & Maruschak, 2010; Kennedy et al., 2020; Moe & Ferraro, 2008; Mitchell & Davis, 2019; Sawyer, 2018; Koons-Witt et al., 2021; Zelba, 1964) suggests that the rapid growth of the female offenders' population has resulted in the increase in the number of women of colour who are mothers behind bars. Zelba's (1964) study's findings on women offenders and their families in California, USA, with 124 incarcerated mothers using interviews and questionnaires, provided fundamental knowledge that proposes that most incarcerated women (75%) in the study were women of colour who were single mothers with sole custody of the child prior to incarceration.

Bloom and Steinhart (1993) conducted a survey of 439 incarcerated women in USA correctional facilities on behalf of National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD). Bloom and Steinhart's (1993) findings support Zelba's (1964), as most women in the sample of 439 were African American (169) and Native Americans (33)

who were single young mothers between the ages of 25 to 29 years. Bloom and Steinhart (1993) argue that incarcerated mothers have had at least one child under the age of 18 years old before entering the criminal justice system, had legal custody, and were living with their children prior to incarceration.

Recent research by Aiello and McQueeney (2021), Easterling et al. (2019), Sawyer (2018), Wilson et al. (2022), and Koons-Witt et al. (2021) is in line with earlier studies (Bloom & Steinhart, 1993; Zelba, 1964) which demonstrate that most of the females were women of colour and 60% to 80% of the women conflicting with the law in the USA correctional facilities are single mothers who are primarily responsible for their child(ren). Kennedy (2012) emphasises that female offenders have at least one child by the age of 15 to 21 years old before they enter into the criminal justice system.

Glaze and Maruschak (2010) and Chesney-Lind (2004) argue that the increases in incarcerated women in correctional facilities during the two decades prior to their publication were due to mandatory sentences which were related to the laws on drugs and mass incarceration as early explanation of women's pathways to crime. To add to this idea, Moe and Ferraro's (2008) qualitative study on the value of parenthood in a correctional facility with 30 incarcerated offenders in the USA, proposed an early explanation that women's pathway to criminality is influenced by poverty, and economic needs to fulfil their maternal identity. Furthermore, the life histories of women offenders reflect on the experiences of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), poverty, dysfunctional relationships, single-parent responsibilities, mental illness which contributed to their low esteem, substance abuse and offending behaviours (Baldwin, 2021; Cooper-Sadlo et al., 2019; Ruback et al., 2014; Salisbury et al., 2018). Current studies (Baldwin, 2021; Easterling et al., 2019; Garcia-Hallet, 2019; Kennedy et al., 2020) contribute to Moe and Ferraro's (2008) study, which discovered that women's trajectories to crime are gendered pathways which take account of the vulnerability of women's social status, their histories and maternal identity, which are in line with the society expectation as contributing factors to their arrest.

Inferring from the little current and previous literature that documents women's life histories of poverty, unemployment, lower educational attainment and

maltreatment, the inclination to engage in economic-related crimes, particularly drug trafficking, shoplifting or petty theft, is utilised as a means for survival and maintaining lifestyle (Ackermann, 2016; Arditti, 2012; Chesney-Lind & Pasko, 2013; Dastile & Agozino, 2019; Moe & Ferraro, 2008), while those who experienced domestic violence, IPV, and victimisation are more likely to commit violence crimes such as murder or attempted murder, and robbery.

Conflicting with international literature (Arditti, 2012; Chesney-Lind & Pasko, 2013; Moe & Ferraro, 2008) and local research (Dastile, 2014; Steyn & Booyens, 2017), which cite that offender woman were likely to be apprehended for economic-related crimes such as shoplifting, theft, prostitution and drug-related offences, Ackermann's (2014) report is in line with the Department of Correctional Services' (DCS) annual report 2019/2020 (DCS, 2020), which articulates that female offenders were incarcerated more for aggressive crimes (41%) than any other crimes, such as economic-related crimes (39%), narcotics offences (8%) and other offences (13%). Leading discourse in female offender literature locally by various researchers (Ackermann, 2014; Agboola, 2014; Haffejee et al., 2006; Luyt & Du Preez, 2010; Parry 2022; Pretorius & Botha, 2009) indicates that women who committed murder or attempted murder and robbery were linked to the experience of domestic violence, IPV and victimisation. Artz et al. (2012) articulate that most battered women who were in violent relationships perpetuated economic crimes such as theft or shoplifting to remove themselves from the context of violence. On the other hand, women who remain with abusive partners for the sake of caring for their children are more likely to murder their partners (Ackermann, 2014; Agboola, 2014; Luyt & Du Preez, 2010; Pretorius & Botha, 2009).

Similar to the USA's justification of women's involvement in crime, South African research has noted that poverty and cultural norms with regard to women's social position in the community (for instance women's role being limited to childbearing rather than being the provider) contribute to the increase in incarceration (Ackermann, 2014; Dastile, 2014; Haffejee et al., 2005; Law, 2014; Parry, 2018; Steyn & Booyens, 2017). Furthermore, literature by Ackermann (2016), Artz and Hoffman-Wanderer (2017) and Parry (2022) cites that most women who are experiencing poverty have high probability of being in conflict with the law due to the burden of assuming caretaking responsibility for their children and extended family

members. Parry's (2018) thesis on the motherhood penalty with 17 women who offend in Johannesburg, Gauteng, supports USA findings on feminisation of poverty as gendered pathways to criminality. To add on this, structural discrimination (such as lack of access to economic resources, education, employment opportunists) exist in communities which was exacerbated by patriarchal systems, and legacy of apartheid makes most single mothers from disadvantage background to be vulnerable to criminality due to bearing the burden of financially providing for their children alone (Ackermann, 2016; Artz & Hoffman-Wanderer, 2017; Parry, 2022). Moreover, the discourse of female offending locally outlined that women criminality was linked to victimisation and violence, mental Illness and addiction, experiences of loss and abandonment, race and language, and the role of motherhood (Ackermann, 2016; Artz et al., 2012; Artz & Hoffman-Wanderer, 2017; Dastile & Agozino, 2019; Parry, 2018; Steyn & Booyens, 2017).

Compared to USA figures, South Africa has a low female incarceration rate, which ranges from 2% to 2.6% (DCS, 2020; National Institute for Crime Prevention and the Reintegration of Offenders (NICRO), 2014; Walmsley, 2017). Ackermann's (2014) report on *Women in pre-trial detention in Africa: A review on literature* for the Civil Society Prison Reform Initiative (CSPRI) corresponds to international statistics in portraying female offenders locally as a fast-growing population. Conflicting with Ackermann's (2014) report and international statistics (Sawyer, 2018), the DCS (2020) suggests that the women's incarceration rate of sentenced and unsentenced offenders over the past decade has decreased from 3,029 in 2014/2015 to 2,534 in 2019/2020. In contrast to the research abroad, Luyt and Du Preez (2010, p. 92) propose "the introduction of correctional supervision, special remissions of sentence, and special amnesty for women with children under 12, partly facilitated this decline in the female inmate population". For example, Table 1.1 shows female offender trends from 2014/15 to 2019/20.

Table 1.1:

Female Offender Trends from 2014/15 to 2019/20

Categories	Gender	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Sentenced	Females	3 029	2 026	2 979	2 956	2 957	2 453

Unsentenced	1 089	1 157	1 195	1 370	1 359	1 448

Source: Department of Correctional Services (DCS) (2020)

Despite the low rate of women incarcerated for offending in the country, their proliferation is similar to that shown in the USA literature, which indicates that the majority of women behind bars are mothers (Ackermann, 2016; Artz et al., 2012; Artz & Hoffman-Wanderer, 2017; Dastile & Agozino, 2019; Luyt & Du Preez, 2010; NICRO, 2014;Parry, 2018, 2021, 2022). Dastile (2010) conducted qualitative research on Black female offending in post-apartheid South Africa with 32 incarcerated Black women at two Gauteng correctional centres. The study discovered that almost 69% of the participants were mothers who had a child before detention and arrest. Research evidence (Artz et al., 2012; Artz & Hoffman-Wanderer, 2017; Dastile & Agozino, 2019; Dastile, 2014; Law, 2014; Parry, 2018) suggests that incarcerated women are primary caregivers of the children prior to incarceration.

Artz and Rothman (2012) suggest that the onset of female offenders being mothers before entering the correctional centre is before they are 21 years old. This implies that most of the female offenders were teenage mothers at the time they entered the criminal justice system (Artz & Rothman, 2012). Consistent with international literature, the majority of women in correctional facility are mothers, who are breadwinners from single-headed households, and their racial group is most likely to be Black (Ackermann, 2016; Artz & Hoffman-Wanderer, 2017; Artz & Rothman, 2012; Dastile, 2010; Haffejee et al., 2005; Parry 2022). Similar to research in the USA, the local research evidence (Steyn & Booyens, 2017) represents that the racial division of the incarcerated women behind bars shows that many women are mothers who are Black (71.4%) and mixed-race (10.1%.). The demographics of women in South Africa in general are similar to those of the female offenders' population internationally and locally with regard to the majority being Black Africans who are mostly mothers (Ackermann, 2016; Artz & Hoffman-Wanderer, 2017; Dastile & Agozino, 2019; Parry, 2020). They often come from marginalised communities characterised by high levels of structural poverty, unemployment, low levels of education, teenage pregnancy, experience of Gender-Based Violence (GBV), female-headed households, and they lack the financial resources to support their

children (Ackermann, 2016; Artz & Hoffman-Wanderer, 2017; Dastile & Agozino, 2019; Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation [CSVR], 2016); Statistics South Africa [Stats SA], 2021).

1.3   The Construction of Motherhood

Motherhood, as suggested by Lockwood (2013), is a socially constructed concept that outlines role responsibility for women who have biological dependants. Within the Northern American context, motherhood identity is constructed based on role expectations of intensive mothering that were outlined by Hays' theory, which involves being physically present in the child's life, providing emotional and financial support to children, continual child-rearing responsibilities, and being able to exercise authority (Hays,1996). Lockwood (2013) suggests that Hays' (1996) construction of motherhood has not changed; however, it recently became versatile to mother by virtue of birth, adoption, foster parents and older persons raising their siblings.

Kennedy (2012) argues that the motherhood identity in society is based on the sense of idealism which many women either rely on or struggle with. Mothers who are able to mimic the societal ideal of mothering tend to receive the greatest praise and are perceived as good mothers, whereas women who defy the cultural norms about motherhood and mothering face the level of criticism from the society which might make them out to be bad mothers (Kennedy, 2012).

Mitchell and Davis (2019) argue that although motherhood is a universal construct across cultures, it differs according to class, race and ethnicity. In addition, intensive mothering expectations are universal across countries, but the reality is that they are constructed based on personal experiences which may vary due to cultural and traditional expectations (Aiello, 2016; Barnes & Stringer, 2014). Within the African and South African context, the ideology of intensive mothering may be allocated to the maternal uncle, while motherhood is being socially constructed based on women's fertility, which is coupled with marriage (Walker, 2007). Moreover, recently literature by Moore (2013) argues that motherhood refers to a socially constructed identity that outlines the set of behaviours performed by women in line with the mothering role. Nonetheless, maternal role is culturally bonded as a

collective of the maternal grandparents or uncle of the child rather than individualistic responsibility of the mother (Moore, 2013).

Although mothering is a collective role, the Sepedi or Tswana cultural proverb locally emphasises that *mmago ngwana o tswara tipa ka bogale,* directly translated to the mother of the child is the one who holds the knife by its blade (Mawati et al., 2011). This implies that mothers are expected to do anything to protect or care for their children and family, which is similar to Hays' (1996) ideology of intensive mothering. According to Greene et al. (2000), mothering from inside a correctional facility is similar to mothering from outside as it is affected by factors such as resources, support and the cultural constraints of the mothering role. However, societal ideologies of motherhood create stereotypes and stigma that contradict the role of motherhood while incarcerated (Grumbach, 2014; Kennedy, 2012; Mitchell, & Davis, 2019). According to Grumbach (2014), stigmatisation of motherhood inside a correctional facility may produce meanings about devalued maternal identities and their relationships with other people. Grumbach (2014) suggests the stigma of imprisonment as a blemish on the individual character of having a weak will.

The ideal of motherhood identity for incarcerated mothers has not changed from the societal expectations of motherhood. However, incarcerated mothers are in the transition of adopting and re-defining their identities within correctional facilities (Grumbach, 2014; Kennedy, 2012; Mitchell, & Davis, 2019). Even though there is no absolute definition of what mothering is inside a correctional facility, internationally and locally an attempt to define motherhood can be regarded as a socially constructed identity that women utilise to classify themselves as either good or bad, judging by their ability to carry out societal expectations of intensive mothering (Barnes & Stringer, 2014; Jackson, 2011; Lockwood, 2013). Mothering behind bars is an act of positive reinforcement to boost self-esteem and gives female offenders hope to reunite with the child who has been removed from a correctional institution or remained at home during the offender's incarceration (Stone, 2013).

1.4   The Rationale of the Study

Schoeman (2011) postulates that the previous body of literature that addresses female incarceration focuses on correctional facility health conditions, population and the profile of women who are incarcerated. When the issue of

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mothering is brought to the forefront, it deals with how children's abnormal behaviour is linked to the mother's imprisonment or how maternal absences due to incarceration affect the child's psychological well-being but does not outline how female offenders experience motherhood while incarcerated (Bloom & Steinhart, 1993; Dalley,1997; Henriques, 1982; Richie, 2002).

The study grows from the insufficient literature about female offenders' experiences of mothering behind bars (Baldwin, 2021; Berry & Smith-Madhi, 2012; Celinska & Sigal, 2010; Easterling, 2012; Easterling et al., 2019; Enos, 2001; Jackson, 2011; Poehlmann, 2005; Stone, 2013) which argues that little is still known to the public about the realities of female offenders as mothers, particularly about how they cope with imprisonment, how their identities are constructed or deconstructed during imprisonment, the effects of separation between the mother and child, and/or how they maintain or facilitate mothering behind bars. Moreover, the existing literature (Brown, 2016; Grumbach, 2014) on female offender experiences does not address how female offenders are prepared to resume or establish their maternal role while they are incarcerated or how maternal identity is formed while incarcerated.

Aiello and McQueeney (2021); Beckerman (1991, as cited in Brown, 2016), Easterling (2012); Easterling et al. (2019); Grumbach (2014), Stringer (2020) and Wilson et al. (2022) suggest that for most women, mothering does not stop due to imprisonment. Literature (Aiello & McQueeney, 2021; Baldwin, 2021; Barnes & Stringer, 2014; Stringer, 2020) suggest that some female offenders have the desire to restart or resume their mothering role in the correctional facility, with the aim of amending the broken relationship that they have with their offspring prior to incarceration. Studies by Baldwin (2021), Barnes and Stringer (2014), Brown (2016), Cooper-Sadlo et al. (2019), Easterling (2012), and Stringer (2020), in line with Enos (2001), maintain that in spite of the circumstances of mothering while being physically separated from the youngster, mothering still remains an essential phenomenon for detained women.

According to research studies (Artz et al., 2012; Bloom & Steinhart, 1993; Gowland, 2011; Luyt & Du Preez, 2010; Poehlmann, 2005), the fallout of separation can either be formally (due to the laws and policies that guide on separation), for

example in the USA, the Adoption and Safe Family Act (ASFA) of 1997 (ASFA, 1997) which advocates for termination of the custodial rights of an incarcerated mother with lengthy sentences, provided that they are unable to appoint a caregiver for the child. As a result of ASFA (1997), female offenders with lengthy sentences may be at the vulnerable positions of losing permanent custodial rights over a child to the caregiver (Berry & Smith-Madhi, 2012; Easterling et al., 2019; Kennedy, 2012; Stringer, 2020). Incarcerated women with lengthy sentences may experience informal physical isolation from their children, due to the negative connotation which creates stigma associated with mothering behind bars (Baldwin, 2021; Berry & Smith-Madhi, 2012; Brown, 2016; Kennedy, 2012; Poehlmann, 2005; Stringer, 2020). As a consequence, offender mothers may lose contact due to the negative perception held by mothers or caregivers about the context of the correctional facility being harmful to the child, which in turn may disrupt their relationships and put strain on the maternal identity (Baldwin, 2021; Berry & Smith-Madhi, 2012; Brown, 2016; Cooper- Sadlo et al., 2019; Poehlmann, 2005).

Literature (Artz et al., 2012; Baldwin, 2021; Brown, 2016; Poehlmann, 2005; Stringer, 2020) demonstrates that limited or a lack contact (lost communication or inability to meet the demand of initiating contact due to cost, for example travelling or calling), or laws and policies that govern contact, i.e. the ASFA (1997), may have implications on the emotional connection between mothers and their child(ren). Ultimately, limited or a lack of contact may put strain on maternal identification, causing a breakdown in communication and jeopardising the attachment bond of incarcerated mothers with their children (Arditti, 2012; Baldwin, 2021; Brown, 2016; Jackson, 2011; Koons-Witt et al., 2021; Poehlmann, 2005). Berry and Smith-Madhi (2012), Stringer (2020), and Baldwin (2021) suggest that unlike offender mothers who have shorter sentences, those with lengthy sentences may lose hope of reuniting with the child after imprisonment, especially if they no longer have full custodial rights over their children or they have lost communication with their children.

According to Poehlmann (2005), female offenders who have poor attachment relationships with significant others are more likely to have poor adoptive coping mechanisms to regulate intensive stress. Ankie and Menting (2016), Berry and Eigenberg (2003, as cited in Stone, 2013) and Easterling (2012) postulate that the

stress caused by mothering behind bars due to the correctional facility environment being unsupportive of the maternal role could result in the experience of psychological distress, such as post-traumatic stress, depression, feelings of grievance and alienation associated with being physically isolated from their children.

1.4.1 Significance of the Study

Motherhood while in imprisonment may be a two-folded phenomenon. On the one side it serves as a motive for criminal behaviour; alternatively, motherhood can be considered as a mechanism for survival, hope and coping with the correctional facility environment (Celinska & Sigal, 2010; Nuytiens & Christiaens, 2016; Parry, 2022; United Nations [UN] handbook on women and imprisonment, 2014). Jackson (2011) points out that those who justify their involvement in crime due to the mothering role tend to use maternal identity as a mechanism to change behaviour and become better law-abiding citizens and mothers. Nonetheless, it is a rewarding task as it promotes positive reinforcement to a change in behaviour and maintaining relationships that contribute to the psychological well-being of the offender (Ankie & Menting, 2016; Poehlmann, 2005). Given the transitions and psychological implications of imprisonment on the maternal role and identity, there is a need for further investigation to explore and describe women's experiences of mothering behind bars (Easterling, 2012; Ferraro & Moe, 2003; Jackson, 2011; Stone, 2013).

The research demonstrates the effects that the context of incarceration has on offender mothers' experiences of mothering, construction and reconstruction of maternal identities to match with the societal standards (Dastile & Agozino, 2019; Easterling, 2012; Ferraro & Moe, 2003; Jackson, 2011; Stone, 2013; Stringer, 2020). The mother's experiences may be beneficial to programme developers in the correctional facility by providing a sound foundation of how incarcerated females manage to be mothers. Moreover, descriptive knowledge of the female offenders will unmask the experience of mothering while incarcerated, which could be valuable knowledge to therapists, academics, and policymakers (Arditti, 2012). The study contributes valuable knowledge largely to the sphere of corrections, criminology, and psychology by providing knowledge of pathways that lead to maternal incarceration, life experiences and experiences of performing mothering roles behind bars.

1.4.2 The Objective of the Study

- To explore lived experiences of female offenders mothering while incarcerated.
- To understand the meaning attached to mothering by the female offender.
- To describe the effect of contact and separation on offender motherhood role.

1.4.3 Research Questions

Main question:

What is the lived experience of incarcerated mothers who are mothering while incarcerated?

Sub-questions:

- How do incarcerated mothers fulfil their role of mothering while incarcerated?
- How do incarcerated mothers perceive their role of mothering while they are incarcerated?
- How do expectations about mothering bear out for incarcerated mothers who are physically separated from their children?
- How do expectations about mothering at proximity bear out for incarcerated mothers who mother inside correctional facilities?

To answer the above-mentioned research questions and gain insight about female offender lived experiences of mothering behind bars, data were collected by using a face-to-face interview schedule guided by a semi-structured guide, with eight (8) participants from the Johannesburg female correctional centre, Gauteng province. The literature review (which is discussed in the next chapter) helped in developing the relevant questions that I desired to include in the semi-structured interview guide. Utilising the semi-structured interview guide enabled me to approach the phenomenon of motherhood behind bars broadly, which was followed by specific questions. The guide provided me with an opportunity to be flexible with the interview questions and have informal conversations that allowed participants to be more relaxed and open about their stories, while on other side, I was able to obtain facts, opinions, and insight about their experiences (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). In

addition, I utilised social constructionism as a paradigm underpinning how the participants and I developed knowledge and how we came to construct the realities of being a mother behind bars. I utilised verbatim transcription to transcribe data and analysed it using interpretive phenomenological analysis, which revealed how women experienced motherhood behind bars.

1.4.4 Demarcation of the Study

Findings of the study are not generally conclusive of all the incarcerated populations within the South African context and across borders or internationally, as correctional facilities differ in terms of the conditions, procedures or jurisdiction in which they exist. However, conclusions drawn from this research could help in revealing the lived experiences of the incarcerated mothers in South African correctional facilities. Findings can be utilised to understand the underlying meaning attached to motherhood, how offenders reconstruct or construct maternal identities, how maternal roles are negotiated or resumed while imprisoned, and the lived experiences of mothering behind bars.

1.6   Definition of Concepts in the Study

Arrested – When someone is taken into police custody (UN Criminal Justice Handbook Series, 2014)

Community – group of people living together and sharing the same characteristics, attitudes and attributes (Hornby, 2010)

Contact – refers to different forms of communications that are utilised for mothering via physical visit, letters and telephone calls (Poelhmann, 2005)

Convicted – a person who has been declared guilty of a criminal offence by verdict or decision of the judge (UN Criminal Justice Handbook Series, 2014)

Custody – protective care or guardianship of someone (UN Criminal Justice Handbook Series, 2014)

Criminal justice system – the system of law enforcement that is directly involvedly in apprehending, prosecuting, sentencing and punishing those who are convicted of criminal offences (UN Criminal Justice Handbook Series, 2014)

Discourse – formal expression of a thought on a subject (Hornby, 2010)

Female offender – convicted and sentenced individual who is incarcerated (UN Criminal Justice Handbook Series, 2014)

Feminization of poverty - is the term that describes women's experience of severe and increasing poverty as compared to man's due to gender factors which are not limited to discrimination, inequality and bias that exist within communities (Mackenzie, 2019)

Poverty - refers to a state whereby individual(s) or communities are unable to meet their daily demands that sustain their living due to a lack of resources which are not limited to water, food, shelter and clothing (Chen, 2022)

Incarcerated mother – refers[1] to women who have a child either by virtue of birth, adoption or who is responsible for the supervision of her young siblings (UN Criminal Justice Handbook Series, 2014)

Maternal role – female responsibility that they carry out in relation to their identity as mothers (Moore, 2013)

Placement – the protocol that is used by the DCS in removing the child from the correctional facility to reside with the relatives, foster home or any persons and/or caregiver (Republic of South Africa [RSA], 2008)

Relative – a person connected by blood or marriage and/or any relation to the mother

Separation – physically removing the child who used to resides with the mother from the correctional facility (UN Criminal Justice Handbook Series, 2014)

1.7   Concepts that are going to be used Interchangeably

Arrest – apprehend

Female offenders – apprehended offenders/detained offenders

Incarcerated mothers – offender mothers

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[1] This definition is inclusive of females who are heading their families and are in charge of supervision of younger siblings but exclusive of those who have parents and are supervising their siblings.

Research ethics board and research ethics committee

Incarceration – imprisonment

Motherhood identity – maternal identity or offender identity

Sense of self-identity or self-image

1.8 Outline of the Study

There are five chapters in this study, each focusing on specific aspects of the research. Each chapter begins with a brief introduction and ends with a conclusion of the chapter. An overview of the study is as follows: Chapter 1 introduces the study, followed by the literature review and theoretical framework of the study in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 describes the ethical considerations, research design and methodology. Chapter 4 discusses the findings of the study. Chapter 5 concludes the study, discusses its limitations, makes recommendations, reflexivity and makes suggestions for future research.

1.9 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter provided an overview of the study, detailing how the study is outlined. The background of the study, the rationale, research questions, objectives and significance of the study were described to provide grounded information of mothering within correctional facilities. Methods that were deployed gave a brief overview of how participants' information was collected and analysed. A detailed review of how mothering is facilitated in correctional facilities is discussed in Chapter 2.

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1   Introduction

In this chapter, I sought literature that included research papers and articles that are most closely engaged with the phenomenon of mothering behind bars, to ensure that the literature review remained relevant to the research study. Further, different research papers locally and internationally assisted in approaching this issue from a different angle and broader range of perspectives. The goal of the literature review was to move beyond the social discourse of motherhood and consider this topic through multiple lenses, provide an overview of ways in which the context of a correctional facility, society, and criminality shapes motherhood. In this perspective I attempted to better understand the research topic and situate it within the context of a correctional facility. By doing so, it allowed me to identify what is already known internationally about mothering behind bars and inform the research study undertaken.

Primarily, I began by discussing the construction of maternal identity and role. This was followed by exploring the effects of incarceration on maternal role and identity. I discussed women's general pathways to criminality. Next, I moved to motherhood identity as a motivation to criminality. Subsequently, I discussed motherhood's self-concept as perceived by mothers behind bars. I deliberated on the effects of separation and mothering as a construct of maternal contact. Finally, I included the Social Identity Theory (SIT) as a theoretical framework to provide a better understanding of how the motherhood identity is constructed behind bars.

2.2   The Construction of Maternal Identity and Role

Literature (Lwelunmar et al., 2010; Maqubela, 2016; Moore, 2013; Walker, 2007) suggests that in the South African context, the construction of maternal identity and role is affected by history that is shaped by interlocking structures of race, class and gender. The legacy of apartheid in the country influenced women's social conditions such as slavery, rural life, political turbulence, and labour policies, which in turn shaped the way in which women negotiated the maternal identity and role (Maqubela, 2016; Moore, 2013; Simango, 2016; Walker, 2007). During the apartheid era, mothering roles included protecting and preserving the child from

political violence in urban areas by sending them to be cared for by grandparents in rural communities (Maqubela, 2016; Moore, 2013; Walker, 2007). Moreover, most black women cared for their estranged children's welfare by providing financial support while they were working as domestic workers in white urban areas (Maqubela, 2016; Moore, 2013; Parry & Segalo, 2017). The legacy of apartheid, together with HIV-related loss, contributed to the change in family structure and gender roles, the discourse of the mothering role, the way they infer and comprehend what they are doing as a mother, and how they can express it (Moore, 2013; Parry & Segalo, 2017; Simango, 2016; Walker, 2007).

Women's caregiving role in a domestic context was also influenced by the outbreak of the HIV and AIDS pandemic, which resulted in women needing to take care of their infected partners who were working in the city (Lwelunmar et al., 2010; Parry & Segalo, 2017). In addition, the HIV and AIDS pandemic also influenced how infected women negotiated their identities as a result of not being able to nurture the infant via breastfeeding (Lwelunmar et al., 2010). Furthermore, Chinyakata et al. (2019) explain that being a single mother, which was the result of an HIV/AIDS - related loss of a husband or other circumstances, may cause a woman's role to evolve into the main income provider because of the responsibility to take care of her children and families.

Post-apartheid era, changes in labour policies which advocate for equality in all spheres of the economic market amongst women, shifted their social standing in the society, which increased the likelihood of their participation in the labour force, and in turn influenced the negotiated maternal identity and role (Moore, 2013; Parry & Segalo, 2017; Walker, 2007). Moreover, Maqubela and Nishimwe-Niyimbanira (2021) articulate that the women's role shift to become a provider was led by educational attainment and government policies that promote their engagement in the labour force. Notwithstanding the government's effort to create a gender equality environment, some segments of the economic market still have gender gap participation in the workplace, which leads to women's unemployment rate that makes them vulnerable to criminal deviance (Tshifhumulo et al., 2018).

2.3   Maternal Role as a Turning Point to Criminality

Ferraro and Moe's (2003) study of mothering, crime and incarceration with 65 incarcerated woman who are mothers at Pima County adult detention facility in South Arizona in the USA shows that women's motivation to criminality was connected to maternal responsibilities to provide for their children financially, which is in line with the modern normative standard of good mothering in the society. Literature (Ferraro & Moe, 2003; Glaze & Maruschak, 2010; Van Voorhis et al., 2010) suggests that most single mothers who experience financial deprivation may struggle with performing their maternal role, for example supporting their children as a result of unemployment and poverty, which may motivate them to engage in deviant behaviour. Garcia-Hallet (2019) argues that even though unemployed or underemployed women rely on government child aid to support their children, the money is often inadequate to cover daily expenses, which causes women to be predisposed to criminality to supplement their income in an effort to take care of their children. Moreover, overwhelming feelings of failing to meet the maternal obligation, coupled with unemployment, as highlighted by Rodermond et al. (2016), can become a turning point to criminality for women who may opt to earn money via illegitimate means to meet their mothering responsibilities.

Further, victimised women who flee to the streets as girls are highly likely to be teenage mothers who may experience high levels of poverty, which may predispose them to criminality due to the burden of maintaining their motherhood obligations (Nuytiens & Christiaens, 2016). Victimised women from poor households tend to stay with their abusers for the sake of caring for their children's well-being and may act violently or aggressively, thus commit crimes such as arson, murder or homicide as a way of fighting back against their batterer to protect their loved ones, namely their children (Nuytiens & Christiaens, 2016). Nuytiens and Christiaens (2016, p. 196) articulate that "it is argued that victimized girls become offenders because of a 'survival strategy' or 'resistance strategy'". This implies that for incarcerated women, engagement in violent behaviours results from trying to protect themselves from violent partners within a domestic context (Nuytiens & Christiaens, 2016).

On the other hand, neglecting maternal responsibility as a result of being impaired by a substance (for example alcohol and drugs) may lead to child maltreatment (Goodrum et al., 2019). Moreover, Kreager et al.'s (2010) article suggests that the role of mothering becomes a reason for some women in disadvantaged communities to desist from involvement in criminal activities and drug abuse. Bachman et al.'s (2016, paras.2-4) qualitative study with 118 former female offenders in USA, on the other hand, revealed that "motherhood rarely functioned as a turning point per se that activated desistance but caring for children did serve to solidify prosocial identities once offenders had transformed their addict/criminal identities". This implies that the maternal role acts as a mechanism that strengthens women's traditional social relationships, which in turn may reduce their engagement in criminal behaviour (Bachman et al., 2016).

2.4 The Effects of Incarceration on Maternal Role and Identity: Stigmatisation

Although the context of a correctional facility makes mothering a difficult phenomenon to practise due to the distress that is triggered, restrictions and laws, the ideology of motherhood is not different from mothering outside the correctional system (Grumbach, 2014; Kennedy, 2012). The rationale behind this is that the ideology of motherhood is affected by societal normative behavioural expectations of performing the maternal role. In addition, individuals who defy these societal expectations are then stigmatised as being bad or unworthy of the status of being a mother (Aiello & McQueeney, 2016; Easterling et al., 2019; Kennedy, 2012).

Offender mothers are attached to the stigma of being bad mothers by society and the criminal justice system (CJS) due to their involvement in crime, which in turn produces devalued meanings of the maternal identities, which result in female offenders neglecting their role or losing self-confidence in performing their role (Aiello & McQueeney, 2016; Berry & Eigenberg, 2008; Kennedy, 2012). Berry and Eigenberg (2008), Easterling et al. (2019), Mitchell and Davis (2019), and Stringer (2020) propose that incarcerated mothers may experience role strain as the consequence of being incapable of carrying out the maternal role due to the legislation that limits contact in correctional centres, thus weakening their identity as mothers. Incarcerated mothers' attitudes towards their maternal role and how they

experience role gratification influence their identity prominence, which entails the feeling of being associated with their role and identity (Barnes & Stringer, 2014; Berry & Eigenberg, 2008).

2.5   The Construction of Women's Maternal Identity behind Bars

The way in which offender mothers evaluate their maternal identity within the category of good or bad mother relies on the justification for their wrongdoing in relation to their maternal role and the context that influenced their deviant behaviour (Aiello, 2016; Brown, 2016; Ferraro & Moe, 2003). In line with international findings (Aiello, 2016, Brown, 2016; Ferraro & Moe, 2003), local research (Artz et al., 2012) suggests that the motherhood identity shapes incarcerated mother's choices that become a turning point in criminal behaviour and reinforces the assigned labels that they personally internalise as good or bad mother in relation to their role responsibility.

2.5.1 The Good Mother Identity

2.5.1.1 Perception of Criminality being wrong and having a Need to Change

The value of being a good mother is a critical component that influences offenders to change their previous behaviour and possibly be accepted by their relatives (Garcia-Hallet, 2019). Garcia-Hallet (2019) proposes that the value of good mothers encouraged incarcerated mothers from drowning in their feelings of failure and guilt and bringing them hope for the future. Garcia-Hallet (2019) suggests that when incarcerated mothers have hope, they are able to break the cycle of depression and the lack of self-esteem in their mothering role through their relationships with their children. Kennedy (2012) suggests that incarcerated mothers who justify the crime that they committed to support their children, perceive themselves as good mothers; however, they often judge their decision of criminality as wrong and feel a need to change. Easterling's (2012) study focused on how incarcerated mothers navigate motherhood while they are behind bars, using qualitative interviews with 49 participants at the Kentucky Correctional Institute for Women in the USA. Easterling (2012) articulates that the women in the study maintained that they were good mothers despite their involvement in crime and

drugs. Even though incarcerated mothers perceived themselves as good mothers, they still felt guilt or ambivalence about being isolated from their children (Couvrette et al., 2016; Grumbach, 2014).

Similar to the US context, a local study by Gowland (2011) documents how six (6) offender mothers who were part of Phoenix's programme Starting with Us perform their mothering role behind bars using the Eshowe Correctional Centre, Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa. Gowland (2011) claims that being a good mother means that mothers can see that their decision to engage in criminal activities is wrong and they want to change their ways to become better mothers.

2.5.1.2 Care and Concern

Greene et al. (2000, as cited in Lockwood, 2013) suggest that mothers in correctional facilities perceived that the good mother notion was associated with mothers who made sure that their children were taken care of by others. In addition, Barnes and Stringer's (2014) study cited that a good mother express love and concern for their children. Parallel to the USA research, the Gowland (2011) study shows that most of the participants reached consensus that a trait of a good mother involves being able to take the responsibility of taking care and providing for the child financially.

2.5.1.3 Sense of Control

In addition, Berry and Eigenberg (2004, as cited in Grumbach, 2014), stipulate that the attributes of being a good mother are linked to having a sense of control over their child's behaviour or constantly being involved in the child's life. A sense of control in this case may be having a relationship with the child and the caregiver of the child and being able to exercise parental role despite being a distance mother (Celinska & Sigal, 2010). Barnes and Stringer (2014) suggest that a good mother identity is sustained when incarcerated mothers maintain a maternal bond by minimising the loss of control over the child. For example, incarcerated mothers whose children are in the custody of their maternal grandmothers will minimise loss of control by negotiating parental involvement and power with the maternal grandparents of the children (Barnes & Stringer, 2014). Celinska and Sigal's (2010) study with 73 incarcerated women which focused on coping strategies to deal with being separation in the US indicated that offenders who perceive themselves as

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good mothers depend on their ability to exercise the mothering role with their children, despite the incarceration condition, or the children being placed with their maternal grandmothers. Celinska and Sigal (2010) suggest that the role of good mothering is associated with female offenders who attempt to maintain good relationships with their children by detaching with the unfit mother or offender identity.

2.5.1.4 Dissociation with the Addiction Identity

Greene (2003, as cited in Lockwood, 2013) argues that being a good mother meant that incarcerated mothers were playing an active mothering role in their children's lives and stayed clean from substance abuse, such as drugs. Incarcerated mothers who were classified as good mothers were the ones who obeyed correctional facility rules, longed to be better mothers, worked hard to recover from substance addictions, which increased their chances of redemption, and who were in contact with their children (Aiello, 2016). Celinska, and Sigal (2010) argue that good mothering identity is adopted by female-weight parenting skills as a more important priority than the criminal and drug-abusing identity. Being recognised as a good mother is attached to a woman who does not abuse a substance and can be able to give her children enough attention and care, which are signs of a positive parenting role. In addition, Gowland's (2011) study reports that in some instances, incarcerated mothers provided a neutral response by arguing that even though they were guilty of not being able to take care of their children, they still maintained that they are not bad or good mothers.

Granja et al. (2015) argue that regardless of female offenders' desire to be good mothers, the context of the correctional facility may limit their ability to exercise the traditional parenting role, for example making decisions about how to take care, discipline and be actively involved in the child's education matters due to physical isolation. Couvrette et al.'s (2016) study, which focused on mothering experience by female offenders who abused substances in the USA, with 38 women using interviews, has proposed the idea of a deviant good mother model, which challenges the conventional status of a good mother. According to Couvrette et al. (2016, p. 302), women "build themselves a conception of motherhood that is more representative of their own reality, dismissing some key features of the good mother

model and adjusting others". This implies that despite being in the context of correctional facility, which devalues the worth of the maternal identity or having an addiction issue, women defend their worth by placing it on the idea of still being able to care for their children.

2.5.2 The Bad Mother Identity

2.5.2.1 Inability to Disassociate Individual Identity with Criminal Identity

Chesney-Lind (2004, as cited in Easterling, 2012) suggests that in contrast to a good mother, a bad mother label is assigned to women who link their identity with their criminality rather than with their mothering role.

2.5.2.2 Incapable or Unfit Mother

Furthermore, they perceive themselves as being incapable of mothering because their children were taken away from them and they lost custody of their children (Ferraro & Moe, 2003). The bad mother identity, as emphasised by Gowland (2011), was associated with incarcerated mothers who have neglected their children prior to incarceration due to spending too much time engaging in their criminal activities rather than being close to their children.

2.5.2.3 Abandoning their Children

On the other hand, Couvrette et al. (2016) argue that incarcerated women suggested that bad mothers are associated with mothers who neglect their parental responsibilities due to their drug addiction and criminal behaviours. Gowland (2011) suggests that bad mothers abandoned their children prior to incarceration.

2.6 The Effects of Separation on Maternal Identity

According to Berry and Smith-Mahdi (2012), the criminal justice system, together with the members of the community, tends to enforce the label of women who offend as being bad mothers who are incapable of performing their maternal responsibilities. As a result, the state laws, such as ASFA of 1997, indirectly prevent female offenders with lengthy sentences from exercising their maternal roles because they are perceived to be incapable of raising the child due to the correctional facility circumstances. The ASF Act (1997) proposes that parental rights

of the incarcerated mother be terminated based on the criteria of the state and the agency assessment of how unfit and unsuitable the incarcerated mother might be.

A nexus test approach is utilised to weigh whether parental rights should be terminated after the child is separated from the mother inside the correctional facility for more than 15 days, and the child is then to be placed in a foster home. The ASF Act (1997) looks at a traditional notion that mothering should occur in a nuclear family, whereby the mother should bear a primary responsibility for the family. For example, Barnes and Stringer (2014, p. 18) cite that "The state of Utah allows for the termination of parental rights if a parent's incarceration means that a child will be deprived of a 'normal' home for more than 1 year". Kennedy (2012) contends that the termination of parental rights diminishes mothering identity for mothers who fall short of the ideal motherhood, the reason being that they are unable to provide direct care for their children for multiple reasons, such as incarceration.

The UN Handbook on women and imprisonment (2014) covers challenges that women who offend encounter (for example separation between the mother and child) in in their situated correctional facility which may be in a developed and developing countries and also offer guideline on how to address such issues. According to the UN Criminal Justice Handbook Series (2014), children who are separated from their mothers at the age of 5 years inside correctional centres are more likely to be placed with maternal grandparents than foster homes or biological fathers. Poehlmann-Tynan et al. (2019) and Loper et al. (2014) argue that unlike foster homes, maternal grandmothers refrain from seeking legal custody because they believe that changing custodial rights symbolises the inability of the mother to care for her child and a change of custody changes the family structure.

Studies on parental incarceration (Chesney-Lind & Pasko, 2013; Koons-Witt et al, 2021; Poehlmann-Tynan et al., 2019) have shown that forcefully removing the child from the correctional services leads to mothers having psychological implications, such as anxiety, verbal or physical aggression, withdrawal, low self-esteem, and post-traumatic disorder, as they would have flashes of the child being removed from the correctional facility. Incarcerated mothers who serve longer sentences might experience the sense of self-helplessness fostered by negative reinforcement of behaviour, such as consistently worrying about their children's well-

being, having no sense of authority in the child's life and not being able to exercise their mothering role (Celinska & Sigal, 2010). In addition, offenders may experience a sense of loss over their identities as mothers due to being estranged from the child (Mignon & Ransford, 2012).

Grumbach (2014) argues that incarcerated mothers may experience a disconnection with their maternal identity during incarceration due to regret about the separation from their children. According to Celinska and Sigal (2011), incarcerated mothers who perceive themselves as good mothers evaluate separation as in the best interests of their children, even though it may be the most difficult and painful thing to do. Lockwood (2013) claims that offender mothers who experience feelings of guilt and shame while mothering behind bars are more likely to perceive the maternal role as being incompatible with the societal expectation of the mothering role. Some incarcerated mothers internalise the negative connotation that is attached to their self-image that depicts them as depraved mothers, which makes them feel incapable of fulfilling their role, thus discouraging maternal bonds (Grumbach, 2014).

South African literature (Parry, 2018) suggests that the experience of female offenders in South Africa is not entirely different from those in the USA. According to the Correctional Service Amendment Act of 25 of 2008 [CSA Act] in South Africa (RSA, 2008), children are separated from their mothers when they reach the age of 2 years in a correctional facility. Compared to the ASF Act (1997), the CSA Act, 2008 (RSA, 2008) does not legislate that child whose mothers are unable to provide a caregiver during placement should be placed into the childcare system. Nonetheless, Schoeman (2011) suggests that incarcerated mothers experience similar deprivation of loss of custodial rights once their children are placed in childcare homes, which in turn weakens the maternal identity.

Similar to international research, Du Preez's (2006) article on the examination of the effects of separation on incarcerated mothers who have children outside the correctional facility, lists the study's findings, which propose that incarcerated mothers with children outside the correctional facility experience feelings such as depression, pain and guilt, which stem from the fact that their children are left outside and there is nothing that they can do to protect them from social factors such as crimes that surround their communities (Du Preez, 2006). Adding to Du Preez's

(2006) views, Parry (2018) shows that some mothers preferred to be separated from the children because they felt guilty and ashamed of the crimes they have committed. Hesselink and Dastile's (2010) article reveals that about 75% of incarcerated mothers suffered from stress, insomnia, depression, trauma, eating problems, helplessness, frustrations, and anxiety after they have been separated from their children.

2.7   Mothering as a Construct of Maternal Contact

Poehlmann-Tynan (2015) suggests that the effects of separation on the incarcerated mother can be minimised by effective contact through the intervention of the mother, caregivers of the child and the criminal justice system in an effort to maintain the mother-child relationship and positive maternal identity. In contrast to the ASF Act (1997), the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures (the Bangkok Rules), rule 23 (UN Criminal Justice Handbook Series, 2014) recognise the necessity of female offenders to maintain contact with the outside world. According to the Bangkok rule 23 (UN Criminal Justice Handbook Series, 2014), female offenders' maternal identity behind bars is supported by the need to facilitate contact outside via co-mothering relationships and inside correctional facility by means of Mother-Baby Units (MBUs).

2.7.1 Mother-Baby Unit (MBUs) as a Construct to Mothering behind Bars

Given the history of incarcerated mothers' traumatic experiences, such as domestic violence, substance misuse and poverty, Sleed et al. (2013) argue that MBUs provide safe environments which strengthen the maternal identity. Harris (2017) suggests that incarcerated mothers who have unresolved trauma issues may have difficulty in building positive relationships with their children. Moreover, mothers who struggled with substance misuses articulated that admission to correctional facilities created an opportunity to deal with their addictions which interfered with their maternal identity and created the chance to bond with their children. Notwithstanding that the correctional facility is perceived as a safe space for some female offenders, existing studies indicate that the context of the correctional facility, as being a controlled, harsh and stressful environment, offers little support to maternal identity.

Barnes and Stringer's (2014) argument is in line with Arditti (2012) and Poehlmann-Tynan (2015) that structural constraints inside correctional facilities, such as a lack of beds to separate the mother from the general population or resources to implement the MBUs within a women's correctional facility, and harsh treatment from the correctional officials, sometimes strip away the female offender's autonomy to perform the mothering role. Despite that, Goshin and Byrne (2009) and Baldwin (2021) argue that the MBU provides an opportunity for the offender mothers who co-reside with their infant children behind bars to have proximal contact, which is important for attachment relationships and reinforcement of positive maternal identity. Barnes and Stringer's (2014) study's findings showed that regardless of demographic factors, incarcerated mothers develop positive mothering identities when they have close mother-child care relationships, frequent contact with family during incarceration, and expectations of having child custody upon release.

Byrne et al.'s (2010) longitudinal study on maternal attachment shows that incarcerated mothers who co-reside with their infant children inside correctional centres were inclined to develop secure attachment rather than insecure attachment relationships. Sleed et al. (2013) claim that allowing the child to co-reside with the mother who is a primary caregiver while serving her sentence, reduces the effects of the devastation caused by separation from the child which has the likelihood of diminished attachment bond, thus increasing their self-esteem in their mothering role.

South African literature is not different from the USA, as DCS (2005) and the Correctional Service Amendment Act 25 of 2008 (RSA, 2008) articulate that contact in the local correctional facility is provided through the MBUs. Eloff and Moen (2003) argue that the importance of the unit is to facilitate physical contact between the mother and child, which will promote healthy bonds between the two. Corresponding to the international research, the White Paper on Corrections (DCS, 2005) suggests that provision of contact reduces disruption of the family relationship as the mother is generally the caregiver of the child and promotes positive maternal identity. However, resources in South African correctional facilities are not adequate (enough beds and space) for the mothers to have proximity contact with the children in the correctional facilities.

Despite MBUs being necessary for maintaining maternal ties, there is a debate internationally and locally of whether its implementation inside correctional facilities is in the best interest of the child (Eloff & Moen, 2003; Enroos et al., 2010; Kanaboshi et al., 2017; Sleed et al., 2013). Some researchers (Eloff & Moen, 2003; Enroos et al., 2010) support the implementation of the MBU in favour of development in mothers of attachment and maternal identity. On the other hand, other research (Enroos et al., 2010; Sleed et al., 2013) is opposed to the ideology of the mothers co-residing with their children because of the stigma of the child being in a correctional facility and the incarceration environment as not being an effective place to raise the child.

2.7.2 *Co-mothering Alliance between the Child Caregiver and the Offender Mother as a Construct of Mothering at a Distance*

Poehlmann-Tynan (2015) argues that the perception of the caregiver towards the women who offend as being good or bad may affect cooperation in the co-mothering relationship. Literature (Aiello & McQueeney, 2021; Loper et al., 2014; Stringer & Banner, 2014; Wilson et al., 2022) suggest that a lack of cooperation may result in limited contact between the incarcerated mother and the child, as the caregiver may perceive their relationship as harmful, thus weakening the maternal identity. On the other hand, having a good relationship with relatives provides women in conflict with the law the privilege of receiving frequent physical visitation contact between mother and child, thus strengthening the maternal identity. Research evidence (Arditti, 2012; Barnes & Stringer, 2014; Harris, 2017; Poehlmann-Tynan, 2015; Stone, 2013; Stringer, 2020) articulates that contact can be affected by travelling and telephonic cost which may lead to infrequent contact, thus weakening the maternal identity.

According to Arditti (2012) and Baldwin (2021) incarcerated mothers who lack educational attainment are affected by their limited literate capacity to use letters to communicate with caregivers of the child. Some incarcerated mothers, as articulated by Barnes and Stringer (2014), initiate their first contact with their child for the first time while being incarcerated, while others maintain their pre-existing contact. Incarcerated mothers who had never been in contact with the child/children prior to incarceration may be required to deal with emotions such as rejection, anxiety,

embarrassment or resentment immediately after their first contact with their children (Barnes & Stringer, 2014; Birc et al., 2018), while incarcerated mothers who have pre-existing relationships and had contact with their children before incarceration, as emphasised by Barnes and Stringer (2014) and Birc et al. (2018), may experience emotions such as separation alienation, depression and guilt or shame for having restrictions of contacting their children.

Easterling's (2012) study, which focuses on the influences of the context of imprisonment on offender maternal identity and relationships with 49 participants at a Kentucky Correctional Service for women, USA, has shown that 66% of incarcerated women are in contact with the children, 34% had lost contact with the children and 61% had never received a visit from the children. Schubert et al.'s (2016) study articulated that frequent physical visitation contacts between the offender mother and the child results in lower levels of depression, anxiety, somatisation and high self-esteem.

Correctional Institutions can provide contact programmes, for instance Maryland's Correctional Institution in the USA has a contact programme for Women's Activity Learning Centre (WALC) and Girls Scouts Beyond Bay (GSBB) that assist with regard to facilitating contact between the mothers and children (Bussone, 2011). However, few correctional facilities are able to offer such programmes within the American context, even when they are mandated to do so (Brown, 2016; Burgess & Flynn, 2013). An example of a good practice of contact programme is in the Topeka correctional facility in Topeka, Kansas, USA where they make use of WALC programmes to facilitate contact between the mother and child. The aim of the contact programmes does not only involve facilitation of physical contact between the mother and child, but it also supports women to be prepared emotionally to deal with separation and loss of the child, promotes a healthy relationship with open communication between the child and the mother, and it reduces emotional trauma that is fostered by separation which influences successful reunification (Brown, 2016; Burgess & Flynn, 2013; Cooper-Sadlo et al., 2019).

In South Africa, Luyt (2008) suggests that receiving contact via telephone or visits while co-mothering with the caregiver of the child, is a privilege in South African correctional facilities, not a right, as indicated in the USA literature. Geldenhuys

(2015) asserts a claim that apart from a lack of infrastructure at correctional facilities, factors such as correctional facility, correctional officials' hostility and limited time allocated for contact also play a role in influencing female offenders' conception of motherhood. Research evidence (Artz et al., 2012; Artz & Hoffman-Wanderer, 2017; Dastile & Agozino, 2019; Geldenhuys, 2015; Luyt, 2008) shows that communication between the mother and the child can also be hindered by factors such as transportation and telephone costs.

Luyt's (2008) study at Pollsmoor correctional facility, Western Cape province, South Africa, confirmed that few participants in the study, 31.34% (n = 21), had some form of contact with all their children, while 65.15% (n = 43) indicated that they had lost contact with their children or at least some of their children. Further, most of the women (n = 64) in Luyt's (2008) study indicated that they did not receive physical visitation contact from their children while they were incarcerated. Corresponding to the USA research, local literature from the SA context (Artz et al., 2012; Du Preez, 2006; Luyt, 2008; Parry, 2018) suggests that incarcerated mothers who had never been in contact with the child/children prior to incarceration may be required to deal with emotions such as rejection, anxiety, embarrassment or resentment immediately after their first contact with their children. Du Preez's (2006) study indicates that incarcerated mothers demonstrated that having their children visiting them at correctional facilities was a painful experience, thus they refused to receive visitations from them. Du Preez (2006) articulates that preference of refusing visitation comes from the desire of offender mother "to spare the children the trauma of separation and of having to say goodbye".

Parry (2018, p. 61) discovered that "It was a relief to be incarcerated for some mothers who had been primary providers and caregivers to their dependants/ children, but they felt guilty about that relief and did not want to be separated from their children". Further, Parry (2018) explained that some of the incarcerated women feelings of guilt and shame of not being in contact with their children were derived from the fact that they lied about their whereabouts. Moreover, Artz et al. (2012) support Luyt's (2008) study findings by suggesting that incarcerated mothers might not allow their children to visit at correctional centres because they perceived themselves as being failures who could not meet the standard norm expectation of motherhood, which affects their self-esteem or self-efficacy.

2.8   How Offenders manage Motherhood while Incarcerated

Berry and Smith-Madhi (2012) make provision that when mothering behind bars, experience high rates of stress due to the laws that regulate motherhood, placement issues and they internalise feelings of negative self-conception. However, Celinska and Sigal (2010) suggest that incarcerated mothers search for different ways of reducing maternal role stress which entail adapting maternal behaviours as mechanisms to reduce maternal role strain.

Evidence by Celinska and Sigal's (2010) research supports that incarcerated mother utilise Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) coping strategies of emotionally focused coping. This pertains to how offender mothers decrease their stress levels by seeking an emotional support system and the problem-focused coping mechanisms. This was indicated by the grounded theory study of Celinska and Sigal (2010), which used a semi-structured interview of 37 incarcerated mothers at the North-Eastern country correctional facility, Mexico. The study's findings revealed six emotionally focused coping strategies, such as self-transformation, role confusion, self-blame, role identification, planning, and preparation (Celinska & Sigal, 2010). The themes were further categorised into maladaptive or adaptive patterns of coping strategies (Celinska & Sigal, 2010). Role identification can either be an adaptive or maladaptive pattern of emotion-focused coping which pertains to how incarcerated mothers perceive themselves and how they can manage to exercise their mothering role (Celinska & Sigal, 2010), whereas mothers who have role confusion, which is reinforced by self-blame, are using dysfunctional ways of emotional-focused coping mechanisms (Celinska & Sigal, 2010). Young offender mothers tend to use family member areas' source of support to deal with emotional challenges of motherhood while incarcerated, while older incarcerated mothers rely on their fellow offenders within correctional facilities for emotional support (Loper & Tuerk, 2011; Mignon & Ransford, 2012).

Adding to existing literature, Aiello (2016) uses an ethnographic lens to access how mothers at a North-East correctional facility in the USA cope with motherhood. Drawing from 83 interviews with incarcerated mothers and observations, Aiello (2016) accesses how mothers utilise cerebral strategy, which entails mothers imagining or thinking about mothering and the implication of

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motherhood while incarcerated. The methods of imagining doing mothering enable the women to do mothering without being in physical or direct contact with their children (Aiello, 2016). In addition, women use their past experience as mothers. This served as a reminder of their role as mothers and brought a sense of comfort. However, thinking about mothering is a painful experience for some mothers who serve longer sentences as they have no hope of reuniting with their children (Aiello, 2016).

O'Malley and Devaney's (2016) research study in the Irish Correctional Service in Northern Ireland shows how offenders are supported in facilitating mothering behind bars by correctional officials in order to reduce their stress levels of initiating/maintaining contact with their children. In addition, correctional staff working with the external agency arranged for offenders to establish communication with the foster homes that are caregivers of the children for the mothers to be informed about the children`s life and for the children to be allowed to visit the mothers (O'Malley & Devaney, 2016).

Utilising focus group interviews with 15 African American mothers in a Midwestern maximum security correctional facility, USA, Stringer's (2009) study examines the role of spirituality, religion and the way incarcerated mothers cope with their mothering roles. Findings demonstrate that incarcerated mothers used religious practice and symbols as coping mechanisms for fulfilling maternal roles while co-residing with the child inside the correctional facility (Stringer, 2009). The research presents that incarcerated mothers follow religiosity and spirituality practice to draw strength to deal with challenges associated with motherhood (Stringer, 2009).

Gowland's (2011) local research study supports Stringer's (2009) findings that incarcerated mothers utilise spirituality and religion as mechanisms for coping with motherhood. Incarcerated mothers utilised Bible verses and their religion to cope with challenges of motherhood while incarcerated. Other coping mechanisms presented by the findings of Gowland's (2011) study indicate that some incarcerated mothers utilise pictures of their children as a way to cope with motherhood, while sharing stories of their mothering experience with their fellow offenders as a way to seek emotional support, which is similar to Celinska and Sigal's (2010) findings that incarcerated women's coping methods may be linked to the Lazarus and Folksman

(1984) emotional coping strategy. Other incarcerated women expressed that either sleep or avoiding talking about their children were mechanisms to cope with their motherhood while incarcerated (Gowland, 2011).

2.9   Theoretical Framework: Social Identity Theory

Tajfel and Turner's (1986) social identity theory (SIT) was chosen as the theoretical framework of the research study. The use of this theory provided a framework for understanding the development of offender mothers' self-esteem in relation to performing mothering roles and was applied to describe the process of constructing maternal identity behind bars. SIT assists in explaining intergroup group distinctiveness as a source of understanding of one's group membership in the society to which they belong. Hoggs et al. (2017) assert that the group membership contributes to the influence on one's self-esteem, self-image, and pride. Tajfel and Turner (1986) suggest that self-concept is a consequence of internalisation of group behaviours within a particular social context with which individuals are affiliated.

Stryker and Burke (2000) assert that it is through social interactions within the social structure that individuals' identities acquire self-meanings. Stryker and Burke (2000) believe that focusing on the individuals without focusing on the social structure is incomplete and the reciprocity of the society and the individual must not be overlooked; applying this theory to the research study, the self-structure in this case will be a correctional facility. Incarcerated mothers may internalise the outer structure by which they are influenced as part of the overall identity concept. From this perspective, it is unlikely that the incarcerated mothers would identify themselves with the label of criminal thrusted upon them rather than the mother identity. However, for incarcerated mother who have lengthy sentences, their criminal identity may strengthen over time, which diminishes the maternal identity (Berry & Smith-Madhi, 2012). In addition, the self-structure is known to influence social behaviour. It is therefore not surprising that literature on the incarcerated mothers indicates that for mothers who had weak bonds with their children due to their involvement in criminal influences, there is a desire to change their ways by starting to reach out to their children and amending their relations, which in turn strengthens their maternal role.

SIT aids in providing explanation on individuals' multiple selves that they employ to function in a social context which assist in affiliation with different groups. Tajfel and Turner (1986) argue that individuals' selves are based on the category of the affiliated social groups into which they classified themselves, for example a female offender may classify herself within the offenders' group, the mother, sister and provider. Literature (Arditti, 2012; Brown, 2016; Cooper Sadlo et al, 2019; Mitchell & Davis, 2019) corroborates this theory by indicating that the maternal identity is the most important identity rather than any other identity that incarcerated mothers may have. Hoggs et al. (2017) suggests that identification of self and others in the group relies on the rationalisation of behaviour and social comparison. In this regard, Tajfel and Turner (1986) propose that persons define themselves in comparison to individuals in other categories. For example, the category of bad offender mothers is meaningful only in relation to law-abiding good mothers.

Tajfel and Turner (1986) advocate that the knowledge of social group membership helps in providing understanding of individuals' sense of belonging, that in turn influences the normative standards of acceptable behaviour, values, assumptions, characteristics, how a person behaves and thinks. According to Boduszek et al. (2016), group identification is established when individuals are strongly motivated to adopt the behavioural strategy, attitudes for achieving or maintaining their in-group status.

Moreover, Haslam et al. (2009) argue that the process of group identification is the reflection of the social categorisation which involves a perceptual cognitive process. SIT postulates that individuals' evaluations of self and other to an in-group category may potentially promote favouritism, which increases group self-esteem. On the other hand, having a negative perception towards the out-group increases stereotypical behaviours which influence discriminatory behaviours on the other group (Hoggs et al., 2017). This implies that mothers who are outside correctional facilities are perceived as being good mothers due to their self-restraint from criminal engagement, whereas female offenders are regarded as bad mothers by the CJS and the society due to the committed acts of their wrongdoings (Henriques, 1982; Jackson, 2011; Kennedy, 2012; Lockwood, 2013; Parry, 2018).

Rivera and Veysey's (2014) research study on the criminal system involvement and gender stereotypes and its implications for identity has indicated that stereotypical views on individuals' social identity as mothers can stimulate psychological/cognitive dissonance. The cognitive dissonance may arise as the fallout of two polarised views of the society's perception of incarcerated mothers as being bad, in contrast to evaluation of their own behaviours as being good mothers (Rivera & Veysey, 2014).

McKeown et al. (2016) maintain that intergroup bias has consequences on group permeability. McKeown et al. (2016) argue that individuals who perceive group structure to be permeable, allow one to deal with negative connotations associated with the group. For example, instead of incarcerated mothers categorising themselves as bad mothers, they may try to dissociate themselves from the bad label and establish new relationships with offspring or resume their mothering roles. Otherwise, individuals may strive for positive regard by attending mothering classes to help with improving mothering skills or attend educational programmes that may be utilised as a way to provide income for their children after being released.

However, in the case where the group boundaries are not impermeable, McKeown et al. (2016) emphasise that it threatens the identification. The fallouts of identity threat influences people's notion of feeling that they are not observed as unique entities with their unique characteristics. In line with the study, female offenders' identification as mothers may be under threat as mothering behind bars presents unique challenges that differ from mothering on the outside.

SIT aided in providing a better understanding of how a social group of offender mothers' identity was deeply embedded within the context of the correctional facility. Moreover, this theory helped in explaining positive group distinctiveness, which bought an understanding of changes in individual behaviour within a group. SIT brought an understanding of how the mothering role was facilitated within correctional facility, which is different compared to the social expectations of motherhood. Adding to this, the idea of group favouritism provided an insight into how female offenders perceived their role and constructed motherhood within the correctional facility.

2.10   Conclusion of the Chapter

The literature review aimed to explore the incarcerated women's maternal identity in relation to their criminality. The maternal role, together with women's economic status in the society, was mostly cited in the review as the motivation of criminal involvement (Artz et al., 2012; Easterling et al., 2019; Ferraro & Moe, 2003). Despite the incarceration, women's roles as mothers do not end. To understand how the maternal identity was constructed by female offenders, the following were explored in the literature review: women's perception of self-concept as others, effects on the maternal identity of being separated from the child, mothering as a construct of contact (via MBU and co-mothering alliance with caregiver of the child), and how they coped with their mothering role behind bars. In addition, the SIT helped in providing a framework of how maternal identity was developed in a social context of a correctional facility. Although there is commonality on the aforementioned aspects of mothering behind bars in the literature review internationally and locally, the South African research is insufficient in addressing this issue. Moreover, literature from abroad and locally has inadequately addressed the effects of being separated from the child (mothering from the distance) on the maternal identity (Easterling, 2012; Gowland, 2011). In the next chapter, I discuss my chosen research methodology for undertaking the research study.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

3.1   Introduction

The literature review and theoretic framework in Chapter 2 aimed at discussing various aspects that contribute to the understanding of women's construction of maternal identity while in imprisonment. The exploration of the literature review has provided a lens through which the objective of the study is addressed. Therefore, the goal of this chapter is to adopt an appropriate design and a research methodology in an effort to address the objectives, aim, problems and questions of the study through experiential investigations. Research methodology refers to a strategy used in investigations to collect data, analysis of the data and selection of participants that researchers use to execute the empirical research (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative research methodology, which was used in the study, is concerned with identifying meaning attached generated from transcript data set (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2017). The research design, on the other hand, assists with planning of how the study will answer the research questions and/or interests of the researcher (Creswell, 2013; Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2017).

This chapter provides a description of the detailed step-by-step procedure of how the research was executed. The preparation of the study included a discussion of the objectives; who were the participants in the study; where were they located; and what type of research design and method of analysis were employed in the study. The current study utilised the interpretative phenomenology design guided by the assumption of social construction paradigm. In an effort to verify the quality of the gathered data, Lincoln and Guba's (1985) measures of rigour were utilised. Lastly, there is a discussion on ethical considerations pertaining to the study.

3.2   Assumptions underpinning this Research: Social Construction Paradigm

Even though different researchers propose that social construction can either be an interpretative research framework or a paradigm based on the needs of a research study, I utilised social constructionist as a paradigm to guide my study (Creswell, 2013; Mertens, 2014). I used the social construction paradigm because it resonates with some of the assumptions of the SIT which recognise the importance

of social context and social interaction in influencing how individuals experience a phenomenon. In addition, this is aligned with the interpretative phenomenology (which is discussed later in the chapter) idea that individuals' interpretations of reality are constructed based on subjective experiences together with their interaction with other people (Koonin, 2019). This paradigm was best suited for the study as it explains how individual subjective experience of a phenomenon is influenced by their interaction with others in a social context (Berger & Luckmann, 1996; Creswell, 2013). The meanings that individuals attach to their experiences through interacting with others are not solely based on the individual level, but on social systems (Creswell, 2013; Mertens, 2014; Willig, 2012). According to Koonin (2019), the use of language allows individuals to form a social interaction that helps in channelling social knowledge and meanings attached to an experienced phenomenon. Further, Koonin (2019, p. 75), cites that "knowledge is an effect of social processes and individuals construct their reality based on social practices". Moreover, the meaning of the phenomenon experienced can be developed, sustained and transmitted (Koonin, 2019). Within a social construction approach, knowledge is developed, sustained and transmitted to others through individual and group interaction in a social context (Koonin, 2019). Creswell (2013) argues that individuals' subjectivity in the creation of knowledge within a social environment is equally perceived as important and acknowledged.

Yang and Gergen (2012) emphasise that social constructionists refute the idea of a universal reality that is discovered by laws by proposing that there are multiple realities that exist in cultural and historical context based on past and current experiences. Yang and Gergen (2012) suggest reality as a social dynamic process that involves individuals co-creating the meaning of phenomena experienced within a social interaction (Creswell, 2013; Neuman, 2014; Yang & Gergen, 2012).

In this regard, social construction articulates that the motherhood ideology is influenced by social structures, such as a correctional centre, that contribute to the shift in the mothering roles which are framed relative to the time, place, history and construction of gender roles. This perspective helps in explaining how women's social position and structural differences, which are influenced by culture and historical context, have implications for women's social construction of maternal identity within the context of a correctional setting. To get a sense of how maternal

identity is constructed within a correctional facility, the incarcerated mothers and I interacted with each other during the interviews and co-created the meaning attached to motherhood based on culture, personal experience, social context and language, which ultimately represent knowledge (Creswell, 2013).

3.5.1 *Johannesburg Correctional Facility as the Setting of the Research*

The target population in the study was drawn from the female section of the Johannesburg Correctional Facility, also known as Sun City, in the Gauteng province, South Africa. The female section of the correctional facility has two sections, namely the medium (A or B) and maximum security; nonetheless, the study focused on female offenders who are mothers serving sentences classified as maximum offenders. Sun City was chosen as an appropriate site as it is only the correctional centre in Gauteng that has an MBU within a correctional facility as compared to other female facilities in Gauteng, i.e. the Kgosi Mampuru correctional facility. As a result, most incarcerated mothers who are detained with their child(ren) may prefer to serve their sentence in Sun City because their children can also be accommodated in the facility, which makes it easier for them to perform their mothering role. Again, opting for this facility was because of the linguistic criteria that I selected for my research, as the majority of female offenders fall in the Sotho tribe and is housed near their homes, as compared to other correctional facilities (DCS, 2005).

3.3   Research Methodology: Qualitative Methodology

This study used a qualitative research enquiry that is consistent with the constructionist paradigm (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2017). Qualitative research is primarily concerned with the way in which participants and the researcher co-create the meaning of a social phenomenon and interpret the meaning attached to a phenomenon experienced within a particular context (Creswell, 2013; Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2017). This enquiry involves understanding how the meaning attached to a phenomenon experienced is constructed from multiple subjective perspectives during individuals' (participants and I) interaction in a particular social context that is tied by history and culture (Creswell, 2013; Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2017). A qualitative research paradigm was deemed appropriate for this study, as it allowed the researcher to study the phenomenon experienced by participants within

the naturalistic social setting and allowed close interaction between the participants and the researcher (Creswell, 2013; Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2017).

Central to this methodology is the interaction of the participant together with the researcher in a specific context that leads to shared interpretation of a phenomenon, instead of prediction of outcomes of the research (Willig, 2012). In this regard, quantitative research was not perceived as a suitable methodology for this study as it deals with large numerical data sets that allow predictions of results to be quantified (Willig, 2012). Therefore, qualitative research was fit for this the study because I did not require a large sample to voice participants' experiences as in quantitative research. Eight (8) participants as representative of the population of female offenders were sufficient to provide an insightful depth of understanding of the lived experience of female offenders mothering behind bars. I, as the researcher, as suggested by Creswell (2013), acted as a tool for gathering data through observations and interviews with participants rather than relying on pre-existing questionnaires that are created by other researchers.

3.4   Research Design: Interpretative Phenomenology Design

According to Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014), phenomenology, established by Husserl, is an approach to qualitative research which aims at describing how participants are experiencing their lived experiences from their own perspectives in their social world. This method draws from how the participants and the researcher interpret the shared meaning derived from social interaction and how they co-construct the phenomenon experienced (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Hermeneutics phenomenology is a branch of phenomenology and psychology that was developed by Martin Heidegger, Hans-goerg Gardner and Paul Rico that goes further to reveal the unforeseen lived experiences of the participants within a specific context and provide interpretations of the subjective meaning attached to the phenomenon (Kokkori, 2009; Laverty, 2003). I selected hermeneutic phenomenology because of its interpretive nature in the co-creation of shared meaning attached to phenomenon experienced by participants and me as the researcher, which is shaped by the social context that is in line with constructionist paradigm adopted in this study (Willig, 2012). Moreover, the use of this research methodology allowed me to achieve the

study's objectives, which are to explore the meaning attached to incarcerated women's construction of motherhood behind bars.

Hermeneutics phenomenology paved itself in uncovering how meaningful interpretations by participants and the researcher are co-created through interaction within a context in which conversations take place, while paying attention to the language and history that may influence the participants' experiences (Creswell, 2013; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2017). This method suggests that the researcher's bias is not free from the research process during shared interpretation of the phenomenon experienced by participants, thus making bracketing off one's personal experience as a keynote to descriptive phenomenology difficult to achieve (Bynum & Varpio, 2018). Research (Bynum & Varpio, 2018; Smith & Osborn, 2008) makes assertions that the researcher's personal experience, values and prior knowledge are vital in interpreting and producing meaning attached to individual lived experiences (see reflective section later in this chapter).

Smith and Osborn (2008) articulate that in constructing significant interpretations, the researcher should go through a process called a double hermeneutic, which entails participants attempting to understand their reality, while the researcher wants to understand the participants who strive to understand their world (Laverty, 2003). Moreover, interpretation will require me to use imagination which involves asking myself questions related to participants' lived experience and paying attention to the language used, their lived experiences and the meaning they attach to their lived experience (Kokkori, 2009; Laverty, 2003). Furthermore, these interpretations are not direct but partial and they relate to part of the whole (Laverty, 2003).

3.5   Method of Collecting Data

3.5.1 Selection of Participants in the Study - sampling technique, population and sample size of the study

3.5.1.1 Sampling technique

Purposive sampling refers to a non-probability sampling method of sampling that is utilised by researchers to select participants in the study based on specific characteristics in which the research is interested (Campbell et al., 2020; Van Beek,

2020). In this study, purposive sampling was utilized due to its compatibility with the qualitative research methods to select the participants in the study. When examining complex human issues, the use of this sampling technique is helpful because it emphasizes on understanding a phenomenon over generalizing it (Van Beek, 2020). According to Campbell et al. (2020), purposive sampling was used in the study because it allows for better sample matching to the research goals and objective, enhancing the study rigor and reliability of the data and findings. As mentioned in the above discussion, a sample of eight incarcerated mothers was chosen purposively because of having the characteristics which were in line with the research criteria as mentioned below. The participants in the study were selected based on the following:

Inclusion criteria:

The incarcerated mother must be classified with female offenders who are at the maximum correctional facility and serves a lengthy sentence. The rationale for choosing this sample was because incarcerated mothers' length of sentence has a high possibility of losing contact or custodial rights, which puts a strain on their identity and relationships with their children. The criteria for selecting participants were based on experience of performing the mothering role inside the correctional facility (before entering the criminal justice system) and during incarceration. They must have biological children or be regarded as caretakers for their siblings or adopted offspring, which might be with them "inside" or on the "outside" with other caretakers.

The exclusion criteria were based on the following:

Female offenders who are serving lengthy sentences but are not mothers (have never been mothers in their life). On the one hand, a female offender may be a mother by virtue of birth but has never performed a mothering role (while serving her sentence in a correctional facility or outside the correctional facility). Female offenders who were mothers prior to incarceration but do not have the experience of mothering inside the correctional facility were excluded.

3.5.2.2 Population and sample size

The current active correctional facilities in South Africa are 243, with nine housing women only and while eighty-four has sections of both men and women

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within the centre (DCS, 2019, 2020; Mamacos, 2021; Parry, 2018). According to Mamacos (2021), the majority (75%) of women offenders who reside in correctional facility are mothers. The Parliamentary Monitoring Group (2014) proposed that there are 16 out of a total of 22 correctional female facilities that has MBU in South Africa. This study selected only eight participants from Johannesburg correctional facility of the four thousand and ten sentenced and unsentenced female offenders who forms part of 2,5 % of the general population rate of women who incarcerated in the country (DCS, 2019, 2020; Mamacos, 2021). Further, I have chosen to select the participants in the study from Johannesburg correctional facility because it is considered to be one of the largest women correctional facilities only in South Africa and it also has an existing MBU, which increased my possibilities of obtaining my sample size based on the above-mentioned criteria (Parry, 2018). Francis et al. (2010) suggest that in qualitative research enquiry, the sample size of two to ten participants is sufficient to provide subjective knowledge about participants' lived experiences and bring insight into new themes that may emerge in the study.

The selected participants in the study were from the ages of 28 to 52 years and reported that they were indeed mothers before and during the incarceration. Even though participants' mother tongue languages were Northern Sotho and Setswana, during the interview's participants were able to narrate their stories using English. There were instances where participants conversed in English, Sesotho, isiZulu and Setswana. Fortunately, I speak Northern Sotho and I was able to understand and speak Setswana, Sesotho, and IsiZulu. However, I am not a fluent speaker of IsiZulu. Nonetheless, I did not lose track of their narratives or meaning that they tried to convey (see Diagram 3.1: Representation of demographics of incarcerated mothers who participated in the study).

Diagram 3.1:

Representation of Demographics of Incarcerated Mothers who participated in the Study
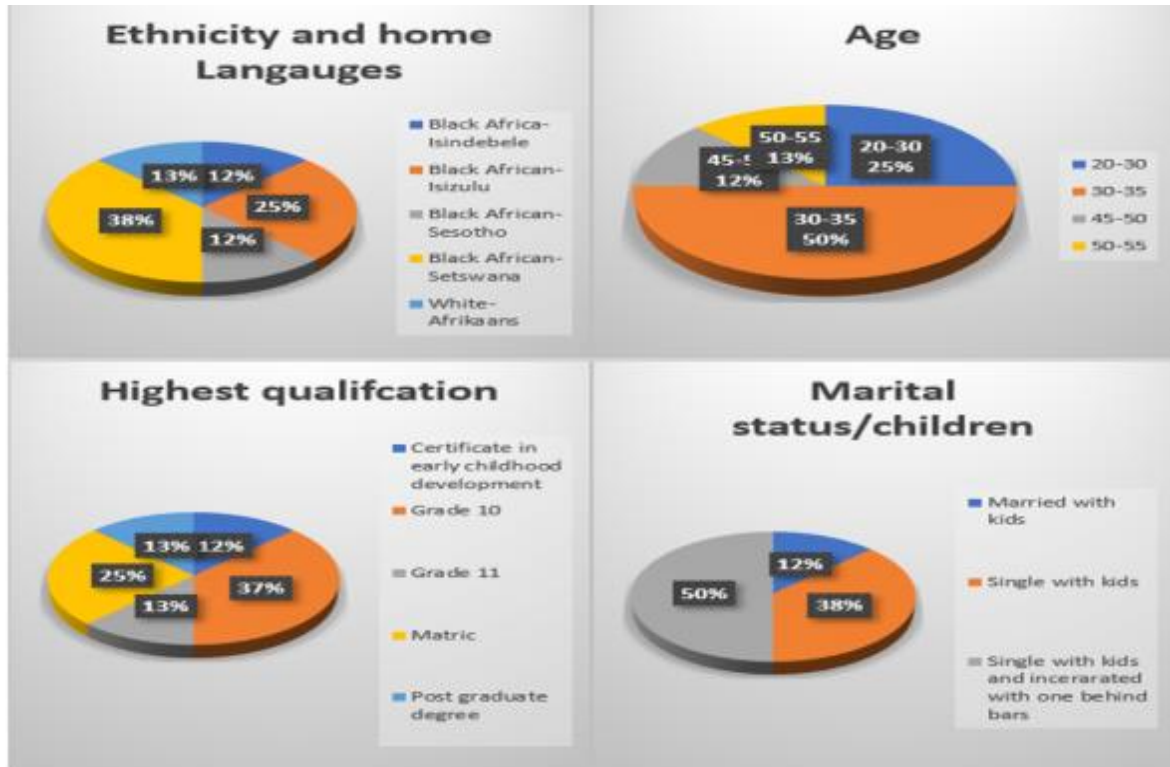
The discussion of how the sample was accessed from the entire population of the female correctional facility is contained in the following section.

3.5.3 Access to Participants and Recruitment

After receiving ethical clearance from the DCS ethics committee to conduct the study, I contacted my research guide to develop the research plan. The research guide serves as the liaison for accessing participants at certain correctional services. Requesting appointments to visit the correctional facility was a difficult task due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which meant that my request to visit the research site was based on the government-adjusted levels of social gathering, the Unisa permission to conduct research during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic and the DCS permitting access to the site with observed protocols to minimise the spread of COVID-19. Further, I made an appointment with the guide about expected time frames and discuss where and when it would be suitable to conduct interviews with

participants. We further discussed correctional services routines and the expected behaviour within the correctional facility environment (DCS, 2019).

The first meeting with my guide concluded with a tour inside the correctional facility while observing protocols for COVID-19, meaning that we practised social distances of 1.2 metres and wore masks all the time. A week after the first meeting with my guide, I went to the recreational facilities at the correctional centre and introduced myself to the female offenders and told them about the research study. During the conversations with the female offenders, I made it explicitly known to them that I do not require an immediate response from them on whether they were interested in participating. I then informed them that interested participants should go to the guide to get information about certain dates and times on which interviews would take place. Participants were assured through verbal communication that the decision to engaging in the study was not coercive but was voluntary and no other person who was not part of the research would have access to the research data. If they wished to be part of the study, they would have to provide written consent during interviews (issues of consent and confidentiality are addressed in the Appendices A to E).

I assured the participants that the guide has signed a confidentiality disclosure agreement form and there would be no hard copy evidence that would be disclosed to other members of correctional services who spoke to the guide about my study.

3.5.4 Research Context and Data Gathering Procedure: Interviews (Semi-structured Interviews)

The setting of the interviews took place at an office room inside the Johannesburg correctional facility, female section of the maximum-security facility. Vaismoradi et al. (2013, p. 398) indicate that "to understand a phenomenon that is being studied, researcher needs to investigate the phenomenon from the perspective of those experiencing it". In this current study, to understand the lived experiences of the incarcerated female offenders, I firstly needed to understand the context in which they were experiencing motherhood. This was embedded through my visit at the correctional facility with the Inside-Out Outside-In South African Corrections Interest Group in South Africa at Unisa and during the times of conducting my research study. The strict protocol that was required for executing the study included the

procedure for accessing the correctional facility premises, which entails being searched at the gate before entering and having a limited number of items to bring, such as a voice-recorder with extra batteries, diary and pen, having an access pass to come to the correctional facility based on appointments to conduct the interviews, and being present at specific times and dates as agreed upon in the appointment letter. I had difficulty gaining access to the research site due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused the correctional facility to restrict visiting hours and dates in response to minimising the spread of the virus. I was only allowed access to the site when the DCS permitted individuals to visit the centre.

To add to this experience, I asked questions about incarcerated mothers lived experiences. Despite the fact that I am not a mother, I was able to understand female offenders' mothering experiences from the position of an emic perspective, because of the above-mentioned reason of my familiarity with the correctional facility context, being a woman and being mothered within the South African context. Not being mothered inside a correctional facility and not being a mother myself, helped me to obtain an objective stance during interviews. I used the two techniques (of an insider as I was familiar with the correctional facility environment through visitation and an outsider as I was not a mother) interchangeably during the interview. Doing so helped me to make the decision of criteria inclusion and exclusion of participants and made me cognisant of the questions that were going to be asked during the interview. This also assisted me in consciously monitoring questions that triggered negative emotions or thoughts. Furthermore, the two-tactic approach helped to eliminate bias, preconceived judgement or stereotypes about how mothering is performed inside a correctional facility. I listened attentively and paid detailed attention to the narrative accounts of the lived experiences of incarcerated mothers.

The type of interviews that was utilised with the mothers to capture their mothering experiences was face-to-face interviews that were composed of semi-structured interview guides. The interview guide that was approved by the DCS ethical clearance committee consisted of six main questions and five sub-questions under each main question (see Appendix E). A face-to-face interview is a qualitative interview method of gathering data which allows the participant and I to socially construct the meaning of motherhood through social interactions (De Vos et al., 2011).

Before the interview started, I introduced myself and the study to the participants. I read out the informed consent (see Appendix D), which included the purpose of the study, aim, brief summary of the study, permission to record the conversations and taking field notes. The descriptive field notes helped me to provide the context in which experiences were narrated, for example emotional cues, posture and reaction towards a certain topic, which helped me to probe into the issue at hand. During the interviews participants highlighted some issues that I did not address in the interview guide, and I made sure that in my next session I included the question to elicit more insight into the phenomenon experienced by participants.

After I provided the participants with copies of the consent form, which was written in English, Northern Sotho and Setswana to read for themselves, they provided consent by means of their signatures and asked questions if they needed clarification on the study. The audio-recorder was placed between the participant and I for the purpose of capturing clear voices during the sessions.

To break the ice during the interview session, I asked the incarcerated mothers general questions before getting to specific questions. I continued to use the format to elicit normal conversations between the participants and myself, rather than leaving the participants with the feeling of being interrogated. The flexibility of the semi-structured interview guide allowed me to probe for clarity and discover unanticipated topics or themes that might emerge during discussion (Creswell, 2013; De Vos et al., 2011; Mertens, 2014), rather than having a biased assumption of how mothering is facilitated.

The semi-structured interview guide enabled me to guide the conversations instead of being lost in the participants' narratives (Mertens, 2014). The guide consisted of open-ended questions which allowed me to access participants' thoughts and memories in their own words. Neuman (2014) proposes that the nature of open-ended questions addresses the questions of "how" and "what" questions, which cause the participants to voice their experiences using their own words and thus generating nuance data. Therefore, the semi-structured interview guide provided me with the opportunity to engage with the participants' lived experiences and then allowed the participant and I to construct the meaning attached to motherhood.

I conducted interviews in the mornings because of the absence of noise that was made by female offenders during the lunch time, with the minimum of two people per day until I reached ten participants. At the end of the process I managed to interview eight (8) participants. The debriefing and interviews lasted for 1 hour and 45 minutes. The interview sessions were tape-recorded as permitted by the DCS ethics committee (see Appendix B). Participants were given a choice to use pseudonyms or codes instead of their real names during interviews. I made use of theoretical fields as additional resources to the interview, to provide a clear description of the phenomenon being experienced. Afterwards, I transcribed each of the eight recorded interviews manually after the end of each session. The participants' names were replaced with pseudonyms during transcription, as they were given fictitious names on the interview transcript, to protect their identities and preserve anonymity (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2017). The transcribed data were then prepared to be analysed.

3.6 Data Analysis – Interpretative Phenomenology (Hermeneutics Phenomenology) Analysis

The transcriptions derived from the interviews were analysed by the Interpretative Phenomenology (hermeneutics phenomenology) Analysis (IPA). This method was chosen because it aligned itself with the research aim, which attempts to make sense of the subjective meaning attached to female experiences of mothering behind bars that contribute to the collective understanding of a phenomenon. Moreover, I chose IPA because of its compatibility with the theoretical framework of the study, SIT and social constructionist paradigm, as they all primarily focus on the way in which the context influences the essence attached to a social phenomenon that is shaped by language while individuals are socially interacting with one another. Opting for IPA in this study allowed subjective experiences of participants to be voiced by the researcher through the interpretative process with the transcripts.

The choice of IPA was influenced by its nature of being idiographic, which involves the researcher interacting with particular interview transcript cases and then moving on to general claims (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Focusing on each transcript, I searched for the meaning attached to the construction of maternal identity, how the

mothering role influences their identity, and then identified emerging themes in the study (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). According to Clarke (2009), the nature of IPA being inductive creates an opportunity for me to be able to identity unforeseen ideas and themes from participants' experiences rather than imposing on theories. I reiterated the process until specific conclusions were reached on each case, which offered me a chance to gain a better understanding of how maternal identity is shaped by the context of a correctional centre (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Smith and Osborn (2008) assert that IPA does not have standard procedures for data analysis; nevertheless, it recommends steps in research analysis that can be tailored in accordance with the needs in investigations. As identified by Smith and Osborn (2008), the following are the steps that I applied in analysing data:

3.6.1 Multiple Reading and Taking Notes

I read through each single case until I completed it and repeated the same procedure for eight transcript interviews. I repeated reading the transcripts together while listening to the recorded audio interviews, to ensure that what has been transcribed in text reflected what was said of the participants' experiences. While I was engaging in the text transcripts, I became familiar with the context in which the participants' narratives took place, the atmosphere during the interviews, the language used and how participants and I communicated ideas (verbal clues, posture and feeling). I took notes in the form of linguistic remarks on how the transcripts represented the manner in which the content and the meaning were expressed (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014).

I developed descriptive comments of the significant text of the transcripts utilising the function of comments in Microsoft Word for each individual interview case. Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014) suggest that when making descriptive notes, researchers are advised to record their bias using a reflective journal, which will be discussed later in section 3.8. While I was developing the notes, I ensured that I reflected on the interpretative account of each interview transcription.

3.6.2 Identifying and Labelling Themes

In this stage, the focus of the analysis involves the researcher taking descriptive notes derived from the transcripts interviews together with the notes

taken from observing the participants during interviews. I then clicked on the macros on the View tab of Microsoft Word, so that I could work with comments only (notes produced from all transcripts) rather than the actual transcripts. I generated the initial codes and themes by identifying significant statements across the data in relation to the phenomenon being studied. I inserted a line number on each text of transcripts so that I could cross-check with the codes generated from the notes. I then searched for potential themes by grouping different codes together in accordance to how they relate to each other and then assigning a potential theme for the purpose of analysis. I read through the codes grouped within a certain theme and verified if they have a coherent pattern that fits within the identified theme. I checked if themes overlapped with each other and if they did, I either refined or collapsed the themes. Furthermore, if the codes did not fit in any of the identified themes, I removed them from the analysis.

3.6.3 Linking Themes and Identifying Thematic Clusters

I copied the Microsoft Word document that contained the codes generated from descriptive comments to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, to be able to easily navigate data. According to Willig and Stainton-Rogers (2017), the researcher searches for how themes are connected to one another in relation to their conceptual differences and similarities. At this point of analysis, Willig and Stainton-Rogers (2017) suggest that the focus is on themes that fall under specific sub-themes or subordinate clusters in relation to the meaning that a notion has been classified within a theme.

3.6.4 Writing Up

At this stage of the analysis, the researcher, as pointed out by Willig and Stainton-Rogers (2017), produced nuanced data about the participants' experiences by providing explanations to emergent themes presented in table format. I also added illustrative quotations extracted from the interview transcripts to support the inference from the emergent themes. Subsequently, the emergent themes reflected the participants' voices with regard to the phenomenon experienced and the shared interpretation of the participants' and researcher's narrative account concerning a phenomenon (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Moreover, the analysis included the way the

emergent themes linked to the theoretical framework and literature, which elicited insight about the phenomenon experienced (Smith & Osborn, 2008).

3.7   Ethical Considerations

Parry (2018, p. 60) suggests that "conducting research inside correctional facilities is a challenging prospect, but not an impossible one if conducted through the correct channels with the appropriate support system". As a member of Inside-Out Outside-In South African Corrections Interest Group in South Africa at Unisa, I was assisted with regard to becoming familiar with the correctional facility setting and the expectations of conducting research at the correctional centre. The Inside-Out Outside-In South African Corrections Interest Group (https://sites.google.com/view/insideout wikipage/home, 2015), is an initiative that focuses primarily on disseminating knowledge about the world of corrections to citizens in and outside correctional facilities. It was founded in 2013 through the Department of Psychology at Unisa by a group of lecturers and students. This group has informed me about the DCS research ethics sites which open four times a year and twice per semester (http: www.doc.gov.za/page_id=1549). For ethical clearance, I firstly applied at the Unisa research review committee. After the study was approved by the Unisa research review committee, I applied at the DCS Research Ethics Board.

When conducting research in the correctional centre I was guided by the Health Profession Council of South Africa's (HPCSA) code of conduct in research and the DCS guidelines in research, which guided me on how to adhere to ethical standards throughout my research process, as participants in my study are a vulnerable population group. In addition, the guidelines assisted me to be cognisant of how incarceration can affect a participant's ability to make decisions to participate in my research study without coercion (Parry, 2018). To avoid such intimidation, the following process to address any communication issues was adhered to before the interview would commence:

I would communicate to participants that agreeing to take part in the study would not grant participants favours from the DCS personnel, officials and officers. Their sentences would not be commuted or pardoned. If I felt and saw that the questions that were asked were imposing psychological harm to the participant, the

choice to continue or quit would be given to the participant. Further, after the interview session, I should be allowed to make referrals or recommendations to see a psychologist or counsellor inside the correctional facility. I indicated to the participant what my role was in the research study and that I was limited to research expertise only. Therefore, participants should not expect that I would act as a counsellor during interviews (DCS, 2019).

3.7.1 Informed Consent

Before the study could begin, informed consent would be introduced to participants. According to Kruger et al. (2014), informed consent refers to an ongoing process whereby participants can comprehend the information because of the power choice which lies in being informed of the risk, benefits, and aims of the study that enable the participant to provide consent voluntarily. According to Kruger et al. (2014), consent is transactional in the sense that the participant permits me to audio-record their views of and insight into the phenomena explored in the study.

The consent form was written in comprehensible English, Northern Sotho and Setswana to avoid misinterpretations and doubts on the side of the participant. Informed consent pertained to the description of the study, its objective and outlined the rights of the participant, the goal of the research study, the procedure that would be followed during interviews and the time expected for the participant to engage in the study (see Appendix D for a copy of the consent form). To have participants' consent in writing, the participant was given a consent form to be signed which indicated agreement to take part in the study (Kruger et al., 2014; Mertens, 2014).

3.7.2 Autonomy

According to Kruger et al. (2014), autonomy refers to the ability of participants to make informed decisions about their participation in the study. As conducting research with female offenders may be subjected to coercion, I took measures to prevent such incidents by informing female offenders that participating in the study was voluntary; if they wanted to withdraw from the study they could do so at any time they wished to, without having any form of implications. Participants who spoke to the guide about their interest in the study but chose not to be present during the interview session were regarded as unwilling volunteers. In addition, such

participants would not receive any form of communication to be involved in the study from either the guide or myself. Further, interested participants who showed up to be interviewed were asked to sign the consent form before the interviews could take place (Creswell, 2013; Kruger et al., 2014).

3.7.3 Confidentiality and Anonymity

Mertens (2014) argues that anonymity refers to the ability of the researcher to assure that participants are not known to the general public and other researchers. I guaranteed participants that they would be anonymous in the study by providing them with the choice to use pseudonyms or codes instead of their real names during the interview. Further, I made sure that that information given during interviews would not be linked to the participants' identities during data analysis and presentation of the findings of the study (Kruger et al., 2014).

To ensure confidentiality, participants were informed about individuals who have disclosure of the data in the study, for instance my supervisors if there is a need, but no other persons (be it the correctional officials or the guide) would have access to participants' information. No one else from the DCS Research Ethics Board or any other correctional officials or officers (apart from my guide) would have information of my sample. There would be no tables with identifying data, and no discussion of their offenses leading to incarceration in the research report. The study purely focused on mothering experiences from behind bars. I did not provide any information about my participants to any DCS staff member at the facility and do not have to submit any progress reports, participant sample information or raw data to the DCS.

3.7.4 Privacy

According to the National Academy of Sciences (as cited in Parry, 2018, p. 46), "Privacy of participants is of the utmost concern when conducting research in a correctional setting, as there are risks and benefits posed to the participants". To ensure privacy, transcriptions will be stored in a password-encrypted laptop (De Vos et al., 2011; RSA, 2013). Further, incarcerated women in the recreation facility within the correctional facility were not required to follow me or sign a participation form after my brief discussion with them about the study as it would risk their privacy. No

other person was allowed to be present during the interview session. To ensure participants' privacy, interested participants would be encouraged to visit the DCS appointed guide in order to get involved in the study. The guide, who had already signed a confidentiality agreement to protect the participant identities, was available in the immediate environment at the correctional facility. Furthermore, five years after the study is completed and published, I will destroy the transcriptions and interview recordings of the study that I kept for authenticity, dependability, and transferability (RSA, 2013).

3.8   Measures of Trustworthiness

For my study to be credible and authentic, I gained early familiarity with the correctional services settings through my visit with the Inside-Out Outside-In South African Corrections Interest Group in South Africa at Unisa (https://site.google.com/veiw/insideoutwikipage/home). My familiarity with the Inside-Out Outside-In South African Corrections Interest Group assisted me to be culturally sensitive to participants and informed me about the expected behaviour inside the correctional facility. To determine the study's honesty, the study involved only participants who gave permission to the guide by listing their names to participate in the study and I also requested participants' written consent before the study could commence (see Appendix D for a copy of consent form). Most importantly, participants in the study had characteristics in which I would be interested.

Participants were informed about the right to withdraw from the study without providing explanations. This was done to avoid dishonest responses. I kept a reflexive journal throughout the study to record the research process, my biases about the study and how they influenced my data collections and analysis (Mertens, 2014).

Further, there was an audit trail that indicates records of all phases of the research process, for example problem formulation, selection of participants, fieldwork notes, interview transcripts, and data analysis decisions, which could be accessed and audited by peers who wanted to assess whether proper procedures were followed correctly. This made my study confirmable as it would indicate that conclusions in the study are based on themes generated and interpretations of the themes rather than fragmented imagination.

I made a transferability judgment to the readers by indicating thick descriptive interpretations of the motherhood experienced by incarcerated mothers and ensured that methodologies that I employed to generate findings in the study become applicable to other correctional facility settings. Detailed research assumptions will be considered on how they link to the findings presented in the study (Mertens, 2014). To ensure dependability, I provided evidence of the research process for other researchers to be able to replicate the study using similar participants in the same context and verify the constancy of findings.

3.9   Reflexivity

As a criminology graduate, I was hardly taught about female offenders, why they commit crime and the factors that contribute to their criminality. However, what I have learnt throughout the course of the year was mostly on males' offending behaviour. My interest in pursuing this research was predisposed by a curiosity to know more about female offenders, especially in the South African context. This inquisitiveness fuelled me to become a volunteer at the Inside-Out Outside-In South African Corrections Interest Group at Unisa, as mentioned in the discussion above, to engage and understand the context of where these female offenders live.

After being granted permission to come and conduct my studies at the correctional facility by the Johannesburg correctional centre, I was excited and anxious to start with my interviews. The first day when I went to invite my participants, I saw that they were reluctant to engage in the study. This is when I felt a bit let-down. Looking at the environment of the correctional facility, I felt a bit out of place or being an intruder who was infiltrating their place. I was also given a curious and suspicious look which was as if like introducing my study to the female offenders was something that was foreign to them. The non-responsive behaviours caused me to experience the awkwardness that I truly wished I could escape from immediately. I really felt that it was them against me, or shall I say, there was me versus them. Some women even approached me to ask me if I have ever been incarcerated before or do I have any of my family members who have been incarcerated before.

However, going to the correctional facility for a few times to meet my interviewer made some of the offenders used to seeing me around, which stopped them from staring or eliminating the awkwardness when I passed them. This made

me feel a bit at ease, which made my perspective of feeling like an outsider shifting somewhat to be one of the insiders. At some point I felt that I was locked up because I could not come and go as I pleased. Like female offenders, my movements were restricted to specific areas, for example the interview room. I had to ask for permission from the correctional officials to let me in and out of the centre. I acknowledge that conducting my study could never be similar to residing at the correctional facility for a lengthy period of time, but having a bit of a taste (being in the same environment) of what the participants are going through daily, could help in trying to understand the context of their lived experiences.

However, I never got used to be inside the correctional centre. I felt that as much as I was conscious about the setting of a correctional facility through my volunteerism/visitation to the correctional centre, as mentioned above, I was not used to the strict security protocol such as being bodily searched every time before getting access to the correctional facility or signing in at the main gate of the centre. I never really got used to being surrounded by high steel walls and strong steel doors for a period of one month of data collections. The atmosphere of the correctional facility may sometimes make a person feel as if they are closed/pressed into a little box which had no space for air and sunlight. The lack of sunlight and tiny windows which barely show what the outside looks like, always made me feel as if I was in another world or place as opposed to the bright sunrise and fresh air outside the correctional facility. Another distinguishable feature that reminded me of the two worlds, was the language or terms used by correctional officials and offenders to request specific things, for example "dankie hek" [t*hank you, gate]*, asking for permission or entry to some place which was different from the outside community's language.

During the preparation to conduct interviews which entailed introducing the study to female offenders at the general sections and the MBUs, I noticed that there was hesitancy or a lack of interest by the incarcerated mothers to engage in the study. One week after being introducing my study guide contacted me to come and see some of the interested participants, which were a total of 14 and arrange with them about the interview slots. Two participants initially came in to be interviewed during their time slots to change their minds about being part of the study, while another two just said they had other commitments and they were no longer available,

yet another two told me that they were not participating because they were afraid that their information was going to be leaked to the correctional officials despite assuring them that it would not. They felt that their information was too sensitive for them to share, or it was not easy for them so share it at that moment. Other offenders would just say that they did not want to be part of the study because they knew that they were not forced to participate. I did not take their decisions and reasons as mentioned above for not to engage in the study personally and I also did not try to force or convince them to participate in the study. In fact, I perceived their lack of interest as not having the consent to continue to be part of the study. This meant that the remaining participants (8) who provided their consent did so willingly without being coerced to participate in the study, which makes their stories authentic and credible. It was interesting for me to witness the dynamic that surrounds conducting an interview in a correctional facility which caused me to be cognisant of the issue of gaining trust from participants and ensuring that we could have a conversation rather than interrogating questions.

Even though I may have similar experiences of living in South Africa as a black woman from an impoverished background and have experienced the maternal role with limited resources through interacting with my mother and siblings, I differ with the participants in the aspect that I am not a mother or currently expecting a child. I have no experience of being mothered behind bars, which means that I may not resonate with the feeling of being a mother inside a correctional facility. However, during shared conversations with the participants, we constructed the meaning of motherhood behind bars based on the social context and the culture of the correctional facility.

What broke the ice in our conversations was the topic about women's relationship with their children. This conversation caused women to be a more relaxed and comfortable before we could start with engaging in specific questions. I also embraced the participants' silence most of the time, which was accompanied in most cases by tears and a breakdown of the voice, especially when they were narrating about being mothers behind bars. Some participants were open about their silence and elaborated on feeling or expressing particular emotions after being given a moment, while others requested to postpone the question and answer the question later. There were also times when the participants asked me to pause the recording

because they were not comfortable sharing certain information about their experiences.

I was aware that volunteering at the Inside-Out Outside-In South African Corrections Interest Group at Unisa influenced the way I explored this topic through literature, the questions brought to the fore, the way I engaged with the women and the basis that I had about women in correction. Therefore, I continuously recorded bias, previous knowledge, judgement and values in a journal, so that I could refrain from including personal subject-position into the research process.

Moreover, most of time the participants were diverting from the topic to discuss topics that may not be related to the research questions, in spite of my efforts to guide the conversation. It was difficult to redirect them to the actual conversation while they were still sharing narrative, because I did not want to appear to be rude, especially when talking to person who is older than I am. Despite their circumstance of being confined, I felt a need to treat them with the respect that I would give to others who are not incarcerated. I assumed that their rationale for diverting from the topic may be that I was the first person from outside the correctional facility with whom they had physical contact after the hard lockdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and they may have missed interacting with such persons, especially their loved ones. For these reasons the interview time frames varied from 40 minutes to one hour.

I was aware of my role as researcher and its limitations during the research process, which is why, after the interview, I re-emphasised the importance of participants visiting the psychological services which were available to them in the immediate environment for free, whenever they felt a need to go. The collected data were then transcribed by me and I analysed the data using IPA (see Chapter 4) to uncover the shared meaning of motherhood behind bars.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the research methodology that was employed in the study. It highlighted the importance of opting for qualitative research in the study. In addition, a social construction paradigm was used as an epistemological lens informing the study. There was a discussion about how participants were accessed,

the research context and methods used to gather data. Interviews were guided by a semi-structured interview guide. The recorded interviews were then transcribed to verbatim text, and codes and themes were generated from the transcripts. Careful consideration was given to measures of trustworthiness and ethical considerations throughout the study. Lastly, the transcribed interviews were analysed using IPA analysis. The findings inferred from the analysed data are discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Research Findings and Discussion of Findings

4.1   Introduction

The previous chapter (Chapter 3) provided a detailed discussion of the methodology used in the study. Chapter 4 starts by providing a descriptive summary of each participant involved in the study. The summary of the participants entails brief backgrounds of the participants' life experiences and factors that contributed to their engagement in criminal activities. Further, this is followed by a discussion of the identified themes and sub-themes extracted from the interview transcriptions in relation to the existing literature and SIT in the study. The results of the study were structured in a manner that addresses the overall research question, which is "What are the lived experiences of female offenders mothering behind bars?" In order to analyse each participant's subjective experience of being a mother behind bars, I used an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to examine and interpreted offender mothers' subjective experiences (Smith & Osborn, 2008).

4.2   Research Process

The research data were collected from eight (8) incarcerated mothers from the ages of 25 to 53 years old who were interviewed in person with the aid of a semi-structured interview guide at a Johannesburg female correctional centre, Gauteng province, South Africa. The sample of eight (8) participants was sufficient to produce nuanced data that assisted in developing themes (as discussed later in this chapter). Ethical clearance of the study from both UNISA and DCS ethics committee was obtained in 2020 (see Appendices A and B), while data collection was done in August 2021 to September 2021. The study adhered to the ethical considerations to protect the identities of participants by using pseudonyms (see Chapter 3) during the interview sessions. The participants were purposefully selected based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria for the sake of maintaining homogeneity of the sample of which a meaning of a phenomenon of motherhood behind bars is experienced in a similar manner (see Chapter 3). The sample of the participants in the study formed part of the demographics of the South African female population in a Johannesburg correctional facility, and not the representation of the entire population of female offenders in the country. Table 4.1 presents a summary of the

biographical data of the participants, as per the inclusion criteria described in Chapter 3. This is followed by a synopsis of their personal circumstances.

4.3   Participants' Profile Summary

This section provides a summary of the participants' narrative regarding their life history, especially aspects of their socio-economic status, education, and employment status. These narratives explore their experiences of victimisation, which was linked to poverty as a contributing factor of the participants being pulled and pushed to criminal engagement. I begin by providing a short summary of each participant's lived experience (see Table 4.1: Summary of participants' information at the time of the interview), followed by a brief discussion**.** The stories of the participants will aid in providing a background of how the recurring themes emerged. It should be noted that pseudonyms were used instead of the participants' real names to preserve the anonymity of the participants.

Table 4.1:

Summary of Participants' Information at the Time of the Interview

Name	Buhle	Lesego	Lebogang	Lerato	Mmapaseka	Stacy	Unathi	Uthando
Age	33	31	28	30	35	34	46	52
Number of children	2	3	2	3	1	3	3	3
Children's age	11 and 15 years old	2, 8 and 10 years old	2 and 10 years	2, 7 and 13 years old	8 years old	2, 11, 13 years old	13, 18, and 25 years old	15, 23, and 33 years old
Had the experience of residing with the child during incarceration	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Full-time employed/part-time employed	Part-time	Part-time	Part-time	Part-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Part-time
Current/ previous job	Catering assistant, currently un-employed	Adminis-trator, currently a seam-stress	Hairdresser, hairdresser	Spaza shop assistant, currently un-employed	Catering assistant, currently unemployed	Optometrist and currently an educational facilitator	Nanny, currently un-employed	General worker at a restaurant unemployed

Main source of income	Self and father of the child	Self and husband	Self, father of the child government child grant	Self, father of the child and govern-ment child grant	Self, mother, government child grant	Self	Self and father of the child govern-ment child grant	Self, government child grant
Highest educational qualification	Grade 11	Matric	Matric	Grade 10	Grade 10	Post-graduate degree	Certificate in early childhood develop-ment	Grade 10
Current relationship status	Single	Married	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single
Languages	Setswana and English	Setswana and English	Sesotho and English	IsiNdebele Setswana and English	Setswana and English	English and Afrikaans	Isizulu, Setswana and English	Isizulu, Setswana and English
Race	Black	Black	Black	Black	Black	White	Black	Black

4.3.1 Participants' Profile Information at the Time of the Interview

Pseudonym: Buhle

Time spent in a correctional facility: more than two years

Buhle is a 33-year-old Sotho-speaking single mother of two children (15- and 11-year-old girls) who resides in Westonaria, Johannesburg, Gauteng province, South Africa. She spent most of her youth and adult years in Westonaria. Growing up, she was raised by a single mother whom she describes as loving, supportive and God-fearing. She did not converse about her father's involvement in her life but spoke of her childhood as an easy one as she had all the things that she ever wanted as a child. She migrated to Lesotho for a year to begin her high school and then came back to South Africa during the same year to continue with her studies. She mentioned that "the reason why she came back to South Africa was that she was raped by her maternal cousin, and her aunt asked her not to tell her mom because this would tear the family apart".

She spoke of abusing alcohol in high school, which caused her to lose focus and repeat a grade. She met the father of her first-born child at high school and got impregnated by him while she was in Grade 11. She dropped out of high school in

the early stage of Grade 12 in order to take care of her "mischievous" child at that time. Buhle communicated that despite being separated from her ex-boyfriend, he still played a role in being emotionally involved and provided for his child financially. After her child turned three years old, she decided to seek employment rather than completing her high school qualification. She opted to do a learnership in production at an unnamed company. She was involved in another relationship following a break-up with the father of her first child and had another child. She later separated from the father of her second-born child because he did not want to provide financially for the child. Even after the break-up, she spoke of the father of the second-born child as someone who refuses to be involved in any aspect of the child's life (i.e., financial or emotional). After completing her learnership, she joined her mother who was preparing and selling food at the street market. Her employability at her mother's street store helped her to supplement her children's father and her mother's income, which took care of her children financially. Buhle said she had a close relationship with her mother, with whom she would leave her children most of the time while she was going to entertainment areas. As an adult she still had a problem of abusing alcohol which sometimes caused her to be less involved in the children's lives as she would spend most weekends without seeing them.

She met her boyfriend by then who got her pregnant with her third child. She explained that she was not aware that she was pregnant until she was about six months and then she "agreed with her partner to terminate the pregnancy". Buhle added that the pressure of having to provide for another child financially while she was struggling to provide for the other two motivated why she wanted to terminate the pregnancy. After termination of the pregnancy, she decided to separate from the father of her aborted child. Buhle elucidated that the father of the aborted child did not take the break-up well and started abusing her emotionally by stalking, blackmailing, harassing and threatening her for over a year with the aim of wanting them to get back together in the relationship. She disclosed that she could not tolerate the emotional abuse any longer because of the fear that something might happen to her children, and then decided to report herself to the police. She was sentenced and convicted together with her ex-boyfriend for murdering her baby (the foetus was older than 20 weeks). While busy serving her sentence behind bars, her children are left under the care of their maternal grandmother.

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Pseudonym: Lesego

Time spent in a correctional facility: less than a year

Lesego is a Setswana-speaking, 30-year-old married mother of three girls (2-, 8- and 10-year-old) who reside in Soweto, Johannesburg. She spent most of her youth and married life in Soweto. Growing up, she was raised, with two siblings, by single, religious mother. She described her relationship with her mother and siblings as close, but she did not converse much about her father's involvement in her life. After the passing away of her sister, her mother moved into her house to stay with Lesego, her husband and children. Lesego got pregnant when she was doing her matric. She was married an early age to the father of her child, with whom she later had two more children. She attended school life in Soweto but decided to not pursue her education after matric and opted to seek employment so that she could take care of her child financially. Lesego started working at the age of 18 years old because she could not expect her mother to take care of her and her baby. Lesego gave me the impression that she always felt a need to take care of her family, despite having her husband who assisted her to take care of her children. Lesego got a job as a cashier and was later promoted to be an administrator. She disclosed that economic pressures lured her to committing embezzlement and fraudulent activities with her colleagues at the same company where she was working.

She managed to get away with fraudulent activities for some time without arrest on her first attempt of committing fraudulent activities, because there was a time when she stopped engaging in criminal activities. However, she indicated that due to financial pressure, she was pulled back into fraudulent activities which lead to her arrest and conviction. As a mother she never left her children's sight; the only time she was apart from her children was less than a week. She is having a hard time being separated from her children now that she is incarcerated. Even though she initially did not cope with being socially separated from her children, she reported that she used the skills acquired through grief counselling that she attended to deal with the sister's death to help her manage the stress of being separated from her children. While busy serving her sentence behind bars, her children are currently under the care of her mother and husband.

Pseudonym: Lebogang

Time spent in a correctional facility: more than four years

Lebogang is a Xhosa-speaking 28-year-old single mother of two children, a girl aged 10 years and a boy aged 2 years old who resides at Vaal Triangle. Her family originally came from the Eastern Cape and then relocated to the Vaal Triangle, where she spent her youth and adulthood. She describes her upbringing as difficult because of belonging to a big family, where her mother was a stay-at-home parent who received a social grant, and her father was working. Lebogang explains that her family was a typical traditional family with strict parents who are religious. Lebogang had estranged relationship with them, even though she was staying with her parents. As a first-born child, she started working as a hairdresser at a young age to help supplement the family's income. Lebogang got pregnant when she was doing her matric in 2012, where she met the father of her first child. Following the year of her pregnancy, she failed Grade 12 and then dropped out of school to seek employment instead of rewriting matric or enrolling in higher education in an effort to support her baby. She worked as a general worker in a restaurant to supplement her main employment as a hairdresser. Although she separated from the father of her first child due to relationship issues, she articulated that her then boyfriend provided financial and emotional support to their child.

Years later, she left her job and enrolled in a traffic department learnership programme. During this time, Lebogang got involved with the father of her second child, but shortly after separated due to her partner's by then inability to provide financially for the child, as well as relationship issues. Lebogang disclosed that the father of her second child was not involved in any way in the child's life, for example financially or emotionally. She got involved in a cohabiting relationship with a new partner whilst she was pregnant by her ex-partner. Lebogang's boyfriend supported her and her children financially and treated her children as if they were not his. She explained that her children stay with their maternal grandmother, and they would occasionally visit her and her partner.

Lebogang reported that she occasionally abused alcohol with her partner. She highlighted that she tried to quit alcohol, but she could not because every time her

boyfriend would come from the tavern[2] drunk and he would start to physically fight with her or emotionally abuse her. She escaped from her realities by reengaging with alcohol to avoid the pain inflicted by her then boyfriend. Lebogang explained that even though she tried to break up with her abusive partner, she would always find a way to get back with her partner. Lebogang illustrated that she did not have anyone she trusted to talk to about boyfriend issues because her mother was strict and religious. Bottling up issues inside and always fighting with her abusive partner led to her reacting in aggressive violent behaviour that led to her murdering her boyfriend. While incarcerated, she gave birth to a baby boy whilst serving a sentence and stayed for two years and then got separated from the child. Lebogang's children reside with her maternal grandmother and maternal grandfather.

Pseudonym: **Lerato**

Time spent in a correctional facility: spent five months at Kgosi Mampuru correctional facility and more than five years at Johannesburg correctional facility

Lerato is a 30-year-old Ndebele-speaking single mother of three minor children, a boy of 13 years old, and two girls who are 2 and 7 years old, who reside in Mamelodi, Pretoria, Gauteng province. She spent most of her youth in the Gauteng province. Growing up, she was raised by a mother and stepfather who passed away and then moved in with her maternal grandmother. Lerato described her upbringing as happy and loving until her parents were deceased and she then found life to be difficult. Growing up she had a lot of anger, and she did not have a relationship with her biological father, but later reconnected with him in her early adulthood. The involvement with her father was in the capacity that allowed her to get support from him (emotional and financial) when required; however, he passed away a few years after meeting her again. She explained that growing up in a poverty-stricken home caused her to drop out of school at an early age and seek employment to supplement her grandmother's income earnings to support her siblings. Lerato once ran away from home to stay with her religious aunt because of financial issues she had with her grandmother, but later returned home. She worked as a general worker for several years. She got pregnant by her first boyfriend when

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[2] Tavern is a place in townships where alcohol is being sold

she was still a teenager and got separated from him later that year. Even though she separated from the father of her first child, he supplemented her income.

Lerato retired as a general worker and then worked as a spaza[3] assistant and also received a child grant from the government. During that time, she met her new boyfriend and become pregnant with her second child. However, they separated shortly after due to relationship issues and a lack of financial support for their child. Lerato got engaged in another relationship with her current boyfriend and got pregnant by him. The discovery of Lerato's pregnancy by her grandmother caused tension which caused Lerato's grandmother to rage at her. She was threatened by her grandmother to not get pregnant again; now that she was, she was requested to leave her home after having the child. According to Lerato, her grandmother threatened her not to get an abortion because she and baby would die and also said she must leave her house closer to giving birth. Lerato continued to stay at home despite the threats, insults, and criticism from the grandmother because she had nowhere to go. She explained that her grandmother's rage escalated to a point where she would always abuse her emotionally (shaming, criticising) or manipulating her to give her salary every month after she was paid, which caused her stress, anger and depression episodes.

Due to the fear of not having a place to stay after the birth, Lerato decided to go through self-labour. Following that, she strangled her child until she died and then threw the body under a bridge. The discovery of the deceased child by the police led to her arrest. Whilst she was attending trial, she got pregnant again by her current boyfriend. She gave birth while serving her sentence in a correctional facility and then raised her child behind bars. Even though her children were left with her grandmother while serving her sentence, her grandmother later passed away, which caused the children to remain in the custody of her younger brother.

Pseudonym: Mmapaseka

Time spent in a correctional facility: more than four years

Mmapaseka is a 35-year-old Setswana-speaking single mother of a boy who is 8 years old, from the Vaal Triangle. She spent most of her youth and adulthood in

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[3] Spaza shop refers to a mini-market that is run by individuals at their homes

the Vaal Triangle. Growing up, she explained her parents' divorce; her mother remained single, and her father remarried. Mmapaseka had an estranged relationship with her father and a close relationship with her mother. She describes her upbringing as hard, which caused her to drop out of school and seek employment. She got a job as a street vender who sells food in a food market. She was involved in a relationship with her boyfriend who impregnated her. The discovery of her pregnancy by her boyfriend has led to conflict in their relationship, which resulted in a discussion of termination of the pregnancy. Mmapaseka explained that her refusal to terminate her pregnancy led to conflict that escalated to verbal abuse, harassment, and physical violence by her then boyfriend. She articulated that she shortly broke up with her boyfriend but eventually got back with him in the hope that he would not request her to get an abortion. The pressure of being forced into an abortion and the abuse pushed her to be in a conflict situation with her partner that led to her murdering her boyfriend. While serving her sentence, her child is in the care of her maternal grandmother.

Pseudonym: Stacy

Time spent in a correctional facility: more than five years

Stacy is a 35-year-old English-speaking single mother of three minor children, a boy 13 years old, and two girls of 2 and 11 years old, who reside in Brakpan, Gauteng province. She spent most of her youth and married years prior to being divorced in the Gauteng province. Growing up, she was raised alongside with her siblings by both a mother who was a stay-at-home parent and father who was the main provider. Stacy explained that growing up, her father was an alcoholic but managed to quit alcohol at some point and her family was perfect again. She described that she was a university post-graduate student who was studying to be an optometrist. After completing her studies, she met the father of her first two children whom she later married.

Stacy explains that she divorced her husband because he was physically abusing her. She got involved with her boyfriend by then and got impregnated by him. Similar to her ex-husband, her boyfriend was physically abusive. Her experience of physical abuse led her to abuse drugs to avoid the beating. Abusing drugs has led to a state whereby she neglected her children, which allowed her

boyfriend to molest her baby girl. When the crime occurred, she was pregnant with her third child, who she gave birth to and raised her child in a correctional facility. Stacy mentioned that she was convicted and sentenced for child molestation. Her two oldest children were initially left in the custody of her mother and father, who later passed away and the children were moved to her sister's custody.

Pseudonym: Unathi

Time spent in a correctional facility: more than five years

Unathi is a 43-year-old Zulu-speaking single of mother of three children, girls of 25 and 13 years old, and an 18-year-old boy, who reside in Springs, Gauteng province. She spent most of her youth and adulthood in Gauteng. She was raised in a happy family by both the mother and father, along with her siblings in the same household. Her father was the main provider of the family while her mother supplemented their income.

Unathi met the father of her first child whilst in high school and became pregnant by him. She explained that the discovery of her pregnancy led to her deciding to drop out of high school in order to take care of her child. After her child was 2 years old, she sought employment in an effort to support her child. She was separated from the father of her first child due to distance and relationship issues. She got involved in another relationship with her boyfriend by then and got impregnated by him. Following having a child with her then boyfriend, they got married and stayed together. Unathi's husband later passed away due to illness. Unathi got involved in another relationship where she had another child and was married to her boyfriend by then. During that time, she furthered her studies at college and obtained a certificate in early child development and then developed her own day-care service. Even though she had a day-care service, her husband was the breadwinner of the family.

Unathi discussed that her business of childcare services closed due to her experiencing a short illness which left her husband as the only provider of the family. Unathi's husband sometimes deprived her of money to buy basic necessities, such as electricity. In addition, her husband abused her physically and verbally, together with her children. She opened a case of domestic violence with the police and received a protection order, which resulted to animosity between her family and her

in-laws. Even after filing for a protection order from her husband, she continued to stay with him as he was providing financially for her and the children. Unathi was pushed into crime by the physical abuse and bottled-up issues that she had with her husband that caused her to behave aggressively and murder him. As a mother she had never left sight of her children. Her children were initially under the care of her mother and father, but they later passed away, and the children then moved to her sister's household, who also passed away. Currently her children are heading their own household.

Pseudonym: Uthando

Time spent in a correctional facility: more than 5 years

Uthando is a 52-year-old Zulu-speaking single mother who has three children, a minor girl (15 years old) and two boys (33 and 23 years old) who resided in Benoni, Gauteng province. She spent most of her youth in Durban and then moved to Gauteng as an adult. Her mother and father got separated when she was young; her mother remained single while her father remarried. Her mother then relocated to Gauteng with some of her siblings, while she remained at home with her maternal grandmother. Growing up, she was raised in a big family along with her extended siblings by her maternal grandmother. She describes her upbringing as a difficult one and had child favouritisms which were portrayed by her grandmother. Uthando had an estranged relationship with her mother and father.

Uthando dropped out of school at an early age because her father did not have the money to pay for school fees and then relocated to Gauteng to seek employment opportunities. Uthando got a job at a restaurant as a general worker. She met the father of her children in Gauteng, who later married her and she had three children with him. She supplemented her husband's income who was the breadwinner of the family. Uthando's husband passed away due to a severe illness which caused her to be vulnerable to robbery that was occurring in the community, specifically targeting most females. The encounter of the incident of robbery pushed her and her son to initiate mob justice to try to stop individuals who were attempting to break into her house. While serving her sentence together with her son, her children were left in the care of her sister who then passed away, which means that they headed their own household.

4.4 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

The results of data analysis were grounded by the ontological stance of social constructionism paradigm and interpretative phenomenology, which suggest that reality is multiverse. This implies that the themes identified on this topic may be interpreted differently by the other researchers. I conducted this research solely, which implies that subjectivity in data analysis was inevitably influenced by personal experience, culture, and language. The application of Interpretive phenomenology proved to be important in acknowledging my active role during the social interaction process of making sense of participants' stories based on what is regarded as a reality on the topic, discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

The aim of data analysis was to validate offender mothers' narratives from their perspective with local and international literature. The themes that emerged from the data analysis were generated from the reflections of selected participants' stories at a specific time and context, therefore they are not generalised as the experiences of all offender mothers at different correctional centres. It was not the intention of the study to generalise findings, as it was a qualitative study with aims to elicit the in-depth accounts of the lived experiences of the mothers inside a maximum correctional facility, which is why this type of research was important. The themes derived from the data analysis should not be perceived from a single perspective but as integrated information that informs each theme.

The themes derived from the study during analysis were from a wide-ranging to a broader perspective. The general viewpoint included the first themes that provide an explanation of the circumstances surrounding maternal criminality. They then progressed to the specific focus of the second theme, which deliberated on the construction of maternal identity **behind bars**. The third theme discussed contact as a construct of mothering. Ultimately, the fourth theme deals with compromises of difference coping mechanism (see, Table 4.2: Superordinate themes and Subordinate themes emerged from the transcripts).

Table 4.2:

Superordinate Themes and Subordinate Themes that emerged from the Transcripts

Superordinate themes	Subordinate themes
4.4.1. Theme 1: Circumstances surrounding maternal criminality	4.4.1.1 Physical coupled with emotional abuse and substance use as a turning point to criminal behaviour
	4.4.1.2 Physical abuse and maternal obligation
	4.4.1.3 Maternal role and recidivism
4.4.2. Theme 2: Construction of a maternal identity behind bars	4.4.2.1 A distant co-mother
	4.4.2.2 A bad mother
	4.4.2.3 A good mother
4.4.3 Theme 3: Contact as a construct of mothering	4.4.3.1 The role of the social worker
	4.4.3.2 Personal visitation prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic
	4.4.3.3Telephone calls as a means of contact
	4.4.3.4 The effects incarceration on the relationship between the mother and child
4.4.4 Theme 4: Different Coping Mechanism	4.4.4.1 Motivation by others and self
	4.4.4.2 Victim Offender Dialogue programme

4.4.1 Theme 1: Circumstances surrounding Maternal Criminality

Upon the exploration of the rationale behind women offenders, the narrative of most participants (7 out of 8) pointed out that their illegal behaviours, which were conflicting with the law, were linked to the experience of domestic abuse. Domestic violence manifested itself in a variety of ways (emotional abuse, financial abuse, and physical abuse). Discussion on this topic revealed that incarcerated mothers' prolonged exposure to domestic violence has led to women giving in to the life of crime. This theme starts by exploring domestic violence and substance abuse, which is followed by domestic abuse and maternal obligation as a turning point to criminality.

4.4.1.1 Physical coupled with Emotional Abuse and Substance Use as a Turning Point

This theme demonstrates how exposure to emotional or physical abuse resulted in participants' inclination towards abusing a substance, which in turn contributed to reckless behaviour that conflicted with the law (Jeffries & Chuenurah, 2019). Half of the participants (Buhle, Lebogang, Lerato and Stacy) in the study spoke about being exposed to substance abuse at some point in their lives, where they witnessed their parents' abusing substances or have abused substances themselves as a way to get away from their realities of experiences of emotional and physical violence. A prominent factor in shaping incarcerated mothers' criminal behaviour was abusing a substance to avoid conflict with their partners, which eventually led to the physical abuse that implicitly contributed to their engagement in crime. The above statement is represented by the participants' narrative below.

Stacy said:

He started molesting my child and she was two years old, and the saddest part is that I was sitting there, I was home, and I didn't do anything about it because I was too busy using my drugs and I didn't notice what was happening you know in my house ... I only cared about the drugs, I only cared about keeping him happy so that I would not get another beating.

Lebogang added: "Alcohol was the problem because ... we bottled things up inside, we are unable to talk to someone about our issues, so we end up drinking alcohol".

It is evident from the participants' remarks that abusing a substance tapped into their mental state, which caused them to learn helplessness that is shown by the situation of accepting the abuse and bottling up issues inside. In addition, a significant shift of women's identities was identified during my engagement with them, which portrays a dominant identity of an addict due to the contextual situation which put strain on the maternal identity. Lerato added "when I was young, I spent most of my time with friends abusing alcohol without considering the fact that my children needed me". In addition, Lerato said that: "I would spend the whole weekend at the entertainment areas drinking alcohol without seeing my children". Some participants (Buhle, Lerato, Stacy) indicated that abusing alcohol caused them

to be less involved or lose connection with their children's lives, which may have increased the chances of victimisation to take place without them being aware of it, as above (Goodrum et al., 2019). The above statement representation supported the views of Tajfel and Turner (1986), which suggest that the abusive environment that participants occupied influenced their addictive identities, which influenced self-esteem in either parenting or sourcing for help from the abusive relationship. It is evident that the substance abuse or physical abuse clouded the participants' judgement in opting for alternative decisions that might have reduced the chance of the occurrence of crime. Nonetheless, I was aware during my interaction with many participants (Buhle, Lebogang, Lerato, Stacy and Unathi) that their abusers had some form of relationship with their children, as either being a father or a stepfather, or a maternal grandmother, hence as much as the mothers were aware of the toxic behaviour, it was not easy for participants (Buhle, Lebogang, Lerato, Mmapaseka, Stacy, Unathi and Uthando) to remove themselves from the relationship. For example, the participants voiced the following:

Lebogang: "Yes, we were fighting, I tried to break up with my partner, but it does not last for a long time. He is my partner, when he is sober, we sat down together and talk."

Unathi:

So, I decided that I report him to the police to be arrested ... when I did get the protection order that day ... like he was always out in the morning, he took the whole day without coming to the house, when he arrived around 7, he was a person who fought with me ...

Mmapaseka: "We were physically fighting and then I decided that if I stay at home, he will come back, he will come back to his senses. Unfortunately, it could not happen, he kept on following ..."

The participants' representations indicate that even though women may opt to leave their abusive relationships, many women in the study always found ways of returning to their ex-partners, because they were benefiting financially and emotionally from those relationships. Women culturally inherited a role of persevering in their marriages or their relationships, which is highlighted by the Sepedi proverb: "Lebitla la mosadi ke bogadi", which translates in English to "A

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women's grave is at the place or home of her husband". Inferring from this proverb, the participants could not leave or seek help from the justice system to prevent or stop the abuse or leave their abusive partners because they were socialised through social interactions in a specific context to persevere in their relationships regardless of what was happening.

In addition, the majority of the participants (Buhle, Lesego, Lebogang, Lerato, Mmapaseka, and Unathi) in the study relied financially on their abusive partners to supplement their income, which motivated them to continue to stay in the relationship for the sake of caring for their children. The offender mother's lower economic status in terms of personal earnings was a predictor of staying in a prolonged abusive relationship which, in turn, fuelled the abusive behaviour that increased chances of women committing aggressive crimes (Pleaner, 2021). On the other hand, the lack of economic empowerment of the offender mothers forced them to have co-dependent relationships, which tapped into their mental and physical well-being of having low confidence in seeking help for the abuse, thus resorting to a substance in order to cope with experiencing traumatic events (Rose & LeBel, 2017).

4.1.1.2 Physical Abuse and Maternal Obligation

This sub-theme explains how maternal obligation to protect their children in the midst of physical and emotional abuse caused the women to become vulnerable to offending behaviours. Resonating with Nuytiens and Christiaens' (2016) research, some of the participants' remarks below illustrate that their instinctive role of a protector gets evoked in threatening situations that are perceived to be harmful to their children, which distorted their morality of what is right or wrong.

Mmapaseka:

This is our first child, both of us, then he forced me that I must do abortion, then I refused. I refused to do an abortion then we fought ... he keeps on following me even though I was at home, he used to beat me when I was pregnant. I end up committing crime.

Unathi:

It is because I don't want anything that has to do with my children. If you want to distress me, then touch my children and then you will see me. Yes, I was

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annoyed you see because ... that day he threw himself on my child, he has done a lot of things, I was annoyed and I was overwhelmed with emotions I did what I wasn't supposed to do.'

Buhle:

Yes, because if I didn't look at the side of being a mother who protect her kids, what should I have done, I would have stayed with that person. I choose that I rather talk so that I make sure that this monster he is not in front of my children.

Uthando: (Translated to English)

I witness the two people who were trying to forcibly enter in my house through my roofing, while I was sleeping next to my girl. Then I physically blew a whistle[4] for my neighbour to help. Unfortunately, one person died because the myself, my son and the neighbours beating and the other one ran away.

Further, since most of the women in the study (Buhle, Lesego, Lerato, Mmapaseka and Uthando) are single mothers with sole custody of their children, the tendency of standing up for themselves in stressful situations especially when they are experiencing financial struggles or a need to protect their children becomes natural to them due to their exposure to being raised by single women themselves. The above-mentioned statement relates to idea of group distinctiveness by Tajfel and Turner (1986) which provided an understanding of how group membership in this case single motherhood influenced the offender mother behaviour of having a need to be independent.

Lesego alluded that: "umh my mom stays with my sisters first born. I won't lie my mom did her best. eh I decided that when I was pregnant with my first, I need to take responsibility."

Buhle added that:

What if I get back with this person and he decides to rape my children and I would have no choice but to allow his request because he threatened me that

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[4] Blowing on a physical whistle is a mechanism that is used to alert the members of the community of any crime that is happening around them, so that they can assist each other in controlling and apprehending the criminals

he would tell the police what we did. So I had to look within myself and I told myself I need to be a mother and face the consequences of my action for the sake of protecting my child.

Uthando added: "like I said before, I am a mother, I am a father to them. I am providing for them and even my boys know that they can come to me for any assistance, it is difficult, but I have been there for them."

Unathi added that: "you see the way I raised me, it made me be the women that I am today who can stand for her family. It is because of my mother that I can stand for myself."

4.1.1.3 Maternal Role and Recidivism

Discussion on this topic revealed that even though most offender mothers justified that the commission of crime was linked to an act of fulfilling their maternal roles, the context of incarceration caused them to rethink their rationalisation of their criminality. This sub-theme discusses the effect of incarceration on the offender mother's decision to engage in crime in the future. Findings generated from the data analysis showed that self-introspection drawn from re-evaluation of offending decisions as being inappropriate contributed to future desistance in crime. The above statement is supported by the following remarks.

Lesego:

... but I feel that I am strong enough to say never, I would never do what I did. Because I look at my kids and think had I have done better I would have never been in here, no or had I done it and stop.

Lebogang:

For me not to commit crime again yes. Is to be a mother but most importantly is to know what you want as a women ... outside there are things I didn't know like social worker, okay you could hear about social worker, pyschologist you understand, those things we hear them from a distance, those are the things we didn't learn, there is anger management like okay you can read a person ...

Mmapaseka: "Yeah, I won't, it maybe might happen that maybe I find myself in a similar situation that led to my arrest and conviction in imprisonment, I know which procedure I must take now".

Despite the participants' diverse backgrounds, self-awareness drawn from interaction with fellow offenders and attending rehabilitation programmes in a social context of imprisonment influence their future desistance to crime. This relates to Tajfel and Turner (1986) idea of the self-structure's influence of social behaviour, of which in this case the context of the correctional facility together with the rehabilitation programmes influencing incarcerated women perception about crime in the future. It was evident in this topic that most participants (Buhle, Lebogang, Lerato, Mmapaseka, Stacy, Unathi and Uthando) acquired self-awareness which caused them to re-evaluate their choices which were informed by knowledge of the optional choices that one has that they were not aware of. The above statement is supported by McKeown et al.'s (2016) argument on individuals' perception of group structure permeability, which is discussed in detail in Chapter 2, section 2.10. Incarcerated mothers in the study saw past the stigma of being incarcerated and assessed how they could become better selves.

In summing up the two sub-themes, the study's findings differed from the literature (Chesney-Lind & Pasko, 2013; Ferraro & Moe, 2008) in the narrative on maternal incarceration that indicates that economic pressure causes women to be more inclined to commit economic-related crimes. The results of the study correspond with victimisation research (Garcia-Hallet, 2019; Jeffries & Chuenurah, 2019) and local research (Artz et al., 2012; Haffejee et al., 2006; Parry, 2018) which illustrates that experience of victimisation is linked to women's turning point to criminality. The study highlights that contributing factors towards women's vulnerability to incarceration were the high rise in unemployment or underemployment rate and gender-based violence in South African communities, which are mostly affecting women of colour (Artz et al., 2012; Haffejee et al., 2006; Parry, 2018).

Corresponding to research abroad (Nuytiens & Christiaens, 2016) and locally (Artz et al., 2012; Parry, 2018), under any circumstance the dual maternal role of being a provider and a caregiver for their children contributed towards women being

exposed to acts of criminal offences in this case. However, it was interesting to observe that when it comes to protecting their children in general, only the physical wellness was taken into consideration in the context of abuse. When it comes to the mental health of their children, women in the study were not really alarmed to take action towards the abuse (i.e. removing the children from the environment or seeking counselling). Moreover, family dysfunctions are considered as a normal way of living without paying attention to the implications they have on mental care of members of the whole unit. This shows that the participants live in communities where mental wellness receives inadequate attention due to a lack of awareness of person symptoms as compared to symptoms of physical violence. The study indicated that the motherhood identity limited the women's autonomy to make choices that were rightful and beneficial for their children. Parallel to Bachman et al. (2016), it was not really the maternal identity *per se* that would cause women in future to desist from crime, but the realisation what incarceration does to their relationships with significant others and their children. Begging to differ from literature (Jackson, 2011), for most women being convicted behind bars has caused them to discover the knowledge of who they are, which was more important than who they are in relation to other individuals. This relates to the idea of identification of self and others in the group proposed by Hoggs et al. (2017) in a sense that offender mothers realised offending behaviour is wrongful in comparative to the law-abiding behaviour.

4.4.2 Theme 2: Construction of a Maternal Identity behind Bars

Female offenders in the study defied the societal expectations of being a mother. Nonetheless, offender mothers attempt to reconstruct their maternal identities based on the previous relationship with their children and attitudes towards mothering behind bars. This theme answers one of the research questions by exploring how offender mothers constructed or reconstructed their identity and the meaning they attached to their new roles. This theme starts by providing an account of how the participants in the study constructed, firstly, the distance mother, which is followed by the bad mother, and lastly the good mother.

4.4.2.1 A Distant Co-mother

The reflections of how incarcerated mothers construct the good and bad mother identity behind bars resulted in mothers' discussion about being a distance

co-mother. This identity was developed based on the recognition that even though the participants in the study may perform mothering at proximity within the confined spaces of the correctional facility (for example in the case of participants Lebogang, Lerato and Stacy), they were at some point separated from their children. In addition, a shift of status of being a full-time mother with custodial rights over the children to co-mother with custodial rights over the children has caused them to identify themselves as a distance co-mother with the caregiver of their child, with minimal control over the child's life. Some of the participants in the study narrated about performing the co-mothering responsibilities and what these entail in the following quotes.

Lesego:

For me now it just entails that I maintain communication because that is really what I can do, because even if I can say that try this, the people that are responsible now always have the final say see, until further notice.

Stacy:

She is basically If I could explain it to you in this way, she's headquarters and I'm a branch and she has to come and visit that branch. That's how you feel. You feel like she's got all these responsibilities and she has to fit you in somewhere.

Lerato: "Even if you have a child, you should make sure that you speak with your children".

Being aware of their role as distance co-mothers and the way they can be involved with their children (co-parenting instead of being a full-time parent), most of the mothers in the study could not help but wonder who they are going to be to their children once they are released from the correctional facility. For example, Stacy added that:

Am I going home even though I have tried so hard to keep this bond strong enough, who are they going to turn to, are they going to turn to me or to my sister when I reprimand them or are they still going to say who are you and where have you been because you have to be remembered I left my kids.

Offender mothers' doubt about their identity upon release manifested in feelings of concern, frustrations and pain. The effect of the emotional turmoil that women in the study expressed transpired irrespective of them having custody over their children and being assured that the caregiver provided that their children were well taken care of. This is contradictory to the literature by Barnes and Stringer (2014) which indicates that incarcerated mothers with lengthy sentence are more inclined to losing custodial rights over their children. Further, women who mostly had doubts and wondered about whom they were going to be to their children, or their children being alienated from them due to physical separation, are those whose children were younger at the time of incarceration than those who had older children.

The women in the study's feeling of frustrations, worry and pain were also fuelled by the concern of being either accepted or rejected by their children. Notwithstanding the disclosure of their whereabouts to the children, the feelings of being rejected or accepted still loomed in their minds. On the other hand, those who decided not to disclose their whereabouts to their children due to the anticipated effects that the effect of incarceration may have on their children's well-being still suffered the fate of the unknown identity after their release. The anticipated feelings that women shared, even though it put a strain on their role, did not affect the expectations about release and reunification that women in the study had.

Lerato added: "Whenever I think or speak about my children, I just feel like I can be released from the correctional facility right now and be reunited with them".

Lesego added:

I think ever since I had kids ... this is the first time we have been so distanced ... my child said to me when are coming home, every time I am being asked I always say soon. I am going the best that I can to come back.

Even though women held positive attitudes towards the anticipated feelings of reunification with children, the question of who they will be to their children still bothers them.

Stacy:

When I go home my home my soon is going to be busy writing his matric exams, my daughter is going to be 16 and my baby is going to be 12. What

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are they going to say to me, are they going to accept me and say mother or are they going to maintain this long distance relationship, that is my biggest fear. That is my biggest challenge that I am dealing with at the moment.

Furthermore, the participants articulated that openly revelling about their stay in the correctional centre was a way that they used to control information that is being fed to their children, which has the potential to disrupt their relationships. This above statement was supported by the following remarks,

Buhle said that:

I wanted to have a very good relationship with my children, I wanted to make them understand what really happened, so that they wouldn't hear about my case by other people in the streets because in my case my children are the victim.

Lebogang added that:

I understand I may not know what the people in the streets would say to my child about me because they are aware that I am incarcerated. some may say other things that way is not the truth about my arrest, which is why I had to tell my daughter about the arrest.

Some the women in the study, like Lerato and Mmapaseka, did not disclose their whereabouts or their criminality to their younger children because they were afraid of the effect that the incarceration may have on their children's well-being. This contributed to the reason why their children were not aware of the times that the participants initiate calls or have access to a telephone.

Lerato:

My first born knows where I am, while my second born does not know that I am in correctional facility now. The reason why my first born knows about my whereabouts it was because he knows my situation.

Mmapaseka:

My son knows that I am in correctional facility and sometimes he asked me why I am in correctional facility. but for me as I mother saw that it is too for me to explain why he can't stay with me in correctional facility. I can't explain to

him what happened for me to be here, yes, I know that I can't keep that forever one day I will tell him.

Relative to literature (Barnes & Stringer, 2014), the above statement indicates that the participants' sense of control due to being involved in the child's life reinforces their maternal identity despite the physical isolation. From the reflections of the participants in the study, the caregiver plays a vital role in ensuring that the mother can be able to fulfil her co-mothering responsibility through cooperating with the offender mother. Buhle added: "You can understand that when your children are left under the care of specific person who does not have a connection with you; this results in you are losing the connection with your children".

The remarks shared by Buhle show that the good relationship with the caregiver of the child (maternal grandmother or sister in case the grandmother is deceased) predicts the probability of the incarcerated mother being involved in the child's life. Notwithstanding the challenges that are presented by the context of the correctional facility, the participants in the study revealed that they reinforce their maternal identity by developing a resilience to the potential of diminished identity due to physical isolation, by continuing practising their maternal roles on the fellow offenders.

Stacy: "You even adopt people in prison as your children, because you still have that thing of saying I have to care for someone, I have to look after someone".

Mmapaseka: "I still give advice to other inmates here and I can see that they help them ... whether I am a fellow inmate or what, they still take my advice ..."

Unathi: "I can still be seen as a mother, and I can still give the fellow inmates who are younger than me advice. I feel relieved that you know at least I can give others advice."

The above statement collaborates with Hoggs et al.'s (2017) assertion of SIT; the participants' identification with the maternal identity in a correctional facility setting has caused them to behave in a manner that entails fulfilling their role rather than adopting an offender identity. It is evident that the maternal role of being a caregiver to others and providing guidance, as highlighted by Hays' (1996) theory of instinctive mothering, comes naturally in spite of the social situation in which one

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resides. Nonetheless, doing mothering at a distance is characterised by a pattern of emotions of failure which resulted from being separated from their children, which is expressed by the participants below.

Lesego: "Since I am in a correctional facility I feel like am not a good mother, I feel like I have failed them. I don't want to lie to myself."

Stacy:

She came two weeks later, she adapted so much of the life outside and she said to me, bye see me in two weeks. So, you know that clinging part is that it made me feel that I failed her.

Lebogang: "Because now like I said, you know I feel that as a mother I have failed in life".

Mmapaseka: "I feel bad, I have reached a stage whereby I failed my child".

Further, the feelings of failure were generated from the decisions that they made which conflicted with the law and how the consequences of behaviours are affecting their roles as mothers. Moreover, the above participants' remarks support Hoggs et al.'s (2017) quote on SIT in Chapter 2, section 2.9, which explores evaluation of self as being a bad mother that influences self-perception of being a failure.

4.4.2.2 A Bad Mother

Physical absence, which evoked the feeling of failure as a distanced co-mother, has contributed to the construction of a bad mother. This sub-theme provides a discussion of how the context of correctional facility influences the evaluation of the mother's self-concept as a bad mother. Some of the offender mothers' remarks recited below related to Berry and Smith-Mahdi's (2012) conception of a bad mother, which is grounded on physical absence in their children's lives, which is a direct consequence of their conflicting behaviour with the justice system.

Stacy: "... because you must remember in order to be a good mother you have to be present, I am not present, I am a long-distance mother, I am not a good mother ..."

Lesego: "... absenteeism is bad mothering ..."

The above representation cited by participants is further explained by Hoggs et al.'s (2017) quote on SIT, which indicates the identification of offender mothers as being bad due to their involvement in criminality relative to mothers who are law-abiding citizens. Moreover, the construction of a bad mother identity, according to the participants, was drawn from deviating from the normative behavioural role responsibility of caring for their children. The lack of attention to their children, which fosters behaviours of non-caring, contributed to the expression of bad mother, which is highlighted below.

Stacy: "And then you take attention completely away from them and move it to something or to somebody else because my children could have been dead and it would have been in my hands, that is a bad mother".

Uthando: "They don't even give their children attention, you understand they don't give time to their children, they don't even bond with their children".

Lebogang: "A bad mother is a person who does not provide care to her children ..."

Conflicting from what most of the participants stated as bad mothering, Buhle articulated that: "According to me, there is no such thing as a bad mother, for a person to lack parenting skill is because they didn't receive such love, she also can't give it to her children".

From the above participant, someone who was not raised in the loving environment would not be able to reciprocate the love back to their children because she did not internalise such behaviours. The above representation of the participants' statement portrays the importance of how the context of either the homes or a correctional setting influences offender mothers' internalisation of specific behaviour, which is supported by Tajfel and Turner's (1986) statement of self-concept.

4.4.2.3 A Good Mother

This sub-theme deals with how the participants in the study constructed the good mothering ideology based on the idea of care. The ideology of caring about

their children for the participants in the study meant that they become concerned about their children's well-being (Barnes & Stringer, 2014). Echoing the sentiment of Celinska and Sigal (2010), good mothering was reflected by the participants' expression of having a concern about their children's well-being. The concern over the well-being of their children was highlighted by wondering if their children were coping or whether or not their children were safe despite having a good relationship with their children. The statement that supports the assertion above is represented by the following quotes extracted from the interviews.

Uthando: "... it is not easy, sometimes they speak on television about the condition of the male correctional facility, sometimes I stress about how my child will be like after he is released from the correctional facility".

Lerato: "I care too much about my children, sometimes when the sun rises and sunset I wonder if my children are okay, do you understand".

Unathi: "... as I am in a correctional facility I always think, I wonder that while I am behind bars, how are my children coping".

The nature of the context of incarceration has made it difficult to care for their children behind bars, which means that the only thing left to ensure that the children are well taken care of is alerting social workers to check and to communicate with the caregiver of the child. In addition, the other possible aspect to do in order to be good mothers was exercising a role of being loving towards their children. The statement that supports the assertion above is represented by the following quotes extracted from the interviews.

Buhle: "As long as you play your role, and you know that the thing that a child need is surety that she/he is loved".

Stacy: "Okay, I believe that a good mother loves her children ... you still have to be the first one to give the discipline. But it also gives the love, but you must know there is a balance."

Uthando: "firstly, to give your children equal love, they should be any child whom you empathise with more with than the other, just love them equally".

However, Lesego argued that "I don't think there is a good mother, because nobody is perfect in this world ... like they say, there is no textbook for mothering". In the South African Black culture, there is a lack of an acceptable standard that actually defines what contributes to good mothering behaviours, because mothering responsibility in some cases is a collective effort by the mother, maternal uncle and other family members (Moore, 2013).

The above discussion on this theme has demonstrated that offender mothers moved away from utilising the societal normative standard which they defied to explain what good or bad is or what is motherhood by focusing on what they are able to do as mothers based on the time and space of the correctional facility. The above statement collaborates with group identification in SIT which demonstrates that offender mother evaluation of self as either being good or bad was relative to those mothers who were outside correctional facility (Haslam et al., 2009).

4.4.3 Theme 3: Contact as a Construct of Mothering

One of the cornerstones of this research was how mothers get to fulfil their roles while they are behind bars, which is through maintaining contact. During my interaction with the participants, it was evident that most participants (Buhle, Lesego, Lebogang, Mmapaseka, Stacy, Unathi, and Uthando) preferred to be in contact with their children in order to maintain their relationships. This theme illustrates two ways in which participants make contact with their children, which is through personal visit and telephonic calls. During discussion on this topic, participants alluded to the implication of using specific methods of contact on their psychological well-being and maternal roles. This theme starts by discussing the personal contact prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic and the role of social workers in facilitating contact, which is followed by the use of telephone calls as a means of contact.

4.4.3.1 The Role of the Social Worker

DCS offers incarcerated mothers support in the form of negotiating for physical contact on behalf of the mothers with the caregivers of the children through social workers. Many of the offender mothers were aware of ways in which contact arrangements could be made and the procedures that one needs to take. The

exception was made when a visit was allowed in the facility; however, in the times of COVID-19 this arrangement was not permitted.

Mmapaseka: "Oh eh there is this thing whereby you arrange with the social worker when you want to see the child but only for one hour".

Uthando: "... like the one I was arrested with; I am able to arrange and go see him at X correctional facility. Every time I need to talk with him, I arrange."

Buhle: "But the ones for the kids are for social workers, I can make an appointment with the social worker, and then the social worker and the DCS provide a transport to fetch my kids".

The representations by participants above relate to the White Paper on Corrections' (DCS, 2005) statement which indicates that the social workers should assist in making arrangements for visitation to foster attachment between the mother and child. The arrangement that was made by the social worker was regardless of whether the mother is detained in a correctional facility and/or children previously stayed with the offender mothers or not. It is worth noting that even though some participants expressed that they preferred to be physically separated from their children due to the effect of the correctional facility, they opted to use other alternatives to keep in communication with their child, such as using telephone calls (this will be discussed in more detail in in section 4.4.3.3 Telephone Calls as a Means of Contact).

4.4.3.2 Personal Visitation prior to and during the COVID-19 Pandemic

It is worth noting that the period during which the study was conducted resulted in all the offender mothers to be involuntarily separated from their children for almost six months or more than a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, depending on the period of first incarceration. The lack of physical visitation exacerbated participants' feelings of devastation in the context that is already stressful, just like the correctional facility (Sleed et al., 2013). This is conveyed by participants who voiced the following.

Lesego: "For me I won't lie to you, it kills me that I am not seeing them, it's difficult. The physical non-contact, it kills me."

Buhle said:

Children are not allowed to come, a person who is older than 16 years, children are no longer coming here, they are not allowed to come, persons who are allowed are a person who is older than 16 years old.

Lebogang added:

It is very difficult, because of this lockdown. We stay for a long period of time without seeing our children, even when visitation was allowed, we can only see them via the glass window, they were not allowed to come inside the correctional facility.

Stacy: "... you have a feeling inside of you that someone is physically taking their hand and putting it in your chest and squeezing in your heart it's like family died, is like the worst pain ever".

Upon analysis of data collected during the study, participants indicated that they have minor children, which means most of them were affected by the lack of physical contact due to COVID-19, which allowed them to have secure attachment with their children. The lack of physical touch between the offender mother and child strains their relationship, which increases the feeling of being socially isolated and that affects their maternal role. Relating to Artz et al.'s. (2012), Poehlmann-Tynan's (2015) and Loper et al.'s (2014) research, some offender mothers who participated in the study reported that caregivers' decisions to restrict physical contact between children and the offender mothers due to the negative connotation towards imprisonment weaken the maternal role. The expressions that support the above quotes are as follows:

Lerato: "It wasn't easy. It was not easy because there was no person who brought the children to come see me you understand."

Uthando: "Problem was ... eh a ba ... eh the way my sister was seeing things, she didn't want the child to come visits here, she feared that maybe the child may be disturbed".

Participants recalled some of the impressions that were made by the caregivers which illustrated that their reluctance was influenced by the idea that the

setting of the correctional facility is a harmful place for children as it can affect their well-being. The statement by Du Preez (2006) supported the stories shared by participants on decisions not to receive contact. Further, participants reported that they came to the conclusion that it was the best decision to be separated from their child because they felt that the child may be likely to adopt some of the behaviours of the correctional context that could affect their child's well-being (Du Preez, 2006). As a result, some mothers tended to lose contact voluntarily with their children. Participants expressed the following that supports the above statement.

Lerato: "It wasn't easy ... at the end I also didn't want my children to come sees me while I am behind bars arrested, because I saw that it was going to be painful that their mother is arrested".

Lebogang:

I feel that it is the right thing to do ... I want my child to have freedom, here there is no freedom, I feel that yes I have played my part but at the end I must release him for him to know other things like other kids.

Stacy:

The life outside is much better than in here, you know it is the best thing for your child, but as a mother you become so selfish, it becomes so emotional attached to the child, that child becomes your people while in doors.

Moreover, participants' decision to be separated from their children was also informed by their knowledge that correctional facility rules and procedures restrict both the offender mother and the child from a chance to explore the world fully; the children are limited to know their surroundings only. Even though they expressed that it was a good thing to be separated from their children, they also noted the necessity to bond with their children for the first two years.

Stacy: "... I was selfish to keep her for those two years because I wanted to bond with her, keep her for me because it was a way to keep her close to me as far as possible".

Lebogang: "I feel that there is enough space for kids, I feel like there is a need to stay with the child for two years in a correctional facility in order to bond with the child".

From the participants' representatives, overruled by the bad connotation, they chose to make contact with their children. The other way in which they gained contact was through the help of social workers.

4.4.3.3 Telephone Calls as a Means of Contact

As mentioned earlier in the above discussion, the only way in which many of the participants could communicate with their children was via telephone because of COVID-19 lockdown restrictions and they were concern for their child(ren). This sub-theme explains some of the challenges that incarcerated mothers encounter while they are make telephonic contact. It was not a given thing to say that incarcerated mothers' access to telephones automatically implies that they can reach their children at any time they prefer. The reality is that the life behind bars is scheduled and occurs in a routine which may differ from the outside, which participants alluded to that it was feasible to contact their children telephonically during weekends. All of the participants illustrated that they were confronted with issues such as different realities when making contact. Their representation was supported by the following quotes.

Unathi: "Yes, I can call them but something she is a person who does not like phone too much, when I call her, it goes straight to voicemail".

Stacy:

Sometimes they will tell you, mommy I am at a friend's place today, my son told me last weekend, he said to me mom please don't phone on Saturday because I am going for baseball for my birthday speak to me on Sunday. They get busy now, so you feel half like they have taken you and they have put you on this shelf and they dust you every day, that how I feel.

Mmapaseka:

So it's painful, to bond with the child over the phone [pause] and sometimes when you are about to call, the child wants to play during the day, he wants to

play, I will talk to you during the day, I will talk to you tomorrow … call in the evening he does not understand that I can't call.

Moreover, the challenges mentioned above reflect on the role strain that mothers experience as the results of having different reality time which is affecting their telephonic contact. Further, participants alluded to the less frequent time at which mothers are permitted to make telephonic contact to bond with their children. Further, Unathi articulated that the cost associated with telephonic contact threatens the bond between the mother and child, which is similar to Poehlmann-Tynan's (2015) statement on the effect of contact on maternal relationships. Furthermore, the cost of making contact was voiced by the following participants:

Unathi: "... but sometimes I don't have money to buy white call[5]".

Buhle: "The white call is expensive, a person can't afford to use it on a daily basis, and we are able to make telephonic calls using white call on Fridays and Saturday".

I discovered through having conversations with participants in the study that they are able to make telephone call at the specific times and dates when they are locked out of their cells. However, the participants in the study also indicated that they were the ones who were able and responsible for initiating or making telephone calls to their members of the family for a maximum of 30 minutes. The cost of making such telephone calls is R10 for less than 30 minutes. For example, Stacy added that: "... it's now a 20-minute call and they forget to tell you things and you forget to tell them things".

The participants' family members, on the other hand, cannot revert the call, in case they have missed it, or the conversation was cut short due to depletion of the white call voucher. Women in the study pointed out that even though they had a chance to communicate via telephone with their children during weekends, the time was not really enough to catch up on events that have occurred throughout the week. This caused them to miss out on the important aspects of their child(ren) developments. Women collectively expressed that the feeling of missing out on their

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[5] White call: this is similar to airtime voucher, which is purchased in a correctional facility with a minimum of R10 in order to make a telephone call.

children's milestone developments was associated with being a physically absent, distance mothers. To support the statement above, the participants shared the following remarks.

Stacy added that:

My son's voice broke, simple example I wasn't there, I just phoned, and this deep voice said to me hello, like where is my son and he said mommy it's me. A milestone for a boy and I wasn't there I didn't even know that it happened.

Unathi: "My third born is turning 13, she will be a teenager, anytime soon, she experiences menstrual period, and I won't be there".

Buhle: "... you miss a lot, I miss my children nagging, I wanted to be there, when my first-born experience menstrual period and I was not there".

From what I have gathered from the participants' narrative above is that it seems like they wanted to be present when their children experienced their first milestone developments. There was a specific knowledge that women in the study wanted reserved to share with their children, especially when they reached a teenage stage, for examples talks, diseases, hygiene or how to behave as teenagers. The important aspect of socialising their children into their teenage years was actually performed by the caregivers of their children rather than by them, which was painful for women in the study because they could only participate partially in this responsibility. This threatened women identities in a sense that they were concerned about whom they would be to their children after their release, since they were not physically present to be involved in their children's lives during this development due to limited time to catch up on the telephone conversations and non-physical contact. For example, Stacy voiced about that: "What are they going to say to me, are they going to except me and say mother or are they going to maintain this long-distance relationship, that is my biggest fear".

Nonetheless, women in the study demonstrated that having telephonic communication with their children has positive effects on their well-being, which relate to Poehlmann's (2005) study findings. The participants voiced the following.

Stacy added that:

And it boosts you so much, it gives you that energy, it gives you the will to carry on, they give me, they give me the power, they give me the energy, they give me the strength to say make it another week and you live for that phone call.

Lebogang stated that:

To hear my child's voice when I am talking to her over the phone, the way she was happy, it was better that when I am alone, my other siblings are around. I also have my siblings, like it heals that meaning in the other way.

Unathi added that: "You know sometimes I feel relieved to hear the voice of my child, you hear their voice of each and every one, that mom miss us, she speaks on what in her heart, you see its painful".

The above representation reflects the typical attributes of the mother's role of caring about their children's lives, despite the physical isolation or realities that they encounter while making contact.

4.4.3.4 The Effects of Incarceration on the Relationship between the Mother and Child

Despite the challenges that were outlined above with regard to women initiating contact and receiving contact which was hindered by the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, women (Buhle, Lesego, Lebogang, Lerato, Mmapaseka and Stacy) especially in their mid-30s maintained that their relationships with their children have remained the same. This was because some women (Buhle, Lebogang, Lerato, and Stacy) argued their close relationships with their children, and they have disclosed their involvement in criminality to their children. Women in the 40s and 50s (Unathi and Uthando) argued that their relationship with their older children has drifted significantly because of their incarceration. Nonetheless, the context of the correctional facility promoted change in attitude about what motherhood entails, which was shared by the following comments.

Stacy:

I have to go to work, I have to provide ... now after being incarcerated you realise that the laundry can wait until they are asleep ... because you are

going to spend more time with them. You start realising that life can happen after you have shown them love if it makes sense.

Lerato added:

I was still young, I was with my friends most of the time, we going to certain places, I didn't see that my children needed me ... correctional facility changed me a lot. And I want to be a better person to my children.

Buhle:

You know sometimes when you are outside, you don't see the importance of someone waking up next to them. I had the ability to leave my children during the weekends and let them go to their grandmother's place. But now if I get the chance, I don't believe that even a single a day I wouldn't wake up without seeing them.

During the discussion on this topic, it was evident that participants reflected on their previous life choices and their children's relationship, which evidently portray that their priorities prior to imprisonment were not concerning their children; it was with other aspects of their lives, either the entertainment side or work. The context of the correctional facility changed their perspective by influencing women to focus on their relationships with their children rather than being involved in the other actives of their lives. Conflicting with the views of Tajfel and Turner (1986) on self-structure of correctional facility did not diminish the mother's identity of mothers; instead, it reinforced their identities as they became more aware about ways in which they could improve their relationships with their children. This theme portrays that mother identity and mental health care were strengthened by communicating with their children, as well as the implication that the lack of connection has on their mental health care and relationships.

4.4.4 Theme 4: Different Coping Mechanism

This theme illustrates the way in which offender mothers in the study cope with the challenges that they face while they are mothering behind bars, which are outlined in Themes 2 and 3. Discussion on this topic brought attention to the distinct kinds of coping mechanisms that were used by incarcerated mothers, such as motivation by fellow offenders and self, psychologists and social workers, religious

activities and Victim Offender Dialogue. Offender mothers did not opt for one method of coping strategy but utilised two or more in an effort to cope with their mothering challenges. The conversations outlined in the sub-themes below demonstrate how each coping mechanism played a role in boosting offender mothers' self confidence in their mothering ability. The above-mentioned sources of support were not tailored to deal with mothering issues as all participants alluded, but they help with issues that were directly or indirectly linked to their maternal roles.

4.4.4.1 Motivation by Others and Self

In this theme mothers shared that they had to pull themselves together from being over-stressed, having a lack of sleep and being anxious by continually motivating themselves or being motivated by themselves, fellow offenders and social workers or psychologists. During our conversations, I could pick up from participants that managing stress presented by the context of a correctional facility and co-mothering responsibility takes time and it also requires one to accept the situation in which they are. Some offender mothers disclosed how they initially struggled with being incarcerated and being a mother, and how they eventually managed to motivate themselves for the sake of their own mental health and their children.

Buhle said: "At first I didn't cope, but now I cope because I talked with myself that I have to be strong for my children. If I want to see my children, I should not come to her being crazy."

Stacy added:

So, you encourage yourself and you start talking to yourself on a daily basis, so in the beginning it is an hourly basis but eventually you get to a point where you say okay healthy, cared for, loved, give me my children those things and I am okay, that's all I want [crying].

Lebogang stated: "I have to fight myself from depression, from stress and other things so that I can be a normal person who knows what she wants in future".

From the participants' representation, it is evident that offender mothers drew the strength to cope with the challenges of being incarcerated by being hopeful about their children's wellness or about having possible reunification with them. The above statement echoed with Tajfel and Turner (1986) idea of self-concept which is

derived from internalisation of group behaviours within a particular social context with which individuals are affiliate. Relating to literature by Stringer (2009), all of the offender mothers in the study mentioned that they were intrinsically motivated by religious and spiritual activities, such as having faith, praying and reading the Bible, which boosted their confidence and added value to their ability to be a mother. Similar to Loper and Tuerk's (2011) and Mignon and Ransford's (2012) research, findings of the study indicated that incarcerated mothers who struggled with self-motivation, engaged with fellow female offenders who had similar experiences of mothering at a distance for emotional support. In addition, fellow female offenders who have been mothers in a correctional facility are seen as counsel for offering guidance, especially in the case where incarcerated mothers are overwhelmed with emotions.

Lebogang: "To talk to fellow female offenders ... who are mothers who understand the feeling a being a mother, gives support".

Lesego:

At times I would feel like it's easy not calling them and the ladies, and the ladies that I stay with say you need to so that they can know that you are their mother, your presence may not be there but just to hear your voice it fills that void in them that she still cares and she is coming back.

Lerato added: "I share, there are felllow offenders whom I am sharing with".

In addition, offender mothers indicated that staying motivated helped to improve their efficacy in mothering. Moreover, within their immediate environment, offender mothers indicated that they were aware of psychological well-being services rendered by social workers and psychologists that were available based on appointment in case they felt overwhelmed with emotions or feel stress. All the participants in the study reported that they knew the procedure that was required to access the psychological well-being services which provided them with comfort in the case where felt that they could not cope.

Unathi:

Like I come to the office, when I have personal issues, there is something that I require help with ... to be able to book an appointment with social worker, and then I will go to see the social worker so that she can help me.

Buhle added: "Here in correctional facility there is emotional support, whenever I feel emotional down, I am able to see a psychologist".

Lesego:

There are social workers, there is a psychologist, you are able to make an appointment to go see them. If they feel like you need to get medicated in order to cope, they refer you and so forth.

The participants' representations portrayed that it was very important to gain control over their lives, to ensure that they have positive self-esteem to deal effectively with the challenges of motherhood.

4.4.4.2 Victim Offender Dialogue Programme

Discussion on the topic of whether or not there is a programme that helps them to cope with challenges, led to participants' articulation about the Victim Offender Dialogue (VOD) programme and how it helped them to deal with mothering issues, especially if their crime involved their children. The VOD programme refers to the process whereby the victim engages in a dialogue with the offender at a secured place at the correctional facility to voice the effect/consequences of crime on the victim (Peacock, 2019). Some of the offenders who committed crimes that were directly or indirectly linked to their children, reported that they were attending the VOD programme which assisted them to strengthen their mother-child relationship and it also provided them with relief and closure that they were experiencing as a result of the loss of their children.

Buhle commented:

Correctional facility helped me because they have victim offender dialogue, I choose to make it early because I wanted to have a good relationship with my children. I wanted to make them understand what really happened, to not hear from someone else in the street because in my case they are the victims.

Lerato added:

I did it with my grandmother because I coudn't stand her, she was the reason why I was pushed to kill my child, I didn't want her ... So far so good, my children are alright but when I get relased I must do VOD with them, I must talk with them and take them for counsellling ...

The VOD assisted in mending the relationship between the mother and child who were affected in the context of the correctional facility by taking into consideration the nature of the crime that has direct implication on the child's well-being. Even though all of the participants indicated that there is no formal/informal programme that helps them to deal with issues regarding mothering behind bars, the support systerm (i.e. fellow offender, social workers and VOD) contributes towards their mental health care and cofidence in mothering.

4.5   Chapter Summary

This chapter is based on discussions of the main themes and sub-themes which emerged from the data analysis. The incarcerated mothers' stories in their words and findings in the literature were used to support and elucidate each theme. The four main themes consisted of sub-themes which were identified and elaborated upon. Offender mothers' pathway to crime consisted of two sub-themes, emotional abuse, physical abuse, and substance abuse as pathways to crime, and maternal role and recidivism. Construction of maternal roles behind bars provided a discussion about construction and reconstruction of the maternal identity and role. Mothering as a construct of maternal contact explained the meaning attached to mothering behind bars, through the role of social workers, personal visitation prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic and telephone call as a means of contact. In the final theme, different coping mechanisms, which encompass motivation of self and others and the VOD programme, explain how mothers cope with issues highlighted in the three themes mentioned above. Chapter 5 provides a conclusion of the results generated from the data analysis and a summary of the findings, the strengths and limitations, and recommendations for further studies are made.

Chapter 5: Summary of the Research Findings, Conclusion, Recommendations, and Personal Reflection

5.1   Introduction

This chapter highlights findings related to the subjective experiences of women who are incarcerated in South Africa with regard to their lived experiences of mothering behind bars. It is followed by implications of the study findings and how it may resonate with the literature review. This chapter presents a summary of the research findings. This is followed by my interpretations of the study results. Subsequently, the strengths, limitations, and recommendations of findings follow, and the need for further research studies within the field of maternal incarceration is warranted. Lastly, this chapter discusses how the research has influenced my academic and personal development.

5.2   Summary of the Research Findings

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore subjective mothering experiences among female offenders who were mothers, housed in a maximum-security section at Johannesburg female correctional centre. The key findings revealed by this study helped in answering the main and sub-research questions, which are:

Main question

What is the lived experience of incarcerated mothers who are mothering while incarcerated?

Sub-questions

How do incarcerated mothers fulfil their role of mothering while incarcerated?

How do incarcerated mothers perceive their role in mothering while they are incarcerated?

How do expectations about mothering bear out for incarcerated mothers who are physically separated from their children?

How do expectations about mothering in proximity bear out for incarcerated mothers who mother inside correctional facilities?

Moreover, this study aimed to understand the meaning attached to motherhood and the construction of maternal identities by female offenders behind bars. Tajfel and Turner's (1986) Social Identity Theory (SIT) and social construction paradigm (Koonin, 2019) assisted in providing an understanding of the phenomenon of motherhood before and during incarceration.

5.2.1 The Experience of IPV, Substance Abuse and Maternal Obligation

This study demonstrated that the context of IPV, together with the need to fulfil the maternal obligation, shaped maternal criminal behaviour, addict identity, and victim identification. In relation to the social construction paradigm idea of multiple realities (Koonin, 2019), the participants in the study's experiences of victimisation, IPV and use of substance reflect the multiple realities of some of the things that women in the SA endure in their daily interactions with their partners. Further, this relates with Tajfel and Turner's (1986) statement that indicates that the environment that a person's occupies (the abusive environment) influences their multiple identities (maternal criminal behaviour, addict identity, and victim identification) which get evoked by different situations. The women's experience of physical violence led them to use substances such as alcohol and drugs to cope with their trauma of abuse, which in turn made them less involved in their children's lives, creating opportunities for criminality to occur (i.e. child molestation), for example, Stacy added that: "He started molesting my child. I didn't do anything about it because I was too busy using my drugs and, I only cared about keeping him happy so that I would not get another beating". In accordance with the social constructionist viewpoint, knowledge is developed, sustained and transmitted, which implies that the manner in which the participants in the study dealt with being physically abused was a reflection of how they learned to cope with stressful situation at home (Koonin, 2019).

Some offender mothers who were victims of physical violence, coupled with emotional abuse, cited that they acted violently and committed violent crimes such as murder, because of their obligation to protect their children, for example Mmapaseka added that: "... he forced me that I must do abortion, he keeps on following me even though I was at home, he used to beat me when I was pregnant. I end up committing crime." In addition, this study indicated that being removed from

the context of abuse gave women a chance to rethink other choices that they were not aware of instead of the ones that made them part of the criminal justice system. Conflicting with views of Tajfel and Turner (1986) views on self-structure of correctional facility did not diminish the mother's identity of mothers; instead, it reinforced their identities as they became more aware about ways in which they could improve their relationships with their children. Nonetheless, offender mothers in the study cited that self-awareness gained from being removed from the context of abuse and being cognisant of other options life options, were the reasons why they would desist from crime in the future. For example, Lebogang said that "... outside there are things I didn't know like social worker, okay you could hear about social worker, psychologist you understand, those things we hear them from a distance". Resonating with social construction (Koonin, 2019), participants in the study's knowledge of several options which were available to them influenced their desistance to future facility and alludes to how subjective reality is based on personal experience and social interaction with other offenders in a social context of a correctional facility, which is bound by time and place.

5.2.2 Redefining the Maternal Identity

The context of the correctional facility influenced offender mothers to reconstruct their identities from being full-time mothers to distant co-mothers due to them being physically isolated from their children. This statement relates to SIT idea of intergroup distinctiveness, provided an explanation of women who offend redefinition of their identities (see chapter 2, section 2.9). Aligned with social construction's (Koonin, 2019) idea of knowledge as an effect of social processes, it is noted in the study that the change in the environment (from their home to correctional facilities) in which mothering took place for the women who offend in the study influenced their reconstruction of their identity of distant co-mother instead of full-time mother. Incarcerated mothers' physical absence from their children influenced how they perceived themselves as failures who are bad mothers. For example, Stacy said that, "... because you must remember in order to be a good mother you have to be present, I am not present, I am a long-distance mother, I am not a good mother". Relative to the social constructionist perspective of how individuals acquire meanings of the phenomenon experience through interaction with others in a social context which is bound by time and place, implies that women in

the study constructed their identities of being bad mothers due to their interaction with other offenders inside the correctional facility and women and physical isolation from their children due their incarceration (Koonin, 2019).Women in the study indicated that their past experiences as mothers and social interactions with fellow offenders reminded them that they are still mothers. This relates to social the construction approach's standpoint that the meanings and knowledge of phenomenon are derived from the social system and implies that women in the study's experiences of being mothers and together with interaction with other offenders caused them to be cognisant of their roles as mothers (Koonin, 2019). Corresponding with SIT it was through social interactions with fellow offenders within the context of the correctional facility that female offenders acquired their self-meanings as mothers (Stryker & Burke, 2000).

Behind bars, keeping in touch with their children and being concerned about their well-being represented a good mothering ideology. Yet, incarcerated mothers' physical isolation from their children implies that they are bad mothers. The statement above is comparable to the social constructionist idea of reality as social dynamic process, meaning that women in the study constructed either a good or bad mothering identity based on their previous and current interactional experience that they had with their children (Koonin, 2019). Mothering behind bars presents challenges such as involuntary separation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which they experienced to be stressful and painful, and affected their level of involvement in their children's lives. As a result, the alternative option to maintain in communication with their children was through the use of telephone conversations, which had both negative and positive implications on the maternal relationship and role. For instance, Stacy said that: "And it boosts you so much, it gives you that energy ... they give me the strength to say make it another week and you live for that phone call".

5.2.3 Different Coping Strategies

This study discovered that there are no programmes in place in the correctional facility where the study took place to assist with the challenges of mothering. Nonetheless, having programmes such as VOD, as heightened by some of the participants, bridges the gap in promoting positive maternal relationships in the

case where the crime committed by the mother linked to their children. However, incarcerated mothers whose crimes are not linked to their children as victims, do not get any chance to rebuild their relationships. Incarcerated mothers cope with their role strain by motivating themselves. For example, Buhle indicated that "At first I didn't cope, but now I cope because I talked with myself that I have to be strong for my children, if I want to see my children..." In addition, fellow female offenders who have been mothers in a correctional facility are seen as counsel for offering guidance, especially in the case where incarcerated mothers are overwhelmed with emotions.

Lebogang: "To talk to fellow female offenders ... who are mothers who understand the feeling a being a mother, gives support

Lesego added that,

At times I would feel like it's easy not calling them and the ladies, who stays with me advised that I contact my children so that they can know that you are their mother, your presence may not be there but just to hear your voice it fills that void in them.

Moreover, within their immediate environment, offender mothers utilised the psychological well-being services rendered by social workers and psychologists that were available based on appointment in case they felt overwhelmed with emotions or feel stress. To support the above statement, Lesego voiced that:

There are social workers, there is a psychologist, you are able to make an appointment to go see them. If they feel like you need to get medicated in order to cope, they refer you and so forth.

5.3   The Implications of the Research Findings

This study resonates with global (Aiello & McQueeney, 2021; Arditti, 2012; Chesney-Lind, 2004; Easterling et al., 2019; Ferraro & Moe, 2003; Garcia-Hallet, 2019; Nuytiens & Christiaens, 2016; Rodermond et al., 2016; Wilson et al., 2022) and local (Artz et al., 2012; Artz & Hoffman-Wanderer, 2017; Dastile & Agozino, 2019; Geldenhuys, 2015; Luyt, 2008; Parry, 2018, 2022; Steyn & Booyens, 2017) findings on the demographics of female offenders, which indicate that they are mothers of minor children from impoverished backgrounds characterised with high

crime rate, underemployed or structural unemployment, and have low educational attainment. Relating to social construction paradigm idea of multiple realities (Koonin, 2019), the participants in the study experiences of impoverished backgrounds, high crime rate, underemployed, structural unemployment, low educational attainment reflects multiple realities that women in the study experienced in their communities. Similar to international (Brown, 2016; Easterling, 2012; Jackson, 2011; Stone, 2013) and local (Artz et al., 2012; Artz & Hoffman-Wanderer, 2017; Dastile & Agozino, 2019; Geldenhuys, 2015; Luyt, 2008; Parry, 2018, 2022; Steyn & Booyens, 2017) literature, the women in the study were single mothers with full custody of their children prior to their incarceration. Women in the study have experienced traumatic events such as IPV and domestic violence, which influenced their use of substance as way of self-healing, which is similar to international (Aiello & McQueeney, 2021; Nuytiens & Christiaens, 2016; Rodermond et al., 2016; Wilson et al. 2022) and local (Artz et al., 2012; Artz & Hoffman-Wanderer, 2017; Dastile & Agozino, 2019; Parry, 2018; Steyn & Booyens, 2017) research. The above statement related to the SIT idea of how the social structure of the environment that offender mothers resided in influenced their substance addiction behaviour. It also resonates with the approach of social construction that perceives knowledge (use of substance for self-healing) being influenced by personal experience and family system (Koonin, 2019).

Like worldwide (Rodermond et al., 2016) and local research (Haffejee et al., 2006), this study pointed out that the maternal role obligation (care and protect) and the experience of victimisation were connected to women pathways as opposed to financial constraints. While the literature review covered a wider context of experience of offender's mothers behind bars, the results emanated from the study brought focus to multiple realities of women in South Africa, which indicate that most of the women are addicted to a substance, single mothers, unemployed, primary caregivers of the child(ren) and experienced victimisation (Parry, 2020; Simango, 2016). Similar to the international (Aiello, 2016; Brown, 2016; Ferraro & Moe, 2003) and local studies (Artz et al., 2012; Gowland, 2011), incarcerated women as distance co-mothers redefined themselves in accordance with the societal idealisation of good and bad mothering and the ability to fulfil the maternal obligation. The above statement collaborates with group identification in SIT which demonstrates that

offender mother evaluation of self as either being good or bad was relative to those mothers who were outside correctional facility (Haslam et al., 2009). In addition, the above statements relate to the social construction ideology of knowledge creation, which highlights that the subjective meaning of mothering either being a good or bad is drawn from their experience of having to interact with other offenders within the context of the correctional facility through the use of culture and language (Creswell, 2013; Neuman, 2014; Yang & Gergen, 2012). Similar to the international (Barnes & Stringer, 2014) and local literature (Gowland, 2011), a good mother identity categorised with women who were able to express concern or care or communicating with children, whilst the bad mother identity, as identified by international (Berry & Smith-Mahdi, 2012) and local (Gowland, 2011) studies was categorised with women who were physically isolated from their children.

Consistent with international (Aiello, 2016; Berry & Smith-Mahdi, 2012; Brown, 2016; Ferraro & Moe, 2003; Jackson, 2011; Stone, 2013) and local studies (Artz et al., 2012; Gowland, 2011; Luyt, 2008), this study showed that mothering behind bars is a difficult, painful and stressful process. Women who are physically separated from their children experience the feeling of loss, pain, stress and insomnia. Similar to local literature (Artz et al., 2012), female offenders in the study perform co-mothering roles with their caregivers, who may be maternal grandparents or sisters in the case where the maternal grandparents are deceased and have custody of their children as opposed to international research (Berry & Smith-Mahdi, 2012; Easterling, 2012). Relating to the social construction perspective of knowledge being constructed based on social practices (Koonin, 2019), implies that women in the study's decision to procced with their maternal roles may be influenced by the experience of being a mother and being mothered prior to their entry into the correctional facility.

Like international studies (Berry & Smith-Mahdi, 2012; Easterling, 2012) found, motherhood while incarcerated adhere to protocols and policies such the Correctional Service Amendment Act (RSA, 2008) and the White paper on corrections in South Africa (DCS, 2005), which give guidance on separation and contact. Comparable international literature (Arditti, 2012; Barnes & Stringer, 2014; Harris, 2017; Poehlmann-Tynan, 2015) and local studies (Artz et al., 2012; Gowland, 2011; Luyt, 2008), this study showed that contact or communicating with the

child(ren) is the way of fulfilling maternal obligation. Although women in the study indicated that they preferred to make use of physical contact due to the benefits of being able to see and touch their children, which is similar to the findings of international studies (Arditti, 2012; Barnes & Stringer, 2014; Harris, 2017; Poehlmann-Tynan, 2015) and local studies (Artz et al., 2012; Du Preez, 2006; Gowland, 2011; Luyt, 2008), this study was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic which forced communication to be telephonically. The above statements are aligned with the social construction of reality being a dynamic process (Koonin, 2019), which helps in providing an understanding that mothering behind bars was constantly influenced by availability to practise one's role, the physical distance between the mother and child and implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, which restricted personal contact.

Parallel to international findings (Arditti, 2012; Barnes & Stringer, 2014; Harris, 2017; Poehlmann-Tynan, 2015); and local studies (Artz et al., 2012; Gowland, 2011; Luyt, 2008), this study demonstrated that the negative perception of the incarceration being a harmful environment that is detrimental to the child(ren)'s well-being, was a motive why incarcerated mothers or caregivers would not desire the need for communication between the mother and the child to be physical contact. This above statement was supported by Tajfel and Turner's (1985) suggestion that an in-group status is relevant when it is comparable to the outgroup status, which is this case the context of the correctional facility is perceived by the caregivers as being harmful when being compared with the outside environment. Further, the before-mentioned statement resonates with the social construction ideal of subjective experience being equally acknowledged and important, meaning that how caregivers or incarcerated mothers' viewpoint of the context of the correctional facility being harmful to children's well-being should be perceived as sound and logical (Creswell, 2013; Koonin, 2019; Neuman, 2014; Yang & Gergen, 2012).

Different international studies (Brown, 2016; Burgess & Flynn, 2013) but collaborating with local study (Deonarain, 2018), this study showed that there was no programme that specifically addresses the needs of the offender mothers. Similar to global study (Celinska & Sigal, 2010), and local study (Gowland, 2011), incarcerated mothers in this study cope with their role strain of being mothers behind bars by

motivating themselves by utilising religious behaviours (for example reading the Bible and praying).

5.4   Societal and Family Dysfunction and its Effect on the Sense of Self

Some of the participants spoke of their mothers' emotional unavailability that caused their relationships to be estranged, which resulted in them being unsocialised as women and mothers. The above statement resonates with the social construction ideology that knowledge is derived from the social system (Koonin, 2019), which implies that some women in the study's interpretation of their identity as unsocialised women and mothers was derived from their lack of interaction with their mothers. In addition, the before mentioned statement also correlated with SIT idea of group identification, whereby the incarcerated mother's behaviours of being unsocialised to be women and mothers becomes meaningful when they are compared to mothers from the outside who have being socialised to be women and mothers.

One of the contributing factors to their estranged relationships was having an authoritative mother. Some of the women in the study spoke of their parents being strict, which gave them no room to discuss affecting issues in their development (for example sex life, dating, and motherhood). These women learned about their womanhood by socially interacting with their peers, who caused them to be misinformed about sex life or influenced them to be sexually active at an early age, which in turn resulted in them becoming teenage mothers. The above statement relates with the social construction ideology of how meaning and knowledge of a phenomenon emanate from a social context (Koonin, 2019), which implies that women in the study's knowledge of womanhood which had implications on their upbringing was co-created based on their interaction with their peers, members of the society and families' lack of emotional support.

This study pointed out that, some of the women who become teen mothers are likely to have been neglected by their mothers and the father of their children, leaving them as single mothers. Lounds et al. (2006) cite that teenage mother who have a history of being neglected by their mothers, are vulnerable to maltreating their children. This interrelated to SIT thought of group identification by neglecting offender mothers who adopted the behavioural strategy, attitudes of those their mothers (Boduszek et al., 2016). With that being said, with the little experience or

knowledge on how to be a woman or a single mother, they are expected by society to meet the stereotype standard of a good mother, which requires them to be self-self-sacrificing.

With the low level of educational attainment, women in the study tended to secure temporary employment, which is underpaying, or are likely to become unemployed. Some of the women in the study struggled with adhering to their mothering obligations due to structural unemployment and limited options in their communities, relying on their partners to provide financial support to care for their children. The financial disempowerment, coupled with poverty, makes women vulnerable to the toxic masculine identity of exercising control in the form of abusing women financially, emotionally, and physically to regain power. Further, Henton et al. (1983, cited in Pleaner, 2021, p. 59) cite those abnormal social beliefs about violence and declare the "kind of concerned, even caring 'discipline' where the injury sustained as a result of partner abuse was interpreted as being part of maleness, as 'physical signs' of love or caring acts of discipline" sustain women to be in abusive relationships for the sake of themselves and their children.

The social norm about men's authority to discipline women can result in collective expectations of appropriate behaviours in relationships that can be harmful to women's self-esteem and worth (Parrin et al., 2019). In accordance with the social constructionist viewpoint that the meanings and knowledge of a phenomenon are derived from the social system and that language plays a role in providing understanding of how the person experience the phenomenon (Koonin, 2019), implies that the way women in the study responded to the abuse they endured was an indication of how they have socially learned while interacting with others to interpret the phenomenon of maltreatment (Koonin, 2019). This relates to Tajfel and Turner (1986) suggestion of on the knowledge of social group membership helps in providing understanding of individuals' sense of belonging, that in turn influences the normative standards of acceptable behaviour, values, assumptions, characteristics, how a person behaves and thinks.

The women in the study cited that they witnessed either one of their parents using alcohol as a remedy to maintain family quarrels, which influenced their use of the substance in their adult life when they experienced similar problems. In addition,

the before-mentioned statement is in agreement with the social construction ideology of reality being co-created based on a person's interaction with others in a specific context (Koonin, 2019), which implies that the women in the study constructed their knowledge of dealing with being maltreated through the use of substance based on their personal experience and interaction with their family systems. The above statement is supported by SIT concept of intergroup bias, which is why women offender didn't think about any other options of dealing with their problems other than utilising a substance (McKeown et al., 2016).

Women in the study demonstrated that having no experience of being nurtured as a mother creates uncertainty in how to develop a bond between the mother and child, especially when they had relationship issues with their partners (Lounds et al., 2006). This is why most of the mothers cited that they paid little attention to their children's needs because they were busy abusing alcohol and drugs. As a result, a lack of parental involvement created opportunities for criminality to occur (e.g. child molestation). Moreover, women in the study's circumstances of not being financially secured, together with being socialised in an environment whereby one cannot speak up or have an opinion about matters that affect them, contribute to women becoming learned helpless when they encounter the same situation. Aligned with the social constructionist views that meaning is derived from the social system (Koonin, 2019), women in the study's interaction with their family influenced how they learned to address issues that are affecting their emotional well-being, especially when individuals lack financial empowerment. In addition, the above statement corresponds with the SIT conception of self-structure which in this case is the family environment which influenced their social behaviour of not speaking up and finding help whenever need arise (Tajfel &Turner, 1986).

Again, the experience of being restricted to disclose family information, as cited by some of the offender mothers in the study as children because of the assumption that they would tear the family apart, has made women bottle up issues inside instead of speaking out. As highlighted by offender mothers, the consequences of bottling up issues in their childhood and adulthood because they wanted to be a good child, wife, and mother, leads to individuals aggressively committing violent crimes such as murder. In accordance with the social constructionist perspective on multiple realities (Koonin, 2019), the statement above

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indicates the multiple realities of being brought up in an abusive environment which lead women in the study to suppress their feelings that influenced their violent behaviour.

Nonetheless, the realities of women in the study coming from marginalised communities characterised by unemployment, a lack of job opportunities, a lack of financial support and poverty contradict the ideal of good mothering behaviour (Couvrette et al., 2016; Ferraro & Moe, 2003). Relating with the social constructionist view on meaning of the phenomenon emanating from the social system (Koonin, 2019), the meaning of good mothering standard which the women in the study held via interacting with other people in the society had implications (dropping out of school, enduring maltreatment, acting violently to protect their children) for the way in which the maternal role is carried out, which contributed to their involvement in criminal behaviour due to the pressures of adhering to the standards of motherhood.

This causes the value of motherhood to be undermined since women's behaviours are not in line with the social accepted ways of being a good mother (Ferraro & Moe, 2003). Regardless of the circumstances in which women found themselves, the burden of being a good mother/mother that they initially struggled with due to a lack of resources (e.g. financial support and emotional support) does not stop once the mothers are incarcerated (Couvrette et al., 2016). Women in this study continue to strive to achieve the high status of being good mothers behind bars, despite being restricted by the stressful correctional facility environment that they inhabit (Couvrette et al., 2016).

Women negotiate their motherhood identities based on their experiences, their rationale for criminality and their emotional capacity to carry out mothering responsibilities behind bars. Incarcerated mothers' mental capacity to carry out their maternal responsibility (e.g. make contact or become involved in their children's lives) was harmed by their feelings of guilt and self-blame for making decisions that led to them being in contact with the justice system. To add to this, being separated from their children is why they saw themselves as failures and bad mothers. It is not only the context of the correctional facility that compromises their desire to be good mothers, but both their lived experiences before and during entry into the justice system. In accordance with the social constructionist (Koonin, 2019) standpoint on

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multiple realities, women in the study's experience of abuse and incarceration had implications on how they constructed their ideology of mothering while they were behind bars.

In conclusion, gender role stereotypes, which are socially constructed, are firmly established in culture and customs in communities, are an expanding societal problem that must be addressed since they lead to other social concerns such as gender inequality, IPV, and discrimination (Ferraro & Moe, 2003). This collaborates with SIT idea of intergroup bias, whereby the women roles (in-group) are perceived by men (out- group) to behave according to their gender roles. Again, it also relates to the social construction paradigm idea that knowledge is developed, which helps to understand how gendered roles are co-created by individuals in the society and persons they are interacting with in the specific environment (Koonin, 2019). Women's expectations are lowered, and their job prospects are limited as a result of gender stereotypes, which raise their chances of them being trapped in poverty and being in abusive relationships. Gender role stereotypes shape individual identity and subsequent behaviours through behaviour through internalising socially expected behaviour, which can be unrealistic at times and lead to bias, such as the perception that males have control over women. Furthermore, the expectations about how men and women should act per their roles create a paradox of defying or conforming, which promotes prejudice. Gender stereotypes must be addressed, not only on a governmental level, but also on a societal level, where social norms must be deconstructed and cultural practices that perpetuate gender bias must be challenged.

5.5   The Strength of the Study

While the literature on maternal incarceration focuses on the relationship between mothers and children behind bars, the strength of this study bridges the gap in knowledge by providing a descriptive account of female offenders lived experiences of mothering behind bars.

Another strength of the study was that the social constructionism theoretical framework has helped to provide explanations of how offender mothers' subjective experiences of mothering while they are incarcerated were constructed based on their language, culture, and social interaction with others. To add to this, SIT as

theoretical underpinnings added value to explanations of how offender mothers' construction of maternal identities (distance co-mother, a bad and a good mother) was based on the context of imprisonment which was influenced by language and culture and being affiliated with the female offender community. Moreover, the findings of the study indicate how societal systems (the correctional facility, families, and society) influence the environment that a person inhabits and shapes their sense of self to be a good mother and constructive citizen. The key strength of using IPA as a method of analysis is that it allows the researcher to record their biases, judgment, and prior knowledge that may inhibit understanding the participants' world and the interpretation of their lived experiences.

5.6 Limitation of the Study

5.6.1 Sample of the Study

The study was based on the single opportunity, whereby participants' responses during the interviews were recorded once during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants' member checking after the interviews taking place could provide a deeper insight of the phenomenon being experienced. The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic may have exacerbated the incarcerated mothers' lived experiences. The responses of the participants during times perceived as normalcy before COVID-19 may influence the participants' lived experiences. In addition, the other limitation is that responses were generated from conversations with participants from offender mothers who were serving lengthy sentences. The sample of the study consisted of individuals who were originally from or migrated in their youthful years to Gauteng Province; responses of individuals from different provinces may provide a new perspective on the lived experiences of mothering behind bars. Further, incarcerated mothers with shorter or minimum sentences may have provided a distinct perspective on the phenomenon of mothering behind bars. Moreover, offender mothers who had multiple sentences or were nearing the completion of their sentences may have different views as opposed to the participants in the study.

5.6.2 The Interview Room

The lack of interview space (dining hall) in the correctional facility at the specific section where female offenders were incarcerated resulted in interruptions, which in some instances required the interviews to take an unplanned recess during the session. Having a room without disturbances may influence participants' responses, which may be different from the ones recorded in the study.

5.6.3 Language Barrier

In most cases, the interviews were conducted in Sepedi, Setswana, isiNdebele, or IsiZulu, and the responses had to be translated to English, which caused some of the meaning of the idiom, verbs and words to be lost in translation. Conducting interviews only in English would have brought forward different responses.

5.7 Findings of the Study

Eight (8) participants who agreed to take part in the study shared their insightful, in-depth knowledge and understanding of the lived experience of mothering behind bars. While this was not representative of the mothering experiences of all women incarcerated in South African correctional facilities, it provided the rich data that helped in understanding their experiences.

5.8 Recommendations of the Study

5.8.1 Finding 1: A lack of women empowerment contributes to women being trapped in abusive relationships

Firstly, this study recommends the need for a women empowerment programme inside correctional facilities that would assist women to rebuild their autonomy that was deteriorated by being dependent on an abusive partner. Being self-autonomous may encourage women to make informed decisions that are in the best interest of themselves rather than that of other people. In addition, women autonomy would make it possible for them to live independently, have high self-esteem, be educated to get employed in better paying jobs, and seek personal help whenever they feel they require it.

5.8.2 Finding 2: The screening for mental health issues

Secondly, this study recommends a need for screening for mental health issues to ensure that women attend rehabilitation programmes that are specifically tailored to their needs and areas they need to improve on (Deonarain, 2018). Screening of issues related to traumatic experiences and domestic violence will be a proactive instead of a reactive way of empowering women to be constructive citizens and provide them with the capacity to deal with daily challenges.

5.8.3 Finding 3: The lack of a specific programme on mothering behind bars

Thirdly, the study recommends the development of a maternal intervention programme that helps with restoring the value of being a mother who is negatively stigmatised by entry into the justice system. The development of the programme will assist in addressing issues surrounding being a distance co-mother, which may include initiating contact, how to maintain contact and how to deal with physical separation between the mother and child. The maternal intervention programme will assist offender mothers to have a mental capacity facility to deal with the maternal strain on relationships and roles with which they struggle as a mother.

5.8.4 Finding 4: Cost of making a phone call

Fourthly, this study recommends a need to subsidise white call costs, especially during times when female offenders hardly received visitation due to the factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic. As hinted in the discussion below, offender mothers used phone calls as a means of communication to perform their maternal roles. Reducing the cost of the telephonic call (white call voucher) should be implemented based on the understanding that most incarcerated women are from poverty-stricken backgrounds, and they can barely afford to buy white calls because they are unemployed. As a consequence, the lack of affordability implies that the poor are at risk of losing the bond with their children, which exacerbates the inequality that already exists in the country.

5.9 Personal Reflection

Even though my social economic status resonated with my participants, my interaction with them caused me to be thankful for life, and not to take little things for

granted. The way women inside value small little things caused me to start rethinking the things that I take for granted. Having an understanding of the life history of female offender experiences changed how I perceived many of social illnesses in the community and approach to life. Although one cannot completely eliminate the human nature of having assumptions or being opinionated, I found my person leaning towards wanting to understand the context or gaining knowledge on something before I make a comment or suggestion. My standing point on crime is that punishment should fit the crime for individuals who were wronged to get justice. However, I also think that it is important to understand the gender role circumstances that led to women criminality in order to prevent crime from reoccurring or occurring in communities.

Conducting my study in the field of corrections made me realise that I had to work on my trait of being a sensitive person and being influenced easily by my own emotions. I knew that I may encounter narratives of the participants that were traumatic, which have the high probability of causing me to be easily lost in my emotions whilst I am emphasising with participants' lived experience. I was aware that being emotionally invested in the stories of the participants would cause me not to separate myself from the research process, so I learned how to meditate in an effort to control my emotions. Meditation and keeping a journal allowed me to control how I react to the participants' lived experiences and led to our interactions being meaningful. I was even surprised by the way I carried my emotions and how it did not even interfere with the research interviews. I never knew that I would enjoy listening to participants' stories and even reconsider to be a counsellor as it was my first interest in psychology. I became aware that even though a Master's degree may not change the world, it can be a starting point of knowledge development, which is why I want to continue with this research in my doctorate and influence the perspective of how we may engage with the issue of motherhood behind bars in South Africa.

Personally, working on each and every aspect of my research study with the aid of feedback and comments from my supervisor and editor made me improve on my academic writing skills as a qualitative researcher. The part of the study that I enjoyed that most was collecting data, transcribing and analysing it. This section of my research study gave me a voice as a researcher through interpreting what the

participants were saying. Even though it was not like I am suggesting new information, it definitely felt like I was contributing towards the existing knowledge, which was a priceless moment for me. Even though Initially I did not know what kind of researcher I wanted to be and my research interest, I just chose the field of corrections because of being familiar with it in my undergraduate degree in criminology. Embarking on this journey was all about just completing my Master's degree and moving onto counselling or clinical psychology. However, this study has made me aware of my interest of becoming a qualitative researcher and developing a possible career in gender-related studies and societal issues. I think conducting my studies in the field of a correctional facility was an inspiring experience that gave me clarity on my career and exposed a personal trait that I really needed to work on.

5.10   Summary of the Chapter

This chapter focused on the study's conclusion, strength, limitations, recommendations and the researcher's interpretation of the research findings. Furthermore, this chapter summarised the circumstances that lead to maternal incarceration, which were linked to maternal obligation, and how incarcerated women in the study carried on with their roles despite being inside a correctional facility. The implication of the study, together with the interpretation of the research findings, was discussed. It was concluded that gender role stereotypes are very harmful ideologies that could create unrealistic behavioural expectations that affect a person's identity, self-esteem and worth. This was followed by a discussion of how the research process contributed to my personal growth and academic development.

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Appendix A: Unisa Ethics Approval

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COLLEGE OF HUMAN SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

14 May 2020

Dear Sheron Mathlatse Masekoameng

| NHREC Registration # : Rec-240816-052 |
| CREC Reference # : 2020-PsyREC- 6193261 |

Decision:
Ethics Approval from 14 May 2020 to 31 August 2023

Researcher(s): Sheron Mathlatse Masekoameng

Supervisor(s): Prof. Eduard Fourie

　　　　　fourieme@unisa.ac.

　　　　za

Mothering behind bars: Lived experiences of female offenders at Johannesburg correctional services, Gauteng province.

Qualification Applied: MA Psychology

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa Department of Psychology College of Human Science Ethics Committee. Ethics approval is granted for three years.

The ***Medium risk application*** *was **reviewed and* expedited** by Department of Psychology College of Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee, on **14 May 2020** in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.

University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
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2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the Department of Psychology Ethics Review Committee.

3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.

4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.

5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.

6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data require additional ethics clearance.

7. No fieldwork activities may continue after the expiry date **(31 August 2023).** Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.
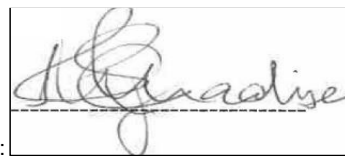
Note:
The reference number **2020-PsyREC-61932361** *should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Yours sincerely,

Signature :

Prof I. Ferns
Ethics Chair: Psychology
Email: fernsi@unisa.ac.za
Tel: (012) 429 8210

Signature :

Prof K. Masemola
Executive Dean : CHS
E-mail: masemk@unisa.ac.za
Tel: (012) 429 2298

Appendix B: Department of Correctional Services Permission and Ethics Clearance Letter

correctional services
Department:
Correctional Services
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X136, PRETORIA, 0001 Poyntons Building, C/O WF Nkomo and Sophie De Bruyn Street, PRETORIA
Tel (012) 307 2770, Fax 086 539 2693

Dear Ms S M Makoaneng

RE: MOTHERING BEHIND BARS-LIVED EXPERIENCES OF FEMALE OFFENDERS

AT JOHANNESBURG CORRECTIONAL FACILITY, GAUTENG PROVINCE

It is with pleasure to inform you that your request to conduct research in the Department of Correctional Services on the above topic has been approved.

Your attention is drawn to the following:
- This ethical approval is valid from **12 October 2020 to 12 October 2023**.
- The relevant Regional and Area Commissioners where the research will be conducted will be informed of your proposed research project.
- Your internal guide will be **Area Coordinator: Development & Care: Johannesburg Management Area**.
- You are requested to contact her at telephone number (011) 9337006 or (011) 9337008 before the commencement of your research.
- It is your responsibility to make arrangements for your interviewing times.
- Your identity document/passport and this approval letter should be in your possession when visiting regional offices/correctional centres.
- You are required to use the terminology used in the White Paper on Corrections in South Africa (February 2005) and Correctional Services Act (No.111 of 1998) e.g. "Offenders" not "Prisoners" and "Correctional Centres" not "Prisons".
- You are not allowed to use photographic or video equipment during your visits, however the audio recorder is allowed.
- You are required to submit your final report to the Department for approval by the Commissioner of Correctional Services before publication (including presentation at workshops, conferences, seminars, etc) of the report.
- Should you have any enquiries regarding this process, please contact the REC Administration for assistance at telephone number (012) 307 2463.

Thank you for your application and interest to conduct research in the Department of Correctional Services.

Yours faithfully

ND MBULI
DC: POLICY COORDINATION & RESEARCH
DATE: 23/07/2020

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Confidentiality Agreement – Correctional officials

Title of Research Project: ……..

Principal Investigator: ………….

As a correctional official who is responsible for escorting the participants to the interview room for this research, I understand that I may have access to confidential information about the study site and participants. By signing this statement, I am indicating my understanding of my responsibility to maintain confidentiality and agree to the following:

- I understand that names and any other identifying information about study sites and participants are completely confidential.

- I agree not to divulge, publish, or otherwise make known to unauthorised persons or to the public any information obtained during the course of this research project that could identify the persons who participated in the study.

- I understand that all information about study sites or participants obtained or accessed by me in the course of my work is confidential. I agree not to divulge or otherwise make known to unauthorised persons any of this information, unless specifically authorised to do so by approved protocol or by the local principal investigator acting in response to applicable law or court order, clinical need, etc.

- I understand that I am not to read information about study sites or participants, or any other confidential documents, nor ask questions of study participants for my own personal information but only to the extent and for the purpose of performing my assigned duties on this research project.

- I agree to notify the local principal investigator immediately should I become aware of an actual breach of confidentiality or a situation, which could potentially result in a breach, whether this be on my part or on the part of another person.

- I agree to destroy interview transcripts once I have completed data analysis and assisted in the authorship of the paper that will follow from this analysis.

_____   _____   _____
**Correctional official Name and surname   Signature
          Date**

_____   _____   _____
Principal Investigator   Signature   Date

Appendix D: Informed Consent

Informed consent – English

Informed Consent for participants Research Project Participation

Study Title: *Mothering behind bars: Lived experiences of female offenders at Johannesburg correctional facility, Gauteng province.*

Researcher: *Ms Sheron Mathlatse Masekoameng*

Description of study: *The purpose of this study is to explore lived experiences of female offenders mothering while they are incarcerated and the meaning that they attach to motherhood while incarcerated.* The study is part of a Master's dissertation in psychology, under the supervision of Professor Eduard Fourie and Bianca Parry at the Department of Psychology at the University of South Africa.

In order to participate in this research study, it is necessary that you give your informed consent. By signing this informed consent statement, you are indicating that you understand the nature of the research study, your role in that research and that you agree to participate in the research. Participants will be required to use pseudonyms or codes instead of their real names during the interview. Please consider the following points before signing:

- I understand that I am participating in a student psychological research study and will participate in a 45 minutes to a one hour interview that is audio recorded.
- I understand that my identity will not be linked with my data, that all information I provide will remain confidential and will be accessible only to the individual working on the project.

- The security of the research data is assured during and after completion of the study. The data collected during the study may be published, and a report of the project outcomes will be available on request.
- I understand that I will be provided with an explanation of the research in which I participated and be given the details an individual to contact in case I need to discuss any concerns that arise from my participation in the research study.
- I understand that participation in research is not required, is voluntary, and that, after any individual research project has begun, I may refuse to participate further without penalty from any individual.
- I understand that participation in research is voluntary, and that I will receive no payment or compensation from any individual for participating in the research.

By signing this form I am stating that I am over 18 years of age, and that I understand the above information and consent to participate in this study being conducted.

Signature: _____   Date:_____

(of participant)

Print your First and Last Name: _____

Informed consent - Sepedi

Tumelelo ya boitsibišo ka go tšeya karolo mo lenaneo la dinyakišišo

Hlogo ya dinyakišišo: Mothering behind bars: Lived experiences of female offenders at Johannesburg correctional facility, Gauteng province.

Modira dinyakišišo: Ms Sheron Mathlatse Masekoameng

Mohola wa dinyakišišo*: go lekudišiša maitemogelo a botswadi bja basadi ba bagolegwa le bohlokwa bjo basadi ba boyago go botswadi bja bona bjalo ka bagolegwa.*

Dihlalošo tša nyakišišo: mohola wa dinyakišišo ke go hlotletša maitemogelo a basadi ba bagolegwa bao balego batswadi bao ba golegilwego le mohola wo ba beyago go goba batswadi. Dinyakišišo tše ke karolo ya masters dissertation wa psychology ka tlase ga hlokomelo *ya Professor Eduard Fourie le Doctor Bianca Parry gotšwa* kgorong ya saekolotši yunibesithing ya Afrika Borwa.

Gore o tšea karolo go dinyakišišo tše, go bohlokwa gore o fe tumelelo ya boitsibišo ka mokgwa wa go leetsa ka go ngwala fase leina le sefane sagago mo pampiring ye. Go saina mo pampiring e, go laetša gore o kwešišitše gore dinyakišišo tše ke tša mohuta thuta mang o hlalosetšwe ka botlalo maikemišetšo a dinyakišišo tše,le karoloya ye o tšeago mo dinyakišišong.

Go fana ka tumelo ya gago lekodišiša tše di latelago:

Ke kwešiša gore go tšea karolo mo dithutong ye, go tlo hlokega gore ke fane ka metsotso ye masome nne hlano go iša go awara mo dipoledišanong tsa diputšišanong tšeo di tlo gatišwago mo odiyong.

Ke kwešiša gore boitsibišo bjaka bo ka se amane le tshedimošo yeo ke fanego ka yona mo dinyakišišong tše, e tla ba sephiriri ebile tlo utulwa fela go yo a dirang dinyakišišo mo project ye.

Polokego ya tshedimošo yeo ke fanego ka yona e tlo khothišwišwa mo dinyakišišo tše.. Ditlamorago tshedimošo yeo e tswerego go motšea karolo e tlo kwalakwatswa

ya ba begiwa, go hewtša pego ya ditlamorago, motšea karolo o swanetše go lemoša mo dira dinyakišišo ka kgopelo ya gagwe.

Ke Kekwešiša gore ke tlo fiwa ditlhaloso tša dinyakišišo tšeo ke tšerego karolo mo gotšona, ebile ke lemoga gore modira dinyakishiso o tlo mpha tshedimošo ya gagwe ka botlalo yeo nka ke kgokagantšhago le yena ka yona, ge go kaba le kgonagalo ya gore ke be le dingongorego tšeo di ka tšeletšago ke go tšea karolo mo dinyakišišo tše.

Kekwešiša gore go tšea karolo mo dinyakišišong tše.ke go ithopa, ebile nka fetola mogopolo waka ka go tsea karolo mo dinyakishisong tse ntle le go ba le ditlamorago tša gotšwa go sephetho se ke se tšerego.

Kekwešiša gore go tšeya karolo mo dinyakišišong ke go ke thaopa, ebeile nka se lefelwe ka mongwa ofe kapa ofe go tšwa go dinyakišišo tše.

Go sina mo pampiring e, go laetša gore ke nale mengwaga ya go feta ye masome pedi seswai, ebile kea kwešiša tšhedimusšo ye e laeditšego mo godimo ebile ke fana ka tumelelo yaka ya go tšea karolo mo dinyakišišong tše

Mosaino: _____ Letšatši le kgwedi:_____

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Têtlêlelô ya go tsaya karolo mo dipatlisisong

setlhôgô sa dipatlisiso : Mothering behind bars :Lived experiences of female offenders at Johannesburg correctional facility, Gauteng province.

Moetsa dopatlisiso : Ms sheron Mathlatse Masekoameng

Tlhalosô ya dipatlisiso: Maitemogelo a dipatlisiso ke go sekaseka go tshela ga kitso ya baira molato ba basadi ba leng kgolegong, le bakaô bjo ba beyago go tlhalosa bosadi bale kgolêgong.

Dipatlisiso tse di tlo phethegatswa ke, ka tlase ga tlhôkômêlo ya Professor Eduard Fourie le Doctor Bianca Parry gotswa go lephata la Psychology unibesithing ya Afrika Borwa.

Go supa gore o tsea karolo mo dipatlisong tse, go tlhôka gore o fane ka têtlêlelô ya go tsaya karolo mo dipatlisisong. Go supa gore o fane ka têtlêlelô ya go tsaya karolo mo dipatlisisong o utlwesisa mafuta wa dipatlisiso, le karolo yeo tsayago mo dipatlisisong tse.

Elatlhoko go dintlha tse di latelago :

Kea tlhaloganya gore gonka karolo mo dipatlisisong tsa psychology go batlega gore ke fane ka metsotso ye masome nne hlano goisha go uora ye ngee fela, dipoledisano tse di kanna tsa theipiwa.

Ke tlhaloganya gore boitshupo bjaka bo ka se ikgokagantshe le tshedimosho yeo ke fanego ka yona ka gore ke sephiri e tla fumanega fela go bath bao ba dirago dinyakishiso tsa projeke ye.

Tshereletso ya tshedimoso e tla netefatswa mo tiragalelong ya dipatlisiso. Ditlamorago tsa tshedimoso ye e kgobokantshitswego e tlo gatiswa ebile e tla kwetsagalaa ka kopo.

Ke tlhaloganya gore ke tla fiwa tlhalosô ya dipatlisiso tseo ke ikelego karolo mo gp tsona gamogo le dithlaloso tsa modira dipatlisiso ge ele gore nka batla go buwa ka dingongorego tsa me tseo di amanago le di patlisiso.

Ke tlhaloganya gore go tsea karolo mo dipatlisisong tse ke goithaôpa, nkano gana ka tlêtêlelô ya me magareng ga dipatlisiso ntle le goba le ditlamorago.

Ke tlhaloganya gore go tsea karolo mo dipatlisiso ke boithapô ebile a ke to lefelwa madi ka bakeng sa gore ke tsea karolo mo dipatlisisong.

Sesupô mo letlakaleng, se laetsa gore kena le mengwaga ya gofeta ye masome seswai, ke utlwishiswa tshedimoso e bonagalang mo godimo ebile ke fana ka tlêtêlelô yaka ya go tsea karolo.

Seshupô: _____ Letsati le kgwedi:_____

(motsea karolo)

kwala lebitso le sefane ka botlalo _____

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Study information sheet

Hello, my name is Sheron Masekoameng, I am conducting an academic study to complete my Master's degree in psychology (with specialization in research consultation). I am inviting you to take part in my study that focuses only on the female offenders' experiences of mothering behind bars. The purpose of the study is to explore the lived experiences of female offenders mothering behind bars and the meaning that they attach to their maternal identity. Thank you for agreeing to volunteer to participate in the study. Please take note that you are not forced to participate in the study and feel free to withdraw from the study at any time that you wish to. The decision to discontinue in the study will not result in any penalty. During the interview there is a possibility of the participants to experience psychological trauma, anger, embarrassment, sadness that participants may experiences as the results of reliving their experience when having conversations about motherhood behind bars. However, there will be free psychological services that are available to participants whenever they require it based on appointment at Johannesburg correctional facility.

There will be no monetary reward/gain, incentives, reduction of sentence that the offender will receive as the results of participating in the study. To take a role in the study, participants will have the chance to have conversations about their experiences which can be therapeutic to some of them. The study will make mothers be aware of the role that they play out in their children life while incarcerated. In addition, women may discover the maternal capability that they have with regard to carrying out maternal responsibility that they are not cognizant of.

There will be no data or information that would lead to the participants being identified by any correctional official or any other person. The participants will be given pseudonyms (false name) or code names of their choice during the interview session. The transcribed interviews will be stored in a safe environment for a period of five years after the study is completed and published.

Please note that the study has been granted ethical permission from the Department of Correctional Services ethics committee and University of South Africa, College of Human Science ethics review committee (copies of approval can be obtained from me if one needs them). I want you to know that this is a safe space to express yourself and you will not be judged about your experiences. Please read through the informed consent forms (which are written in three languages, English, Sepedi and Setswana). If you have any questions, concerns, or a need for clarification on a matter that you don't understand, please feel free to express them. Lastly please sign the informed consent form to ensure that you understand your involvement in the study.

If you have any concerns or questions about the study, please feel free to contact me via this address sheronmathlatse@gmail.com. Again if you have concerns that you want to address in relation to how the study was conducted please contact my supervisors, Prof Eduard Fourie at fourime@unisa.ac.za or Dr Bianca Parry at eparryb@unisa.ac.za.

Thank you!

Appendix F: Interview Schedule

Biographic information

Interview Schedule

1. Greetings and introductions
2. How old are you?
3. Are you originally from Gauteng?
4. Does your family stay here in Gauteng?
5. Are you the primary caregiver of your child?
6. Please describe your background for me.
7. Are you a mother; if yes, how many children do you have and how old are they?
8. How is your relationship with your children?
9. How do you keep in touch with your children while you are incarcerated?
10. Please share with me the challenges and benefits that you experience with regard to a specific mode of communication you highlighted in the above question? How does that influence your maternal identity?
11. Tell me about your role as a mother?
12. How is the context of correctional facility affecting your relationship with your children and significant others?
13. What kind of feelings did you endure/experience while being separated from your child?
14. Is there someone who is staying with your children while you are behind bars; if yes, how is that person affecting the relationships with your children?
15. How was the relationship with your mother growing up?
16. Has your relationship with your mother influence how you grew up?
17. In your opinion what is a good mother and bad in general?
18. What is it that describes a good and bad mother behind bars?
19. Has your attitude about being a mother been influenced by the context of correctional facility?
20. Do you think that being a mom played a role of you being in here?
21. What is your experience of being a distance mother?

22. Was your maternal role and identity affected by your feelings of being physically separated from your child? If so, please elaborate.

23. How have your views, thoughts, feelings, and behaviour of being a mother been affected by being physically separated from the child while being in a correctional facility?

24. How do you cope with your maternal role while being incarcerated?

25. What type of support do you have here to deal with your maternal role?

26. Have you taken part in any programme that helped you cope with your maternal responsibilities and identity? if yes, please describe the programme and its impact on your maternal identity and role.

27. Do you think your maternal identity has any effect on your thought or choice to desist from crime in future? If so, please elaborate.

Appendix G: Turnitin Similarity Report

Final draft of the dessertation

Appendix H: Editor's Declaration

>>> l 'Avenir Consulting

Monica Botha
T/a l'Avenir Consulting
PO Box 32945
WAVERLEY
0135

Cellular: 083 269 0757
E-mail: monicabo@lantic.net

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This serves to confirm that I have edited and proofread the dissertation entitled

Mothering Behind Bars: Lived Experiences of Female Offenders at Johannesburg Correctional Facility, Gauteng Province

prepared by Ms Masekoameng Sheron Mathlatse in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts (with specialisation in Research Consultation) in the subject Psychology at the University of South Africa, according to the specifications of the University, where available, and the latest standards for language editing and technical (computer-based) layout.

Editing was restricted to language usage and spelling, consistency, formatting and the style of referencing. No structural writing of any content was undertaken.

As an editor I am not responsible for detecting any content that may constitute plagiarism.

All references have been provided in the prescribed format.

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