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This research investigates the social processes at play in the lives of ex-felon men who are stay-at-home fathers. The research question guiding this study asks, "Under what conditions do ex-felon men assume the role of at-home father?" Using data collected from in-depth interviews conducted with ten African-American (ex) Felon at-Home Dads residing in Guilford County, North Carolina, this study found that structural as well as agential factors appeared to impact participants' decisions to take on primary caregiver roles.

Drawing from deviance and gender studies, I argue that anomic workforce conditions deny ex-felon men socially acceptable means of gaining financial stability as well as traditional sources of expressing gender. Ex-felon men experience stigma management strain as they attempt to enter/reenter a labor force that often denies ex-felons employment. This experience of strain has led ex-felon men to find new ways to express masculinity. Contextual factors that shape ex-felons' unique experiences along with contemporary images of fathers as nurturers provides some ex-felon men with opportunities to assume domestic roles. By assuming at-home father roles, participants seemingly escaped much of the hostile treatment they experienced as ex-felons. The implication of this research is that American family and domestic life will be reshaped, to some extent, by this Felon-at-home dad phenomenon.
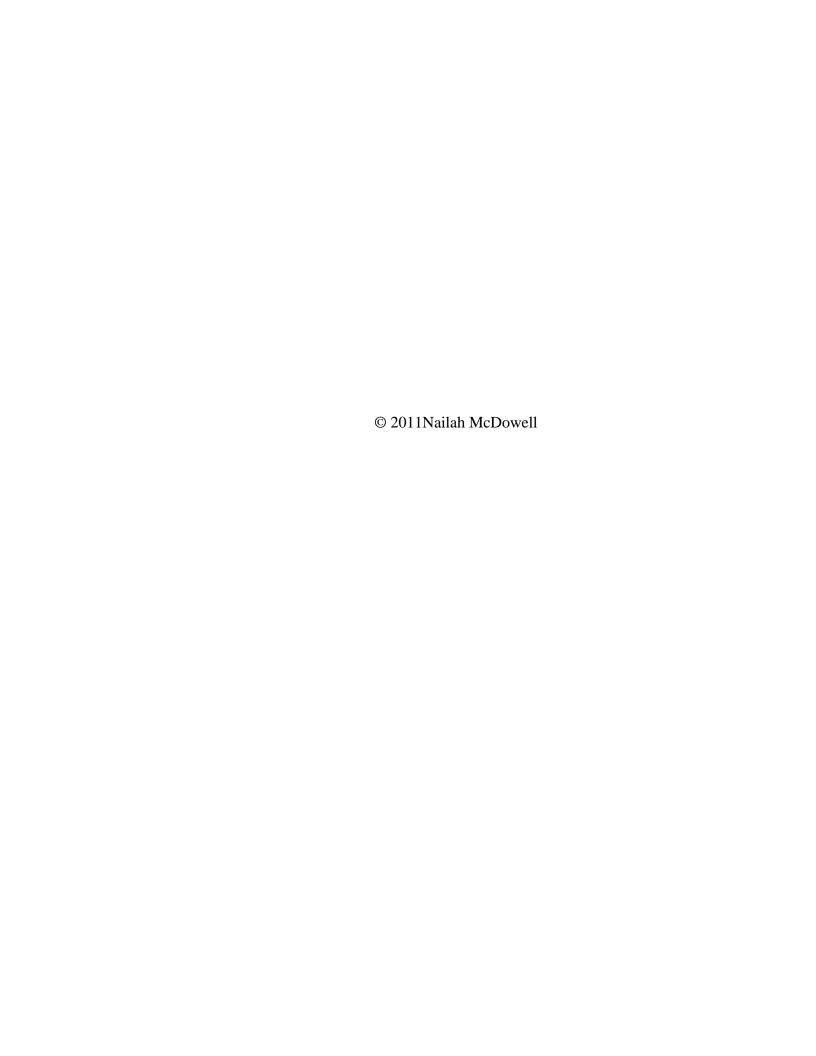
FELON AT-HOME DADS

by

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_____
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To my husband, thank you for your love, support, and encouragement. You have been by my side every step of the way. Without you I would have never survived this project. I also thank my parents and siblings for their support as well.

APPROVAL PAGE

This thesis has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The great escape, perhaps, for ex-felon men is the freeing of themselves from constraints that limit their life chances by assuming at-home father positions. Being convicted of a felony offense often results in enduring damages and stigmatizing penalties that linger long after a prison term has been served. Of particular interests for the present study are the social forces at play in the lives of ex-felon men who are primary caregiver fathers. This research seeks to discover possible social processes that contribute to ex-felon men pursuing this domestic position. Specifically this research seeks to answer the question: Under what conditions do ex-felon men assume the role of at-home father?

Answering this research question will help to fill a gap in the academic literature. Until now, ex-felon/stay-at-home-fathers have been completely overlooked in academic research. After an extensive search of the literature, I have been unable to locate a single academic study on male ex-felons who assume an at-home dad role. Curiously, these men also seem to exist outside of public awareness. Media and internet searches produced almost no information directly dealing with this population. These striking oversights and utter absence of discourse on the topic, whether public or academic, makes this study timely and relevant.

Definitions and Terminology

Given the dearth of research on ex-felon men who adopt primary caregiver roles, there was no terminology previously developed to discuss the topic. This population of male felon/stay at-home fathers has existed without an acknowledged group identity. Prior to this research, these men were a nameless, shapeless bunch. Thus, in order to begin identifying these men, I developed the term 'Felon-at-Home Dad' as an "official" group name. This name is particularly fitting for reasons discussed below.

Felon at-Home Dad (FAHD)

After rejecting several potential names, I settled on referring to this group of male felon/ at-home fathers as Felon at-Home Dads (hereafter FAHD). The name FAHD, appropriately draws attention to its commonalities with *traditional* stay-at-home dads (hereafter SAHD) while simultaneously highlighting the differences between the two. It is possible that FAHDs may be at various stages of involvement with the criminal justice system. They may be out on probation or already have completed their sentence; however, I chose to refer to them as *Felon*-at-Home Dads rather than ex-felon at-home dads (or any other possible term that implies a former association with the identity of felon) to emphasis the permanency of the stigmatizing "felon" label. Manza and Uggen (2006: viii) put it this way:

> …a felony conviction constitutes a permanent stain that will influence many aspects of individuals' lives, even after they have 'paid their debt to society.' In this sense, it is not clear that anyone who has received a felony conviction is ever fully free of the implications of that conviction.

In conceptualizing what it means to be a FAHD, I was careful to take into consideration both the inclusionary and exclusionary nature of determining group membership. Despite limitations in existing knowledge on the topic and an understanding that "…social life does not unfold in discrete packages with well-defined and clearly demarcated boundaries" (Singer 1999; 141), standards had to be set in order to guide this research. Consequently, I chose to draw heavily from the United States' Census Bureau definition of an at-home parent, infusing relevant adjustments as needed. Terms used within the FAHD definition abide by widely accepted uses of those terms (see below).

The United States Census Bureau (2009) definition of a stay-at-home parent reads: "Stay-at-home family groups are married-couple family groups with children under 15 where one parent is in the labor force all of the previous year and their spouse is out of the labor force for the entire year with the reason taking care of home and family." Similarly, for the purpose of this research, a FAHD is defined as: an adult male who is an ex-felon, a resident father/ father-figure who provides primary care for one or more children age 15 or younger and considered not to be in the labor force.

The terminologies used to define a FAHD adhere to the following definitions. According to the online legal dictionary on Law.com, a *felony offense* is: "1) A crime sufficiently serious to be punishable by death or a term in state or federal prison, as distinguished from a misdemeanor which is only punishable by confinement to county or local jail and/or a fine. 2) A crime carrying a minimum term of one year or more in state prison, since a year or less can be served in county jail. However, a sentence upon

conviction for a felony may sometimes be less than one year at the discretion of the judge

and within limits set by statute. Felonies are sometimes referred to as 'high crimes' as

described in the U.S. Constitution." Additionally, because the state is allowed to

determine which crimes are considered felony offenses, felonies are subject to vary by

state (Manza et al. 2006). Therefore, an ex-felon is someone who has been convicted of a

felony offense by the State and/or Federal courts but is out on parole or is no longer

under supervision.

A *primary caretaker* is commonly defined as a caretaker who has the majority

responsibility for the day to day supervision and care of a child (Talbott & Alsop, 1993).

As my definition indicates, a FAHD must be a primary caretaker to a minor child or

children who are age 15 or younger. Furthermore, a FAHD is considered *"not in the

labor force,"* which, according to the U.S. Department of Labor, is somewhat different

from simply being unemployed. An individual who is unemployed is viewed as someone

who is actively seeking employment while those who are not in the labor force have not

attempted to find a job for at least four weeks.

Unlike the census' description of a stay at-home parent, my definition of a FAHD

does not specify marital status or duration of time spent "out of the labor force." These

modifications were made based on two fundamental concerns. For one, a noteworthy

debate around the Census Bureau definition of a stay-at-home parent argues that the

marriage stipulation overlooks a host of men who are not married but perform similar

primary caregiver roles (Doucet 2006). Furthermore, the census' required account of

being out of the labor force for at least a year proves inconsistent with validated research

findings on at-home fathers. Studies suggest that fathers who are primary caregivers do

not commonly remain in this position long-term due to landing some type of

employment, whether part or full time (Radin 1988; Radin and Russell 1983).

Consequently, a mandate of time spent out of the labor force misrepresents the plight of

many fathers who stay at home to raise their children, in part, due to employment

challenges. Taking into account these discrepancies, I chose not to categorize this group

in terms of whether these men are married or by a certain amount of time spent out of the

labor force. Instead, for this research, a FAHD may or may not be married and must

simply be "out of the labor force" as so described by the U.S. Department of Labor (i.e., a

period of four weeks without seeking employment).

Purpose of the Study

This research stands to make contributions to scholarly literature in areas of

family studies as well as the criminological literature on crime and

occupations/unemployment. The purpose of this research is to unveil this hidden

population existing within the family in hopes of promoting academic and public

awareness, discourse, and future research.

Because there are no preexisting data on FAHDs, this research is based on the

assumption that not all ex-felon fathers adopt an at-home father position. For those men

who do become FAHDs, this research seeks to explore the social conditions that

influence their decisions (Schindler and Coley 2007). This study focuses on men who are

already ex-felons and does not attempt in any way to examine or explain the causes for

their criminal behaviors. It excludes men who, while during a period of time in which

they were already at-home fathers, were convicted of a felony offense for the first time.

Instead, the research question posed for this study implies a particular temporal order:

men who were convicted of a felony; completed their sentence or are out on probation;

and subsequently became FAHDs.

"Fathers at the margins," such as ex-felon men, may "experience unique

constraints" to parenting (Schindler and Coley 2007: 40). I conducted in-depth one-on-

one interviews with ten FAHDs to examine personal accounts of the experiences that

have led ex-felon men towards becoming primary caregiver fathers. This exploratory

study is particularly salient in aftermath of the War on Drugs which resulted in a large

population of ex-felon men and the wake of an economic recession that continues to

devastate many families across America.

<center>Researcher's Perspective</center>

I was first introduced to the topic of ex-felons becoming at-home dads years

ago through an acquaintance of mine whose husband is a FAHD. During a casual

conversation, she mentioned to me that her husband, an ex-felon, stayed at home to

care for all five of their children while she pursued her own career goals. Intrigued

by the topic, I jumped at the opportunity to conduct a study on these men for a class

project. Although the data collected and findings derived from that study are

impermissible and will not be discussed in the present research due to The University

of North Carolina at Greensboro Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidelines, the

tremendous amount of insight gained while conducting that study helped to shape the question possessed in this research. The experience ultimately impacted my perceptions of the FAHD population and enhanced my understanding of the role. However, volumes of questions remained unanswered. In particular, the question driving the current study is considered a critical component in building a foundational understanding of this phenomenon. (In an attempt to minimize bias, my friend's husband did not participate in the present research).

My overall theoretical perspective is premised on many of the claims made by C. Wright Mills in the classic book *The Sociological Imagination*. Mills (1959:6) writes:

> We have come to know that every individual lives, from one generation to the next, in some society; that he lives out a biography, and that he lives it out within some historical sequence. By the fact of his living he contributes, however minutely, to the shaping of this society and to the course of its history, even as he is made by society and by its historical push and shove.

Mills (1959) argues that individuals act within a historically specific cultural context (Allan 2005). He links personal troubles to public issues by recognizing the roles that both history and personal narratives play in shaping society. Social institutions such as the economy and family and the social structures that bind them together influence much of our lives. Social forces construct our realities and those things we hold to be true. But this perspective does not render individuals captives of society. Although human behavior is enabled and constrained within the limitations set by social structure, Mills (1959) insists that our lives and actions, also

are impacted by the mutual influence we have on one another. This influence also drives human behavior and can ultimately impact the organization of society. The present research grows directly from this vantage point.

In the next chapter, I review literature on fatherhood in America. Although no research studies have been conducted on FAHDs until now, part of understanding the conditions that influence ex-felons to take on at-home father positions requires a closer look into how the ongoing reconstruction of fatherhood and gender relations shapes men's identities (see Schindler and Coley 2007). I begin by taking stock of the historical trends of American fatherhood in an attempt to explain some of the sources for current attitudes towards fathers. I then turn to literature on gender and gender relations to discuss the role that masculinity plays in shaping fatherhood. Lastly, I examine marginalized fatherhood. Specifically, I review data from the Bureau of Justice Statistic in conjunction with Hairston's work (1998, 2001) and others in an examination of offender father/child relationships, followed by an exploration of literature on ex-felon fatherhood and attitudes towards stay at-home dads.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Part of considering conditions that influence men to assume a FAHD position

may include examining contextual factors around the experiences of ex-felons.

Marginalized fathers, such as ex-felon fathers, often endure what Schindler and Coley

(2007) refer to as "unique constraints" that have direct bearings on how they parent (see

also Arditti, Smock, and Parkman 2005). In a recent study on homeless fathers,

Schindler and Coley (2007) linked contextual factors such as stigmatization and

institutional regulations (i.e., homeless shelters) with father/child relationships and men's

perceptions of themselves as fathers. Reportedly, when confronted with societal

expectations such as fathers ought to be financial providers, homeless fathers who

maintained relationships with their children seemed to deal with their role in the family

by seeking out alternative definitions of fatherhood. For those men, becoming homeless

appeared to evoke stronger commitments to their identities as fathers. Daily involvement

with their children substantially increased. Furthermore, Schindler and Coley (2007)

found that fathers' satisfaction increased as paternal involvement increased.

These insights are particularly salient for the present study. Ex-felons experience

a number of "unique constrains," some of which may influence the ways ex-felon me

provide care for their children. For example, chronic unemployment is a common challenge ex-felons face (Shivy, Wu, Moon, Mann, Holland, and Eacho 2007). Understanding how employment barriers and other contextual factors impact ex-felon men's parenting choices may provide some insight into men's decisions to become FAHDs.

Yet, an investigation of what and why fathers' engage in particular parenting practices requires an examination of ideologies that inform fathers' roles and involvement (Lamb 2010). As Day, Lewis, O'Brien, and Lamb (2005) point out, any conceptualization of fatherhood must integrate the social and personal aspects of men's lives by examining cultural, economic, and social factors. Men's lives take place within a social milieu that, in large part, structures men's family roles in particular ways as well as patterns the social and personal meanings of those roles (Catlett and McKenry 2004; see also Marsiglio 1995). To this end, while it may be necessary to examine the unique influence that being an ex-felon may have on ex-felon fatherhood, these discussions should be tied to wider discourses around historical, cultural, and familial influences on fatherhood (see Lamb 2010). Research suggests that multiple factors influence fatherhood. In addition to familial responses to macroeconomic shifts (see Coltrane 1996), fatherhood also is influenced by masculinity and gender relations (Connell 2002; see also Coltrane 1996; Henwood and Procter 2003; Doucet 2004). Moreover, race (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1997) and social class (see Catlett and McKenry 2004) often impact the ways men father.

Thus, this review of literature examines the interplay of structural, cultural, and contextual factors that shape parenting choices for marginalized men, in particular ex-felon fathers. To conceptualize fathers' roles and their origins, I start with a review of the history of American fatherhood. Dominate cultural images of American fatherhood are linked to different economic cycles and societal expectations of men. Next, I discuss the influence that masculinity, social class, and race have on fatherhood. Against this backdrop, I discuss examine some of the contextual factors that may shape fatherhood for ex-felon men.

American Fatherhood

To gain an understanding of contemporary expectations of American fathers, this section begins by first examining the history of American fatherhood. Particularly, I review four major phases of American fatherhood. These include the moral teacher, breadwinner, sex role-model, and nurturer phases (Pleck's 1984; see also Lamb 2000). While there is some debate over whether American fatherhood can ever truly be neatly packaged into stages, Lamb (2000) insists that Pleck's (1984) assessment of American fatherhood reflects dominant motifs prominent in literature and writings about fathers during particular and specific timeframes. Furthermore, phases are described as 'images' of American fatherhood rather than as the conduct of actual fathers. As such, these phases depict mainstream cultural expectations of fatherhood at the time as opposed to the actual behaviors in which fathers are engaged (LaRossa 1997).

The moral teacher phase is described as taking place during the Colonial Era of American history (Lamb 2000). Puritans believed that children were to be raised with Christian morals and values. At that time, fathers were considered the governing controls of the family unit. Much of their family duties were characterized by obligations to tutor and train the children. Primary roles and responsibilities consisted of teaching and enforcing morals. Although mothers provided the majority daily care and supervision of children (Coakley 2006; Marsiglio 2005), fathers were actively involved in family life (Lamb 2000; Coltrane 1996).

Shifts in macroeconomic conditions during the mid-nineteenth century lessened the need for fathers' stern and active role in the family. As America transitioned from an agriculture-based economy to a market economy the "occupational link between fathers and sons" necessitated by farm life was broken (Coltrane 1996:30). As industrialization took way, new attitudes toward paternal involvement developed. Breadwinning became the central theme and measure of fathers' merit. Duties and obligations began to revolve primarily around providing (see also Gerson 1993; McLanahan 2004; and Waller 2002).

This emphasis does not imply that other features, such a moral guardianship, necessarily disappeared nor that provision failed to be a priority before industrialization. However, industrialization brought about a definite separation between the public and private sphere. During the agricultural era, mothers and fathers shared provisional responsibilities. But, as industrialization took way, fathers were forced to work outside of the home. This move helped set the provider role criterion for "good fathers," a belief that would dominate perceptions of fathers and fatherhood throughout the Great

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Depression (Lamb 2000). Some research argues that this emphasis on work and the ability to financially provide for the family marginalized fathers from family life. The lack of time spent with the children resulted in alienating the father. As a result, the power of the father became increasingly dependent on hegemonic masculine ideologies (discussed in detail below) and income (Coakley 2006; see also Griswold 1993).

Possibly resulting from the turmoil brought about by the rapid succession of the Great Depression followed by the New Deal, and World War II, a new conceptualization of fatherhood emerged –the sex-role model. This meant that fathers were now responsible for teaching their son(s) how to grow up to "be a man" and to uphold distinctive masculine roles. Although the previous phases remained significant, Lamb (2002) contends that this change manifested primarily because the saturation of literature in the 1940's that concentrated on the inadequacies of fathers. Oftentimes, fathers were found "missing" and were accused of inadequately fulfilling their roles (Lamb 2000). Popular literature focused on the strong need for fathers to portray sex-role images in the home, particular for their sons (Forste, Bartkowski and Jackson 2009).

On the other hand, some scholars suggest that the role model phase was a response to women entering the paid labor force at unprecedented rates. Coltrane (1996:30) argues that the influx of women occupying jobs previously considered men's work resulted in "a masculinist backlash" that impacted Victorian beliefs that separated men and women domains. At the turn of the century, women began to occupy positions once dominated by men, such as sales personnel, clerks, bookkeepers, and typists. Women's new role in the labor market threatened masculine ideologies. New ways to

maintain masculine images were needed. Conjured images of powerful, strong, and

masterful men suddenly appeared in popular magazines in response to the threat of

encroaching women. Fathers were expected to embody these new images and to

ultimately instill these values in their sons (Coltrane 1996; see also McLanahan 2004;

and Waller 2002).

The final and most recent phase in the ongoing reconstruction of fatherhood is the

nurturer phase. This phase is also commonly known as the "new fatherhood model."

Popularized in the mid 1970's, the new model of fatherhood focuses on fathers' presence,

level of engagement, and their newly conceptualized abilities to engage in caring and

nurturing parenting (Henwood and Procter 2003). For the first time in either literature or

public commentary, the importance of fathers actively participating in warm, nurturing

relationships with their children was of central focus. Media and pop culture portrayals

of fatherhood depict fathers as loving parents who are actively involved in their

children's lives. Social science has also taken interests in fatherhood and the 'invaluable'

contributions they make to family life and healthy child development (Coltrane 1996;

Henwood and Procter 2003; Lamb 2002; Waller 2002).

This concern for nurturing fatherhood stems largely from the women's

movement. Because of demands for gender equality in the workforce and home, fathers

faced growing expectations to participate in childcare. Mothers with children under

eighteen years old entering the labor force skyrocketed from 8.6 percent in 1940 to 53.0

percent in 1978 (Bloom-Feshbach 1981). As economic conditions pulled women away

from the home, mothers had less time to spend raising and caring for children. In

response, dominate cultural attitudes towards fatherhood began to shift. Contemporary images of fathers suggest that men should be emotionally invested in their children and share the load of housework (Lamb 2002; Coltrane 1996).

How do these modern expectations of fathers as nurtures fair with traditional expectations of men? Recent studies that examine fatherhood from the context of changing masculinities (Robb 2004, Henwood and Procter 2003) suggest that shifting and, oftentimes ambiguous, social expectations of modern masculinities may leave men without clear gender norms to shape the meaning of their lives as men and as fathers (Williams 2009). However, as discussed in the next section, hegemonic images of masculinity continue to shape fatherhood despite current calls for fathers to engage in more nurturing parenting.

Masculinity and Fatherhood

In addition to a historical analysis of American fatherhood, this research considers literature on men and masculinity. While the proliferation of research on masculinity has produced a number of competing theories and perspectives, scholarship on men's lives tends to agree with at least three themes. First, most social science would agree that "any adequate theory of men and masculinity has to have the concept of *power* at its centre" (Edley and Wetherell 2004: 106). Charles Lemert (2005:110) describes power as "the means by which social structures do this not-exactly-fair work of sorting people according to the few or many life-chances they get." From this perspective, macro and micro-level power relations and issues of difference are central structures in the

construction of masculinity (Kimmel and Messner 1998; Connell 2000; 2002; Doucet 2006; also see Collins and Hautzinger 2002). Power relations and difference are typically connected to factors such as race/ethnicity, social class, sexuality, and age (Zinn, Hondagneu-Sotelo, and Messner 1997). Secondly, the definition of masculinity varies within and across cultures. Moreover, what it means to be masculine changes over time (Kimmel and Messner 1998; Connell 2000; 2002; Doucet 2006). To this end, multiple images of masculinity exist. Thirdly, these masculinities interact with each other in particular ways (Kimmel and Messner 1998; Connell 2000; 2002). Connell's conceptualization of hegemonic masculinity elucidates these interactions.

Hegemonic Masculinity

Dominate patterns of masculinity operate in the family where gender perceptions of men influence family dynamics (Connell 2002, Doucet 2004; Williams 2009). Powerful societal expectations that view men first and foremost as providers, continue to shape fathers' roles and responsibilities. While these practices are rooted in social inequalities between women and men, the concept of hegemony calls attention to the influence of dominate forms of masculinities at play in the family (Williams 2009). That is, despite changing expectations of men and fathers, scholars suggest that hegemonic images of masculinity continue to shape much of men's lives (Connell 2002).

The idea of hegemonic masculinity is a concept that grew out of the culmination of women's and gay men's political experiences; studies on men and boys in bureaucracies and school; as well as research on gender arrangements and hierarchy

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(Connell 2002; see also Carrigan, Connell, and Lee 1985). It critiqued prevailing notions of masculinity that discussed men's sex role as 'undifferentiated'. Recognizing the significance of gender differences among men, the concept of hegemonic masculinity emphasizes hierarchal gender relations among men (Connell 2002; also see Kimmel 1987). This concept underscores the ways varying masculinities interact among each other. Particularly, hegemonic masculinity focuses on how hierarchical relationships among masculinities marginalize or subordinate less valued versions of masculinities (see Lusher and Robins 2010).

Hegemonic masculinity refers to a form of masculinity that is most desired or honored. Hierarchical distinctions among masculinities operate through dimensions of power as well as production, emotional, and symbolic relations (Connell 2005; also see Connell 2002). Although relations among dominate and other masculinities may be explicit, many are not. Instead, hegemony is frequently established when there is correspondence between institutional powers and cultural ideologies. Institutions may construct multiple masculinities while cultural ideologies legitimate hegemony. Cultural images of hegemonic models of masculinity make gender relations of difference and hierarchies appear natural. However, hegemonic images of masculinity typically do not reflect the majority of men's actual lives. Rather, hegemonic models are idealtypes that express dominate cultural desires and admired forms of masculinity.

Perhaps the most powerful attribute of hegemonic masculinity is the avoidance of effeminate behavior. Zinn et al. (1997) suggest that, in large part, the dominate meaning of masculinity is the subornation of anything feminine. Thus, men have traditionally

maintained their identities as men by *not* participating in activities considered connected to women's identities (Coltrane 1996). Other forms of masculinity and fatherhood, such as those displayed by fathers who occupy primary caregiver roles, are marginalized and often experience a great deal of public scrutiny.

Doing Fatherhood

Other scholars have focused on ways family dynamics and social expectations of fathers' roles provide men with opportunities to achieve or display masculinity (Finn and Henwood 2009 and Williams 2009). West and Zimmerman (1987: 136) assert that "in virtually any activity {individuals} may be held accountable for performance of that activity as a *woman* or a *man*." Social expectations of men and women, commonly referred to as 'sex' or 'gender' roles, instruct each sex on how they *ought* to behave. Gender roles provide members of any given culture with a shared understanding of what it means to be a woman as well as what it means to be a man (Edley and Wetherell 2004). Conformity to gender roles results in rewards such as acceptance among peers. Nonconformity, on the other hand, is often considered deviant and sanctioned. To this end, gender roles can facilitate and constrain aspects of fathers' involvement (Doucet 2004).

Merla (2008) found that primary caregiver fathers often face scrutiny from family members as well as the public at large for breaking prescribed family gender norms (see also Doucet 2004). Yet, despite participation in what is typically considered 'women's' work, gender roles continue to shape these at-home fathers' perceptions of the ways they

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care. That is, Coltrane (1996) argues that the division of family labor is "a prime opportunity to 'do gender' because of our cultural prescriptions about the appropriateness of men and women performing certain chores" (50). In Golden's (2007) study on at-home fathers, men displayed traditional images of masculinity by framing caregiving as 'work'. For example, fathers descriptions of childrearing centered on job-related images such as planning, arranging, and 'babysitting'. Thus father's parenting practices, whether traditional or nontraditional, can be an opportunity for men to 'reaffirm' gender (Coltrane 1996).

<div align="center">Social Class and Racial Influences on Fatherhood</div>

Constructions of masculinity and fatherhood are connected to social class and racial influences as well. Low-income, minority men often experience distinctive barriers in developing viable identities as fathers. Catlett and Mckenry (2004) argue that low-income fathers continue to face hegemonic ideologies that subordinate their family lives. Some critics argue that the images of nurturer fathers are no more than an attempt by the middle-class to marginalize low-income minority fathers (La Rossa 1987). Similarly, Griswold (1993:252) contends that the new father model "gained cultural legitimacy because it has become an important marker of class." Griswold (1993) suggests that upon middle-class men becoming incapable of financially supporting their families without the additional help of their wives' income, older practices of fatherhood were no longer functional. Confronted with rising costs of housing, tuition, and "insufficient male paychecks" during the 1970's and 1980's, members of the middle-

class desperately strived to distance themselves from the working class (Griswold 1993:253). Stereotypical images of controlling, ethnocentric, intolerant blue-collar menaces surfaced. By implication, middle-class men are perceived as being everything that working class men are not. Hence, images of middle-class men as more knowledgeable, nurturing, and flexible fathers surfaced. As Griswold (1993) puts it, middle-class fathers made a "necessity" a "virtue" by marginalizing lower-class men and their parenting practices. Yet despite these images, research suggests that low-income men also define 'good' fathers as nurturers.

"Good Fathers" In Low-Income and Minority Households

As discussed below, low-income minority fathers make up a large percentage of offender fathers (Hairston 2001). Therefore, this section examines the impact that belonging to a low-income, minority group may have on fatherhood. Roy's (2004) study on low-income fathers found that fathers undoubtedly recognized the need of providing. Roy (2004) suggests that provider roles were symbolically and materially a fundamental aspect of fatherhood for low-income fathers. Yet, low-income fathers were unable to achieve these goals. To this end, Roy (2004) contends that fathers reconciled this dilemma by 'lowering' their expectations of the provider role. Reportedly, fathers criticized emphasize on fathers as providers and sought out alternative constructions of fatherhood. Particularly, the new fatherhood model provided fathers with the promise of being a "good" father as nurturing and involvement are central.

Yet, research on low-income, minority families highlights racial differences in definitions of fatherhood. Coltrane, Parke, and Adams' (2004) study on low-income, Mexican-American fathers suggests that these fathers spend a significantly greater amount of time with their children than white counterparts (see also Gonzalez-Lopez 2004 and Miller and Maiter 2008). Moreover, Miller and Maiter (2008) purport that low-income, African American families' definition of fathering include nurturing and caring (see also Townsend 2002). According to Summers, Boller, Schiffman, and Raikes' (2006) study of 575 low-income, minority fathers (hereafter LIMF), LIMFs are involved with their children more often than previously considered. Summers' et al. (2006) study suggests that LIMF participants commonly associate stability, teaching, physical interaction, and emotional interaction with being a "good father." As opposed to simply providing financial support, moral teaching, sex-role modeling, and nurturing were all major priorities for the subjects in this study. These fathers were clear about what they wanted to teach their children. They desired to raise their children with proper morals and values, including an appreciation of an education, work ethics, and religious beliefs. Spending time with their children was frequently considered the most effective way to be a positive role model. Good fathers, according to the LIMF participants in the study, should be loving parents who are emotionally and physically present. A stable family environment commonly meant a stable relationship with the child's mother. Many fathers believed that raising children requires two parents and that parents should work together to avoid sending mixed signals to their children (Summers et al. 2006).

While social class and race as well as gender and economic shifts help to structure social and personal meanings of fatherhood, men's parenting choices are also influenced by contextual factors. Thus, the remainder of this chapter discusses contextual factors that may influence ex-felon men who assume FAHD roles. Specifically, I review literature on offender fatherhood, ex-felon fatherhood, and attitudes towards at-home fathers.

Offender Fatherhood

Offender fatherhood pertains to the specific dynamics that shape father/child relationships while fathers are incarcerated. Although the current study focuses on FAHDs, there are at least a couple of reasons why it may be particularly useful to examine offender fatherhood. First, the host of demographical data collected on offender fathers (see Glaze and Maruschak 2010) may be helpful in understanding cultural influences on decisions to become FAHDs. Secondly, empirical studies suggest that paternal involvement during incarceration can influence father/child relationships post-release (Hairston 2001). To this end, examining both the constraints placed on fathering while incarcerated as well as the processes and procedures necessary for persevering father/child relationships during this fragile time may be particularly useful.

In any given year, fathers make up a large percentage of the population in prison. Between the years of 1991 to 2007 the number of fathers in federal prisons has more than tripled and nearly doubled in state prisons (see Glaze and Maruschak 2010). Although prison populations have steadily increased, inmates' social characteristics consistently

remain the same. At the time of arrests, most fathers are young, between the ages of 25

through 34, undereducated, and poor. The majority of inmate fathers are black, followed

by white, and Hispanic (Hairston 1998, 2001; see also Mumola 2000; Glaze and

Maruschak 2010). In 2004, the most common offenses were drug related for fathers in

federal prisons and driving while intoxicated for those in state prisons (Glaze and

Maruschak 2010).

On average, offender fathers typically have two children. Most are young,

typically nine years old or younger. While inmate fathers may receive visits from their

minor child (Glaze and Maruschak 2010), visits are infrequent. Hairston (2001) reports

that under 1/3 of fathers in prison regularly see any of their children (see also Koban

1983). Although the majority of fathers commonly have never been married, almost all

fathers regularly indicate that at least one of their minor children lives with their mother

(Hairston 1998; Mumola 2000; Glaze and Maruschak 2010).

Perhaps of most significance for the present study are fathers' reports of providing

primary care to their minor children prior to their most recent arrest. A recent Bureau of

Justice Statics (BJS) report indicates that in 2004 over a quarter (26%) of fathers in state

prisons who reported living with their children prior to being incarcerated also indicated

that they were the primary caretakers of those children (Glaze and Maruschak 2010).

This is especially salient because the majority of inmate parents have previous criminal

records (Glaze and Maruschak 2010). Thus, it is possible that some of these primary

caregiver fathers were FAHDs prior to their most recent arrest. While this line of

reasoning is speculative, it underscores the salience of understanding the impact that

incarceration may have on father/child relationships. Moreover, it may be especially important for the present study to examine how those conditions may influence these relationships post-release.

Contact with children during fathers' incarceration is an important part of establishing relations after release. Contact supports the bond between parents and their children. Yet, most inmate fathers do not receive frequent visits from their children (Hairston 2001). Inmate fathers who have regular contact with their children are more likely to have relationships with those children post-release than are fathers who have no contact with their children. Contact may be contingent upon several factors. To a large extent, contact depends on relationships with the child's mother (Hairston 2001). As mentioned above, the majority of fathers in prison report that at least one of their minor children lives with their mother (Hairston 1998; Mumola 2000; Glaze and Maruschak 2010). Walker (2010) suggests that other family members, particularly the offender father's mother, are also important in relationship building.

Examining fathers on probation, Walker (2010) argues that support services provided by prisons and probation officers are critical. Services such as mandatory programs, skills training, and, in many cases employment, assist with developing stability. Furthermore, similar to the role that paternal mothers play while offender fathers are incarcerated, probation officers may act as negotiators. Walker (2010) found that probation officers often offered support in the form of advice to offender fathers on parenting and other similar informal supports.

Ex-Felon Fatherhood

Even upon completion of sentencing, ex-felons continue to encounter a myriad of obstacles that can make it difficult for men to achieve dominate cultural expectations of fatherhood (see Hirsch, Dietrich, Landau, Schneider, Ackelsberg, Bernstein-Baker, and Hohenstein 2002). Many of these barriers revolve around issues concerning stigma, education and social welfare punishments, disenfranchisement, and employment.

Stigma

Goffman's (1963) classic work describes stigma as a "deeply discrediting" attribute that taints and devalues a social identity. Drawing from Goffman (1963), Link and Phelan (2001) conceptualize four components of stigmatization. Especially salient is the fourth component which suggests that stigmatization occurs when being labeled and characterized as undesirable leads to loss of status and discrimination. Link and Phelan (2001) argue that the problem or dilemma of stigma is that both structural and agential forces operate in ways that discriminate and devalue stigmatized groups. This predicament of stigma is especially precarious for ex-felon fathers. Particularly, stigmatization can lead to a nexus of discrimination and status loss that, when measured against hegemonic images of masculinity, marginalizes fathers.

The highly stigmatizing ex-felon label (Harding 2003) links ex-felon fathers to a host of undesirable characteristics such as being thought of as untrustworthy, dangerous, and disreputable (Hirschfield and Piquero 2010; see also Link and Phelan 2001 on stigma). These negative stereotypes often lead to informal as well as formal

discrimination excluding parents from social and economic activities (Hirschfield and Piquero 2010). Hostile attitudes toward ex-felons held by the public and formal consequences such as education and social welfare punishments, disenfranchisement, and employment barriers are common devaluing and discriminatory sanctions ex-felons endure.

Education and Social Welfare Punishments

Hull's (2006) analysis of the disparities ex-felons encounter includes an examination of educational and social welfare exclusions that many ex-felons experience. Ex-offenders attempting to attend college may face financial challenges. The Higher Education Act (HEA) passed in 1965 geared towards assisting low-income students with financial aid passed an amendment in 1998 to place individuals with drug convictions under strict regulations that ultimately can lead to illegibility for financial aid. As a result, within two years of passing the HEA bill in 2000 roughly 88,000 students had been turned down for financial assistance.

Those convicted of drug-related crimes may be denied Temporary Assistance for Needy Families funds, food stamps, Medicare, Social Security, and federal healthcare benefits for up to five years. Additionally, felony convictions prohibit individuals from eligibility for public housing. Denial of public housing may, in part, contribute to the number of ex-felons among the homeless population. A study found that individuals on parole accounted for 30 to 50 percent of those homeless in San Francisco and Los Angeles (Hull 2006).

Disenfranchisement

Although laws are changing, many states continue to deny individuals who have been convicted of a felony offense the right to vote even after they have completed their sentence and, frequently, their parole. Over two percent of the voting population was barred from participating in the United States presidential election in 2000. This group of nearly half a million people had no control of the political governing of their communities (Hull 2006; also see Uggen 2008).

Employment Barriers

Like most parents across the United States, ex-felon parents need to work in order to provide for their families. However, it is tremendously difficult for many ex-felons to obtain gainful employment. The stigma of being an ex-felon may create a lifetime of challenges around employment. Oftentimes, both formal and informal social controls block opportunities for ex-felon parents to obtain gainful employment (on employment barriers see Bushway and Sweeten 2007; Chiricos, Barrick, Bales, and Bontrager 2007). Bore by over 4.7 million Americans (Cary 2007), the deviant felon label frequently blocks the ability to obtain and/or maintain steady employment and income, particularly for marginalized groups (Bushway et al. 2007; Chiricos et al. 2007). Despite levels of variation within a state and the degree of difference between states on which crimes are considered felony offenses, once convicted, whether for writing bad checks, selling illegal narcotics, or committing a violent crime, these individuals are subject to severe

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levels of ostracism (Bushway et al. 2007). Employers are not immune to public

perceptions of convicted felons. A survey administered to 3,000 employers across four

major metropolitan areas in the U.S. found that two-thirds of the participants indicated

that they would not knowingly hire ex-offenders (Visher and Kachnowski 2007).

State laws have also frequently prohibited employment of ex-felons from a host of

civil jobs. According to Bushway et al. (2007), ex-felons have been excluded from

nearly 800 different types of occupations. Bushway et al. (2007) argue that these bans

are used as additional forms of punishment and question the ethics of "officially

sanctioned collateral consequences" (p. 697). Bans on employment are frequently not

related to the type of offense committed. In 2006, all ex-felons, despite the types of

crimes committed, were banned from becoming speech pathologists in Florida and from

owning barber shops in New York.

Employment discrimination is yet another barrier to consider. Uggen (2008)

argues that employers often discriminate based on criminal histories. Criminal

background checks make it easy and affordable to check criminal histories of potential

employees. Many criminals are cast out of employment opportunities at the application

stage. Others may obtain a job only to lose it when their criminal history is discovered

(Uggen 2008). Race may even further compound job discrimination. Research

consistently shows that employers popularly discriminate against hiring minorities

(Bushway et al. 2007; Chiricos et al. 2007). Because minorities represented 45 percent of

all state court felony convictions in 1998, 46 percent in 2000, and 41 percent in 2002

(Bureau of Justice Statistics 2009), job discrimination based on race potentially threatens

nearly half of all felons. This indicates that felons belonging to minority groups may face greater barriers when seeking employment than their counterparts belonging to the majority.

Micro-level factors have also been associated with impeding employment of ex-offenders. Visher et al. (2007) found that employment prior to incarceration affected employability post-release. Ex-offenders employed before incarceration were more likely to gain employment post-release than were ex-offenders who were not employed prior to incarceration. Regardless of this advantage, on the average, it took roughly eight months for participants to find employment post-release. Other micro-level factors commonly include: education level of the offender, substance abuse, and lack of stable housing (Bushway, Stoll, and Weiman, 2007).

The tremendous rejection ex-felons experience has been described as "doing time after time" (Arestia, Eatougha, and Brooks-Gordona 2010) and being "locked out" (Manza and Uggen 2006) of society. From stigmatization to difficulties renting a home, obtaining student loans, and gaining employment, the ex-felon experience makes it extremely difficult for ex-felon men to achieve societal expectations of fathers. The cumulative effect of these challenges appears to be that "every door is closed to parents with criminal records" (Hirsch 2002:6).

Attitudes Towards At-Home Dads

Modern day beliefs that fathers should engage in nurturing parenting practices do not necessarily translate into people responding positively to SAHDs (i.e., men who do

not participate in the paid labor force and are the primary caregivers of their children). Generally, at-home fathers are regularly confronted with negative reactions from others (Coltrane 1996; Merla 2008). An article in The Wall Street Journal described the difficulties that several SAHDs, living primarily in either New York or California, encountered when attempting to return to the labor force as a result of the stigma associated with being an at-home father. Reportedly, one employer asked a SAHD whether his discussion to take on a primary caregiver role was based on his being a homosexual or "just weird" (Dunham 2003). These negative attitudes towards SAHDs have also been displayed in some areas of feminist literature. Feminists such as Susan Boyd take the position that women are more suitable than men to provide primary care for children because of differences in how men and women are socialized to care (Doucet 2006).

Brescoll and Uhlmann (2005) suggest that negative attitudes towards nontraditional parents (i.e., at-home fathers and working mothers) may, in part, occur because these parents are violating proscribed gender roles. Hegemonic masculine ideologies value strength, success, capability, and control. As mentioned earlier, even though images of masculinity as well as fatherhood are constructed differently within and between races and ethnicities, social classes, and cultures, researchers such as Connell and Coltrane commonly describe hegemonic masculinity as the form of masculinity that is most desired or honored (Doucet 2006).

In their study, Brescoll and Uhlmann (2005) assessed attitudes towards traditional and non-traditional parents by measuring several factors suspected of contributing to

people's reactions, some of which included: personal attitudes; perceptions of how others view nontraditional parents; and the degree to which people are hesitant to express negative regards towards nontraditional parents. They found that participants openly and consistently expressed disregard for SAHDs and working mothers more so than for traditional parents. These findings are consistent with hegemonic masculine ideologies that view the public sphere as masculine and the private as feminine. Brescoll and Uhlmann (2005) argue that perceived norms have been shown to influence behavior, judgments, and the expression of personal attitudes. It was speculated that the dislike for nontraditional parents stemmed from these parents violating socially proscribed gender norms.

At-home fathers, however, were disliked at a greater rate than were working mothers. This may be a result of one of the most powerful gender norms directed toward men: the avoidance of effeminate behavior. While working mothers may have been perceived as entering the workforce out of financial necessity, Brescoll and Uhlmann (2005) suspected that nontraditional fathers were possibly seen as adopting a "feminine" role. Working mothers may earn greater respect than SAHDs because they adopt a higher status. On the other hand, at-home fathers may incur a dramatic decrease in social regard because they assume a highly devalued role (Brescoll and Uhlmann 2005).

Brescoll and Uhlmann (2005) found that there were no gender variations in attitudes towards nontraditional and traditional parents. Both women and men commonly responded negatively to nontraditional parents more often than do traditional parents. Women expressed equal degrees of social disregard for at-home fathers as did men.

Brescoll and Uhlmann (2005) argued that this similarity in attitudes towards non-traditional parents among men and women stemmed from dominate ideologies consensually accepted among men and women that promote inequality.

Conclusion

This review of literature illuminates the broader social context of changing societal expectations of fathers' parenting practices and masculinity as well as emphasizes the "unique constraints" that fathers at the margins may experience (Schindler and Coley 2007:40). What fathers do with and for their children is not only in response to economic and social forces that alter the demands in their lives. Rather, a holist examination of fatherhood considers contextual factors that shape the ways men parent. Thus, this review of literature discussed the history of American fatherhood and the influence that masculinity has on fatherhood. Moreover, contextual factors including race, social class, offender fatherhood, ex-felon fatherhood, and attitudes toward at-home fathers were examined.

Today's fathers are expected to emotionally connect with their children and share in childcare responsibilities. Often referred to as the New Father model, involved fathers are seen as "good fathers". Conversely, uninvolved fathers are typically viewed as "bad fathers" (Forste, Bartkowski and Jackson 2009). In this sense, the term "responsible fathering" underscores the importance of fathers' involvement in the lives of their children. However, although this involvement includes emotional and physical support, it focuses on men's financial contributions to family. That is, employment continues to

be symbolically and materially essential parts of responsible fatherhood (Roy 2004).

Griswold (1993) contends that the powerful link between men and breadwinning

transcends time as well as racial/ethnical divides. With men's ability to provide financial

means of support being so tied up with societal standards for responsible fathering,

financial crises such as unemployment are detrimental to "good" fathering (Schindler and

Coley 2007; see also Doherty, Kouneski, Erikson 1998). To this end, fathers at the

margins, such as ex-felon fathers, may find themselves "renegotiating their role in the

family and seeking out new definitions of fathering" Schindler and Coley (2007:49).

CHAPTER III

THEORY AND METHODOLGY

Theoretical Frameworks

The present study is rooted in the most basic and fundamental assumption of the
sociological perspective; that is, human behavior is embedded in the social. This means
that social forces are perceived as influencing human behavior (Allan 2006). This point
of view provides a basis for understanding the enabling and constraining powers of
structures as well as the dynamics of agency at play in the lives of ex-felon men who
become at-home fathers. Particularly, this study asks: Under what conditions do ex-felon
men assume the role of at-home father? The aim of this research is to gain insight into
possible constraining as well as facilitating factors that may be contributing to ex-felon
men assuming FAHD roles.

The theoretical framework guiding this research consolidates principals drawn
from two areas of study: deviance and gender. From the study of deviance, I combine
perspectives on anomie and strain theories with micro-level ideas about stigmatized
identities and stigma management. Began by Emile Durkheim and expounded upon by
Robert Merton and others, classic anomie and strain theories emphasizes the extreme
conditions and pressures marginalized groups experience that often result in them
accessing alternative means of accomplishing cultural goals. Goffman's (1963) thoughts
on stigma management illuminate the strategies individuals

such as ex-felons employ to control disclosure of discrediting information about their identity. From gender studies, I employ concepts drawn from a gender relations perspective which views gender as both structure as well as agency. In particular, I examine Hondagne-Sotelo and Messner's (1998) work on marginalized masculinity.

The theoretical framework employed in this study is an explanatory approach that highlights structural forces that block upward social mobility for marginalized groups. This framework also explains the influence of structure, agency, and interaction on individuals' choices. While classic anomie and strain theories are typically used to predict or explain criminal behavior, I use theory in this study as explanatory, rather than predictive. Furthermore, rather than relying on a single theory, I employ an amalgam of theoretical principles.

Anomie and Strain Theories

Anomie and strain theories provide insight into some of the ways the disadvantages ex-felons typically endure can constrain as well as enable men's parenting practices. Of particular interest are concepts drawn from three versions of anomie and strain theories. These include: many of Merton's (1938) ideas on anomic conditions and strain produced by blocked access to financial gain; Cloward and Ohlin's (1960) thoughts regarding the impact that differential opportunities have individuals' responses to anomic conditions; and Cohen's (1955) assertions of the ways denial of power and prestige, referred to as status deprivation, can pressure groups to access alternative means of achieving cultural goals.

Emile Durkheim was among the first sociologists to introduce the idea of anomie and strain. According to Durkheim, a functional society is a society in which culture and social structures work together to meet the needs and desires of its members. Anomie is a state of meaninglessness produced by a disassociation between prevailing cultural goals and the structural forces that dictate available pathways to reach those goals (Akers and Sellers 2004). The underlying assumption of anomie and strain theories is the idea that human behavior must be regulated in order for meaning to emerge (Akers and Sellers 2004; see also Allan 2006). When society functions properly, societal regulations organize behaviors according to the group's needs and goals. When disjuncture between regulations and the needs and wants of its members occurs, this disconnect generates dysfunctional or anomic conditions. When marginalized groups like ex-felons deal with heightened degrees of anomic conditions, they often experience pressure or strain which leads to accessing alternative means of achieving cultural goals (Akers and Sellers 2004).

Thus, to describe the ex-felon experience as anomic is to view the challenges ex-felons typically endure as pathological. Societal regulations do not provide a functional amount of opportunities for ex-felons to achieve mainstream cultural goals. Instead, ex-felons are oftentimes systematically denied access to opportunities. Common issues ex-felons confront such as employment barriers (Bushway et al. 2007), stigmatization (Chiricos et al. 2007), and disenfranchisement (Hull 2006; Uggen 2008) block access to legitimate means of achieving dominate cultural interests, purposes, and goals. Tension between societal regulations and cultural desires leaves ex-felons on their own to search for meaning without cultural norms to guide them (Forste, Bartkowski and Jackson

2009). This state of normlessness may pressure ex-felons to access different means of achieving cultural goals.

Social Structure and Anomie Theory

According to Merton (1938), the heart of anomic conditions that marginalized groups frequently endure is blocked access to legitimate means of achieving success, such as occupational and educational opportunities. Because dominant cultural values permeate all social groups, even the most disenfranchised people desire financial success. Anomic conditions produced by blocked opportunities to success places strain on groups to find alternative ways of achieving success goals. While Merton (1938) recognized that most people simply conform to anomic conditions by striving to reach goals within the structurally set limitations of available means, he argued that many do not.

Merton (1938) identified five modes of behavioral adjustment employed by groups to cope with anomic conditions. Of particular importance for the purposes of this research are the two adaption processes Merton (1938) describes as "retreatism" and "innovation".   Unable to legitimately reach culturally prevailing goals, retreatists simply stop trying. Retreatists do not employ illegitimate methods to reach cultural goals because they accept the legitimacy of institutional arrangements that deny them success. In response to this precarious predicament, they find refuge in retreatism –an escapist coping mechanism. Retreatists escape the strain of anomic conditions imposed upon them by completely giving up on prevailing cultural goals as well as attempts to accomplish them (Akers and Sellers 2004). Innovation, on the other hand, is the most common

alternative response to anomic conditions. Like retreatists, innovators endure blocked

access to legitimate means of obtaining financial success. However, unlike retreatists,

innovative adjusters remain committed to the value of success. Thus innovators employ

creative ways to reach their goals, whether legitimate or illegitimate.

Since full-time at-home parenting is an act of giving up on employment goals, at

least for the time being, the concept of retreatism may be useful for the present study.

Primary caregiver fathers often cite work-related issues as a central determining factor of

their family arrangement (Doucet 2006). Research shows that workforce challenges are

among of the top reasons men give for becoming at-home fathers (Russell 1983, 1986;

Lamb 1987; Grbich 1997). In a study on SAHDs, Russell (1986:33) argues that

employment barriers are "clearly prominent in parental explanations of a nontraditional

lifestyle, and therefore needs to be given high priority in any discussion." Norma Radin's

(1988) study on long-term primary caregiver fathers showed that many men did not have

jobs prior to becoming at-home fathers. However, despite employment barriers, not all

men have the opportunity to become an at-home parent. Cloward and Ohlin's (1960)

version of anomie/strain theory, discussed next, moves beyond a focus on blocked

opportunities towards an understanding of how access to specific alternative means

influences the innovative ways marginalized groups may obtain cultural goals.

Differential Opportunity Theory

Cloward and Ohlin (1960) argue that it is presumptuous to assume that all groups

have equal access to alternative modes of adjustment. Not all marginalized groups have

the same opportunities to participate in similar alternative ways of achieving cultural goals. Rather, as Cloward and Ohlin's (1960) Differential Opportunity Theory underscores, it is the availability of alternative means that influences the types of coping behaviors in which groups engage. To this end, it is important not only to recognize that many of the behaviors marginalized groups participate in may be in response to anomic induced strain. Rather, it is critical to understand that the coping mechanisms marginalized groups employ are based upon the opportunities that are available to them. For example, low-income minority fathers may associate stability, teaching, physical interaction, and emotional interaction with being a "good father" because these parenting choices are available to them. Furthermore, offender fatherhood may influence ex-offender father/child relationships. That is, social networks such as good relations with the mothers of their children and, when applicable, prisoner location or negotiator probation officers may be especially salient to preserving or maintaining father/child relationships. Moreover, factors purported to influence fathers becoming primary caregivers include the wife having a positive relationship with her own father and when both the father and mother had been raised in homes with mothers who worked (Radin 1988; Russell 1983). Sex-role ideologies where egalitarian beliefs are held by both the father and mother also appear to be a key predicator of paternal involvement in households where fathers are the primary caretaker (Pleck 1983). However, a limitation of many early studies on non-traditional families is that most only examine white middle-class households (Radin 1988). To this end, Cloward and Ohlin's (1960) Differential

Opportunity Theory may be useful in understanding how the ex-felon experience can facilitate or provide men with 'opportunities' to assume FAHD roles.

Status Deprivation Theory

In addition to blocked access to financial well being and availability of resources to cope with anomic conditions, I examine the influence that denied power and prestige may have on ex-felon men's decisions to become FAHDs. In building this framework, I include macro and micro-level approaches. Cohen's (1955) theory of Status Deprivation is a macro-level approach that agrees with Merton's (1938) basic assertion that blocked opportunities impose strain on groups which can lead to participation in alternative ways of reaching prevailing cultural goals. But, rather than focusing on blocked access to material gain, Cohen's (1955) analysis of primarily low income adolescent males suggests that the deprivation of "status" produces strain. Cohen (1955) argued that the imposition of middle class expectations systematically denies groups that do not adhere to their standards the opportunity to attain status. The deprivation of status leads to strain referred to as status frustration. Consequently, groups seek out alternative ways of gaining status (Cohen 1955; Akers and Sellars 2004).

Although Cohen (1955) employs the term "status" throughout his work, clearly from a sociological point of view, he is referring to structures of prestige and power. Sociologically speaking, all individuals possess some form of status despite the level of associated power and/or prestige. Belonging to a lower class group is as much of a 'status' position as being part of the social elite. Thus for the present study, it is more

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suitable to insert Lemert's (2005) description of prestige and power in place of Cohen's

(1955) use of the word status. Lemert (2005) argues that the collective agreement

between members of society determining which social groups deserve acceptance and

respect and which groups do not is influenced by prestige and power structures. These

structures, like other social structures, are enduring and work to organize society. To this

end, denial or deprivation of power and prestige can be viewed as producing status

frustration.

Stigma Management

I use Goffman's (1963) seminal work on stigmatized identities and stigma

management to examine the idea of status deprivation from a micro-level perspective.

That is, Goffman's (1963) interests in power lay in the interaction and the dynamics of

agency as opposed to structural forces. To this end, stigma is not considered an inherent

characteristic or flaw. Nor is stigma perceived as the result of social structures. Rather,

stigmatized individuals bare a label that "conveys a social identity that is devalued in a

particular social context" (Crocker, Major, and Steele 1998:505). Thus, Goffman (1963)

suggests that the interaction becomes a complex and precarious situation for individuals

who carry a stigmatized identity. As such, Goffam (1963) argues that is the interaction as

opposed to dysfunctional social structures that generate strain for these individuals and

pressures them to engage in various coping mechanisms.

Of particular significance is Goffman's (1963) conceptualization of

"discreditables." Goffman (1963) refers to individuals such as ex-felons whose damaged

identities are not immediately recognizable as 'discreditables'. Because their differences

are not noticeable right away, interactions for discreditables often revolve around

controlling and managing the flow of shameful information disclosed about their identity.

Goffman (1963) illustrates this management process in the popularly quoted line: "To

display or not to display; to tell or not to tell; to let on or not to let on; to lie or not to lie"

(Goffman 1963:42).

Rivera (2008) points out that Goffman's (1963) work conceptualizes three tactics

discreditables commonly employ to avoid embarrassment in interactions. Discreditables

can: (1) avoid contact with "normals", (2) willingly disclose the damaging information,

or (3) attempt to "pass" as a normal by concealing the stigma. Two key factors that

influence the method of management selected are rewards and onset of stigma.

Passing is generally perceived as rewarding and is often the preferred method of

stigma management. On the other hand, individuals commonly engage in practices of

avoidance of interactions in which they are forced to disclose their stigmatized identities.

In the same vein as Merton's idea of retreat, Goffman's (1963) work suggests that ex-

felons may avoid interactions in which they have little to no control over managing their

stigmatized social identity.

Gender Studies

Concepts drawn from Hondagne-Sotelo and Messner's (1998) work on

marginalized men highlight some of the alternative modes of behaviors men typically

engage in when access to power and prestige through traditional sources (such as control)

are denied. Hondagne-Sotelo and Messner (1998:66) argue that men's gender displays

should be viewed "within the context of their positions in a larger social structure of

power." Marginalized men like ex-felons may have little to no control over their own

employment status, income, legal rights, and/or public status. Hondagne-Sotelo and

Messner (1998) found that when men are denied control in the public sphere they

commonly access alternative means of control, particularly over women. That is, a

historical source of power for men has been the systematic domination and subordination

of women. Thus, even when control over resources is denied, the opportunity to

dominate women remains an ever present source of power for men.

   Hondagne-Sotelo and Messner (1998) argue that ideological images of the 'New

Man' as a college educated professional and nurturing father is nothing more than middle

class attempts to marginalize other men. By casting lower-class, minority men into the

light as hypermasculine and aggressive, middle-class men are portrayed as privileged and

egalitarian. Yet, like other images of hegemonic masculinity, most men do not live up to

the standards of the New Man. However, this honored form of masculinity subordinates

other forms of masculinity. In particular, ideological images linked to lower-class,

minority men. As such, Hondagne-Sotelo and Messner (1998) purport that a critical

analysis of changing masculinities should begin by focusing on changes in subordinated

and marginalized masculinities. For example, an innovative way for ex-felon men to

express gendered dimensions of power may be to assume not only a nurturing father role,

but a position of primary caretaker.

Conclusion

The theoretical framework guiding this research consolidates principles from deviance and gender studies. Goffman's (1963) conceptualization of the discreditable emphasizes the level of control certain groups such as ex-felons possess over disclosure of their stigmatized identities due to the inability to visibly view their associated stigma. Ideas drawn from anomie and strain theories merged with gender relations suggest that anomic conditions ex-felons typically endure such as blocked access to financial goals and marginalized masculinity may be produced by the stigmatized criminal/felon identity. Particularly, ex-felon men may experience stigma management strain as they try to enter/remain in a workforce that typically discriminates against ex-felons. This experience of strain may lead ex-felon men to retreat away from the workforce which most often exposes their stigmatized identity towards possibly safer social settings where stigma may be more manageable. Differing social factors combined with contemporary societal expectations of men may provide some ex-felon fathers with opportunities to seek refuge from this strain by assuming a FAHD role.

Methodology

A Qualitative Approach

Qualitative research designs are commonly employed when studying hidden populations (Lambert and Wiebeil 1990; Wiebeil 1990; Strauss and Corbin1990; and Singer 1999). Hidden populations, according to Lambert and Wiebeil (1990), are populations the public knows "little about." Furthermore, as Singer (1999) writes, these

groups are "populations comparatively difficult to find… whose boundaries, characteristics, and distributions are not known" (130). To this extent, the FAHD population is viewed as a hidden population for the purposes of this research.

McCraken (1988) suggests conducting qualitative research before attempting to collect quantitative data whenever researching a "new" phenomenon.   Qualitative methods are recognized for strong descriptive and exploratory research designs (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest, and Namey 2005).

In-Depth Interview Research Design

In order to address the research question: Under what conditions do ex-felon men assume the role of at-home father, I employed an in-depth interview technique. I conducted in-depth interviews with ten FAHDs. Qualitative designs, such as the interview, make it possible to overcome limitations in research by seeking to understand given research topics or problems through the eyes of involved participants (Mack, et al. 2005).

The interview questionnaire consisted of mostly open-ended questions. These questions were preapproved by the University of North Carolina at Greensboro IRB. Questions were intentionally phrased in as much of a nondirective matter as possible. To minimize the level of obtrusiveness, interviews opened and closed with questions considered the least sensitive while more sensitive questions were asked midway (McCracken 1988).

Interviews were conducted in a neutral setting, easily accessible for participants. Specifically, I met participants at local libraries and/ or coffee shops. Interviews lasted approximately 65 minutes, ranging from roughly 60 to 85 minutes in length.

Targeted Population

All participants met the description of a FAHD provided above. This includes men who are: (1) ex-felons, (2) out of the labor force, (3) primary cargivers to a child or children 15 years old or younger, and (4) at least 18 years old. This criterion follows a temporal order indicating that men were ex-felons before becoming an at-home father. Men who received a first time felony offense during or after being a primary caregiver father were excluded.

Sample Size and Data Collection Procedures

I conducted interviews with ten FAHDs who reside in Guilford County, North Carolina. I arrived at the sample size of ten primarily due to time constraints concerning first, the amount of time it took to gain access to this hidden population and, second the complexities around locating willing participants. While it is not uncommon for researchers to experience difficulties obtaining research participants, the nascent nature of this study influenced the decision to conduct interviews with ten FAHDs.

I applied a two-dimensional recruitment strategy to potentially allow for FAHDs with varying backgrounds. I began recruitment by approaching men in community settings who appeared to be fathers (i.e., men interacting with children in a perceived

parental capacity in parks, grocery stores, etc.). Additionally, I posted recruitment flyers

on public bulletin boards. Flyers where hung in libraries, grocery stores, community

centers, and college campuses throughout Guilford County, North Carolina. Upon

locating participants, I used the snowball sampling technique to gain other participants.

The snowball technique relies on referrals from an initial participant(s) to

generate additional participants. Simply put, existing participants were asked to provide

me with access to other participants, and so forth. Selection bias and validity of findings

are primary concerns with this technique (Atkinson and Flint 2001; Noy 2008). While

snowball sampling may lend itself to these risks, validity of results heavily depends on

replication of findings through additional studies.

Despite these drawbacks, snowball sampling is a popularly employed technique

when researching hidden populations. Because members of hidden populations may

engage in practices to intentionally conceal their identities, a certain degree of trust may

be needed in order to obtain research participants (Lambert and Wiebeil 1990; Wiebeil

1990; and Singer 1999). Snowball sampling allows the researcher access to social

networks within the community that otherwise might have been denied.

In the utter absence of existing knowledge on FAHDs, snowball sampling was

particularly useful. Specially, informants acted as gateways into this overlooked

population. They helped to establish a rapport with the targeted population that may

otherwise be denied. Describing the saliency employing snowball sampling and the

fundamental role of informants when studying hidden populations, particularly

individuals addicted to drugs, Wiebel (1990:8) writes:

Indigenous informants are a final and most valuable source of information to the researcher attempting to identify difficult-to-reach populations. Without question, street contact cultivated over years of ethnographic investigations among Chicago's drug users comprise my greatest resource for identifying emergent phenomena and the otherwise hidden populations associated with relatively rare or novel behaviors.

Before beginning data collection participants were asked to sign a consent form. A copy of a signed form was provided to participants for their own personal records. Per participant permission, interviews were audio-taped. However, if a willing participant was uncomfortable being tape-recorded even after being reminded of confidentiality measures to be taken, I took notes on my password protected, personal laptop during the interview. Despite possible drawbacks associated with note taking, the decision to continue interviews with participates who did not wish to be tape recorded was based on difficulties obtaining suitable and willing subjects. During and immediately following each interview, I jotted down my perceptions of participants' body language.

Recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim. Transcriptions are stored on my password protected, personal laptop as well as saved on a back-up USB memory stick. All data collected will remain confidential. All participants were assigned pseudonyms. I have stored a list of pseudonyms and corresponding names in a locked filing cabinet separate from all other data collected. Audio-tapes, notes, and transcriptions of the interviews are stored in a locked filing cabinet (separate from the above mentioned) and will not be made available in their entirety to any source other than myself. In the event of a publication or presentation resulting from this research, no personally identifiable information will be made public.

Coding Procedures

Data was coded and analyzed using the computer program ATLAS.ti. This software is designed to assist with maintaining and organizing qualitative data. A list of initial codes was developed based on data collected during the interview and literature review. These codes were edited and/or omitted and additional codes added after analyzing each transcript and identifying significant passages. After all transcripts were coded, related codes were grouped into a category. Correlations were run on all of the categories. After the final set of categories was developed, I reanalyzed transcripts using only the final set. Analytic conclusions were derived from findings that emerge from the final set of categories (Hughes 1997; Strauss and Corbin 1990).

Problems with Studying FAHDs and Data Limitations

Various factors impeded conventional methods of accessing participants for this research. As mentioned earlier, prior to the present study, FAHDs were a nameless, shapeless population. Databases containing the names, addresses, or demographic information about FAHDs do not exist. The absence of local programs that offer assistance to ex-felon men who are not actively seeking employment meant that I had to employ alternative means to gain access to this hidden population. Snowball sampling proved to be an effective method, but not in the anticipated sense. Men who participated in this study overwhelmingly indicated that they felt cut off from the outside world and consequently, the majority could not refer me to other possible participants. Interestingly, several men who inquired about the present study but, due to criteria

requirements mentioned above were unable or unwilling to participate, provided valuable leads that resulted in locating most participants.

Inevitably, this research will result in findings specific to FAHDs who reside in Guilford County, NC. For example, a particular find analyzed in the next chapter showing that most participants' girlfriends attended college may be a result of the number of colleges in Guildford County. However, like most qualitative research, the purpose for employing this approach is not an issue of generalizability. Rather, it is to: 1) gain access to the hidden FAHD population and 2) provide insight on possible interrelationships and patterns of association to be validated only through similar findings in future research.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Demographics

All men self-identified as African American fathers who, at the time, provided primary care to children 15 years old or younger. Participants' ages ranged from 19 to 37. Four fathers were married while the remaining fathers resided with their girlfriends. The majority (n=8) of fathers had been convicted of criminal offenses previous to their most recent conviction. Most fathers indicated that they had not worked a paying job since their last conviction (n=6). Exactly half of the fathers had been a FAHD to their children in the past (for a chart listing FAHDs' demographics see Appendix E).

Results

Results from the current study revealed that both structure and agency were important factors in influencing participants' decisions to pursue a FAHD role. The most frequently occurring themes were: 1) anomic workforce conditions, 2) stigma management strain, 3) opportunities to at-home father, 4) isolation, 5) temporary status, and 6) children attended daycare and/or school.

Analysis

Anomic Workforce Conditions

Consistent with previous research findings on ex-felons (Hirsch et al. 2002), participants all endured what can be described as heightened anomic conditions. By in large, fathers attributed anomic conditions including: employment barriers, vulnerability, and marginalized masculinity to the stigma associated with the felon label. Perhaps of even greater significance are accounts of the social setting in which most fathers identified experiencing these conditions –the workforce.

Stigma

By in large, participants talked more about issues around stigmatization more than any other challenge they faced as an ex-felon. Every FAHD spoke at length about the stigmatized social identity associated with being an ex-felon. Particularly, fathers discussed the negative outlooks they felt employers have on (ex) felons. Greg, 19 year old FAHD to 2 year old twins, says:

> They {i.e., employers} ain't gonna hire nobody like me… you know what I'm saying? You know… nobody that's got a record like mines. It's like you make a few mistakes and you can't never live it down. They won't never let you live that shit down. So, I guess doing my time don't mean shit. I guess to them I'm still a criminal. And don't nobody wanna hire no criminal. I mean, what am I suppose to do about it? I can't erase my past. And I can't make them change they minds either.

Scott, a 36 year old FAHD of five, felt that having been convicted of a felony offense discredited his true character. Scott argued that having to admit to being a convicted felon casted him out of employment opportunities at the application stage:

You are not the man on the application. You are the criminal who is a felon. No matter what you put on that application –your previous experience, your high school diploma, none of that matters. It's like, once they see you've been convicted of a felony offense, they're not going to hire you because in their minds you're nothing… nothing but a criminal.

Doug, FAHD to three sons and one daughter:

I know what they think about me… I mean, yeah, I got charges. And, they gotta worry about am I gonna do something crazy. But, I don't even think they worry about that cause as soon as they see them charges, they probably just count me out.

Pete, a 19 year old FAHD to a six month old daughter says:

They be thinking dat I'm just a criminal and don't have nothing to offer they place of business. When they see that I ain't never had no job except for when I was in prison, them people ain't dumb. They be figuring out dat I be locked up more most of my life.

John, age 34 FAHD for the past 5 years, argues:

But it really isn't right the way they judge you. I've already been judged. I've already served my time. So how do these people figure its okay to decide not to hire me because of my past? Um, I'm just saying…they got it all messed up. It ain't me they need to be worrying about.

Mike, 20 year old FAHD to a 2 year old daughter, states:

I think they be looking at me like I'm not qualified for no job just because I'm a felon.

Todd, FAHD to five children all under the age of ten tells of an encounter he had:

So, I was at the {restaurant name} and I saw some of the same people dat worked at the place where I had interviewed for a job at. So one guy comes up to me laughing and shit, and starts talking about how the position out there was still open. Then, just as he was about to walk off he says "but you know we do criminal background checks".

Lawrence, a 28 year old FAHD to four children, suggested that race even further compounded his situation.

It's hard out there on a felon. And I'm black too. Man, you know it's hard for brothers like me to get a job.

Claims of negative outlooks held towards ex-felons all revolved around fathers' experiences in the workforce. Above discussions appeared to evoke feelings of frustration in fathers, as negative attitudes regarding ex-felons held by the workforce were perceived as impeding their opportunities for employment. Fathers' claims of employee discrimination did not appear unwarranted. Rather, the stigma of being an ex-felon seemingly acted as a catalyst for additional anomic workforce conditions. That is, fathers' accounts of stigmatization all occurred in the workforce. Resultant acts of discrimination centered on issues pertaining to rejection from the workforce, including employment barriers, vulnerability, and marginalized masculinity.

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Employment Barriers

Although fathers clearly drew connections between negative attitudes held towards ex-felons by the workforce with the employment challenges they experienced, inability to obtain/maintain employment was the sole reason fathers gave for becoming FAHDs. All fathers adamantly blamed the employment challenges they faced since their last conviction of a felony offense for their current family arrangements.

Brian, a 23 year old first time FAHD, says:

The reason I take care of, um, my daughters the way I do is because I have to. I really didn't have a choice in the matter. You know, because this ain't my choice at all. Nah, this right here ain't nobody's choice. Not a man's choice anyway. But there aren't any jobs out there. I know, cause I've looked. Ma'am, the best thing I could do was be there for my daughters the way I am.

Steve, the most recent FAHD, echoes Brian's sentiments:

I ain't have no a choice in the matter. Ain't nobody hiring no felons. ….

Greg says:

…if I had a job I wouldn't have to take care of the kids all of the time.

John describes how unemployment impacted his decisions to become a FAHD:

I've been doing it for a long time. But it's not like I wouldn't take a job over it any day. I mean, that's the reason I'm doing everything for my kids anyway instead of their mother.

Scott explains:

If I could get a job and keep it, things would be a lot different. I wouldn't have to be at home all day taking care of children.

Pete puts it this way:

I take most of the care of my daughter instead of her mother because I'm the one who ain't got no job.

Although most FAHDs were employed prior to being convicted of a felony offense, less than half had worked outside of prison since being convicted of their most recent offense (n=4). Being an ex-felon appeared to impose barriers to employment for most fathers, such as employer reluctance to hire convicted felons and employers being "overly" suspicious of their integrity (see Uggen, Manza, and Behrens 2004). Doug describes his experience applying for a job:

…I filled out the application right there in the building. You know, it wasn't one of them online applications. Anyway, so I tell the guy up front, 'look I gotta charge but it was 5 years ago'. And he looks at me all funny, like I just needed to through my application in the fucking dump on my way out. Then he says something like if it's a misdemeanor the boss man might go on ahead and hire me. But I ain't getting no job out there if I had been convicted of a felony.

Steve claimed that a job interview was abruptly ended once the potential employer realized that Steve had been convicted of a felony offense:

The interview was going good too. You know we were talking about the man's kids and stuff. But then when he looked down at my application, I was like thinking to myself, 'awh damn, I wonder if he done seen that I gotta record yet'. I could tell when he read it too cause it was like he went from smiling to having so

stupid ass look on his face. Then he was like all of da sudden checking his phone and messing wit stuff and stuff. And then that was it. He reached over the table, shook my hand and said he would call me. Man, he just did that mess cause he wasn't trying to hire nobody wit a felony.

Brian says:

One time this man told me that he really liked me and that he would give me a job but he just didn't feel comfortable hiring somebody whose gotta bunch of charges.

Upon release from prison, John returned to his old job. However, John argues that people treated him differently, particularly his supervisor who would check behind him more frequently. Although John had been convicted for sale of illegal narcotics, he contends that he was treated like a 'thief' and was eventually fired from his place of employment due to his supervisor's suspicions of him. John talks about the events that led up to him losing his job:

Some jackass had stole {co-worker's name} a toolbox outta da back of his truck. Now it coulda been anybody, right. Some prick coulda walked by and stole da damn box for all I know. Uhh, to make a long story short, I get called in da office, he {John's supervisor} starts talking about two people said they saw me take {co-worker's name} the box outta da back of his truck, and that muthafucker fires me right on da spot. I didn't have da time to defend myself or nothing. He just let me go. All it was, was the fact that I got a record and they knew it.

Scott argues that he lost his job of 3 years when new management learned of his criminal background. Scott describes how suspiciously he was treated by new management prior to being let go:

I had been working there for 3 years, 3 years. I'm saying, I don't know what they thought I was gonna do but it must of been something cause they was trying, ah you know, like keep they eyes on me.

Employment barriers appeared to be a fundamental condition under which men pursued FAHD positions. Throughout interviews, fathers insisted that they would eagerly "give up" being a FAHD for employment. Thus, fathers' current status as unemployed seemed to influence their decisions to take on primary caregiver roles. Moreover, for those fathers who were able to obtain employment, inabilities to maintain their jobs appeared to be a factor in decisions to become FAHDs. A few of these fathers indicated that their experiences of being let go, seemingly due to being an ex-felon, made them cautious and uncertain about future employment.

While it appears that employment challenges were central influences on men becoming FAHDs, research studies emphasize that not all fathers faced with employment challenges decide to become at-home dads (Coltrane 1996). To this end, in addition to issues of stigma and employment, findings from the current study suggest that vulnerability and marginalized masculinity were also key tenants of the anomic workforce conditions ex-felon men encountered.

Vulnerability

Vulnerability seemed to be an overarching theme consistent throughout men's stories. Fathers talked about feeling "powerless" in their experiences and being disrespected. Unemployment, educational barriers, and devalued prison work histories were common themes. (Issues around power and masculinity were discussed in such

great detail that a separate section titled Marginalized Masculinities is dedicated to these matters below.)

Unemployment, in large part, rendered many participants vulnerable to a host of financial hardships, such as relying on others for, at minimum, basic necessities of shelter and food. Only two men reported living alone previous to becoming a FAHD. Most fathers resided with their mothers (n=4) or roommates/friends (n=3). Lawrence shares his experiences with homelessness:

> I couldn't even um, uh take care of um, of myself. Cause, well… You know like, nobody wouldn't hire me. I ain't have nowhere to stay. I done been in shelters, all ah em. I done stayed with one friend here for a minute then another friend here for a minute. You know? Dat mess was crazy.

John says:

> It's a burden being a burden. I mean, it's like you are just there, always in somebody's um way. It, it's like um, let me see how's the best way to describe it… It's um, it's like um, you're almost not needed. It's like you're just bothering people by being in they space, where they pay the bills. And you're just living there. Man, you know you're a burden to them. Even if they say you're not. Cause it's like um, you're not helping out by being there. I don't know. You just feel in the way.

Greg speaks to the ways low educational attainment has rendered him vulnerable in the workforce.

> …I ain't even finish high school, well, yet. I mean, yet. I mean, I ain't finished high school yet because I'm going back. But, um, without a high school diploma, I don't even stand a chance getting no job.

Both Todd and Steve argued that jobs worked while in prison were discredited in the workforce. Todd asserts that including work experience gained while in prison drew too much attention to his criminal record. Consequently, Todd refrained from including jobs worked as well as skills developed while incarcerated on job applications. Steve argues along similar lines:

When I didn't put the jobs I worked in {name of prison} down on my resume, I got called in for interviews… I don't even know if the bossman knew on my last job when he hired me about my past like that. Cause, I ain't tell em. I ain't tell em nothing. I'm saying {laughter}, I ain't put down that I had no previous work experience in {name of prison} or none of that.

Scott's claim sums up feelings of vulnerability:

It's like you're powerless out there. I mean, you can't make somebody give you a job. You're just at their mercy and that's not cool. That's not cool at all. They disrespect you and treat you any kinda way because they know how bad you need a job.

Marginalized Masculinity

Unemployment denied participants traditional power relations for men. Fathers indicated that unemployment made them feel "less than a man" and "in the way" of family members who helped support them prior to becoming FAHDs. Moreover, employment symbolized manhood for many participants. Fathers wanted their children to see them leaving for work in the mornings as opposed to staying at home.

Lawrence says:

I should be the one with two jobs. Uh, I should be bringing in dat. It pisses me off knowing that I gave it my all to find a job, but they wouldn't give me the time of

day. Now don't get me wrong, I love taking care of kids, I just wish I was bring in a check.

Pete compares how living with his mother verses being a FAHD impacted his

masculinity:

I was living wit my mother, you know like ah, before staying wit my girl and our kids. That kindda made me feel like I was in the way. I wasn't bringing in no money or nothing. Well, I… I still don't bring in no money but I help keep the house in order. I'm able to make decisions, I'm not in the way, and I have even learned how to cook. I keep the yard looking nice, I help with homework and fix things around the house. I know I will land a job one day, but for right now I'll hold things down from inside the house.

Scott emphasizes the ways rejection from the workforce rendered him powerless

and underscores symbolic dimensions of masculinity.

With no job it seems like you have to follow everyone else's led, and that's something I'm not use to. Every time the phone rings I think it's a job calling me to come in and start work, and that's no way for a man to live. Even though being home, I have grown as a father; I just want my family to see me leaving to go to work every morning.

Doug argues:

I was taught a man should always support his family financially. When you don't have a job, you feel less than a man. It seems like I'm out of place. I even applied to clean up after a parade and they turned me away. When you have a job, you have sense of pride, some self-worth. You're contributing to society, your family, and also your country.

Brian speaks on how frustrating unemployment can be for him as a man:

I don't know one man that wouldn't like to take care of his family. It's frustrating to live in country that has all of this money and opportunity, but won't let me get my foot in the door, and I was born here.

John asserts:

I used to bring in all of our income. I bought all of the food, the kids clothes, I paid rent as well as utilities. These days I can't find a job to pay me minimum wage. I can't help but to feel like I let my family down, because we have had to scale back in a major way… I feel a man's home is his castle, and takes money to run a castle.

FAHDs' vivid accounts of the tension between their desires to fulfill the provider role and being systematically blocked out of opportunities to obtain gainful employment were in constant interplay with issues of vulnerability and marginalized masculinities. Narratives from participants spoke to the ways in which hegemonic images of masculinity continue to be the standard by which other forms of masculinity are measured (Doucet 2004). As reviewed earlier, hierarchical distinctions among masculinities operate through dimensions of power, production, emotional, and symbolic relations (Connell 2005; also see Connell 2002). Participants' experiences of rejection from the workforce seemingly marginalized their masculinity in several ways. In terms of power and production, rejection from the workforce denied fathers traditional sources of control over resources for men. Consequently, fathers indicated that they felt humiliated and powerless. Symbolically, fathers were concerned that they were unable to display valued images of masculinity. Particularly, participants desired to uphold hegemonic images in eyes of their children that connect masculinity and employment.

Stigma Management Strain

Participants appeared to experience stigma management strain as they attempted to enter/remain in the workforce which often discriminates against ex-felons (Uggen 2008). In the workforce, fathers were not able to control disclosure of their criminal histories. Rather, despite their efforts, participants' identities were frequently exposed. This strain was apparent in fathers' attempts to conceal their criminal histories, claims of not being "a bad guy,"' and a refusal to be "held down" by negative images of ex-felons held by the workforce.

Concealing Criminal Histories

FAHDs anticipated being turned down for jobs due to being an ex-felon. These concerns did not seem unwarranted, as participants had experienced a great deal of rejection from the workforce since their last felony offense. Inability to control management of their stigmatized social identities in the workforce subjected fathers to scrutiny and discrimination. Attempting to conceal their stigmatized social identity, two fathers admitted to lying on job applications about their criminal record. Lawrence argues:

> At da time I really needed a job. I'm saying, either somebody was gonna give me a job or I was gonna have to do something else… you know what I'm saying? To be honest, I really ain't care nothing about lying on no job application. Cause, it it didn't lie and they ain't get me no job, I telling you, I woulda been back on them streets… you know what I'm saying?

Todd also talks about attempts to hide his past criminal history from employers:

It's always awkward when it comes to that. I mean, when you get to the point of the application where it asks if you've ever been 'convicted of a felony offense', that's a real awkward situation to be in. It's sort of disrespectful cause why should I have to tell about something that happened in my past. You know? Why does that even matter?

…Yeah, I've lied on applications on several occasions about not having a record. But, they usually do criminal background checks anyway. So, it's really not even worth the lie. But, you really just want a chance. You know? You just really want to be considered.

As previously discussed, Goffman (1963) argued that passing as "normal" is a common tactic stigmatized individuals employ, particularly when there is some perceived benefit for passing. As such, participants lied or omitted information about their criminal backgrounds on job applications in order to get hired. Yet, fathers could not conceal their criminal backgrounds for long. Rather, attempts to pass as individuals who did not have criminal pasts were ultimately unsuccessful (see employment barriers discussed above). Thus, this popularly employed strategy for managing disclosure of a stigmatized social identity (i.e., passing) was found ineffective in the workforce.

But I'm Really Not a Bad Guy!

Fathers' contestations that they were not the devalued individuals the workforce perceived them to be highlighted their struggles. Participants' images of themselves appeared to be in direct contrast with negative outlooks on ex-felons held by the workforce. Despite these negative perceptions, most fathers did not appear to internalize the stigma. Rather, several FAHDs maintained that they were 'good' men.

Brian says:

You know, I wish these jobs would give me a chance. They think I'm just some criminal, but I'm really not a bad guy. I did go to college. I didn't graduate, but I do have some college education. Plus, I have a lot of previous work experience and I take care of my daughters. Ma'am, I'm telling you, I ain't no bad dude.

Doug asserts:

I even have my GED and still get treated like I'm coming in to rob the place. I know I made um, mistakes in the past, but I ain't the same person anymore. I just want to work like everyone else, and take care of my house.

Greg argues:

They look at somebody like me with my messed up background and just turn me away. All I need is a job for me, my wife, and kids. I can do any job using my hands, like construction or brick mason. But they not giving me a chance. They won't even call be back. I'm not a bad person.

Mike tells:

If these jobs would look at the person and not the charges, then more people like me that have got into trouble, would be able to get a job. All I ask for is the opportunity.

The message behind FAHDs' assertions of not being bad guys seemed to be that they were qualified individuals who should be given the same opportunities for employment as any other worthy candidate. Despite educational background and job skills, however, participants were denied employment. By declaring that they were not bad guys, FAHDs may have been attempting to divert focus away from their criminal backgrounds toward the good guys them perceived themselves to be. Yet, in the

workforce they were unable to effectively convey this message. Hence, they continued to battle with the strain of attempting to manage their stigma.

They Can't Hold Me Down

Fathers expressed an unwillingness to allow the negative outlooks that others may hold against them as (ex) felons to determine or dictate their behaviors. Particularly, a few men mentioned that they would not allow rejection from the workforce cause them to engage in illegal behaviors or even worse, return to prison.

Steve argues:

> You know, a lot of people in this situation would just go back and do what they know best in the streets, but not me. I ain't going back to prison for nobody. I know something will come through one day, they can't hold me down forever.

Pete:

> Trouble is easy to get into and hard to get out of… No matter what I have to do, it won't be crime. After my daughter was born, I told myself that I will always be there for her. Things may be hard for us right now, but yeah, I know they gonna get better.

Todd:

> Even if you can't find work at a plant, you can find it in the hood. The hardest thing for a man with five kids is not being able to find work. The hood offers a lot of work, work that can easily help me take care of my family. But, I don't want the trouble that come wit these options. Plus, I wouldn't want none of my children to think it's cool to do anything illegal.

John declares:

You couldn't pay me enough to go back to prison. I'll rather be in the house forever than result to a life of crime. I might hear a lot of noise right now, but something good will happen soon.

Even though participants were unable to control exposure of their stigmatized social identity in the workforce, fathers did not appear to accept stigmatization. Pressures and strains from the workforce, although adversely impacting many aspects of FAHDs' lives, were unable to shatter their hopes for the future. Participants appeared to be optimistic that the challenges they faced would not cause them to resort to criminal activities or recidivate. Rather, the above statements indicate that fathers would not allow the stigma of their criminal backgrounds to further limit their life chances.

Opportunities to at-Home Father

As mentioned above, Cloward and Ohlin (1960) argued that life takes place within a social milieu that, in large part, constrains as well as facilitates behaviors. Thus, when groups are denied traditional means of achieving cultural goals, the alternative methods they employ to reach those goals are shaped by the opportunities they have to engage in alternative behaviors. This point highlights the need to understand contextual factors in participants' lives that may have presented them with opportunities to become primary caregiver fathers. Factors that possibly contributed to participants' opportunities to at-home father are discussed within four frames: family support networks, definition of a 'good father', entrepreneur/college student girlfriend, and just had a baby.

Family Support Networks

Fathers' experiences in the private sphere were quite different from those in the public. In the home, fathers had emotional and financial support from their mothers as well as wives/girlfriends (for support networks see Walker 2010). Emotional support consisted of, for example, mothers' declarations that they were "proud" of their sons for being "real" men and "good" fathers to their children.

Mike describes the support he gets from his mother:

…Nah, she {i.e., Mike's mother} proud of me. She tells me I'm a good father all of the time. I've never seen her this happy about something I've done. That's one of da things that keep me going, just to know when I'm feeling down or upset about my situation that she's right there encouraging me and giving me tips on raising my children and being there for my girl.

Pete talks about the emotional support he gets from his mother:

Man…my momma be over our house more than she be at her own. But, she always let me know how strong I am for being a good man and a good father. I could let, you know, all that stuff {i.e., employment barriers, financial hardships, marginalized masculinity, etc.} mess me up. But I don't, you know. But I don't cause I'm a real man. My momma be saying I'm more of man than my father ever was because he wasn't there for me, or my brother and two sisters. I'm doing a good thing and she proud.

Participants' wives/girlfriends reportedly reinforced these notions. Fathers seemed to intuitively know that their wives/girlfriends understood the hardships they encountered as ex-felons. For many men, this "understanding" dealt with issues concerning marginalized masculinity. That is, most men indicated that their wives/girlfriends recognized their current roles as FAHD as masculine.

It's hard out here if you have a record like mine. The world can be a cruel place when people find out you are a felon. It's like a disease that no one wants to catch. That's one the biggest reasons I'm so close to my wife. She's one of the few people that has forgiven me. She could have easily turned her back like so many other people, but she stuck by my side. She understands the problems I deal with being a felon and all. My wife makes it a point to tell me how much of a man I am for taking care the house and kids. She tells me that most men couldn't do what I do and that's what I need to hear for motivation.

…my ole lady is perfect {Laughter}. She don't let me get down on myself. She say that what I'm doing is just like a full time job, and ain't nothing wrong with me being at home with our kids when goes off to work. She say you have to be comfortable wit who you are, and be a strong man to keep it up.

Look, I feel like this, if my wife and children are happy with our situation, then nothing much matters after that. My, um, wife calls me a good man for being a good father to my kids. She always make me take notice to how our children listen when I ask them to do things around the house, and also how they love to play games, and follow everywhere I go. She told me if I wasn't such a good father they wouldn't feel so loved.

When my girl come in from work the kids are in the bed sleep. She ask me every night did they take a bath, did they brush they teeth, did they finish they home work and I answer the same way every time, yes, yes, and yes. Then she thanks me for being the type of father I am. When I was locked up she would have to do what I'm doing now on top of holding a job, and she still finds the time to tell me I'm a good father.

Moreover, while unemployed, a few participants expressed feeling confident that their wives/girlfriends would assume financial responsibilities. Mike puts it this way:

You know your girl's gonna let you stay wit em. She aint gonna leave her baby's father out there like that.

In addition to encouragement and financial assistance, these networks of familial support appeared to provide FAHDs alternative images of masculinity and fatherhood. Possibly of central importance are the ways family support networks de-marginalized images of men as primary caregivers. Men's primary caregiver roles were celebrated and uplifted as supreme images of masculinity in that, despite adverse conditions, FAHDs remained committed to and there for their families. That is, in these particular instances, family support networks appeared to define/redefine masculinity and fatherhood around images of men's dedication to their family and strength to persevere through difficult and uncertain times even if those times required adjusting family arrangements and assuming nontraditional family roles.

Definitions of a "Good Father"

Although FAHD's clearly considered breadwinning an essential aspect of fatherhood (and masculinity), participants' definitions of a 'good father' primarily focused on teaching morals, providing emotional support, and physical presence (see Roy 2004). Several fathers' definition of a 'good father' centered on moral teaching. For example Greg says:

> …I mean, you know what I'm saying… a good father, um you know, is someone who is there for his children. A man that teaches them right from wrong, and also disciplines his children when needed. A good father will always set good examples for his children.
> Similarly, Doug speaks about fathers' responsibilities to instill religious values:

A good father would take his kids to church. He will teach them about God and the ways of the Bible. He will teach his children not to make the same mistakes in life he did. A good father is honest and always available for his family.

Lawrence's definition of a good father emphasizes protection:

Good fathers take care of they families by all means. Um, he protects his wife and kids. And, ah… he take care of anything his family needs him to.

Other fathers focused on emotional support. John says:

A real father shows his children a lot of love. He takes them places and rewards them when they are doing good and punish them when they are being bad. He tells his children that he loves them, and spends as much time as he can with his children.

Brian asserts:

A good father listens to what his children tell him. He realizes that each of his children are different and that the same approach will not work for all of them. He provides for them in every way he can. He gets his children involved in positive activities that will help them to have a better future.

The above definitions of a "good father" seemed to be a contributing factor to participants' opportunities to be at-home fathers. As mentioned earlier, Roy's (2004) study on low-income fathers found that although fathers may consider provider roles a fundamental aspect of fatherhood, the new fatherhood model has provided them the chance to be a "good father" as nurturing and involvement are central. Similarly, a focus on qualities such as moral teaching, protection, and physical presence granted FAHDs opportunities to be "good fathers."

Entrepreneur/College Student Girlfriend

Reportedly, most wives/girlfriends had busy and seemingly hectic daily schedules. Many of the fathers said that their wives/girlfriends were entrepreneurs. Others indicated that their girlfriends were college students as well as worked paying jobs. Although most fathers indicated that their children where either attending daycare or school (discussed below), wives'/girlfriends' demanding schedules meant that fathers spent several hours throughout the day and evenings providing care to their children.

> Even though I don't have a job right now, my girlfriend does. She has a good job, and goes to school full time. So me being at home with da kids helps out. But by da time she graduate, I hope to have a good job too so our kids can have some of da things I didn't…

> When I got out, my wife had got her own nail shop. She is good too and got some other girls working for her too. She is gone all day and sometime half the night. So it's nothing for her to come home to a clean house and dinner with the children already in the bed so she can relax and get some rest.

> My girl works two full time jobs and goes to school online. She has a little break between jobs to come home eat, see the kids, and then she has to leave. I don't like to see her work so much, and I tell her all of the time, when I find a job, she can quit one of hers so we can spend more time together.

> My girl sells {name of cosmetics} and goes to school. She puts a lot of her college money into the house as far as paying bills. Sometimes she pay all our bills up for several months with her college money. With her selling {name of cosmetics} her and my daughters get a lot of that girl stuff for free.

Because several colleges are in Guilford County, North Carolina, participants' girlfriends attending college may be an especially limited find. Given these limitations, the above findings suggest at least two things. First, drawing from participants' accounts,

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significant others appeared to be actively involved in the workforce. Thus, women's commitment to their own careers may have been a determinate of men's family roles (see Russell 1986). Additional, wives'/girlfriends' rigorous schedules seemed to restrict the amount of time they had to provide daily care to their children. Therefore, it is possible that the need for someone to provide primary care to participants' children may have also been a contributing factor to opportunities to at-home father.

Just Had a Baby

Research on incarcerated fatherhood suggests that residential fathers typically resided with their youngest child prior to incarceration (Hairston 2001). Along similar lines, a few fathers in the present study indicated that the FAHD role gave them time to spend with their infant/toddler children.

> I just had a baby. (Laughter) Well, my girl just had a baby. And, she mean everything to me. She's the reason I'm changing my life around. I love seeing how she reacts to things. And, I also, um love her little smile. And, I enjoy being home wit her. We very close already. And, I'ma do everything to stay out, and not miss any part of her life.

> My youngest child just turned one. She is wylin' or should I say running all over da house. This is the first child out of five that I been in the house full time with and saw all of the early stages with. Before my conviction I had a job when all of my other children were born. But I'm glad I'm around to see it and wouldn't trade it for the world.

This find may be connected to the previous entrepreneur/college student girlfriend find. That is, fathers seemingly did not want to miss out on their children growing up. Moreover, these families were in need of someone to provide primary care to their

children. As such, the recent birth of a child may have provided fathers with even further

opportunities to be at-home dads.

Isolation

Whether due to the number of tasks associated with their role as FAHDs, desires

to primarily focus on family, or other untold reasons, most participants experienced some

degree of isolation from the outside world. Tasks such as getting the children ready for

school in the morning and putting them to bed at night, preparing dinner, cleaning the

house, and helping the children with their homework appeared to occupy much of

participants' time. Fathers made comments such as: "I don't get out much" and "I don't

hang wit my friends anymore, I be in the house all of the time." Perhaps Scott puts it

best:

> It's like I don't even know what's going out there in the streets anymore. I don't
> try to keep up. I just stay in the house and do what I have to do. I have enough
> going on at home that I wouldn't have time to be on the streets even if I wanted to
> {laughter}.

To a large extent, isolation can be viewed as providing FAHDs with greater

abilities to control the management of the stigma of both being an ex-felon as well as an

at-home father. Goffman (1963) argues that a tactic individuals use to manage disclosure

of their stigmatized social identity is to avoid contact with "normals". Notwithstanding

the tremendous responsibilities of being a primary caregiver to children, isolation from

the outside world may shield men from possible negative attitudes towards ex-felons as

well as SAHDs held by the public. By not spending time with their friends or hanging

out in the community, fathers did not have to face the moral judgment or scrutiny from the public. Rather, isolation granted fathers greater control over exposure of their social identities and subsequent stigmatization.

Temporary Status

Research suggests that primary caregiving for fathers is often a role that men take on short-term as opposed to throughout their children's lives (Radin and Russell 1983). Although the present study did not include follow-up interviews with FAHDs and therefore cannot support these claims, along similar lines, men did not seem to consider their role as FAHD to be a permanent position. Instead, several men suggested that they thought of their FAHD role as a temporary status while 'between jobs'. Fathers spoke about plans to return to work in the future and how they had chosen work over primary caregiving in the past.

Plans to Return to Work

Most men indicated that they had plans of returning to work in the future. Some men expressed desires to attend college in order to increase their chances for employment. Others talked about returning to work once their girlfriend graduated college and obtained a "good" job.

Brian argues:

Yeah, I might be in this situation for no, but I plan to go back to college soon. I know it will be easier to find a job with my degree. That's how I plan to take care

of my family. Within the next year or two I plan to graduate and begin a new life, better than this.

Lawrence tells:

No doubt… I'm going to college. They even pay you to go, who wouldn't take advantage of da? I'm on the road to great things, and college will just top it off.

Greg:

Man… When my wife finish school… man… we are gonna be rich. I know I will have a job by then, and with her having the big job, um so we can stack our money, together and live how we really want to, and have the house and cars we want.

Chose Work Over FAHD in the Past

Five participants indicated that they had been a FAHD before. While it is

uncertain whether or not these accounts of previous primary caregiving involved the

same children they currently provide care for, two men mentioned that they had chosen

work over being a FAHD in the past.

When I was trying to get back on my feet last year, I got a job. So, I couldn't be at…um, taking care of my kids like that anymore. I mean, I was still taking care of my, our kids, but it was like I couldn't be there all of the time cause I had a job.

I remember my last job. Man, I was so glad dat my son could see his father going to work. Cause in the past, I was home wit him. So, you know what I'm saying, he ain't get to see dat.

These findings suggest that employment remained a strong source of masculine

identity for FAHDs. Although men admitted to being FAHDs ranging from 2 months to

7 years, fathers remained connected to employment, a traditional source of masculine identity. By recognizing their current role of at-home father as temporary, FAHDs maintained close ties to the workforce and thusly, their identities as men (see Doucet 2004). That is, FAHDs did not seem to welcome the at-home dad label. Rather, by recognizing their domestic role as short-term, fathers were able to frame their current positions as "between jobs." This connection to paid work appeared to allow FAHDs to better salvage portions of their masculine identities.

Daycare/School

An unanticipated find was that most FAHDs did not provide care to their children during the day. Rather, nine out of ten FAHDs indicated that their children attended daycare and/or school. Only two FAHDs had children who were all school age. The overwhelming majority of FAHDs who had residential children too young to attend school indicated that their children went to daycare during the day. Specifically, three FAHDs said that all of their children attended daycare. Conversations about daycare/school mainly revolved around what fathers had to say about their childcare responsibilities. For example, one father says:

> I get my kids ready for school every morning. I make sure they have they homework in their backpacks at night. I make sure they are dressed properly and eat breakfast before the bus gets here.

> Another father says:

I'm there when they get home from school. I help em wit they little homework and let em get something to eat.

Several fathers indicated that they transported their children to and from daycare daily.

I drop her {i.e., daughter} off around nine and then I have to be there to pick her up by seven. But I usually come get her around three, three thirty.
I get one ready for school and the other ready to, um go to daycare, you know what I'm saying. It's like my oldest rides the bus and the baby rides with daddy {laughter}.

Children attending daycare /school during the day may have granted FAHDs control over managing their identities as at-home fathers. FAHDs provided the bulk of primary care to their children during the early morning and evening. As such, FAHDs were not frequently seen in public with their children during normal business hours (i.e., Monday through Friday roughly from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.). Not having to publicly provide primary care to children during typical business hours may have limited potential suspicions of other regarding FAHDs' behaviors. FAHDs were not seen caring for children when the "should" have been at work. Exposure to potentially negative attitudes towards primary caregiver fathers held by the public may have been limited due to the "acceptable" hours in which FAHDs provide care.

Conclusion

Findings from the current study suggest that a number of conditions may have influenced ex-felon men to assume the role of at-home father. Emergent themes were: 1)

anomic workforce conditions, 2) stigma management strain, 3) opportunities to at-home father, 4) isolation; 5) temporary status, and 6) children attended daycare and/or school.

Anomic workforce conditions dealt with the ways rejection from the labor force denied participants opportunities to achieve cultural goals and desires. A fundamental factor of anomic workforce conditions were employment barriers, the single reason fathers gave for assuming the FAHD position (for employment barriers see Uggen, Manza, and Behrens 2004). Participants adamantly argued that they became FAHDs because of their inability to obtain/maintain employment. All fathers indicated that they would readily trade employment for their current role as at-home fathers. To this end, I argue that employment barriers appeared to be a primary contributing factor to conditions under which ex-felon assumed the role of FAHD. However, as Coltrane (1996) emphasizes, not all fathers respond to challenges around employment by becoming primary caregivers. Thus, additional factors must be at play in the lives of ex-felon men who assume FAHD roles. Results from the current study found that structural as well as agential factors impacted conditions under which participants assumed FAHD positions.

In addition to employment barriers, anomic workforce conditions included issues around stigma, vulnerability, and marginalized masculinity. Although fathers blamed employment barriers for their current positions as at-home father, participants discussed stigmatization more than any other obstacle they encountered as ex-felons. Particularly, fathers focused on the ways perceived negative outlooks on ex-felons held by the workforce may have impeded their opportunities for employment.

Difficulties getting and/or keeping a job rendered fathers vulnerable to more than subsequent financial hardships. Rather, vulnerability was an overarching theme consistent throughout men's stories. Issues of vulnerability were connected to powerlessness and marginalized masculinity. That is, at the mercy of a workforce that discriminates against ex-felons, fathers felt unable to control their life chances. Denial of traditional sources of power, production, emotional, and symbolic relations for men marginalized participants' masculinity.

Moreover, in the workforce participants could not control the management of their stigmatized social identity. This absence of control seemed to produce stigma management strain as fathers attempted to enter/remain in a workforce that discriminates against ex-felons. Some fathers tried to manage disclosure of their stigmatized identity by concealing their criminal histories. Despite continued rejection from the workforce, fathers refused to be defined by the felon label. Participants insisted that they would not be 'held down' or allow negative images of ex-felons held by the workforce limit their life chances.

Denied traditional means of achieving financial well being and dominate images of masculinity, contextual factors in participants' lives may have presented them with opportunities to become FAHDs. Opportunities to at-home father included emotional and financial support as well as a de-marginalization of men's masculinities primarily from participants' mothers and wives/girlfriends. Other opportunities were: definitions of a 'good father', entrepreneur/college student girlfriend, and a recent birth of a child.

As FAHDs, fathers were better able to control the management of their stigmatized social identities both as ex-felons as well as primary caregiver fathers. First, FAHDs engaged in several practices that appeared to result in them being isolated or cut-off from the outside world. Many FAHDs centered their lives around the lives of their children. Others expressed desires to stay out of trouble or as John put it, "off the streets". Moreover, as research studies suggest (Radin and Russell 1983), fathers did not consider their at-home positions a permanent role. Rather, FAHDs maintained close connections to employment (see Doucet 2004). Men talked of future plans to return to work and declared that they had chosen work over being a FAHD in the past. These ties to employment appeared to allow men to maintain connections with a traditional source of masculine identity. Lastly, dependent children to nine out of ten FAHDs either attended daycare or school during the day. Thus, FAHDs may have avoided possible scrutiny from others because they did not have to publicly engage in primary care of their children during normal business hours (roughly 9:00 to 5:00) in which many traditional fathers are at work.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Discussion

Many men who have been convicted of a felony offense(s) are assuming the role of stay-at-home dad, providing primary care to an unknown number of children across the United States. Until now, this new stay-at-home father has been completely overlooked in academic research. The aim of this research was to investigate the social processes at play in the lives of ex-felon men who occupy primary caregiver roles. Specifically, this research asked: Under what conditions do ex-felon men assume the role of at-home father. The purpose of this research is to promote academic and public awareness, discourse, and future research on this new type of at-home father.

To answer the research question, I conducted interviews with ten FAHDs. I employed a two-dimensional recruitment strategy to gain research participants. First, I approached potential men in community settings who appeared to be fathers. I also posted recruitment flyers. Upon identifying a few potential participants, I used the snowball sampling methods to access other participants. Drawbacks of this technique include selection basis and validity of the findings. As such, participants in this study were all black men who lived in Guilford County, North Carolina. Thus, descriptions of

participants' experiences and results from the current study can only be validated through further research in other studies.

Several themes emerged, from this research (outlined in the previous chapter). In this chapter, I examine these themes in greater detail. Specifically, I discuss four topics. These include: discrimination and loss of status, escaping social controls, normalization and validation, and retreat and innovation.

Discrimination and Loss of Status

Drawing from Merton (1938) and Cohen's (1955) anomie/strain theory, I argue that stigmatization, specifically the interplay of discrimination and loss of status in the workforce, led to a host of anomic workforce conditions in participants' lives. Constant throughout men's stories was an overarching theme of vulnerability felt in the workforce. Fathers overwhelmingly argued that they did not choose to become FAHDs. Rather, fathers indicated that this choice was made for them. Despite work histories, aggressive job searches, and expressed desire for employment, once identified as an ex-felon, participants repeatedly experienced rejection from potential employers. Thus, while employment barriers appeared to have been a contributing factor of conditions under which men assume the FAHD role, issues around stigma seemed to generate many of these and other challenges.

Link and Phelan (2001) point out that a primary component of the stigma process is that individuals experience discrimination and loss of status. Discrimination may occur on the structural as well as individual level. Men's accounts of feeling forced out of the

workforce and driven into the role of FAHD speak to the constraining powers of social

forces operating in their lives. The United States has historically practiced retributive

justice and, despite contemporary criminal "restoration" initiatives, it continues to uphold

its punitive roots. As mentioned earlier, the consequences for being a convicted felon

followed these men long after they left prison (Hirschfield and Piquero 2010). Even after

completing their sentences, ex-felons typically experienced both formal as well as

informal sanctions. Loss of the right to vote in many states, as well as being banned from

working in particular occupations are among some of the formal restrictions placed on

ex-felons by the criminal justice system. Moreover, workforce structures systematically

deny ex-felons employment opportunities. Criminal background checks, work histories,

and educational requirements, for example, organize the workforce in ways that block ex-

felons out. Criminal background checks may cast ex-felons out of job opportunities in

the application phase (Uggen 2008). Work history may be negatively impacted by

periods of incarceration. Furthermore, national survey data on felons show that most

felons have low educational attainment (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2011).

Employer and co-worker discrimination also occurred. Several fathers shared

stories of being discriminated against. Fathers felt that potential employers often

questioned the credibility and trustworthiness of ex-felons. Many participants expressed

feeling as though employers simply disregarded ex-felons and did not consider them as

viable candidates for employment. For those fathers who were able to find work, their

ability to maintain employment appeared greatly impeded. Fathers argue that employers

and co-workers' negative attitudes towards ex-felons hindered their ability to keep a job

(Hirschfield and Piquero 2010; see also Clear 2007, Pager 2003). Race may have even further perpetuated job discrimination for ex-felons. These men may have encountered discrimination in response to their criminal records as well as the color of their skin (Bushway et al. 2007; Chiricos et al. 2007).

Not only did potential employers discriminate against participants, participants in this study also experienced what Link and Phelan (2001) describe as "status loss." Being negatively labeled results in an almost instant downward ranking of an individual's status (see also Goffman 1963). All participants in the current study indicated that they had suffered status loss in the workforce. Experiences of status loss heavily revolved around financial well being as well as masculinity.

Rejection from the labor force devalued men's statuses in particular ways. A primary source of power for men is employment. Connell (2002) argues that in modern Western society, the entire economic culture has been defined as male domain. Without jobs, participants were virtually unable to financially support themselves. Collateral consequences of being ostracized from the workforce meant that men often relied on family members and friends for basic necessities such as shelter and food. This level of vulnerability may be challenging for men, in large part due to hegemonic images that marginalize men who are not 'good' providers (Catlett and McKenry 2004; see also Townsend 2002). Moreover, cultural values and ideology directly impact gender identities and understanding of one's 'place' (Connell 2002). Men in the present study associated masculinity with employment and being able to financially provide for their family. John put it this way, "As a man, you want to provide for your family." Thus,

being denied the opportunity to work paying jobs challenged participants' manhood. Men felt "in the way" of family members who helped support them and "disrespected" by employers and the workforce. Interestingly, assuming a FAHD position appeared to lessen some of the normlessness these men experienced in the workforce.

Escaping Social Controls

Becoming an at-home father is a strategic escape from social forces operating in the labor force that render participants undeserving and devalued. Stigmatization and other anomic conditions participants experienced were described as occurring in the workforce. Thus, retreat from the workforce constituted an escape from normlessness. By giving up on or, as discussed below, taking a break from the workforce, participants freed themselves from rejection and condemnation of employers and co-workers. Moreover, the stigma management strain participants described feeling in the workforce was not apparent in their stories of being FAHDs.

To a great extent, the process of stigma depends upon the social setting (Goffman 1963; Link and Phelan 2001; Reutter, Stewart, Veenstra, Love, Raphael, Makwarimba 2009; and Winnick and Bodkin 2009). Crocker, Major, and Steele's (1998:505) definition of stigma, "a social identity that is devalued in a particular social context," highlights this point (see also Reutter et al. 2009). In the workforce, participants were forced to disclose their criminal histories despite known or perceived consequences. Seemingly unredeemable in the view of the workforce, participants spent long hours seeking employment only to be let down. Recognizing that in this particular setting (i.e.,

the workforce) they experienced a great deal of stigmatization that marginalized their

masculinity and financial well being, participants retreated.

Goffman (1963) purported that a coping mechanism for stigmatized individuals

is to avoid contact with "normals." By walking away from the idea of participating in the

public sphere, fathers left anomic workforce conditions behind them. Retreat not only

stripped away some of the control the workforce had over men's life chances. Rather,

retreat also granted participants greater control over their own lives. Despite remaining

unemployed and marginalized to an extent, men were freeing themselves from the

constraints imposed on them by the workforce.

Blocked employment opportunities denied men a traditional source of power. As

mentioned earlier, power is a fundamental aspect of masculinity. However, assuming

FAHD roles offered men alternative means of power and ways of displaying masculinity.

Cloward and Ohlin's (1960) anomie and strain theory illuminates the role that

opportunity plays in the alternative mechanisms individuals employ to deal with anomic

conditions. That is, to a large extent, the ways participants dealt with anomic workforce

conditions were contingent upon alternatives available to them.

Normalization and Validation

Drawing from Cloward and Ohlin (1960), I argue that the interplay of

conglomeration of factors provided participants with the "opportunity" to assume a

FAHD role. Specifically, many of these factors revolve around the normalization of

participants' experiences as ex-felons combined with validation of masculinity through

primary care giving. Moreover, the interplay of normalization and validation is perceived as influencing men's decisions to become FAHDs.

Hirschfield and Piquero (2010:28) contend that the stigma of being an ex-offender may be diminished in instances where involvement in the criminal justice system is so "commonplace that offenders face little rebuke and ostracism in response to their crimes and punishments" (see also Nagin 1998). This concept of normalization is significant for several reasons. First, most participants had been convicted of criminal offenses on more than one occasion. Thus, cycles of incarceration where familiar to participants. Moreover, although not specified in interviews, girlfriends and family members may have become accustomed to participants reoffending. This is not to suggest that criminal behavior was perceived as acceptable or "normal" by loved ones, or even participants for that matter. Rather, the private sphere represented a less stigmatizing social setting for participants than the workforce. In the family, participants had systems of support verses discrimination and rejection experienced in the workforce.

Second, the employment barriers participants experienced also may be a contributing factor. Casper and O'Connell (1998:24) suggest that cycles of unemployment and cutbacks due to economic recessions "may enable fathers to provide child care." That is, unemployment affects the likelihood that fathers are available to provide childcare. Much of the Fathers' Movement literature purports that societal expectations of fathers as breadwinners has resulted in the alienation of fathers from the family (see Forste, Bartkowski and Jackson 2009 and Griswold 1993). To this end, unemployment provided fathers with more time to participate in the family. Although

some of the literature argues that fathers' unemployment may result in hostility towards children and wives (Elder, Conger, Foster, Ardelt 1992) as well as reduction in involvement (Harris and Marmer 1996), participants' claims that they would give up being FAHDs for employment, suggests that unemployment was a fundamental factor in decisions to take on primary caregiver roles.

Last, participants' assertions like Mike's: "Can't no felon get a job", depict at least two important factors. Primarily, Mike's claim reflects the normalcy of unemployment among ex-felons. Moreover, such claims move beyond individual shortcomings towards an understanding of the social structures that shape life chances. While periods of unemployment are often difficult, fathers did not entirely blame themselves for their circumstances. Rather, they recognized the macro-level social forces at play in their lives. This normalization of unemployment among ex-felons seemingly helped fathers reconcile with the rejection they experienced in the workforce.

Validation played a key role in becoming at-home fathers as well. Egalitarian attitudes held by participants validated nontraditional family roles including both girlfriends assuming provider roles as well as fathers taking on at-home positions. Moreover, race and social class may have been factors as well. That is, race and class often influence attitudes toward fatherhood. As mentioned earlier, definitions of a good father often revolve around spending time with their children for low-income minorities' (Roy 2004 and Summers et al. 2006).

However and perhaps most importantly for participants, were the ways assuming a FAHD role validated participants' identities as men. As mentioned earlier, the division

of family labor is a prime opportunity to "do gender." Furthermore, contemporary images of middle class fathers as nurturers in conjunction with the emphasis placed on the provider role in ideas concerning responsible fathering, marginalize lower-income fathers. Public perceptions of lower-income fathers are commonly negative, such as deadbeats or absent (Forste, Bartkowski and Jackson 2009). To this end, participants' assuming not only an active father role but an at-home caregiver position appeared to be an ultimate symbol of masculinity. Participants said that their girlfriends were "glad" and "proud" of them for being good fathers to their children. Furthermore, participants' indicated that their mothers celebrated their decisions to be a "real man" by taking care of their children.

Retreatists and Innovators

Drawing from Merton's (1938) conceptualization of the types of alternative methods groups suffering from anomic conditions employ to achieve cultural goals, FAHDs may be implementing a strategic mix of retreatism and innovative coping mechanisms. As previously reviewed, retreatists give up on desires to achieve cultural goals while innovators employ alternative methods to reach aspirations.

Suspending job searches and taking on a full-time domestic role can be viewed as giving up on desires to obtain employment. For example, participants had been FAHDs ranging from 2 months to 7 years with most fathers occupying this position for at least 6 months (n= 6). However, although fathers retreated away from the workforce, they did not consider the FAHD role a permanent position. That is, participants suggested that

their current status was 'between jobs' rather than FAHD. Therefore, participants had not fully relinquished ties to employment (see Doucet 2004). Although they were not currently seeking employment, framing their current FAHD position as being between jobs served as an innovative way for participants to salvage connections to the workforce and preserve remnants of a traditional source of masculinity. Moreover, family support networks provided fathers with innovative ways to display valued images of masculinity through primary care giving. Finally, isolation and children attending daycare or school may have also been innovative ways for fathers to manage control over disclosure of their stigmatized identity as an ex-felon as well as primary caregiver father.

Conclusion

The narratives of these FAHDs represent the intersections between the stigmatization of ex-felons in the workforce and unemployment, fatherhood and primary caregiver fathers, and marginalized masculinity. Despite the fact that the FAHD population has flown under the radar of academic and public awareness, once I was somewhat "in the loop," it became apparent to me that this phenomenon may be a common survival mechanism used to counteract constraints placed on ex-felon men in the workforce. Male ex-felons are freeing themselves from ostracizing labels in the workforce that tag them deviant, unworthy of employment, and marginalized men by assuming the role of FAHD.

This study contributes to academic literature in family studies as well as criminology in areas of crime and occupations/unemployment in at least three ways.

First, this research gives voice to a population that has been overlooked by academia and the public. Until now, no readily available literature, scholarly or otherwise, has examined ex-felon men who assume at-home father positions. The aim of this study is to begin discourse on the topic.

Second, this research implies that American family and domestic life will be reshaped, to some extent, by the FAHD phenomenon. In the workforce, the stigma of being an ex-felon overshadowed FAHDs' job skills and educational qualifications. Rejection from the workforce denied men of traditional ways to display masculinity. Due to the anomic workforce conditions they experienced, FAHDs felt more like "men" in the home than they did in the workforce. Thus, despite the historical link between breadwinning and societal expectations of men (Griswold, 1993) and fathers (Coakley, 2006), domestic positions served as a primary source for FAHDs to achieve masculinity.

This accomplishment of masculinity through a traditionally female domain leads to my third and concluding point. Despite occupying "feminine" roles, hegemonic images of masculinity continued to shape FAHDs' identities as men. To a large extent, vulnerable and oftentimes hostile undertones present in FAHDs' narratives (particularly regarding being blocked out of the workforce and feeling forced to assume domestic roles) speak to the ways hegemonic images of masculinity marginalized FAHDs. Earlier mentioned assertions such as Brian's: "…this ain't my choice at all. Nah, this right here ain't nobody's choice. Not a man's choice anyway," reflect the tension between hegemonic forms of masculinity that marginalized effeminate behavior and being an at-home father. Seemingly consequently, FAHDs and their family members framed this at-

home father position as displaying certain aspects of hegemonic masculinity.

Specifically, FAHDs and their family members reconciled with participants' family roles

by celebrating the commitment that these men show to their families despite adverse

conditions and uplifting FAHDs as "strong" and "stand-up" men.

Implications for Future Research

The nascent nature of the present study lends itself to a barrage of implications for

future research. In this section, I discuss four areas for future research in which I find

particularly interesting. As mentioned above, hegemonic images of masculinity

continued to shape FAHDs identities as men. Thus, researchers might examine whether

the FAHD role privileges men. To what extent do these families support patriarchal

social structure? Are the behaviors that are considered feminine in these families

marginalized in any way?

Second, this research emphasizes the need to examine the impact that the current

economic recession may have the FAHD phenomenon. From the days of agriculture to

the influx of mothers into the labor force fulltime, dominate cultural images of American

fatherhood have, to a great extent, aligned with the needs of the economy (Coltrane 1996;

Lamb 2002; Marsiglio, 2005; Coakley, 2006). As such, America has yet to fully

understand the influence that our most recent economic recession may possibly have on

fatherhood. While the nurturant father was a beneficial dominate cultural image prior to

the current recession, the needs of today's economy in the wake of recession may result

in new images of American fatherhood.

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Men in the dominate culture losing their jobs and moving back into the home may give way to a greater acceptance of primary caregiver fathers. While breadwinning may remain connected to images of masculinity, it is possible that the recession has or will somewhat loosen the reigns that marginalize primary caregiver fathers. Images of fathers in the home fulltime may be less stigmatizing today than they were 20 or even 10 years ago. Thus, the act of assuming a FAHD role is possibly a strategic escape from a highly stigmatized social identity towards an image that may be increasingly gaining acceptance.

Third, my research highlights the necessity to further investigate contextual factors that impact ex-felon men's decisions to become FAHDs. For example, the above mentioned unanticipated find in which several FAHDs indicated that their children attended daycare for many hours during the day may be an interesting topic for future research. Researchers may want to compare whether FAHDs are more likely to provide care to children who attend daycare than are "traditional" SAHDs and/or at-home mothers. Moreover, additional context factors such as age, for example, may be examined. In a study on young, criminally-involved, minority fathers, Wilkinson, Magora, Garcia, and Khurana (2009) argue that the onset of criminal activity at a young age may result in an accumulation of adverse conditions that make it difficult for these men to achieve societal expectations of fatherhood. To this end, FAHDs who become criminally involved at a young age may face a unique set of challenges that other FAHDs may not such as early exposure to trauma and violence and increased likelihood of prematurely ending their education (Wilkinson et al. 2009).

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, this study underscores the point that academic research can no longer afford to overlook the FAHD population. FAHDs exist. This phenomenon is impacting American families in ways we have yet to understand. We must recognize these men and their families and work towards a greater understanding of the dynamics of FAHDs.

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APPENDIX: A

<p style="text-align:center">RECRUITMENT FLYER</p>

ARE YOU A MAN WHO IS:

- at least **18** years old or older,
- an **EX-FELON** (that is, someone who has been convicted of a felony offense or offenses in the past and has paid his debt to society)
- **UNEMPLOYED, AND**
- a **DAD WHO STAYS AT HOME** to raise a child or children who is 15 years old or younger?

IF SO, you are eligible to participate in a research project about men like you!

This research study is trying to find out the following two things:

1. The social factors that influence ex-felon men to stay at home to raise their children rather than seek employment
2. How men in this situation manage to create an identity for themselves.

If you agree to participate in this research project, you will be asked to participate in one interview. The interview will be a one-on one interview conducted by the student researcher listed below. Interviews are not expected to last longer than ninety minutes. There are no costs to you or payments made for participating in this study.

For more information please contact:

Nailah McDowell

M.A. graduate candidate

Student Researcher at

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Sociology Department

APPENDIX: B

CONSENT FORM

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO

CONSENT TO ACT AS A HUMAN PARTICIPANT: LONG FORM

Project Title: Ex-Felon Men: The New Stay at-Home Dads

Project Director: Nailah McDowell

Participant's Name: _____

DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH PROJECT:
You are being asked to take part in a study called, "Ex-Felon Men: The New Stay at-Home Dads" conducted by Nailah McDowell, a MA student in the Department of Sociology at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro (UNCG). This study is a research project about adult men who are ex-felons that stay at home to raise a child or children. The purpose of this research project is to find out:

1. If any of the things listed below influence men who are ex-felons to stay at home to raise children:
   - A. difficulties finding a job,
   - B. the current economic recession, and/or
   - C. today's attitudes about father's responsibilities in the family.

2. How these men overcome the challenges associated with being ex-felons who stay at home to raise a child or children.

You have indicated that you are an adult male who is at least 18 years or older and meet all of the below requirements:

1. An ex-felon (that is, someone who has been convicted of a felony offense in the past, whether by the State and/or Federal judicial system, and has fully paid his debt to society),
2. Currently not working a paid job
3. Have not sought after employment within the last 4 weeks, and
4. Stays at home to raise a child or children who are 15 years old or younger. (Hereafter referred to as a "stay at-home dad.")

EXPLANATION OF PROCEDURES:

During the course of this study the following will occur: The researcher will present and explain an informed consent form to you. You are encouraged to ask any questions about the research project itself or your participation and the researcher will address any concerns you may have. You may also direct any questions about the procedures of this study to Dr. Hunnicutt at (XXX) XXX-XXXX.

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to participate in one interview. During the interview you will be asked several questions about your personal experiences as an ex-felon and a stay-at-home dad. The interview will be one-on-one and should last between 60 to 90 minutes.

Participants must sign the informed consent form before participating in this study. At the conclusion of the interview, you will be thanked for your time and provided a copy of the consent form.

When conducting research interviews, researchers commonly tape-record interviews as well as take some notes. This approach is an effective way to capture an interview in its entirety. If you agree to allow the researcher to tape-record your interview as well as take notes please initial the appropriate box located on the last page of this consent form. If you do not wish to have your interview tape-recorded but agree to allow the researcher to take notes during the interview please initial the appropriate box located on the last page of this consent form.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

You will not benefit directly from taking part in this study. Your answering questions may help people learn more about ex-felon men who are stay-at-home fathers. In addition, you will have the opportunity to speak about your own experiences in your own words.

The potential benefits of this study to society include possibly helping people learn about ex-felon men who are stay-at-home fathers.

PAYMENT

There are no costs to you or payments made for participating in this study.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The Institutional Review Board at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro has determined that participation in this study poses minimal risk to participants. The possible risks to you is that the interview may bring up feelings of frustration or other similar emotions as you discuss your personal experiences as an ex-felon who is also a stay-at-home dad. If you find yourself distress, please let the research know and the interview will be stopped immediately. However, all precautions have been made to

reduce this risk as much as possible. Federal guidelines require that you be informed that no threat of physical harm or injury exists as a result of your participation in this study.

OPPORTUNITY TO ASK QUESTIONS:
At any point during the interview session, please feel free to stop if you have questions. Should you have questions following the session, please contact the Principal Investigator, at UNCG Department of Sociology, 337 Graham Building, Greensboro, NC 27412.

OPPORTUNITY TO WITHDRAW WITHOUT PENALTY:
You have the right to refuse to participate or to withdraw at any time, without penalty. If you do withdraw, it will not affect you in any way. If you choose to withdraw, you may request that any of your data which has been collected be destroyed unless it is in a de-identifiable state.

NEW INFORMATION/CHANGES IN THE STUDY
If significant new information relating to the study becomes available which may relate to your willingness to continue to participate, this information will be provided to you.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Interviews will be conducted one-on-one. To protect your identity and your answers the researcher will be assigning each participant a pseudonym, or fake name. Only the researcher will know which fake name matches which real name. At no point will real names be given out or used. (Please read the below sections "Exceptions to Confidentiality.") A list of these names will be kept as a hard copy as well as saved on a USB memory stick. This data will be stored off the UNCG campus in a locked filling cabinet in the student researcher's home office. This data will be stored separate from all other data collected.

If you agree to have your interview tape-recorded, because your voice will be potentially identifiable by anyone who hears the tape, your confidentiality for things you say on the tape cannot be guaranteed although the researcher will try to limit access to the tape as described below.

Audio-tapes will not be made available in their entirety to any other source other than the researcher. The audio-tapes will be stored off the UNCG campus in a locked filling cabinet in the researcher's home office. Interviews will be transcribed for analysis. Written notes taken during your interview will be included on transcriptions. Once interviews have been transcribed, audio-tapes and written notes will be completely destroyed and properly disposed.

If you do not want your interview audio-taped, the student researcher will take notes a private, password protected laptop owned by the researcher. These notes will be considered interview transcripts.

All transcripts will be stored as computer files on a private, password protected laptop owned by the researcher. These files are not open to public use. A back-up of the transcripts will be saved on a USB memory stick. The memory stick will be stored off the UNCG campus in a locked filling cabinet in the researcher's home office. Transcripts will be kept by the student researcher.

EXCEPTIONS TO CONFIDENTIALITY
The following are exceptions to the confidentiality agreement. Under the law, disclosure of illegal activities/behavior not known to the police or proper authorities; harm to another person; and/or intent to harm another person and/or yourself must be immediately reported to the proper authorities. At no point will you be asked about illegal activities/behavior that you may or may not be involved in that has not been disclosed to the police and/or proper authorities. Disclosure of this type of information will result in exemption of confidentiality agreement.

VOLUNTARY CONSENT BY PARTICIPANT:
By signing this consent form you are agreeing that you read, or it has been read to you, and you fully understand the contents of this document and are openly willing consent to take part in this study. All of your questions concerning this study have been answered. By signing this form, you are agreeing that you are 18 years of age or older and are agreeing to participate, or have the individual specified above as a participant participate, in this study described to you by Nailah McDowell.

If you have any concerns about your rights, how you are being treated or if you have questions, want more information or have suggestions, please contact XXXX in the Office of Research Compliance at UNCG at (XXX) XXX-XXXX. Questions, concerns or complaints about this project or benefits or risks associated with being in this study can be answered by Dr. Hunnicutt who may be contacted at (XXX) XXX-XXXX.

If you **agree** to have your interview tape-recorded initial this box _____

If you want the researcher to **take notes** during your interview initial this box _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX: C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Tell me a little about yourself.
   - Age
   - Race
   - How long you've live in this town/city.
2. Tell me about your family.
   - How many kids do you have? Boys, girls?
   - How old are they?
   - Are you married or living with someone who helps you with the kids?
3. Why did you become a SAHD?
   - Finances?
   - Recession?
   - Convenience?
   - If you didn't have a record, do you think that you would still be a SAHD?
4. What's it like?
   - Do you feel about it?
   - What is the best thing about being a SAHD? What's the worst?
   - What does a typical day in your house look like?
   - How are housework and responsibilities divided up around the house?
5. What does your family say about it and how do their reactions make you feel?
   - What does your _____ (spouse, significant other, or etc.) think about it? (If applicable)
   - Have your kids ever asked why you stay at home? If so, how did you respond?
   - Do your kids know about your record?
6. Do you tell other people?
   - If so, how do they respond?
   - How do their responses make you feel?
7. Would you have ever considered being a SAHD before your conviction?
8. Okay, now I'm going to ask you a few questions about employment. Can you tell me about your employment history?
   - Did you work before getting convicted?
   - Have you worked since being convicted?
   - When's the last time you had a job?
9. Have you ever stopped being a SAHD because you got a job?
10. When someone is looking for a job, do you think it matters if that person has a criminal record?
11. Are you aware of the current recession?

☐ If so: Do you think the recession has anything to do with you being a SAHD? Have your family responsibilities changed since the recession?

12. In your own words, describe what you think a "good father" is.

☐ What's the most important characteristic of a good father?

13. Do you know anyone else who could participate in this study?

APPENDIX: D

CODING SHEET

I.   Anomic Workforce Conditions
  a. Stigma
        i. Negative outlooks they felt employers have on (ex)felons
       ii. Matters of Race
  b. Employment Barriers
        i. Employer reluctance to hire
       ii. employers being "overly" suspicious of their integrity
  c. Vulnerability
        i. Financial Hardships
       ii. Educational barriers
      iii. Devalued prison work histories
  d. Marginalized Masculinity

II.   Stigma Management Strain
  a. Concealing Criminal Histories
        i. Attempts to hide their stigma
  b. But I'm Really Not a Bad Guy
        i. They Can't Hold Me Down
              1. Did not want to return to a life of crime
              2. Did not want to return to prison

III.   Opportunities to at-Home Father
  a. Family Support Networks
  b. Definition of a 'Good Father'
  c. Entrepreneur/College Student Girlfriend
  d. Just Had a Baby

IV.   Temporary Status
  a. Plans to Return to Work
  b. Chose Work Over FAHD in the Past

V.   Daycare/School

FAHD DEMOGRAPHICS

FAHD	Age	# Resident Children	Child's Age	How Long in Current FAHD Position
Brian	23	2	3 & 5 years of age	1 year
Doug	25	4	1, 3, 4, & 7 years of age	2 years
Greg	19	1	2 years of age	4 months
John	34	1	12 years of age	7 years
Lawrence	28	4	3, 4, 5, & 9 years of age	5 months
Mike	20	1	2 years of age	8 months
Pete	19	1	6 months	6 months
Scott	36	5	3, 6, 7, 9, & 14 years of age	2 years
Steve	37	4	8, 11, 13, & 15 years of age	3 months
Todd	31	5	1, 2, 4, 6, & 9 years of age	10 months